



The Soul-Winner's Secret

Chapter 2 – Obedience

"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," said Paul, and in that saying he reveals the secret of his wonderful success as a soul-winner. The soul-winner is a man sent by God, and will have visions and revelations and secret orders that, if affectionately heeded and heartily and courageously obeyed, will surely lead to success. He is preeminently "a worker together with God," and a soldier of Jesus Christ, and as such must obey. It is his business to take orders and carry them out.

"Before I formed thee I knew thee, and before thou camest forth I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nation," said the Lord to Jeremiah, and when Jeremiah interrupted and said, "Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child," the Lord said to him, "Say not I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee," saith the Lord; "thou therefore gird up thy loins and arise and speak unto them all that I shall command thee. Be not dismayed at their faces lest I confound thee before them."

"If they had stood in My counsel and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings," said the Lord of the false prophets. (Jeremiah 23:22.)

"Not what is proper, but what is right must be my fearless and constant inquiry. Jesus, still lead on!" was the motto of Joseph Parker, one of London's mightiest preachers.

The soul-winner must get his message from God and speak what and when He commands. He is a servant of God, a friend of Jesus, a prophet of the Most High, an ambassador of heaven to the sons of men, and he must needs speak heaven's words and represent heaven's court and King and not seek his own will, but seek the will of Him that sent him. "Behold, to obey is better



than sacrifice." He must not trim his course to suit men, nor stop to ask what this man or that shall do, but he must attend strictly to his Lord and steadfastly follow Jesus. Paul tells us that Jesus was "obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:8), and again and again he calls himself "a servant of Jesus Christ."

First: This obedience must be prompt. In spite of the appeals and encouragements of Joshua and Caleb, the children of Israel refused to go over into Canaan, but afterwards, seeing their sin in refusing to obey promptly, they essayed to go over in spite of the warnings of Moses not now to attempt it, and met with bitter defeat. Promptness would have saved them forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Once the soul-winner knows the Master's will, he must not delay to fulfill it. If he is in doubt he can take time to assure himself as to what that will is. God would not have him run before he is sure he is sent, nor go before he has his message, nor falter and possibly fall because of uncertainty. But once he has received his orders and got his message, let him remember that "the King's business requires haste;" let him "strike while the iron is hot;" act and speak when the Spirit moves, and not, like covetous Balaam, dilly-dally to see if God will not change His mind and His orders.

Dewey's matchless victory at Manila was won, and the geographical boundaries of the nations changed, by the promptness with which he carried out his orders to destroy the Spanish fleet.

I have noticed that if I speak when the Spirit moves me, I can usually introduce the subject of religion and God's claims to any individual or company of men with happy results, but if I delay, the opportunity slips by, not to return again, or if it does return, it does so with increased difficulties.

Second: This obedience must be exact. Saul lost his kingdom and his life because his obedience was only partial. (See 1 Sam. 15.) So also did the prophet who warned the wicked King Jeroboam. (See 1 Kings, 13.)

"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it," said Mary to the servants at the marriage of Cana, and



when they obeyed Him Jesus wrought His first miracle. And so He will work miracles today through His chosen people, if they will do whatever He saith. The soul-winner must beware of quenching the blessed Spirit, and then he will find that it is not himself but the Spirit that speaks in him, so that he can say with Jesus, "The words that I speak, I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works," for does not Jesus say, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do"?

Third: This obedience must be courageous. "Be not afraid of their faces," said the Lord to Jeremiah. And again He said to Ezekiel, "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear." He was not to say that which would please the people, but that which God gave him to say, and that without fear of consequences.

"And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandments of the Lord, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice." No wonder God cast him off and gave his crown and kingdom to another! God says, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." Let the soul-winner recognize that he is on picket duty for heaven, and let him throw himself on heaven's protection and rest in the assurance of his Heavenly Father's care, and the utmost sympathy and support of Jesus, and do his duty courageously, saying with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Again and again I have comforted myself with the assurance of good King Jehoshaphat, "Deal courageously and the Lord shall be with the good," and encouraged myself with the bold declaration of Peter to the enraged and outwitted Sanhedrin, "We ought to obey God rather than men," and measured myself by the self-forgetful words of Nehemiah, "Should such a man as I flee, and who is there that being as I am would go into the temple to save his life? I will not



go in." (Neh. 6:11.) And of Paul "Neither count I my life dear unto myself. so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God." And of the three Hebrew children: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king; but if not, O, king, be it known unto thee that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

That is the kind of stuff out of which God makes soul-winners.

Do you ask, how can a man get such a spirit of courageous obedience? I answer by dying – dying to your selfish interests, dying to the love of praise, the fear of censure, the hope of reward in this world, and by a daredevil faith in the reward that God will give in the world to come; by a steadfast looking unto and following of Jesus, and a constant comparison of time with eternity. I read the other day that it was only dead men who were living preachers.

Fourth: The obedience must be glad. The command is, "Serve the Lord with gladness." "I delight to do thy will, O God," wrote the Psalmist. There was no grudging about his obedience; it was his joy. It is a love service God wants, and that is always a joy service. "My meat and My drink is to do the will of Him that sent Me," said Jesus, and Paul declares, "If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward." It is a glad love service God calls us to, and once we are wholly His and the Comforter abides in us, we shall not find it irksome to obey, and by obedience we shall both save ourselves and others to whom the Lord may send us.