

# Dr. Dave Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 28, Obedience of the People of God Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Mathewson, NT Theology, Session 28, Obedience of the People of God, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mathewson's lecture explores the theme of obedience within the New Testament, framing it as a response to God's grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that faith, while central, is always accompanied by obedience and good works, stemming from a transformed life enabled by God's provision. **The lecture analyzes key passages in the Gospels, Pauline epistles, and the book of James to illustrate this relationship between faith and obedience.** Mathewson particularly examines the Sermon on the Mount as an ethic for Kingdom people and Paul's teachings on the New Covenant and new creation. **He argues that obedience is not a means to earn God's favor but a natural outflow of a life changed by the indwelling Holy Spirit and union with Christ.** Mathewson also highlights the communal aspect of Christian ethics, where transformation occurs within the community of believers.

**2. 22 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathewson, NT Theology, Session 28 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → NT Introduction → NT Theology).**



**Mathewson\_NTThe  
ology\_Session28.mp**

### 3. Briefing Document: Mathewson, NT Theology, Session 28, Obedience of the People of God

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. David L. Mathewson's New Testament Theology Session 28, focusing on the obedience of God's people.

#### Briefing Document: Obedience of the People of God in New Testament Theology

**Main Theme:** This session explores the theme of obedience as a response of God's people to His grace, especially in light of Christ's work. It examines how obedience and good works relate to faith and how the New Covenant enables a transformed life. Dr. Mathewson emphasizes that obedience is not a means to earn God's favor, but rather a consequence and expression of a life transformed by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

#### Key Ideas and Facts:

1. **Faith and Obedience are Inseparable:** While salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), faith is *always* accompanied by obedience and good works. "In the New Testament, we find that those who respond in faith to God's gracious provision of his Son, Jesus Christ... will also respond in obedience and with a transformed life. So again, we find in the New Testament that faith and a transformed life are not at odds with each other but instead accompany each other and cannot be divorced."
2. **The Old Testament Law and Grace:** Even in the Old Testament, the law is not divorced from God's grace. God's commands in Exodus 20 follow his act of redemption: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." The law is a *response* to God's prior act of redemption, not a way to *earn* it.
3. **The New Covenant and Transformation:** The promises of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36) are crucial. God promises to write the law on people's hearts and pour out His Spirit to enable obedience. "The New Covenant carries with it the promise that God would write his law on their hearts and pour out his spirit, enabling them to keep his commands." This directly impacts the New Testament understanding of obedience.

4. **Repentance as Part of Faith:** Faith in Christ implies a turning away from evil and embracing Jesus. Mark 1:15: "Repent and believe the good news." Thomas Schreiner is quoted as saying, "it is unthinkable that the new relationship to Jesus would be anything less than life-transforming."
5. **The Sermon on the Mount: An Ethic for the Kingdom:** The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is best understood as a genuine ethic for God's people who belong to His Kingdom. It's not simply a societal ethic, nor merely a means to show our sinfulness (Luther's view). Mathewson posits that "...the best way to look at the Sermon on the Mount is to see it as an ethic for the Kingdom." It operates within the "already but not yet" tension.
6. **The Beatitudes and Spiritual Bankruptcy:** The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11) describe the *kind* of people who can live out the Sermon on the Mount. They are "poor in spirit" (recognizing their moral bankruptcy), mournful (repenting of sin), meek, and hungry for righteousness. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."
7. **Remaining in Christ (John 15):** Obedience and fruit-bearing are only possible by "remaining" in Christ, the true vine. John 15:10: "If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love."
8. **Repentance: A Turning of the Entire Self:** Repentance is not merely changing one's mind; it's a reorientation and change of the whole life toward God, turning from sin. Faith and repentance are "two sides of the same coin."
9. **The New Covenant and Transformed Life (Paul):** In Pauline theology, the New Covenant is central to understanding obedience. God's people are enabled to keep His commands because He writes the law on their hearts and pours out His Spirit. A transformed life is a *defining* characteristic of a Christian in the New Covenant.
10. **Galatians 5: Fruit of the Spirit:** Righteousness and a transformed life are the result of living under the New Covenant Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace..." Paul expects them to follow commands despite living in the Spirit, showing the responsibility they have.

11. **Ephesians 2:8-10: Created for Good Works:** While salvation is by grace, Christians are *created* in Christ Jesus *to do* good works. "For we are God's... creation, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." This emphasizes the purposefulness of good works in the Christian life.
12. **Romans 6: Died to Sin, Alive in Christ:** Paul argues that Christians have *died* to sin through union with Christ's death (Romans 6:2), and are raised to walk in newness of life through union with His resurrection. This is a radical break from the reign of sin.
13. **Indicative and Imperative:** Paul's ethics follow a pattern of *indicative* (what God has done for us in Christ) leading to *imperative* (commands for how we should live). The "already" (new creation reality) enables and motivates the "not yet" (living out a transformed life).
14. **Corporate Dimension of Ethics:** Paul's instructions in Ephesians and Colossians are often presented in a corporate context. Transformation takes place within the community of faith, not just individually. "Paul has in mind not just the renewal of individuals...but the renewal of an entire community. And it's only in relationship to the community that the transformation of God's people can take place."
15. **James: Obedience and New Creation:** James emphasizes obedience and good works, but also within the context of new creation and the transforming power of God's Word. James 1:18: "He chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creation."

#### **Areas for Further Exploration:**

- The apparent tension between Paul and James regarding faith and works.
- The specific commands given in Galatians 6, Ephesians 4, and Colossians 3.
- How the "already but not yet" tension shapes the Christian life of obedience.
- The implications of the corporate dimension of ethics for the church today.

## 4. Study Guide: Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 28, Obedience of the People of God

### Obedience and the People of God: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Mathewson, what is the proper response of God's people to God's provision for their salvation?
2. How does Mathewson explain the relationship between faith and works in the New Testament?
3. In Exodus 20, what precedes God's giving of the law, and why is this significant?
4. What is the significance of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 for understanding the New Testament?
5. According to Mathewson, what is the best way to understand the Sermon on the Mount?
6. How do the Beatitudes provide a context for understanding the Sermon on the Mount?
7. According to Mathewson, what does repentance mean in the New Testament?
8. How does Mathewson describe the significance of the New Covenant in Paul's teaching?
9. According to Mathewson, how should Galatians 5:22-23 be understood?
10. How does Romans 6 explain the relationship between dying to sin and living a new life?

#### Answer Key

1. The proper response of God's people is faith, which is trusting in God's promises and Jesus' death and resurrection for salvation. This faith, according to Paul, is emphasized in Ephesians 2:8-9 as a gift of God, not earned by works.
2. Mathewson explains that faith is never at odds with obedience and good works in the New Testament; instead, they always accompany each other. A transformed life is enabled and motivated by God's gracious provision in Jesus Christ.

3. In Exodus 20, God's act of redeeming his people out of Egypt precedes his giving of the law. This is significant because it demonstrates that the law is not given as a means to earn God's favor, but as a response to what God has already done.
4. These passages, found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, are crucial because they anticipate a time when God will write his law on the hearts of his people and pour out his Spirit on them, enabling them to keep his commands. These promises are foundational for understanding the New Testament.
5. Mathewson says the best way to understand the Sermon on the Mount is to see it as an ethic for the kingdom, meant for God's people who belong to God's kingdom. It's a genuine ethic for God's people who have entered God's kingdom, and Jesus expects His followers to conform their lives to His instructions found in the Sermon on the Mount.
6. The Beatitudes describe the people who will put the Sermon on the Mount into practice, particularly those who are poor in spirit, mournful for their sin, and hunger and thirst for righteousness. These qualities reflect a recognition of spiritual bankruptcy and a dependence on God's grace.
7. Repentance in the New Testament suggests the turning of the entire self towards God, not just a change of mind. It encompasses a reorientation and change of the whole life and will, turning from sin and responding in obedience.
8. The New Covenant promises that God will write His law on our hearts, give us a new heart, and pour out His Spirit upon us to enable us to keep God's commands. Mathewson teaches that this enables God's people to keep God's commands.
9. Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, etc.) as the inevitable result of living life under the New Covenant Holy Spirit. This is the kind of life that is engendered by living under the New Covenant Holy Spirit.
10. Romans 6 teaches that through being united with Christ in his death, believers have died to sin, bringing an end to its reign in their lives. They are also united with Christ in his resurrection, enabling them to walk in newness of life and offer themselves as slaves of righteousness.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the relationship between faith, obedience, and good works as presented by Mathewson. How do these concepts relate to each other, and why is it important to understand their interconnectedness?
2. Analyze Mathewson's interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. What are the different approaches to understanding it, and why does Mathewson favor the interpretation of it being an "ethic for the kingdom"?
3. Explain the significance of the New Covenant in the teachings of Paul. How does the New Covenant transform the understanding of law and obedience for Christians?
4. Compare and contrast Mathewson's presentation of Paul's and James's views on faith and works. Are they contradictory, or can they be reconciled? Support your answer with specific references to the text.
5. Examine the role of community in Christian ethics, according to Mathewson's interpretation of Paul's letters. How does the communal context shape individual transformation and obedience?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Obedience:** In the context of New Testament theology, obedience refers to the active and intentional response of God's people to his commands and will, demonstrated through a transformed life.
- **Faith:** Trusting in God's promises and the atoning work of Jesus Christ for salvation.
- **Good Works:** Actions and deeds that reflect a transformed life and are produced by the Holy Spirit, demonstrating love and obedience to God.
- **New Covenant:** The agreement established by God through Jesus Christ, promising forgiveness of sins, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the ability to obey God's commands.
- **Sermon on the Mount:** A collection of Jesus' teachings in Matthew 5-7, presenting a high ethical standard for his followers and offering instructions on how to live as citizens of God's kingdom.

- **Beatitudes:** The opening statements of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-11), describing the characteristics of those who will inherit the blessings of God's kingdom.
- **Repentance:** Turning away from sin and turning towards God, involving a change of mind, heart, and behavior.
- **Holy Spirit:** The third person of the Trinity, who empowers believers, enables obedience, and produces the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.
- **Indicative:** A statement of fact or reality that describes what God has done for believers through Christ.
- **Imperative:** A command or exhortation that calls believers to live in accordance with the reality of what God has done for them.
- **Old Self/Old Man:** The pre-conversion identity of a person, characterized by sin, bondage to the law, and separation from God.
- **New Self/New Man:** The transformed identity of a believer in Christ, characterized by righteousness, freedom from sin, and union with God.
- **Kingdom of God:** The reign and rule of God, both present and future, in the hearts of believers and in the world.
- **Fruit of the Spirit:** The virtues and characteristics produced in believers by the Holy Spirit, including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).
- **New Creation:** The reality inaugurated by Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, signifying a renewal of all things and the beginning of a new era of salvation.



## 5. FAQs on Newman, Synoptic Gospels, Session 28, Obedience of the People of God, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### Obedience of the People of God: An FAQ

Here's an FAQ based on the provided document about the obedience of God's people in the New Testament:

#### **Question 1: How does the New Testament present the relationship between faith and obedience?**

The New Testament presents faith and obedience as inseparable. While salvation comes through grace by faith (Ephesians 2:8-9) and not by works, genuine faith is *always* accompanied by a transformed life characterized by obedience and good works. Faith isn't merely intellectual assent but involves turning away from sin (repentance) and embracing Jesus Christ.

#### **Question 2: What role does the Old Testament Law play in the Christian's life, according to the New Testament?**

The Old Testament Law isn't a means to earn God's favor but a response to God's prior act of redemption (as seen in Exodus 20). In the New Covenant, God promises to write His law on the hearts of His people and pour out His Spirit, enabling them to obey His commands (Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 36). While the law shows us God's will, the Spirit empowers us to fulfill it.

#### **Question 3: What are the key components of the New Covenant and how do they relate to obedience?**

The key components of the New Covenant include the forgiveness of sins, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and God writing His law on our hearts (2 Corinthians 3). These elements *enable* obedience. The New Covenant fundamentally changes the believer, empowering them to live a transformed life that reflects God's will. This is a key distinction between the Old and New Covenants.

**Question 4: How should the Sermon on the Mount be interpreted in light of New Testament theology?**

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is best understood as an ethic for the Kingdom of God. It's not simply an impossible standard to drive us to despair or a societal blueprint, but a genuine ethic for God's people who have entered God's Kingdom. It is possible to substantially follow the demands of the Sermon on the Mount through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. The Beatitudes contextualize the Sermon, highlighting the spiritual poverty and repentance required to live it out.

**Question 5: What does it mean to "remain in Christ," and how does that relate to obedience?**

"Remaining in Christ," as taught in John 15, signifies a constant dependence on Jesus for the ability to live a life pleasing to God. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit apart from the vine, Christians cannot produce good works or keep Jesus' commands apart from a vital connection to Him. Obedience is the fruit of this abiding relationship.

**Question 6: What is the significance of the "indicative" and the "imperative" in Paul's letters regarding obedience?**

In Paul's letters, the "indicative" describes what God *has already done* for believers in Christ (e.g., uniting them with Christ in his death and resurrection). The "imperative" are the commands and exhortations to live a certain way. The indicative *grounds* and *enables* the imperative. Because of what God has done, believers *can* and *should* live a transformed life of obedience.

**Question 7: How does Paul address the concern that grace might encourage sinfulness in Romans 6?**

Paul argues in Romans 6 that the idea of continuing in sin so that grace may abound is absurd. Christians have *died to sin* and been united with Christ in his resurrection. They are no longer enslaved to sin but are now slaves of righteousness. The new creational existence in Christ has now become the basis for the ethical exhortations in the rest of the gospel. This new life necessitates a separation from sin.

**Question 8: How does James's emphasis on works relate to the New Testament theme of obedience, and how does it align with Paul's teachings on faith?**

James emphasizes that genuine faith *demonstrates itself* through works (James 2). He stresses obedience in the context of new creation and the implanted word. This doesn't contradict Paul's teaching on justification by faith alone but complements it. James highlights that true faith is not passive but actively expresses itself in a transformed life, revealing the reality of the believer's new creation reality.