

Obedience From the Heart

*“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed **from the heart** that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness,”* Rom. 6:17-18.

Formerly, the servants of God at Rome had been “*servants of sin,*” but they became “*the servants of righteousness.*” The change made in their condition was due to their having “*obeyed **from the heart***” the “*form of doctrine...delivered*” them, which was the “*gospel of Christ.*” cf. Rom. 1:16. This shows that the “*gospel of Christ,*” in order to save the sinner, has to **obeyed** by the sinner. But this obedience must be “*from the heart.*” The expression “*from the heart*” does not simply denote an inner condition of the heart, but rather it refers to obedience that came from the heart.

The “*heart,*” as it is used here, has reference to that part of man that: (a) desires, Matt. 5:28; (b) perceives or understands, John 12:40; © reasons, Mark 2:6; (d) intends, Heb. 4:12; (e) that has faith, Mark 11:23; (f) and purposes, Acts 11:23. Thus, it refers not to a fleshly organ, but rather to that part of man that has emotions, reason, and will.

Hence, “*obedience from the heart*” denotes obedience that results from knowledge, or understanding. This is why the great commission demands that preaching, or teaching, precede baptism. Cf. Matt. 28:18-20). One’s “*obedience to the faith*” (Rom. 1:5) has to be based upon an understanding of what God requires, or else it is not obedience “*from the heart,*” and is therefore invalid.

This necessarily proves that infant baptism is unscriptural. An infant, void of Biblical understanding, can not obey “*from the heart.*” Paul said “*Ye have obeyed from the heart;*” he did not say “*your parents obeyed for you from their heart.*” This also disproves the doctrine of salvation by “*faith only.*” Faith, or understanding, is that which leads to obedience and is not that which saves by itself; faith “*alone*” is “*dead,*” James 2:17.

No one is a true member of the church of Christ unless he has first “*obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered,*” We invite you to come and study with us. We have no theological ax to grind, or creed book to uphold. We simply seek a “*thus saith the Lord.*”

-B. Witherington
