Our scripture this morning comes from Matthew 21:28-31. While you’re finding that, a mother came into the kitchen and was horrified to see her five year old standing on the counter stretching up to get the cookies on the top shelf of the cabinet. She hurried forward and pulled him down. Looking stearnly, she said, “Don't let me ever catch you doing that again!” The little boy said, “I’ll try, but I can’t guarantee it.” The mother was shocked, “Why can’t you guarantee it young man?” she asked. He answered, “Well, you’re just so quiet some of the times”.

**Matthew 21:28-31 28“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ 29He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. 30Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I *go,* sir,’ but he did not go. 31Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to Him, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.**

The last few weeks, we’ve been looking at Roses in God’s garden. Rose stands for reverence, obedience, self-control, and endurance. God is looking for followers with these characteristics. We talked about how we’re to reverence God with a sense of awe unmatched by anything else. When we hold anything or anyone with the same reverence we hold God, our reverence for God is pitifully too low. He is to be first in our lives, the focus of our lives, and deserves the full fidelity of our lives. We reverence Him in our person, praise, purpose, and in the places we encounter Him. When the Holy Spirit enters in, we begin to seek the Will of our awesome God for our lives.

Today, we’ll take a look at the O in rose – obedience. Obedience is the supreme test of our faith in God. We can talk about reverence for God, faith in God, belief in God until we all are as blue as a Smurf, and it means nothing until we bow in obedience to God’s Will for our lives. Obedience is an ugly word in today’s world. We bow up when the preacher speaks on obedience. We don’t like that word… why? Because of our disobedience to God. Our e\_g\_o has become our g\_o\_d. Self is ruling the house that God purchased.

In our scripture this morning, we have two sons. The first says he won’t go, but ultimately does. The second says he will, but never does. The question is asked, “Who did the will of his father?” The answer… none of us can disagree… the first. Yet, many hear the call of the heavenly Father to do something – talk to a neighbor, serve as a deacon, teach a Sunday school class, start a Bible study at work, visit the shut in – and never do it… and think nothing of the fact that the Will of the Father was left undone. Was something more important? Obedience is not only a test of our faith in God, but it’s a screaming signal of our reverence for God.

Obedience starts with commandment, travels through commitment, and ends in conduct. Commandment, commitment, conduct. There is no commitment to the commandment unless the conduct reveals it. In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus shares the two greatest commandments. Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second *is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” God gives a clear command – love. Love Him, Love His people. When we’re tempted to hate, we’re off commandment; tempted to love something more than God, we’re off commandment. Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life try to draw us. The world is always at our door. How do we resist?

Until we have a commitment to His commandment, we’ll be confused. 1 Kings 8:61 says – Let your heart therefore be devoted to the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day.” It takes commitment to keep God’s commandments. Our thoughts must hold Him in such high regard that we commit our ways to Him. Proverbs 16:3 says to “commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” We commit based on His commands.

Our commitment to His commandments proves out in our conduct. 1 John 4:21 sums it all up - And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also. Our obedience is proven through the conduct of love toward our neighbor. We don’t get to decide who we love. We are commanded to love. We must love our neighbor or we are disobedient to God. In Luke 10, Jesus, when asked, “Who is my neighbor?” by a man seeking to justify himself, chose a Samaritan as the object of the lesson. Samaritans were despised by Jews – they hadn’t held to the letter of the Jewish Laws – had taken on pagan practices. Jews would walk great distances further so they wouldn’t become contaminated by stepping foot on Samaritan soil. They were loathed. Jesus said, “This is your neighbor”. Who is our neighbor? Who’s the Samaritan in my life? That’s my neighbor…. That I’m to love. Proper conduct is found in the fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

This week – I’ll consider my obedience to God’s commandments by looking at my commitment to His commandments and how my conduct reflects His commandments. My obedience to God reveals my reverence for God. Christ-like conduct reveals our commitment to God’s commandments. God, in Jeremiah 7:23 says, “Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people.” It was true in Jeremiah’s time… it’s still true today.