

Saturday 25th July



Psalm 119:129-136

*Your statutes are wonderful;
therefore I obey them.
The unfolding of your words gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.
I open my mouth and pant,
longing for your commands.
Turn to me and have mercy on me,
as you always do to those who love your name.
Direct my footsteps according to your word;
let no sin rule over me.
Redeem me from human oppression,
that I may obey your precepts.
Make your face shine on your servant
and teach me your decrees.
Streams of tears flow from my eyes,
for your law is not obeyed.*

Obedience is not a very popular word these days. Many people have struggled to follow the rules of lockdown, especially as it has been eased. Although we understand the importance of rules, many of us, if we are honest, dislike being told what to do. Yet David, who is credited for writing this psalm, longs for the rules that God will set for him. David desires to follow God's words, commands, laws, decrees – yet as we know, he occasionally fails.

Whenever I discuss the idea of obedience with people, I challenge them about why they pray to God for guidance. After all, if they ask God to help them but then don't follow God's instructions, what is the point in asking? God guides us in many ways, but we have a choice as to whether we obey: we have free will.

Following God's guidance for us should be the same as following advice from a trusted friend. If we trust a friend to guide us in our choices, then we should also trust God. This reminds me of the words from a traditional hymn: "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus" – words written by John Henry Sammis (*Hymns and Psalms*, 687).

*Trustworthy God
You know us completely and you love us
Help us to trust you completely
In times of uncertainty
When the road seems unclear
When we don't know which way to go
Help us to ask for your help
To follow your guidance
Knowing that you only want what is best for us
We thank you that we can trust you
For your steadfastness endures forever
Amen*

Weekly Prayers for July written by Revd Claire Rawlinson
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