

# SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 27.10.24

**PREACHER: PS ADAM DODDS**

FAITH & FAMILY TRAITS

## BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

*BEING, THINKING & DOING*

**Conviction of a Disciple:** As we move forward in our journey into Christlikeness, we learn to, in faith, obey God's commands, knowing they are where we find freedom.

### OVERVIEW

Choosing Jesus marks a life-changing beginning, planting seeds of God's family traits - Obedience, Love, and Faith - in us. As we cultivate them, we grow into a deeper life with God, becoming living reflections of His character to the world.

### ACTION

**Step 1:** Reflect: Where do you feel a conflict between obeying God and your natural tendencies or cultural values?

**Step 2:** Commit: What specific step will you take this week to trust God's authority over an area of your life?

**Step 3:** Act: How can you show love to someone who challenges or frustrates you, and what difference could this make in your faith journey?

# THOUGHT

## SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 5:1-5

There's an old saying that goes: "God doesn't have grandchildren." Essentially this means that we don't get to inherit our parents' or grandparents' relationship with God. Being a child of God is a decision each person must make. In this choice, we hand over our allegiance to Jesus, marking a profound change beginning inside of us. John calls this change, "being born of God" (1 John 5:1).

At that moment, God plants seeds of His family traits in us:

1. Obedience to His commands
2. Love for others
3. Faith in His promises.

These traits form the foundation for our life with Jesus. However, it is then up to us to nurture and cultivate these seeds into maturity.

The first trait is Obedience. For many, the very thought of a God who "commands" that we must be "obedient to" raises alarms. These ideas sharply contrast the modern Western values of independence. For several hundred years, we've been trained to be independent and suspicious of power and authority. Finding out that we are called to walk in obedience and in submission to God (and each other) immediately puts many people off. Sadly, even those inside of God's family can have these same aversions. This creates a natural tension as we choose who we allow to hold authority over our lives.

But this aversion and fear is against worldly power - a power that is always self-seeking. When we take the time to investigate God's character - through His words and His actions - we begin to see that obedience to God isn't a rigid or fearful submission; it's a trusting step toward true freedom. His commands are life-giving, not burdensome, designed to shape us into people who experience peace, joy, and love in abundance. Through obedience, we grow into a deeper, more intimate relationship with God, discovering that He is trustworthy. This discovery isn't about simply taking someone else's word for it; it's a journey of personal faith where we learn to trust God through experience.

The second family trait of being in God's family is Love. This isn't about just any love, but a devoted, committed love for our brothers and sisters in Christ and for the world around us. And this is important for John: We don't get to choose who we love. God's love in us perseveres, even when others frustrate and disappoint us (by the way - you also frustrate and disappoint others, so this is really good news! It means your mistakes don't disqualify you from this loving flow!).

The church, odd as it is at times, is God's family. It will never measure up to our idealised version of what it should be. Instead, it's a gathering of imperfect people, learning to love through misunderstandings and conflicts. This is the heartbeat of spiritual formation and where our deepest maturity takes place.

We are also called to extend this love to those outside the walls of the church building, becoming living testimonies of God's character to a world desperately in need of God's love and grace.

The third family trait is Faith. Faith is what launches us into our relationship with God, and faith is what sustains us through every challenge. When life's struggles hit, our natural tendency may be turning inward toward self-reliance, but this is where we are to actively trust God even more. Faith is giving Jesus our trust, our heart, and our allegiance. This means trusting our lives are held firmly in God's care.

As His children, God plants His family traits in us, but they require our active participation. Through obedience, love, and faith, we grow into the fullness of life that God intends, a life that overcomes the world.

## DISCUSSION

1. What are some common reasons we resist God's authority, and how can we overcome these?
2. How has loving others in the church, despite misunderstandings, helped you grow in spiritual maturity?
3. In what ways does your faith sustain you in difficult times, and how can we encourage each other to rely on God rather than ourselves?

## PRAYER

Father,

Thank You for the gift of new life as children of God. Help us grow in obedience, deepen in love, and live with a faith that goes all the way down to the deepest parts of us. Help us see your trustworthiness teach us to live as your image-bearers, for the sake of others.

Amen.