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OBEDIENCE VS. SACRIFICE

(episode 019)

theme: God prefers us to obey Him than to sacrifice to Him **scripture:** Matthew 21:28-31; I Samuel 15:22; Hebrews 5:8 **quote:** “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.” I Samuel 15:22b **summary:** On this installment of the popular game show “Guess That Truth” host E. Buzz Backs presents his contestants with questions concerning God’s pleasure in obedience versus sacrifice. Although it’s true that when we sacrifice something to God, whether it’s our time or labor or money, it costs us something, we find from God’s word that He is more pleased when we obey him.

In the parable of the two sons, Jesus tells of a father who told one of his sons to go work in the vineyard for him. The son said that he would go, but then didn’t. The father then came to the second son and told him the same thing. The second son said that he wouldn’t go, but later regretted what he had said and went as his father had told him. Which of the two did his father’s will, Jesus asked? Obviously the second son.

God is not pleased with those who say “yes” to Him, but then don’t do His will. Rather, He is pleased with those who, although they may at first say “no” to Him, repent of their disobedience and do His will. Of course we can just say “yes” to God right away and be sure to follow through on doing His will. God is pleased with our obedience in the little things and in the big things.

12-YEAR-OLD JESUS FOUND IN THE TEMPLE

(episode 027)

theme: Jesus offers opportunity to all of us to see that He is the Son of God. **scripture:** Luke 2:41-52 **quote:** “And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.”

Luke 2:47 **summary:** Nit Whitly travels to the Temple in Jerusalem where a 12-year-old boy has just amazed a group of teachers. Amazing were His questions to them, and His answers to their questions, and His understanding of the things of God. What they had the opportunity to realize was that this 12-year-old boy was the long-awaited Messiah.

Throughout His earthly ministry Jesus would interact with religious leaders and common people alike. Some would test Him to try to catch Him in an error. Others would come to Him seeking help or insight. In each encounter His answers and actions were always amazing and offered evidence that He was the Son of God. Some would see this evidence and believe in Him. Others would refuse to believe and look for opportunities to silence Him.

That same thing is true today. Each one of us must decide for him or herself whether we are going to accept Jesus’ Messiahship and His sacrifice for our sins, or reject it. The opportunity is there, and it’s a decision we can’t ignore.

ZACHEUS & CHANGED LIVES

(episode 036)

theme: When we come to Jesus, our lives change **scripture:** Luke 19:1-10 **quote:** “Lay aside the old self...and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God

has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” Ephesians 4:22,24 **summary:** Zacheus was the chief tax collector living in Jericho. When Jesus passed through town Zacheus wanted to see Him. Since he was short he had a hard time getting a look at Him because of the crowd, so he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree. When Jesus came walking by He looked up and said to Zacheus, “Hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.”

Zacheus would have his life changed because of this visit. This change was soon evident when he promised to give away half of his possessions to the poor, and to repay four times anyone he had cheated.

When we are born-again the Holy Spirit comes and lives within us. The Holy Spirit will then lead us, guide us and teach us in doing what is right. He also convicts us of the things we are doing wrong. When these things are revealed to us (because of His presence within us), we will many times be prompted to take action - sometimes drastic action - to make right those things we have done wrong.

Jesus made a big impact on Zacheus' life that drastically changed him. Jesus still has the power to drastically change people's lives today.

MARY

(episode 069)

theme: Mary's example of humble obedience is a good one for all of us. **scripture:** Luke 1:26-38

quote: “And Mary said, ‘Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according

to your word.’” Luke 1:38 **summary:** When God sent the angel Gabriel to a young woman living in Nazareth what He instructed Him to tell her was amazing - even incredible. The young woman was Mary. What she was told was that she was to be the mother of the Savior.

In order for Jesus to come to earth to die for the sins of men He would have to come as a man. He needed to have an earthly mother, and God chose Mary for that honor. Mary's response is a good indication why it was she that God chose.

First of all she displayed a great deal of faith in the power of God. She would conceive this child by the Holy Spirit without an earthly father. That is the kind of miracle it takes a lot of faith to believe.

Secondly, she accepted God's will and His plan and purpose for her life. She considered herself God's bondservant, to be used by Him in anyway He chose. She wasn't concerned with herself, only in serving God.

These two qualities are ones we should have as well. We should humbly accept whatever situation or condition God has given us. Seeking not our own glory or comfort but His. Considering ourselves His servants with a desire to do His will. And to trust that God will bring everything to pass that concerns us.

We should live our lives in such a way that In the end, when we enter into eternity, we will hear Jesus say those wonderful words to us, “Well done, you good and faithful servant.”

CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

(episode 097)

theme: We should be zealous for the holiness of God. **scripture:** Matthew 21:12-14; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11; Psalm 69:9 **quote:** “Zeal for Thy house has consumed me.” Psalm 69:9a **summary:** Nit Whitley travels back to the Temple in Jerusalem to give us his report on what has been called “The Cleansing of the Temple.” This is when Jesus went into the Temple and through out the money changers and those who were selling doves. His actions seem somewhat strange to us until we realize what was going on and why Jesus did what He did.

When people came to the Temple to offer sacrifices to God they didn't always have the right currency or have an animal to sacrifice. The money changers were those who exchanged the money the worshiper had for that which could be used in the Temple. Those who needed an animal could buy one from those who were selling them. This wasn't the problem. The problem was that they were charging high prices and in so taking advantage of the people. Their extortion was "polluting" the Temple, a place for holiness.

Jesus was angry, but His anger was because God's holiness was being affronted. He quoted two Old Testament prophecies when He said, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you are making it a den of thieves.'"

This kind of zeal for God's honor and to keep holy things from being degraded should be in each of us. Everything from God's name to His law should have a high place in our lives. We should be people who are known for holding a high standard of personal righteousness - but not for feeling we are above others. This high standard should make us humble, knowing that it is God who is great and not us.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

(episode 107)

theme: Loving our neighbor as we love ourselves is the sum of the last six

commandments. **scripture:** Matthew 22:34-40 **quote:** "The second [great Commandment] is like [the first], 'You shall love your

neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:39,40 **summary:** The first four of the Ten Commandments have to do with our relationship to God, and Jesus summed these four Commandments up by saying we should love the Lord with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. Commandments five through ten deal with our relationship to each other, and Jesus summed these six up by saying we should love our neighbor as we love ourselves. If we follow this simple rule we will find ourselves keeping those six Commandments.

In this episode of Reality Check Nit Whitly explores the meaning of this command. By loving other people as we love ourselves, we will not cheat them or lie to nor steal from them. We will never use other people simply for our own gain, but always consider what is in their best interest as well.

Jesus Himself gave us the greatest example of how to fulfill this command when He laid His life down on our behalf. He explained that there is no greater love one man can display to another than to lay down his life for him. When Jesus took the cross upon Himself, He didn't do it for Himself. He did it on our behalf. The sins He paid the price for through His death were not His, they were ours.

With Jesus as our example, we should strive to daily lay our lives down for others. Not that we will be asked to physically die for them, but rather to die, as it were, to our own desires or wishes. To put the needs of others over our own and give ourselves to what will benefit them.

If all men lived this way what a very different world it would be.

NO GREATER LOVE

(episode 112)

theme: Laying down our lives for each other is the greatest act of love there is. **scripture:** John 15:13 **quote:** "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:13 **summary:** In this episode of "Radio Theater of the Air" we see how Georgie lays down his life for his young brother Beanie. Beanie is allergic to bee stings, and when a bee enters their tree house he gets frightened. Knowing what could happen to his brother should the bee sting him, Georgie catches the bee in his hands and lets the bee sting him. He took that stinger so his brother would be safe.

This act is what we would call laying down one's life for another. Jesus told us, in John 15:13, that this is the greatest act of love. Jesus also demonstrated this act of love when He willingly laid down His life for us. When He went to the cross, He offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. He paid

with His life what we had no ability to pay. He died so that we might live. His act was motivated by His deep love for us.

Using Jesus' example, let's practice laying our lives down for others. Let's demonstrate in our lives the greatest act of love.

FARMER BROWN & THE SEED-GROWING SECRET

(episode 132)

theme: The Kingdom of God grows almost unnoticed as we labor day in and day out. **scripture:** Mark 4:26-29 **quote:** "The Kingdom of God is like a man who cast seed upon the soil." Mark 4:26

summary: The farmer prepares the soil, plants the seed, and works to help the seed grow. He does this day in and day out. Sometimes it doesn't seem like anything is happening. But, if he's faithful and diligent, eventually the plant will grow, producing its fruit.

The Kingdom of God is much like this. God is moving constantly in our lives and in the lives of others. It may seem to us that there is no progress. Sometimes it seems as if we are going backwards. But God is working. One day, just like the farmer, we will wake up and be amazed at what God has done.

What we must do is be faithful to work for Him. It is still God who does the life-changing, but He uses us to accomplish His work.

Let us take Galatians 6:9 to heart. "Do not be weary in well-doing, for in due time we will reap if we do not faint."

NICODEMUS & BEING BORN-AGAIN

(episode 140)

theme: In order to get to heaven we must be born of the Spirit. **scripture:** John 3:1-21 **quote:** "Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of

God." John 3:3 **summary:** Nicodemus was a Pharisee, one of the religious rulers of Israel, and he came to see Jesus. He was curious concerning the things that Jesus was teaching. He acknowledged Jesus' authority as a teacher having come from God. Jesus told him something that confused him. Jesus said, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus questioned him about being born again. "How can a man be born when he is old? He can't enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" he asked.

Jesus went on to explain that what is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. We have all been born of the flesh, which is our physical life. But, because of sin, even though we are physically alive, we are spiritually dead. When Jesus spoke of being born again, He meant that we need to be born of the Spirit.

This was hard to Nicodemus to comprehend, just as it is for many today. But when we ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior we receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts, and our lives, which were once dead to God are made alive to Him. This work of regeneration is necessary for our sins to be forgiven and for us to become righteous in God's eyes.

Since the time of Nicodemus many men and women have come to Jesus and have been born again. It is without a doubt the most important thing that can ever happen in the life of a human being. Has it happened to you?

DIM VS. THE RED DUKE & THE GREAT COMMISSION

(episode 145)

theme: Jesus has given us a Great Commission. **scripture:** Matthew 28:16-20 **quote:** “Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” Matthew 28:19a **summary:** In this special episode, Dim Whitly is a World War I flying ace heading on a special mission into enemy territory to announce salvation to troops trapped behind enemy lines. Even though the enemy is well-armed and the danger is perilous, Dim sets out on his commission without looking back.

Before He left, Jesus gave us a commission. We are to go into all the world to make disciples for Him, telling them the good news of salvation through His blood. Teaching them to obey His commands and letting them know of all the benefits He provides, not only in this life, but in the world to come.

The dangers could be many, and we will be tempted to get discouraged and give up. But, just like Dim, we have to have a mind to completing our mission. Not giving up, no matter how hard it gets, until our work is done.

We also have an additional motivation to keep on going. Jesus Himself has promised to be with us always, “Even to the end of the age.”

THE CALLING OF MATTHEW

(episode 151)

theme: Blessed are those who know they are spiritually poor. **scripture:** Matthew 9:9-13 **quote:** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:3 **summary:** It is sometimes puzzling when we consider which people respond positively to the gospel and which don't.

There are people who could be considered “good.” They are honest and kind and display many good qualities. Some of them turn their hearts to Jesus easily while others refuse to acknowledge their need for a savior.

Then there are those who have fallen into the deep darkness of sin. For some the gospel is a light in a dark life, and they gladly receive the forgiveness that comes through the blood of Jesus. Yet others, in this same condition, reject Christ's gift of salvation, choosing instead to remain in their enslaved condition.

Then there are those who fall in between these two extremes. Here, too, we find some who embrace the gospel message and others who don't.

Since the above described conditions don't seem to make a difference, what is the common factor between those who accept Christ and those who reject them? The answer is found in the heart. Jesus said that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are poor in spirit.

To be “poor in spirit” means to realize and understand one's spiritual poverty. That he has nothing to offer to God for the forgiveness of his sins. He is poor and, if left to himself, helpless and hopeless. To be “poor in spirit” means to see the need for God. Someone who is not “poor in spirit” sees no need for a savior. The reasons may be many, but in the end they reject the gospel - regardless of their condition.

The Apostle Matthew was one who saw his need, and when Jesus called him, he was ready to go. We all have a need for Jesus, let's pray that God will turn the hearts of men to see that need.

PHILIP & BRINGING PEOPLE TO JESUS

(episode 152)

theme: We should always look for opportunities to introduce people to Jesus. **scripture:** John 1:45; 12:20-23; Acts 4:12 **quote:** “He who is wise wins souls.” Proverbs 11:30b **summary:** Philip, the Apostle, is perhaps most noted in Scripture for introducing people to Jesus. It was he who brought Nathaniel to Jesus (John 1:45), and who served as a go-between for some Greeks who wanted to meet Jesus (John 12:20-23).

To those of us whose lives have been dramatically changed by Jesus Christ, and who know of His power to forgive sin and redeem our souls, it should be a regular part of our lives to introduce those we know and meet to Him.

No one else can do for men what Jesus can do. There is no other Savior. He is the only mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5). As it says in Acts 4:12: "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

Let's make it a point to introduce others to Jesus.