



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: What Does God Ask of Us?
Part I: Obedience



Baptism of Jesus
Public Domain

Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Helen is a lay-Dominican, which is also known as the Order of Preachers, and she, along with her husband Dan, are engaged in youth catechesis and music ministry. Sharon is our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions. To answer those questions is why we have our panelists, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

Discussion:

As we concluded our series concerning the battle for the hearts, minds, and souls of our children, we addressed some of the challenges parents face towards fulfilling their vocation as parents and helping their children understand the meaning and importance of their faith. We

discussed a rather long, but certainly not complete, list of topics we should be prepared to discuss with our children and resources which may assist in our own understanding so that we are better prepared to enable the understanding of our children.

Parental teaching of faith to children is often more informal than formal; meaning that most of our teaching is by opportunity and example rather than classroom style presentation. The most important aspect of this ability to teach is keeping the doors of conversation open with our children and making time for living our faith traditions and celebrations.

For some of us, (I know it was the case for me), we may fear revealing to our children what we do not know. We are tempted to remain silent, but we cannot fall into this trap. If we do not know an answer to a question, it is better to say so, but then, we must research the answer and follow-up with our children. The time we take to help our children learn their faith and put on the armor of God will pay dividends, not only for them, but for us as well. Our children are our future. What we do to prepare them will help them to prepare the generations which will come from them. Let us pray the generations which follow us will rejoice over the faith passed to them through us.

With the fullness of our faith, there is so much to learn and experience. If we are to enable our children towards living their faith, we must help them to experience the traditions, blessings, and love which we may share as children of God's creation. Perhaps the most important thing for us to help them learn is what God asks of us. So that is what we are going to begin to talk about today.

To begin to answer this question, we can start with the book of Genesis. After we receive the story of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, we encounter a conversation in the Garden of Eden.

(Genesis 3:1-7)

1 Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden'?" 2 The woman answered the snake: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.'" 4 But the snake said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! 5 God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil." 6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

(Question 1: In this moment, which we know as original sin, there was an action by Adam and Eve. **What was the nature of this action and why did it create an issue?)**

(Exodus 20:1-6)

1 Then God spoke all these words: 2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 You shall not have other gods beside me.

4 You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; 5 you shall not bow down before them or serve them. For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation; 6 but showing love down to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

(Question 2: Of course, as God gave this commandment for Moses to share with the people, they were engaged in making for themselves a golden calf. What was the problem with gathering their gold and using it to create a statue? What did God promise and what was rejected?)

(1 Samuel 8:1-18)

1 In his old age Samuel appointed his sons judges over Israel. 2 His firstborn was named Joel, his second son, Abijah; they judged at Beer-sheba. 3 His sons did not follow his example, but looked to their own gain, accepting bribes and perverting justice. 4 Therefore all the elders of Israel assembled and went to Samuel at Ramah 5 and said to him, "Now that you are old, and your sons do not follow your example, appoint a king over us, like all the nations, to rule us."

6 Samuel was displeased when they said, "Give us a king to rule us." But he prayed to the LORD. 7 The LORD said: Listen to whatever the people say. You are not the one they are rejecting. They are rejecting me as their king. 8 They are acting toward you just as they have acted from the day I brought them up from Egypt to this very day, deserting me to serve other gods. 9 Now listen to them; but at the same time, give them a solemn warning and inform them of the rights of the king who will rule them.

10 Samuel delivered the message of the LORD in full to those who were asking him for a king. 11 He told them: "The governance of the king who will rule you will be as follows: He will take your sons and assign them to his chariots and horses, and they will run before his chariot. 12 He will appoint from among them his commanders of thousands and of hundreds. He will make them do his plowing and harvesting and produce his weapons of war and chariotry. 13 He will use your daughters as perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 He will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his servants. 15 He will tithe your crops and grape harvests to give to his officials and his servants. 16 He will take your male and female slaves, as well as your best oxen and donkeys, and use them to do his work. 17 He will also tithe your flocks. As for you, you will become his slaves. 18 On that day you will cry out because of the king whom you have chosen, but the LORD will not answer you on that day."

(1 Samuel 12:13-15)

13 "Now here is the king you chose. See! The LORD has given you a king. 14 If you fear and serve the LORD, if you listen to the voice of the LORD and do not rebel against the LORD's command, if both you and the king, who rules over you, follow the LORD your God—well and good. 15 But if you do not listen to the voice of the LORD and if you rebel against the LORD's command, the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.

(Question 3: A request was made by the people to have a king. Why was this request to have a king, just like everyone else, an issue with God? Why did the people not need a king? What did the people gain when God told Samuel to anoint a king and give the people what they wanted?)

(1 Samuel 15:13-23)

13 When Samuel came to him, Saul greeted him: “The LORD bless you! I have kept the command of the LORD.” 14 But Samuel asked, “What, then, is this bleating of sheep that comes to my ears, the lowing of oxen that I hear?” 15 Saul replied: “They were brought from Amalek. The people spared the best sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the LORD, your God; but the rest we destroyed, putting them under the ban.” 16 Samuel said to Saul: “Stop! Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night.” “Speak!” he replied. 17 Samuel then said: “Though little in your own eyes, are you not chief of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king of Israel 18 and sent you on a mission, saying: Go and put the sinful Amalekites under a ban of destruction. Fight against them until you have exterminated them. 19 Why then have you disobeyed the LORD? You have pounced on the spoil, thus doing what was evil in the LORD’s sight.” 20 Saul explained to Samuel: “I did indeed obey the LORD and fulfill the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought back Agag, the king of Amalek, and, carrying out the ban, I have destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But from the spoil the army took sheep and oxen, the best of what had been banned, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.” 22 But Samuel said:

“Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the LORD’s command?

Obedience is better than sacrifice,
to listen, better than the fat of rams.

23 For a sin of divination is rebellion,
and arrogance, the crime of idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
the LORD in turn has rejected you as king.”

(Question 4: So Saul was instructed by God to put the Amalekites under the ban. To have fully obeyed God, this meant the total destruction of the Amalekites and all their possessions. Nothing was to be taken as spoils. King Saul tried to explain, what was taken to be given as sacrifice to God. So, what happened? Why did this draw God's disappointment in Saul?)

As recounted in 2 Samuel 11:1-27, King David saw a married woman who intrigued him. So that King David could have her, he sent her husband into a point in battle which resulted in her husband's death. After a period of mourning for her husband, King David took the woman as his own wife. This did not make God happy as we see in 2 Samuel 12.

(2 Samuel 12:1-7)

1 The LORD sent Nathan to David, and when he came to him, he said: “Tell me how you judge this case: In a certain town there were two men, one rich, the other poor. 2 The rich man had flocks and herds in great numbers. 3 But the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He nourished her, and she grew up with him and his children. Of what little he had she ate; from his own cup she drank; in his bosom she slept; she was like a daughter to him. 4 Now, a visitor came to the rich man,

but he spared his own flocks and herds to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him: he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the one who had come to him." 5 David grew very angry with that man and said to Nathan: "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves death! 6 He shall make fourfold restitution for the lamb because he has done this and was unsparing." 7 Then Nathan said to David: "You are the man!"

After being confronted with his sin, King David felt remorse.

(2 Samuel 12:13-14)

13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan answered David: "For his part, the LORD has removed your sin. You shall not die, 14 but since you have utterly spurned the LORD by this deed, the child born to you will surely die."

(Question 5: As we compare the two stories, both King Saul and King David sinned against the Lord. Saul was rejected by God as king, but King David was not. So what happened here? Were not both disobedient to God? What was the difference?)

(Luke 18:18-23)

18 An official asked him this question, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 20 You know the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother.'" 21 And he replied, "All of these I have observed from my youth." 22 When Jesus heard this he said to him, "There is still one thing left for you: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 23 But when he heard this he became quite sad, for he was very rich.

(Question 6: In this scripture, we see a man who believed he had kept all of God's commandments, but Jesus answered that there was still one thing left. So, what was the sin of this man? Was Jesus adding a commandment: Thou shall not be wealthy?)

(Acts 5:18-23)

27 When they had brought them in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, the high priest questioned them, 28 "We gave you strict orders [did we not?] to stop teaching in that name. Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and want to bring this man's blood upon us." 29 But Peter and the apostles said in reply, "We must obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as leader and savior to grant Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. 32 We are witnesses of these things, as is the holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey him."

(Question 7: Here, Peter and the apostles with him were brought before the Sanhedrin for disobeying their order to stop teaching in the name of Jesus. What was the response of Peter and what meaning does this response have to us?)

(Question 8: Peter also said, “We are witnesses of these things, as is the holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey him.” This reveals that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him. Why might this be important to us? Why might we desire the Holy Spirit within us?)

(John 14:16-17)

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, 17 *the Spirit of truth*, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.

26 The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you.

(1 John 5:6)

6 This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood. *The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth.*

(Matthew 3:13-17)

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14 John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” 15 Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. 16 After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. 17 And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

(Question 9: According to CCC: 1213, “Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ.” We might wonder, then, why would the Son of God be in need of Baptism? What did Jesus demonstrate as He received the baptism by John the Baptist?)

(NABRE Footnote to Matthew 3:14)

This dialogue, peculiar to Matthew, reveals John’s awareness of Jesus’ superiority to him as the mightier one who is coming and who will baptize with the holy Spirit (Mt 3:11). His reluctance to admit Jesus among the sinners whom he is baptizing with water is overcome by Jesus’ response. *To fulfill all righteousness*: in this gospel to fulfill usually refers to fulfillment of prophecy, and righteousness to moral conduct in conformity with God’s will. Here, however, as in Mt 5:6; 6:33, righteousness seems to mean the saving activity of God. *To fulfill all righteousness is to submit to the plan of God for the salvation of the human race. This involves Jesus’ identification with sinners*; hence the propriety of his accepting John’s baptism.

Quotes:

It is not hard to obey when we love the one whom we obey.
– St. Ignatius of Loyola

If obedience does not give you peace it is because you are proud.
– *Venerable Jose Escriva*

Poor human reason when it trusts in itself substitutes the strangest absurdities for the highest divine concepts.
– *St. John Chrysostom*

Who teaches the soul, if not God? There is no better instruction for the world than that which comes from God.
– *St. Clare of Montefalco*

Final Thoughts:

Today, we discussed God's desire for our obedience. Especially when we live in what we call, “the land of the free,” this might seem foreign to many, that we are called to be obedient. The temptation placed before us is to reject this notion of obedience as counter to our freedom, but before we do, we should consider the purpose of our call to obedience.

The evil one would have us believe that by our obedience to God, we will miss out on something. The reality is, when (and I say when, because of our concupiscence – meaning our strong personal desires) we fall to the seductions of the evil one, we separate ourselves from God. In other words, we trade fulfillment of worldly desires for what is possible for us through His eternal love. Yet, we struggle so.

As we continue in this series, we will discuss more about what God asks of us and the blessings of obedience to His commandments. We will also discuss the vocations and work He desires of us in fulfillment of those commandments. If we examine them, we shall see a meaning and a purpose behind them – and it isn't just to keep us from having fun.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we begin to examine His commandments and their purpose.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: What Does God Ask of Us? - Part II: Commandments

References:

Catechism of the Catholic Church; (1994); 2nd Edition; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops;
<http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/index.html>

The New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE); (9 Mar 2011); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; <http://usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>