

A Study Outline on – Christ's Active and Passive Obedience

Introduction

A father tells his little son to chop and split for firewood a very large pile of wood by night fall or he will be punished. . The pile of wood is so large the little son could never do it. Along comes his big brother and says, 'I will do it for you.' He does. This is a picture of Christ's active obedience. He does what we could never do. And then our big brother bears the punishment we deserve for our failure.

The Anointed One has to live the perfect life(active obedience) and die the sacrificial death(passive obedience). Christ fulfills the demands of God's Holy Law and Will and then in His person suffers the penalties for our disobedience. It is the case of a coin with two sides. The active and passive obedience are unified in Christ. No one can split a coin and have that coin still have worth. So both must be in Christ, the active and passive, so as to be worthwhile to us. In Jn. 19:26-27 we have the two sides of the coin clearly together when our Jesus obeys the fourth commandment by commending Mary's care to John and He does this while dying on the cross to atone for our sins.

I. Christ Fulfills the Demands of God for the Perfect Life. Active Obedience

In both the Old Testament (Lev. 19:2) and in the New Testament we hear 'You, therefore, must be perfect , as your heavenly Father is perfect.' Mt. 5:48 Our big brother must step in for us for even the imagination of our mind is evil from our youth.

A. First let us consider the Ten Commandments. We look at their wording and the explanation in the Catechism and we see how Christ taught and lived them.

- First...In Mt. 4:1-11 we have our Lord overcoming the three great temptations of the devil. You shall worship the Lord God and Him only shall you serve.
- Second...In Gethsemane, Mt. 26:36- 39, we have Him using the name of the Father properly.
- Third...Jesus went into the synagogue and that regularly using the Word. Mk. 6:2, Lk. 4:16
- Fourth...Who can forget the 12 year old Jesus obeying His parents. Lk. 2:51
- Fifth...He helped and befriended all in their bodily needs. Lk. 4:40
- Sixth...He upholds marriage and opposes divorce. Mt. 19:3-6
- Seventh...He helped to improve and protect. Mt. 5:42
- Eighth...He defends His disciples. Mt. 12:1-7
- Ninth and Tenth...He had no where to lay His head. Lk. 9:58 Instead of seeking to get He always sought to give. Acts. 20:35

B. He also obeyed all earthly authorities.

- Religious – He answered under oath when commanded. Mt. 26:63-64
- Government – He commanded obedience to such even providing a coin in a fish's mouth to pay a tax. Mt. 17:27, 22:20-21

Truly the Law found its fulfillment in Him for our sakes. Rom. 10:4

II. Christ Suffers for Us, Bearing the Penalties we Deserve. Passive Obedience

A. Think of the mental suffering He went through for us. Prior to Holy Week He had this also within His heart, but during Holy Week we see it in graphic detail.

- Abandonment by the Apostles Mt. 26:56
- The Crowd's Condemnation Mk. 15:6-15, Let Him be crucified.
- The Mocking of Thieves, Rulers, Soldiers and Passersby Mt. 27:44, Lk. 23:35-38, Mk. 15:29-30
- And the Father would not Save Him as He must die for the sins of the people. Mt. 27:46 He could have called down more than twelve legions of angels, but He would not. Mt. 26:54(a legion at times in the Roman army could be up to 6000)

B. His Physical Suffering

- Before Pilate – Mt. 27:26-31
- Before Herod – Lk. 23:11
- Before the Rulers of the Jews – Mt. 27:23, and Caiaphas – Mt. 26:67, Mk. 14:64-65
- The Ultimate was on the cross – His hands and feet are pierced. He is on the cross for six hours suffering. He would not drink the fluid that would have lessened his suffering at first as He must drink the full cup of suffering. Mt. 27:34 At the end He utters 'I thirst' Jn. 19:28
- And then He willingly dies. Mt.27:50

C. All is fulfilled. He was tempted in every respect but did not sin. Heb. 4:15 He bore the curse and condemnation for us. Gal. 3:13, Lk. 23:33 Ezekiel warns that the soul that sins shall die. James says if we offend in one point we are guilty of all. James 2:10

- Love is the fulfilling of the Law- Think of the Lord's summary of both the first and second table. On the cross He shows His love for the Father by addressing Him at the first and at the last. And then in between His words are of love to the soldiers, Mary, the thief.
- He made Him to be sin for us... 2 Cor. 5:21
- He died/suffered once for all I Pet. 3:18