



Obedience: The First Law of Heaven



Some time ago I was invited to speak at a Stake Conference at which I was presiding, and decided to address a most pressing topic that has been plaguing our dearest Latter-day Saints—even God's chosen people. For the benefit of all, here is a copy of my remarks:

My dearest brothers and sisters,

How grateful, humble, and meek I feel to address this immeasurable throng assembled here today. Not a single seat is empty within this vast stake center. The house is full, as are our hearts on this glorious and blessed day.

I should like to address a topic of utmost importance. It is a terrible misinterpretation which has been plaguing our people for some time and causing many saints to stumble. This problem involves a grave misunderstanding of our doctrine, one that originates from the adversary himself to lead the children of men astray from the paths of righteousness. I first became aware of this problem some time ago whilst attending a ward Sunday School lesson. A well-intentioned but

sadly misinformed teacher stood at the front of the room and blatantly taught a false and misleading doctrine. She said, in effect, that "love is the first law of heaven." She even attempted to justify this false teaching by quoting from the words of Jesus:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law..."
(Matthew 22:37-40)

I was shocked and immediately stood to correct the teacher. (Being the presiding authority, it was my duty to correct false doctrine.) I kindly declared:

"Dearest sister, lest a false doctrine be sown into the hearts of these innocent ward members and grow and fester into a flawed belief, I feel I must correct you. You must not take offense, for the Book of Mormon clearly teaches us that only the wicked take the truth to be hard (1 Nephi 16:2-3). You have stated that love is the first law of heaven, but this is not so. We know from modern-day revelation that obedience is actually the first law of heaven."

I then turned to the most recent copy of the Conference edition of the Ensign, which I always keep close at hand as a beacon of light to guide my actions, and read aloud from our beloved prophet's talk entitled "Obedience Brings Blessings":

"Obedience is the first law of heaven." (see <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/04/obedience-brings-blessings> (<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/04/obedience-brings-blessings>))

The sister asked how this could be so, especially in light of the scripture that she had quoted (which purported to contain the words of Jesus). I answered her question with a few questions in return:

"Dearest sister, do you not believe that it is more important to follow a living prophet than a dead one? What is the purpose of continuing revelation if not to give us greater light and wisdom for our time? A true and living prophet who walks the earth today has taught in General Conference that obedience is the first law of heaven. Let us not be deceived. According to our Articles of Faith, we can only believe the Bible as far as it is translated correctly. Many errors have been introduced into the Bible by conspiring men. This is why we must follow the living prophet in order to know the truth. Do you think that God would contradict Himself? Of course not."

For emphasis, I explained to the class members that the correlated doctrine in our lesson manual further validates this truth. I turned to my copy of the official Gospel Doctrines manual and read aloud this confirming statement made therein: "Obedience is the first law of heaven." (see <https://www.lds.org/manual/doctrines-of-the-gospel-student-manual/chapter-17-obedience-a-law-of-heaven> (<https://www.lds.org/manual/doctrines-of-the-gospel-student-manual/chapter-17-obedience-a-law-of-heaven>))

I then closed by teaching the class members this crucial lesson: "My dearest members, we know that temple ordinances are indispensable for eternal life. Are there any questions in the recommend interview that mention the word *love*? If love were the first law of heaven, wouldn't the Lord make this our focus? Instead we are asked if we are *obedient* to all the rules, laws, and commandments, and to *obey* all the authorities of the Church. Do we covenant in the temple to *love*? No, we covenant to *obey*. And in His Holy House, the Lord undoubtedly has His priorities straight. God requires obedience to all of His divinely-called General Authorities in order for us to obtain recommends and receive the sacred tokens that enable us to receive life eternal. And the Lord has reiterated the vital principle of obedience during Conference through our latter-day prophets as *the first law of heaven*. Therefore we know with a surety that *obedience truly is the first law of heaven*."

After explaining this to the class, I went home from church feeling quite gratified that I was able to correct this false and dangerous doctrine for the members of that Sunday School class. And now I devotedly share this vital lesson with you. Truly, obedience is the first law of heaven. Let us not succumb to the cunning snares of the adversary, who would have us believe that love is the first and greatest law. No, this cannot be. Modern-day revelation assures us that obedience takes precedence. Is it wrong, then, to love? It certainly can be. While we should claim love for all people, we cannot allow our love to overrule our obedience, lest we succumb to the societal trend of "tolerance" and begin promoting sin in all its pernicious forms. And surely one of the gravest of these sins is to place the principle of *love* above absolute *obedience* to the the Lord's chosen mouthpieces upon the earth.

I close by quoting from the inspired words of Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, who further confirmed the supremacy of obedience: "Obedience is *the first law of heaven*, the cornerstone upon which all righteousness and progression rest. It consists in *compliance* with divine law, in *conformity* to the mind and will of Deity, in *complete subjection* to God and his commands" (Mormon Doctrine, 539). May we ever be compliant, conforming, and in a state of absolute and complete subjection to the laws of our inspired prophets, seers, and revelators. May we ever keep uppermost in our minds our temple covenants and the inspired temple recommend interview questions that permit us to enter therein. May we ever be obedient to "all the rules, laws, and commandments," including sustaining all the General Authorities, shunning "any individual whose practices are contrary to those accepted by the Church," paying a full tithe, abstaining from the evils of harmful substances including coffee and tea, and being "worthy in every way," that we might one day merit the great blessings of eternal life in the great mansions above reserved only for the faithful and obedient, I pray humbly, in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.