Through disobedience Saul lost his kingship, although he had put so much time and energy into working for God. God is not interested in our self-chosen work and sacrifices, even when we say we are doing it for Him. When Saul clearly refused to obey the command of the Lord, Samuel reminded him that “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15: 22). Obedience is pure love for God; disobedience is the selfish desire to satisfy our own egos.

If we are Christians, we usually do not act in open disobedience like non-believers. But, like Saul, we camouflage our disobedience. We say that our work is necessary, that it is a beneficial ministry for God and man. Yet whether we are believers or unbelievers, unrepented disobedience belongs to the sins that deserve death (Rom. 1: 30-32). People who dare to commit this sin reject the will of God. They have separated themselves from God and are already in death, although they may not realize it. But one day in the kingdom of death they will die a second death (Rev. 20: 14, 15; 21: 8). That is why we must turn away from all disobedience.

When we look at the people of Israel, we see the consequences of disobedience. Through disobedience the people of God turned away from God and most of the Israelites died in the desert. They did not take God’s words to heart: “If you obey the voice of the Lord your God . . . all these blessings shall come upon you” (Deut. 28: 1,2). Only out of love God demanded obedience. Only out of love He gave them His commandments; and only out of love He gives us commandments today. They will lead us into good fortune if we let them be binding for us. Disobedience on the other hand, always leads us into misfortune.

Yes, disobedience, disrespect for the commandments of God which show us His will so clearly, is spreading more widely today than ever before. And the curse of this disobedience is already manifest in all the horror of sin, which ruins lives and leads to chaos. Does not God have to lament again today about the many nations and especially about His own people: “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people” (Rom. 10: 21). They “walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices” (Isa. 65: 2). Often it is especially His own that are in danger of disobedience without their realizing it. They know His will and commandments better than people who are separated from God and they know how important it is for them to listen and obey. But today there are so many "reasonable" arguments about why the commandments of God are not binding on us, not even for us Christians. People say that the commandments have to be adjusted to the conditions of the times. But if Christians are disobedient and change the standards of the commandments in a false manner, they will have to bear serious consequences.

There is still another form of disobedience, a "pious" form. Many Christians spend themselves in service for the Lord. They offer one sacrifice after another. And still they will bear no fruit. There is no blessing in their work, although they may be praised by many. God sees their hearts, but men only see what is before their eyes. Because of their work in the Kingdom of God others might praise them "to highest heaven" but in reality their place may be very far away from God. For their sacrifices were self-chosen; they were offered in disobedience to God.

There may have been a missionary who was sent home from the field, because she was sick. At the mission she had been admired for her dedication, love and willingness to sacrifice. Back home she suddenly became unbearable, rebelling against everything, because she had to do administrative work. Why? She said, "I cannot live without serving men." But then God will pronounce this verdict over her; "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15: 22). She could not humble herself in obedience to God's will-leaving her former work because of illness. Her ministry was not done out of love for God nor out of pure love for man. She had lived for herself; she performed this ministry to satisfy her own ego. She was missing the true love for Jesus, for Jesus said, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word" (John 14: 23); he will do God's will.

We see how cleverly the enemy deals with us so-called "pious" Christians. He knows that we will not consciously commit an obvious sin, because we know that disobedience is a sin and will be punished severely. That is why he uses a different method to catch us in his trap. He tells us that we should sacrifice something special for God and His service, or for our neighbour in his need. But in face of the serious consequences that disobedience has for time and eternity, we should stop and ask God, "Place me in the light of Your truth. Let me see the true motives for my actions and repent when You unmask them and show me that my decisions and actions stemmed from disobedience!"

If God convicts us of disobedience and we find it difficult to be obedient to His will, we should look at the countenance of Jesus, which is pure love and tells us that His will is goodness. Jesus is asking us to accept
His will and to carry it out in obedience. He assures us that only our best interests lie in His will. We hurt Jesus, if we do not believe that His heart is full of love, that His will is only goodness, and so try to frustrate His loving intentions by disobedience. Love obeys. Yes, if I love someone I can read his desires in his eyes. We are called and redeemed to have such a relationship of love to God; we are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who said, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me” (John 4: 34). If our heart is resting in His will, we will be filled with peace and joy. Then all our actions will bring forth eternal fruit, and God's blessing will rest upon all our ways.

When we are at one with the will of God, our lives will be filled with power, for then we are at one with Him who has all power in heaven and on earth. When we surrender our will to God, His heart will be opened and a stream of love, peace and joy will flow into our hearts. Being at one with the will of God remoulds us so that we will be like Him. Words are not sufficient to express the spiritual wealth that obedience and commitment of our wills to Him will bring us. When we obediently say, Yes, to the will of God, even when it comes to us through other people, our suffering and needs will lose their power. Therefore no matter what it costs, we must always choose God’s will and not our own. In all matters, large and small, we are constantly confronted by this choice. But every time let us realize this: if we choose God’s will and act according to His commandment, we will be bound to Him. But if, in disobedience, we do our own will, we will be bound to Satan. Our lives will not be blessed and this will have serious consequences in the other world.

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