

I Must Obey Because Christ Is Lord

A Bible Institute Chapel Message for the Beginning of the School Year

Luke 6:46 | Hebrews 3:15 | James 4:17 | Luke 9:23

I must obey because Christ is Lord. I have to respond today because His call should not be postponed.

Good evening to each one of you. I understand everyone speaks English, and I am very happy to be with you at the beginning of your new school year.

For those who are new, my name is Tap Hornor. I live in Sinaloa, Mexico. My family and I have served here for about thirty years. I am a Baptist, independent, fundamental missionary. Since 2021, the Lord has allowed me to use online ministry through Zoom and WhatsApp to minister in South Asia.

Lord willing, I hope to visit India and Nepal in October and November of this year. I may not be able to come to your Bible Institute, but I do hope to see some of you face to face somewhere in that trip.

Today I would like us to look at four Scriptures and see how they relate to one another. These verses show us the will of God, the authority of Christ, the urgency of obedience, and the daily call to follow Him.

THE FOUR OPENING SCRIPTURES

1. Luke 6:46

“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

This verse is very simple and very direct, but it is very challenging. It demands a response from every one of us. At the beginning of this school year, and at this stage of our personal lives, we need to ask ourselves: “Lord, are You more than just words to me? Are You real in my obedience? Is what You want evident in my new life in Christ?”

2. Hebrews 3:15

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

This verse speaks about the immediacy and urgency of walking with Christ. We are not called to follow Him only in special meetings, on Sundays, or during chapel. We are called to respond to Him day by day. If Luke 6:46 asks whether we truly obey the One we call Lord, Hebrews 3:15 tells us when we should begin: today.

3. James 4:17

“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

Our Christian life is more than knowing what is right. Because Jesus Christ is Lord, we must do what is right. Because we now know better, we must respond. He saved us for a reason, and His truth must become visible in our decisions, actions, thoughts, words, and service.

4. Luke 9:23

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

This verse brings everything together. The Lord tells us how He wants us to live. To follow Him means to deny ourselves, take up the cross daily, and keep following Him. This is not a call to religious words only. It is the call to a surrendered life.

THE CENTRAL STATEMENT

I must obey because Christ, God’s anointed and promised Savior and Son, is Lord. I have to respond today because His call is not something I can take lightly, ignore, or postpone.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come to You, not pretending that we are anything in ourselves. All that we are is because of Your grace, Your initiative, Your love, Your patience, and Your mercy.

Thank You for rescuing us from sin, darkness, ignorance, pride, and everything else that separated us from You. Thank You that in Christ we have entered into a wonderful new life, where old things are passed away and all things are made new.

Please help these Bible students. Help the leaders and teachers. Help me. Help all of us to live so that these truths are actually seen and heard in our daily decisions, our actions, our thoughts, and especially in the way You want to use us in this world.

Meet the needs of these students. Provide more than their daily food. Help them seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness, trusting that You will provide everything else they need. Prepare our hearts, our minds, our bodies, and our souls. Thank You for Your help, Your presence, and Your power. May Christ be exalted in everything. In Jesus' name, amen.

HEARING TRUTH AND OBEYING TRUTH

Young people, I am speaking to myself as much as to you. There is a great difference between hearing the truth and obeying the truth.

I spent six years trying to learn the Bible in seminary. That was from 1981 to 1987. I began when I was twenty-six years old and finished when I was thirty-one. It was supposed to be a three-year course, but I had no Bible training in my previous college studies. I had to make up classes. I was already married. We began with one small child, and during those years two more boys were born. I could not go to school every semester. I had to work. When I did go, it was often part time.

The Lord taught me many things. But now, many years later, I am still learning. I realize there is so much more that I do not know. But there is

another problem, and it is a serious one: what am I doing with what I already know?

That is a problem for all of us. Bible students learn doctrine. You learn how the Word of God fits together. You are trained in truth. You will prepare messages. You will speak in chapel, in villages, in churches, and perhaps to your families when you go home. It is natural to talk about serving the Lord.

But all of us still have a battle. Sometimes we resist God in private areas of our lives. That should not be so. We must ask, “Lord Jesus, You saved me. You are my Savior. Am I obeying You as my Lord?”

I. I MUST OBEY BECAUSE CHRIST IS LORD

Acts 2:36

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Peter was finishing the great sermon on the day of Pentecost. This was a different Peter from the man who had walked with Jesus for three years and yet had denied Him before His crucifixion. Before the cross, Peter had confessed, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” But when Jesus explained that He must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise again, Peter resisted that truth.

Jesus rebuked Peter because Peter was putting the things of men before the will of God. Peter had the right words about Christ, but he did not yet understand the mission of Christ.

After the resurrection, Jesus restored Peter. Peter had gone back to fishing with the others. They worked all night and caught nothing. Then a voice from the shore told them to cast the net on the other side. When the great catch came, John understood and said, “It is the Lord!” Peter could not wait to get to Jesus.

By Acts 2, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. The physical presence of Jesus was no longer before his eyes, but Christ was living in him and empowering

him. Peter stood and declared to thousands that God had made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ.

When we say, “I must obey because Christ is Lord,” the word must speak of responsibility before God. We are not our own anymore. We have been bought with a price. We belong to Christ.

Jesus is not merely a teacher who gives advice. In Bible Institute, you will hear many good things. But the authority is not the Institute. The authority is the Word of God being opened and explained to you. The authority is the living Christ, who speaks through His Word.

Jesus is not merely a Savior who forgives and gives us a second chance. He is Lord. That means He has authority over my life, my words, my attitude, my purity, my phone, my friendships, my plans, my service, and my private life when no one else is watching.

He is the Christ, the One sent from God. He is the anointed Son of God. He is equal with the Father in divine nature. He is the One to whom all authority has been given. He is the One who will judge. He is Lord.

John 14:15

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

We cannot separate love and obedience. Underneath our relationship with Jesus as Savior and Lord is gratitude and love. If we love Him, we obey Him. When we disobey God, we are not acknowledging Him as Lord in that moment. We are acting as if we are lord. True love obeys.

A young person cannot honestly say, “Christ is my Lord,” and then keep being controlled by friends, fleshly desires, pride, or secret sin. A Bible student cannot honestly say, “Christ is my Lord,” and study the Bible only to preach it to others without first letting the truth confront his own heart.

James 1:22 says, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” What a shame it is to continue day after day thinking we are someone, pretending we are someone, maybe as a Bible Institute student, a

pastor, or a missionary, while deceiving ourselves because we do not lovingly obey.

A person who hears and does not obey is not growing. He is stagnant. He is stuck. He may even be walking away from God. The Lord wants us to grow, mature, and understand the responsibility He has given us through His message and through the power of His Son in our lives.

II. I HAVE TO RESPOND TODAY BECAUSE HIS CALL SHOULD NOT BE POSTPONED

Hebrews 3:15

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

Hebrews 3 reminds us that this message is not new. God has always called His people to respond to Him today. The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years under Moses. They heard God’s voice, saw God’s works, and yet hardened their hearts.

Human nature has not changed since Adam and Eve. In the garden, they chose not to take God seriously. They thought less of His Word and more of their own ideas. They were deceived by Satan and wanted to know good and evil on their own terms. Sin changed human nature drastically. Humanity became fallen and separated from God.

Yet God in His love made the first sacrifice to cover their shame, and from that time forward mankind has known the effects of sin. One common excuse has always been, “Maybe later.” But God says, “Today.”

The phrase “I have to” speaks of urgency. God is the God of the present. We have access to Him now. We have His Word now. We have His call now. Today is not something we should take for granted.

If God is dealing with our hearts, the answer should be, “Yes, Lord. How? Right now I return. Right now I begin. Right now I follow You.” We do not say, “Later.” We do not say, “Maybe.” If God is calling us to repent, we should not

wait until the meeting is over or until we get home. If He is showing us sin, a wrong attitude, or an act of disobedience, we must respond today.

The key word is today. Not when Bible Institute is over. Not when you graduate. Not after you get married. Not when things become easier. Not when it costs less. Today.

Sometimes we do not openly say, “No, Lord.” We say, “Not yet.” But what is the difference between “not yet” and “no”? In the present moment, “not yet” means “no.” It means, “Lord, not now. Me first. My situation first. My comfort first.” That is not the response of a surrendered disciple.

III. I MUST DO WHAT I KNOW IS RIGHT

James 4:17

“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

James 4 reminds us that our life is like a vapor. We should not live arrogantly, making our own plans as if tomorrow belongs to us. Instead, we should say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

Therefore, when God has shown us what we must do, delayed obedience is not wisdom. Delayed obedience is disobedience. It means I have stepped away from God’s authority in that moment. I am choosing to do what I think is better for now.

If we need to confess sin, do it. If we need to ask forgiveness from someone, do it. If we need to break away from something wrong, repent and do it. If we need to obey our parents or the authorities over us, do it sweetly. If we need to surrender to the ministry, follow the Lord step by step as He leads. If the Holy Spirit is prompting us to speak the Gospel to someone outside the Institute, in the street, or in the world, do it.

That is responding to the leadership of the Lord in the moment. He is showing us what He wants right now. We must not keep waiting for a more comfortable moment to obey God.

Every day will have its challenges. Every day our flesh will give us reasons to postpone obedience. Every day there will be pressure to deceive ourselves. Postponed obedience often becomes abandoned and forgotten obedience. If it continues, it turns into direct rebellion.

IV. I MUST FOLLOW CHRIST DAILY WITHOUT RESERVATION

Luke 9:23

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

Luke 9:23 shows how all these truths affect our daily life. The Lord calls us to follow Him without reservation, without holding anything back, because He is Lord of our lives right now.

In the context, Jesus was telling His disciples that He would suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise again. He had not come first to be their political ruler. He came to save them from their sins. He came to give true spiritual liberty, not merely political liberty.

Then He said, “If anyone desires to come after Me...” That includes us in 2026. This is the whole Christian life: keeping Christ in front of us. He is not behind us, and He is not merely beside us. We are following His direction and His example.

To deny self means that I no longer live with myself as the center. My desires, my pride, my plans, and my flesh do not have the final word. Christ has the final word.

To take up the cross means that I have laid aside my own plans. The cross is an instrument of death. A person carrying a cross is not negotiating his own future. He is moving in one direction. For the Christian, this is the daily surrender of the old self so that the resurrected life of Christ is seen in us.

Romans 12:1 calls this a living sacrifice. A sacrifice does not negotiate on the altar. A sacrifice means complete surrender. We do not offer God a piece of

our life in exchange for keeping the rest for ourselves. We belong to Him completely.

Christ did not say, “Follow Me when it is easy.” He did not say, “Follow Me when everyone supports you.” He did not say, “Follow Me when it costs nothing.” He said, “Deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Me.”

Without reservation means nothing held back. Nothing hidden. Nothing halfway. Nothing outside the rule and authority of Jesus Christ.

It is not saying, “Lord, I give You Sunday, but not the rest of the week.” It is not saying, “Lord, I give You my time in Bible Institute, but not the rest of my life.” It is not saying, “Lord, I give You my service, but not my attitude.” Your attitude is part of your service.

It is not saying, “Lord, I give You my words and my Bible vocabulary, but I keep my heart for myself.” It is not saying, “Lord, I give my life to ministry, but I guard my secret sin.” That is not following Christ as Lord.

Without reservation means, “Lord, everything I am, everything I hope to be, and everything You want to make me by Your power and grace, I am Yours.”

CONCLUSION

I must obey because Christ is Lord. I have to respond today because His call should not be postponed.

This message speaks of authority: Christ is Lord, therefore I must obey.

It speaks of urgency: Christ calls today, therefore I must not harden my heart.

It speaks of responsibility: I know what is right, therefore I must do it.

It speaks of surrender: Christ calls me to deny myself, take up my cross daily, and follow Him.

The question is not only, “What did I hear?” The question is, “Will I obey?” It is not enough to say, “That was a good message.” It is not enough to say, “I learned something new.” Obedience is the response our Lord deserves and demands.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for this time at the beginning of this school year. Thank You that today is the beginning of the rest of our lives.

Lord, it is easy to say these words, but help us live with this attitude: “I have this present moment. I am promised a future in Christ, but I do not know about tomorrow. Therefore, Lord, help me live for You today.”

Help us be completely surrendered. Help us deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ. Our flesh is nothing. Our own plans are nothing compared to the excellency of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

Remind us of these truths. Help us see that following You is life itself. Fill these students with this knowledge and with the joy of obedience. Help me also to live for You in this same spirit every day, starting right now. Lord, whatever needs to change, by Your grace, may we do it today. In Jesus’ name, amen.

FINAL WORD TO THE STUDENTS

Thank you for your patience. I hope you were able to understand the message, and I hope to meet you, Lord willing, this fall. Until then, go forward today. The Lord bless you all.