

Nothing Trumps the Word of the Lord

1 Kings 13 & 20

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December 31, 2017

When Josh asked me to preach today he said it was an open Sunday. The Advent series is over, and a new series won't start until next Sunday, so he said I was free to preach whatever I want so long as it's in the Bible. I love the Old Testament, and we haven't been in the Old Testament for some time, so I decided to go to one of my favorite Old Testament characters. I can't tell you his name because it's never mentioned. I can't tell you anything about his family or his background. All we really know about him is that he was a prophet from Judah. However, his life communicates a lesson that I believe is just about as critical as any we could learn as we enter a new year, or anytime, for that matter: **Nothing trumps the Word of the Lord.** If you're a card player you know that even the lowest trump card takes a high card in any other suit. But friends, in the game of life, nothing trumps the word of the Lord.

Before we read our Scripture text let me first set the historical stage. The United Kingdom of Israel, after a little over a century under the rule of Saul, David, and Solomon, endured a bloodless civil war and split into two nations. Jeroboam established himself as the new King of Israel, consisting of the northern ten tribes, while Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, was left with only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but this included the city of Jerusalem. Jeroboam was worried that if he allowed his people to go to Jerusalem to worship they might waver in their loyalty to him and once again give allegiance to Rehoboam, so he decided to establish worship centers in two cities in the north—Dan and Bethel. You can see both cities on this map. Bethel is just a short distance from Jerusalem while Dan is in the far north.

Please understand this is not equivalent to planting two new churches in order to expand worship opportunities for the people. This is a direct violation of the command of God for all Israelites to go up to the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem three times a year to meet with God and receive atonement for their sins. Instead Jeroboam sets up golden calves in the cities of Dan and Bethel, and calls upon his people to worship God there. In fact, he leads them in this false worship, acting as a priest himself, though that was clearly forbidden of anyone not a descendant of Aaron.

Now please give attention to God's Word from 1 Kings 13. But I encourage you to pay close attention, because the whole point of the story could be lost if you don't. Also, as we read I want you to watch for a phrase that is repeated at least a dozen times. It is the phrase, "by the word of the Lord." This is a technical phrase that identifies the message as clearly coming from God.

1 Kings 13:1-33¹

¹And behold, a man of God came out of Judah **by the word of the LORD** to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. ²And the man cried against the altar **by the word of the LORD** and said, "O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'" ³And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign that **the LORD has spoken**: 'Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.'" ⁴And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Seize him." And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself. ⁵The altar

¹ Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® unless otherwise noted.

also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given **by the word of the LORD**.⁶ And the king said to the man of God, "Entreat now the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." And the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him and became as it was before.⁷ And the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me, and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."⁸ And the man of God said to the king, "If you give me half your house, I will not go in with you. And I will not eat bread or drink water in this place,⁹ for so was it commanded me **by the word of the LORD**, saying, 'You shall neither eat bread nor drink water nor return by the way that you came.'"¹⁰ So he went another way and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel.

¹¹Now an old prophet lived in Bethel. And his sons came and told him all that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. They also told to their father the words that he had spoken to the king.¹² And their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him the way that the man of God who came from Judah had gone.¹³ And he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him and he mounted it.¹⁴ And he went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak. And he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" And he said, "I am."¹⁵ Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread."¹⁶ And he said, "I may not return with you, or go in with you, neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place,¹⁷ for it was said to me **by the word of the LORD**, 'You shall neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way that you came.'"¹⁸ And he said to him, "I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me **by the word of the LORD**, saying, 'Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.'" But he lied to him.¹⁹ So he went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water.

²⁰And as they sat at the table, **the word of the LORD** came to the prophet who had brought him back.²¹ And he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, "**Thus says the LORD**, 'Because you have disobeyed **the word of the LORD** and have not kept the command that **the LORD your God commanded you**,²² but have come back and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, 'Eat no bread and drink no water,' your body shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.'"²³ And after he had eaten bread and drunk, he saddled the donkey for the prophet whom he had brought back.²⁴ And as he went away a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his body was thrown in the road, and the donkey stood beside it; the lion also stood beside the body.²⁵ And behold, men passed by and saw the body thrown in the road and the lion standing by the body. And they came and told it in the city where the old prophet lived.

²⁶And when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God who disobeyed **the word of the LORD**; therefore the LORD has given him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to **the word that the LORD spoke to him**."²⁷ And he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." And they saddled it.²⁸ And he went and found his body thrown in the road, and the donkey and the lion standing beside the body. The lion had not eaten the body or torn the donkey.²⁹ And the prophet took up the body of the man of God and laid it on the donkey and brought it back to the city to mourn and to bury him.³⁰ And he laid the body in his own grave. And they mourned over him, saying, "Alas, my brother!"³¹ And after he had buried him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones."³² For the saying that he called out **by the word of the LORD** against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria shall surely come to pass."

³³After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people. Any who would, he ordained to be priests of the high places.³⁴ And this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.

This is the Word of the Lord.

This is a strange story, and you might be inclined to object, “Lord, it’s not fair!” Twice this true man of God from Judah rebuffed efforts to distract him from single-minded obedience to God’s revealed will. Clearly he would have received a handsome reward from the king had he simply agreed to visit the palace and enjoy a meal, but he refuses. He even refuses a similar offer of hospitality from an older prophet.

Why, then, is he subjected to still a third temptation, one *so convincing* that almost anyone would be tempted to fall for it, namely an ordained minister with multiple degrees behind his name and decades of experience as a prophet tells him that an angel from heaven has commanded him to come home and enjoy hospitality in his home? And why does the poor man of God have to lose his life for such a trivial mistake?

These are natural questions that arise in our minds. But what we must come to grips with *above all else* this morning is that disobedience to a clear word from God is *never* a trivial mistake. It is not our job to weigh the commands of God and decide which ones are important and which ones are optional. *None* are optional. So that brings us to our first proposition this morning.

WHEN GOD HAS SPOKEN CLEARLY, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING SUPERSEDES IT.

Now this is true both of God’s predictions and of his commandments. While our primary focus is going to be on the Lord’s command to the man of God from Judah, I don’t want to overlook the prediction that precipitated this whole incident.

What God predicts will come to pass. The man of God from Judah cries out against Jeroboam’s idolatrous altar and predicts two things by the word of the Lord.

This is not guesswork on the part of the man of God; it is not a strong impression he happens to have; it is the word of the Lord.

The first prediction he makes is that a person named Josiah would be born to the house of David and once he became king, this Josiah would sacrifice the very priests who were offering sacrifices on Jeroboam’s altar. That prediction came to pass *exactly* as the man of God prophesied, but not for almost 250 years! In the seventh century B.C. Josiah became king of Judah at the age of 8, started a revival at age 18, and then began to sweep the country clean of idolatry. For the fascinating fulfillment of the minute details of this prophecy, I draw your attention to 2 Kings 23, particularly verses 15-18. Mind you this occurs 2 1/2 centuries after our story!

2 Kings 23:15-18

*¹⁵Moreover, the altar at Bethel, the high place erected by Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, that altar with the high place he (Josiah) pulled down and burned, reducing it to dust. He also burned the Asherah. ¹⁶And as Josiah turned, he saw the tombs there on the mount. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar and defiled it, **according to the word of the LORD** that the man of God proclaimed, who had predicted these things. ¹⁷Then he said, “What is that monument that I see?” And the men of the city told him, “It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted these things that you have done against the altar at Bethel.” ¹⁸And he said, “Let him be; let no man move his bones.”*

As we return to our story, we recall that the second prediction of the man of God from Judah was given as an *immediate* sign that the first prediction would *eventually* come to pass. He said, “Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.” And that’s exactly what happens while Jeroboam is standing there with his shriveled and paralyzed hand. Sometimes

what God predicts takes a long time to be fulfilled; at other times it happens immediately. But whether long-term or short-term, God's Word is always fulfilled. You can count on it.²

But not only is it true that what God prophesies surely comes to pass; it is also true that...

What he commands *must* be obeyed. The Lord had told the man of God from Judah not to eat or drink or return by the way he came. The will of God in this matter was perfectly clear to him, for *twice* he himself spells it out. Even though King Jeroboam, grateful that his arm has been healed, extends an invitation to enjoy dinner at the palace and offers him a reward, the man of God refuses because God's will in the matter was not in doubt.

Is God's will always as clear to us? No, not if you're talking about which direction to go home from work or where to eat. But on most important issues it is. Should we lie, steal, cheat, get drunk, commit adultery, divorce, or covet? No. Should we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and should we treat others with respect and love and with the same kind of care and concern we want to be treated? Yes. There can be no doubt that God has spoken on these matters, as well as many others, and he has spoken clearly.

However, if we're honest we have to admit that it's not unusual for us to rationalize disobedience to what God commands. Several of these rationalizations are found in our story, so let's consider them.

No relationship justifies disobedience. Did you notice what the old prophet said to the man of God after he first refused to go home with him? "I also am a prophet, as you are." Hey, we're equals. We're both ordained. In fact, I've been ordained a lot longer than you. Do you think I would ask you to do something if it weren't OK with God?" But, friends, ministerial credentials are no guarantee that a person is speaking for God. Some clergy are just blind guides of the blind.

If you look back at verse 11, you discover that this old prophet was living in Bethel, where Jeroboam set up one of his golden calves. In 2 Chronicles 11 we learn that when the northern tribes split from the south and the wicked Jeroboam was chosen as King, all the priests and Levites and godly people abandoned their positions and possessions and fled south to support Rehoboam, the rightful king. Jeroboam then replenished the clergy with unqualified volunteers. Why then is this old prophet still in Bethel, a center of idolatry in the northern kingdom? The best reason I can come up with is that he must have sold out to Jeroboam. Perhaps he was getting a pension from the King and wasn't willing to leave his position and his possessions to go south like the godly priests and prophets did.

The point I think we need to learn from the claim of the old prophet ("I too am a prophet, as you are,") is that relationship should *never* be allowed to trump the Word of God. And don't think that doesn't happen in the church today! The Bible makes it crystal clear that a believer should not marry an unbeliever. Yet I often hear young people say, "But what if I really love him and he treats me well?" Or, "What if she's showing interest in spiritual things? I'm just sure she'll eventually become a Christian." Or, "I know a case where a friend of mine married an unbeliever and the person became a believer, and now they attend church together." The fact remains, God's Word says a believer should not marry an unbeliever, and no relationship trumps the word of God. In addition...

². By the way, the most important prophecy in all of Scripture is Jesus' prediction that he will come again, will wipe out all rebellion and cut off evil-doers from the earth, and will receive the family of God to spend eternity with him in heaven. It hasn't happened yet, and some people scoff that it will never happen, but do you want to take the chance that he was just kidding, based upon the track record of biblical prophecy? I wouldn't if I were you. There's actually a very good reason why Jesus hasn't come back *yet*—and that's to give you more time to repent of your sins and turn in faith to Christ (2 Peter 3:3-10).

No claim of authority justifies disobedience. Look at the next thing the old prophet says to the man of God from Judah: “I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, ‘Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.’” Wow! How can you argue with *that*? Not only does he claim to have heard from an angel, but to top it off the angel himself supposedly spoke **“by the word of the Lord.”** There’s that phrase again. The claim is that the angel has conveyed a clear, direct command from God.

This is the argument that finally breaks down the defenses of the man of God and leads him into disobedience. And this is the kind of argument that is causing so many in our day to follow false teachers into all kinds of heresy. Every cult on the face of the earth is the result of someone claiming to have received new revelation from God—truth that directly contradicts what he has already revealed.

But didn’t the Apostle Paul warn us in the first chapter of Galatians, “But even if we (apostles) or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed (eternally condemned, NIV)” (Gal. 1:8)! Now clearly Paul’s point is hypothetical because no angel from heaven would ever preach another Gospel, but *even if he did*, he has no authority to change what God has established. The fact is an angel did *not* speak to the old prophet—he was lying about it, as we are specifically told in verse 18. More importantly, the man of God from Judah has no business relying on a second-hand report about an alleged angelic revelation when God has already made his will known to him.

There is an authority crisis in the church today, and that authority crisis is directly related to abandonment of our one true and reliable authority—the Word of God. Mainline Protestant churches would never approve same-sex marriage, or celebrate divorce, which God hates, or approve abortion on demand, except for the fact that they have already abandoned the authority of Scripture. God’s Word is clear on all of these issues.

The Roman Catholic Church wouldn’t be mired in the scandal of pedophile priests if they hadn’t replaced the authority of God’s Word with the authority of the church hierarchy. There is not a shred of teaching in the Bible that requires celibacy of the clergy, and so long as that requirement remains the Catholic Church is going to suffer both a shortage of priests and scandal among those who *do* become priests. The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 7 that “it is better for a man to marry than to burn with lust,” and that goes for priests and pastors as well as lay people.

Heresies like health/wealth theology wouldn’t survive for a moment if the Bible were honored as authoritative. And even evangelicals do not have completely clean hands on this issue of authority. Oh, we pride ourselves in our commitment to biblical authority, but how many professing evangelicals practice regular, proportional, generous giving, which is clearly commanded in the Word of God? Surveys indicate not very many. How about regular worship? I saw a couple I like very much in church last Sunday. Since I hadn’t seen them in a long time, I gave them a hug and told them how much I had missed them. The lady replied, “We’re C & E Christians now.” C & E means “Christmas and Easter.” But God’s Word speaks clearly, “Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together.”

Now let me turn to a third rationalization commonly used.

Neither reason nor emotion justifies disobedience. Our society is split on whether reason is king (that’s modernism) or intuition and emotions are king (that’s more postmodern). Most in our culture would choose one or the other, either “I must do what reason tells me is right” or “I must do what

my heart tells me is right.” But the fact is neither should be allowed to supersede a clear word from the Lord.

I want you to turn your attention to 1 Kings 20. We’re skipping over quite a few years and several kings, but the brief story here is so relevant to our text today that I think we must consider these two accounts together. We’re going to find here another unnamed prophet who also loses his life to a lion for an act of disobedience to the word of the Lord, but if possible, this account is *even stranger* than the one we’ve been considering.

Jeroboam is long dead. Ahab is now King of Israel and is being threatened by his northern neighbor Syria or Aram. Their king Ben-Hadad is threatening the nation of Israel with a large and powerful army. In his initial encounter with Ben-Hadad Ahab obeys God, and God gives him a significant victory. He then obeys God a second time and God gives him another victory. In fact, he actually captures the Syrian king.

But then Ahab decides to do it his way. Despite God’s order to execute Ben-Hadad, Ahab negotiates a deal instead. In exchange for land concessions and trade agreements he decides to let Ben-Hadad go. Now pay attention to the unique means God uses to teach Ahab and us that disobedience is inexcusable and even fatal. Let’s begin our reading at the end of verse 34.

1 Kings 20:34-37

³⁴So [Ahab] *made a covenant with him* [Ben Hadad] *and let him go.*

³⁵And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his fellow **at the command of the LORD**, “Strike me, please.” But the man refused to strike him. ³⁶Then he said to him, “Because you have not obeyed **the voice of the LORD**, behold, as soon as you have gone from me, a lion shall strike you down.” And as soon as he had departed from him, a lion met him and struck him down. ³⁷Then he found another man and said, “Strike me, please.” And the man struck him—struck him and wounded him.

Satisfied with his wound, this prophet covers his head with bandages (presumably with the blood oozing out) and waits alongside the road for Ahab to pass by. Sure enough the king stops his chariot when he sees the badly wounded man, and the prophet tells him a fictitious story: “I was in battle when a prisoner was placed in my charge. I was told that the penalty for letting him escape was my life or a very large fine. Well, I got busy and all of a sudden the prisoner was gone. Do you think the judgment is fair?” Ahab responds, “Sure it’s fair. You agreed to it, didn’t you?”

The prophet then removes his head bandage and Ahab recognizes him as a prophet. He informs Ahab that the fictitious story is really about *him*. He has let Ben-Hadad escape despite God’s command, and God is going to make him pay with his life. (And, indeed, Ahab is later killed in another battle with Ben-Hadad, which would never have happened if Ahab had done what God told him). But, and here is the kicker, *not only* does Ahab lose his life for disobedience; *so does* the poor prophet who refused to slug his fellow-prophet, just so the first prophet could act out an object lesson for King Ahab!

Again I think we must assume that prophets had a God-given capacity to discern the voice of the Lord. The first prophet had asked his fellow-prophet to strike him **“by the command (word) of the Lord.”** Once God’s will was discerned there was *nothing* that should have interfered with obedience. But this second prophet in chapter 20 allows other factors to interfere. Perhaps he thought, “It’s not *reasonable* to strike another person. He might hit me back and I can’t afford any time off work.” Besides “God would never want me to do anything violent; surely he was joking.”

Or “My *emotions* won’t allow me to do that. This prophet is my friend, and I’m not going to treat a friend that way.” Normally speaking I would agree. Under normal circumstances reason and emotions are God-given controls that help us behave in a civil manner. But they *cannot* be allowed to trump a clear word from the Lord.

In our day reason and emotion are being used in a heavily orchestrated media campaign to convince us that homosexual behavior is perfectly normal, and many in the church are falling for it. Many Protestant denominations today even ordain practicing homosexuals to the ministry. Someone told me about a brochure that was being distributed by a mainline church group advocating homosexual marriage. On the cover it reads, “Everything Jesus Said About Homosexuality.” The inside is completely blank because Jesus never addressed the subject. The intended inference is that if Jesus didn’t address it, there must not be anything wrong with it.

But the fact of the matter is the words of Jesus are not the *only* words of God; in fact, the words of Jesus are actually *no more* authoritative than the words of Paul, for “*all* Scripture is inspired of God.” Homosexual acts are addressed clearly in both the Old Testament and the New Testament in many places, and the Bible makes it absolutely clear that homosexual acts are sinful, as sinful as are heterosexual acts outside marriage, by the way. Are we going to allow reason and emotions to determine our theology of human sexuality, or are we going to allow the Word of God to determine it?

So far, we have spent all our time demonstrating from these two Old Testament stories that when God has spoken clearly, absolutely nothing supersedes it. But there’s a second point which, though very brief, is just as clear in these accounts.

WHEN GOD’S WILL IS MADE CLEAR, DISOBEDIENCE IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY GOD.

The man of God from Judah lost his life due to his disobedience.³ The second prophet in chapter 20 also lost his life for the same reason and *even by* the same means. I must tell you I’m glad God doesn’t generally deal with disobedience as abruptly and harshly today as he did in Jeroboam’s or Ahab’s day; my suspicion is that my audience this morning would be quite small. (But, of course, there probably wouldn’t be anyone to fill the pulpit, so it wouldn’t matter).

But the fact that God doesn’t operate exactly the same way does not mean he no longer considers disobedience serious. Even today we see the sad consequences of disobedience to God’s moral law in many people’s lives. We see it in broken lives, broken families, all kinds of addictions, wasted potential. It would be very dangerous indeed for us to conclude that God no longer cares when we violate his known will.

Now there is one more very important issue I want to address.

HOW DO WE KNOW TODAY WHEN GOD HAS SPOKEN?

There is no doubt in these two stories that the prophets who were killed by the lions *knew* what God had said. In the first account the prophet himself flatly says so. In the second story it says, “By the word of the Lord one of the sons of the prophets said to his companion, “Strike me with your

³. The fact that he did not just have bad luck on his way home is made clear by the note in verse 28 to the effect that the lion and the donkey were standing beside the man’s body, and “the lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled the donkey.”

weapon.” This companion *knew, or should have known*, that the message came from the Lord. So neither prophet could argue that he didn’t know what God’s expressed will was. He could only try to rationalize his disobedience.

But God doesn’t speak in the same way today as he did then. Oh, some people claim that he does, and that’s why you hear a lot of them saying, “God told me x,” or “God told me y.” But I don’t believe it. I see no evidence in the church today that God is speaking in the same manner he used with the OT prophets. In fact, the Bible actually tells me I should not expect that. Hebrews 1:1 says, “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us *by his Son*.” Jesus is the ultimate revelation. And how do we find the truth about Jesus? Only through the Bible, the written word of God.

I am tempted to say that through this book and *only* through this book can we know what God has spoken. But that’s not quite accurate.

God does give individual guidance through his Holy Spirit. I have no doubt about that because the New Testament speaks frequently of a believer being “led” by the Spirit, and I have experienced it myself. But there are certain caveats I would immediately attach to that statement. First, the direction a believer receives that way is personal—i.e. direction for his own life, not direction for the whole church. And second, God will never give personal direction that contradicts the written Word of God. When a TV preacher tells his congregation that God told him that it is a sin to be poor, as I once heard with my own ears, I can state without any fear of contradiction that he was either lying or deluded, because God cannot contradict himself, and the Bible makes it absolutely clear that one can be in great poverty and spiritually rich at the same time.

But while God gives individual guidance through his Spirit...

God speaks normatively to the Church through the Bible, the Word of God. This book is God’s book in the way that no other book in history is. This is the living and powerful Word of God. This book contains all we need to know to live a godly life. This book contains all the doctrines we need to know—about who God is, who we are, how we can have our sin problem solved, how we can be sure to spend eternity with God. God has spoken in this book, and if God has spoken, it is our responsibility to obey.

In conclusion, let me ask you this question: Is there some clear truth from God’s Word that you have ignored because of some relationship or some false claim to authority. Have you violated his revealed will because of your own reason or emotions? If so, I urge you to cease and desist immediately, to confess your disobedience, and to commit yourself today to follow God’s revealed will no matter where it takes you. That’s really not very risky, friends, because God won’t take you anywhere that is harmful.

And may I draw your attention to one particular commandment of God which is *always fatal* to disobey. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 says, “. . . when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels, he will punish those who do not know God and do not *obey the gospel* of our Lord Jesus.” What does it mean to “obey” the gospel? It means to repent of your sin and place your faith in Jesus who died on the cross for your sins, to trust him and him alone for our eternal salvation. I call upon you today to obey this command.

If you are already a believer in Jesus Christ, I warn you as well that God expects obedience from his children—not tolerance of sin, not reasoned arguments, not emotional excuses, but obedience.

Let's pray. Father, we know from experience that we can't obey as we should on our own. We are incapable because of our tendency toward sin. Only by the power of your Spirit is it possible for us to live obediently to your Word. Fill us with your Spirit. Help us to surrender our hearts and lives completely to his control. Amen.