

Ultimate Joy

“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” –**John 4:34-35**

Jesus drew His strength from His obedience; it was His sustenance. That is what excited Him, just being obedient.

Similarly, what makes a Christian a consistently committed person is that he gets his joy in doing what he knows pleases the Father. When he is obedient, that is his joy.

When we are obedient, too often it is because we say, “Well, later on I’ll get something out of this.” But what happens when this is our motivation is that we give up when the going is rough; we give up if things do not work out. We want some evidence that this obedience counts for something. We must come to the place where we get our joy from obedience. Joy is the unlooked-for reward that Jesus certainly knew was the outcome of His humility.

Although we know that Jesus is God, He allowed Himself to be considered as other than God: He allowed Himself to have another identity in peoples’ eyes.

We will sometimes use the expression projecting an image. Everyone has an image. Sometimes it is an image we want; sometimes it is one we dislike. What image did Jesus project? There was one identity, and it was one that if they said it, He considered it a compliment. Do you know what it was? It was the identification as a prophet. In truth, Jesus is said to be prophet, priest, and king.

Jesus embraced the role of a prophet, and this is the image He conveyed. It is interesting that the one undoubted characteristic of a prophet is that vindication always comes later, after death, when they get to heaven.

This is the problem. Jesus was a prophet, and to be a prophet means no vindication until you are dead, and then, when you are safely out of the way, the next generation will praise you. My fellow Christians, we are called today to become prophets. Expect no recognition; do not even expect a decent burial. But great will your reward be in heaven!

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