

Christ as Lord and King of Your Life

by Arno Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of paying attention to oneself, one's teaching, and making Jesus Lord and King in order to experience growth in spiritual life.

Duration: 1:05:44

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:34, 1 Timothy 4:15

Topics: "Lordship of Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being fully committed to serving the Lord. He refers to the letter written by Paul to Timothy, where Paul instructs Timothy to be diligent in his work and to pay close attention to himself and his teaching. The speaker highlights that this instruction applies not only to preachers but to all believers who have the opportunity to teach others, whether it be through conversations with friends, family, or counseling. The sermon also emphasizes the need for personal growth and progress in one's spiritual life, moving beyond a superficial understanding of Christ's birth and miracles to a deep and genuine relationship with Him.

Transcript

Now, Lord, we come to you and we pray that you will bless your word to us this morning. May your word be alive and bring life and grant us an ear to hear and a heart that will accept what you want to say to us. We ask it, Lord Jesus, for your name's sake.

Amen. Many years ago, there was a young man. As a young man, he got to know the Lord.

He committed his life to the Lord. And then, as it is the natural outcome, he had the desire to also serve the Lord and to be a witness for Him. And then, he also later went into full-time ministry.

Now, I know that God doesn't call everyone into so-called full-time ministry. But in a way, God calls us all into full-time service for Him wherever we are. And then, one day, Paul wrote these words to this young man, whose name was Timothy.

We find those words in 1 Timothy chapter 4. And he had written to him, given him various instructions, how he should go about his work, and also about his life. And then, in verse 15, he writes and he says, Take pains with these things. Be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all.

In verse 15, he says, Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching. Persevere in these things. For as you do this, you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

In verse 16, It's interesting that he makes extra mention of the fact that he must take careful note, pay close attention to himself. That's something we as Christians must never forget. That we pay close attention to ourselves.

Not to others. What we Christians so like to do. We love to pay close attention to what others are doing, or not doing.

And we're so quick to realize what they're doing right, or not necessarily that. We're so quick to notice what they're doing wrong. But here we are taught and told that in the first place, what is important as a Christian is that I pay close attention to myself.

That's what we should do on an ongoing basis. When last did you do it? Have you answered the question yet? When last did you pay close attention to your own life, testing and proving to see whether you are really still in the faith? And not just superficially. Not just quickly.

And that little pause I had just now was just time for you to answer the question. That wasn't enough time for you to actually do it. That was only enough time for you to say, I do it or I don't do it.

I have done it, I haven't done it. It's of vital importance that we keep taking stock of our lives. And he says also pay close attention to your teaching.

It's important for those that stand in front here and preach that they pay close attention to what they teach, including myself. But it's not only those that stand in a pulpit that teach. How often don't you teach? Don't you when you sit together with your friends, tell them your opinion, try and teach them what you think is the correct thing? How often don't you sit with your wife and talk to her? Telling her what you think and teaching her? How often don't you do it with your children? Maybe you're not a preacher, but maybe you're a counsellor.

How often aren't you teaching people while you talk to them? Now tell me, what do you teach them? Paul says, pay close attention to what you teach people. Is what you teach others, pass on to others, upbuilding or is it destructive? And he says, by watching yourself carefully in the light of God and also by teaching the right thing, you'll save yourself and you'll save others. But if you don't pay close attention to yourself, to your thoughts, to your words, to your deeds, and to what you teach others, you will destroy your own life and the others that you're with.

We should be a good influence as we go through life. My life should be a blessing to others, not a curse. When people think of me, they should be able to bless God.

Because of the work that he's done in me, and because of the growth that is evident. And I want to say a little bit about this growth that should be evident in our lives as Christians. There is so much one could say about it.

And I'll probably just scratch the surface. But it is exceptionally important. Our growth as Christians should be evident for all to see.

If I had to ask this morning, who's a Christian? I take it maybe everyone would put up their hands. But what would happen if one asked others to tell us whether they see growth in your spiritual life or not? And it's not enough to say, no, I'm getting on fine. I really think I've come a long way in my spiritual life.

No, the test is whether others are seeing that growth. And it's easy to ask here, if you say, well, what do you think about the one who spoke today or preached today? What do you think? Well, maybe you only see the best side of him today. But what is important is to say, well, does my wife see growth in my life? Maybe it would be good if we went home and asked our wives and say, tell me, wife, be honest.

Do you see that I am growing? Is my progress in the Lord evident to you or not? Maybe you as a wife can ask your husband. And maybe the children can ask their parents. Maybe you're a child.

You can ask your brothers or your sisters. Maybe you can ask your classmates. Say, tell me, what do you see in my life? Do you see me growing in the Lord? Or is it only other things that you see me getting better at? And these are the things which we should take pains at.

It says here, take pains with these things. Many people take great pains in many different things. Just these days I was reading about the Comrades Marathon and they were saying that, listen, if you run the Comrades, it's going to hurt.

It's about a 90 kilometre marathon. They say it will hurt you. It will give you pain.

But people who know it, they are still prepared to do it. Because you've got to punish your body for it. But those runners are prepared to go to those pains.

Other people go to pains for other sports. And if you look at the world today, it almost looks as if sport is becoming a new religion. With all these role models, people almost worshipping these different sports stars.

And some of them aren't very good examples. I won't mention any names. But maybe you should just, if you're one of those who've got your stars in sport or whatever other thing it is, maybe it would do no harm if you just found out a little bit more about them.

And then you should ask yourself whether as a Christian you should really adore and worship these people the way you do. We've got the best role model of all and it shouldn't be difficult for us just to spend our energies on it. We should spend our energies on Him, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

So those people go to all those pains. I don't know what pains you go to for all the different things you're involved in. But there should be nothing that you can compare with the pains you go to to make sure that your growth in your spiritual life is evident to all.

Paying close attention to those things that are of eternal value. These are the things, the things of the Lord, the things of God should take pre-eminence, should take first place in our lives. Now, let me just look, let's look at it quickly, just use some examples out of, perhaps just in the context of the days that we've just gone through, having been Ascension Day not long ago.

It was Good Friday and Easter Sunday and so we've remembered these things recently and maybe we can just use those as examples of seeing at which station we've got in our spiritual lives. Just in the last few months we've had, we've celebrated Christmas. Now in the church we celebrate these days.

So these days act as a full stop in our lives. Like in the Psalms, sometimes you read and then suddenly you read, pause. There's a break, you must actually stop and think.

So let's just look at these few events and see them as full stops in our lives and just quickly take stock and see how far we've got. So often at Christmas time we are asked, have we experienced Christmas? Has the Christ child been born in our lives, in our hearts? Now today I want us to ask ourselves questions and also to answer them. And as we go through these different stages, just check in your life and maybe make a note to see where you stand in your life.

Has the Christ child been born in your heart? And is he alive and well in your heart? Or have you let Herod kill him? And don't say, oh yes, now I know about the Christ child. Yes, he was born in Bethlehem, I know that. I was at the stable where He was born.

Well, the donkeys and the cows were also there. We need to have the Lord Jesus in our hearts, that He's born there and that He's there, alive and well. And then you see the Christ child growing up.

The Lord Jesus, as He walked this earth, and there were many people that went with Him. Some were closer to Him than others. There were huge crowds that followed Him at times.

And especially when things went well, the crowds, there were really many, when the Lord was doing wonders. People like to see miracles. They like to see things happening.

But it's interesting, when He was in the garden, He was alone. And even His three disciples were sleeping. That's the next point we're going to get to, to the cross.

But also at that time, when He was being accused before Pilate, before Herod, where were His followers then? But while He was there on the mountainside, feeding them, there were thousands. In fact, the Lord Jesus even said it. He said to some of them, He says, you only follow Me because you see these miracles.

You only follow Me, you only come and listen to My words because you get food to eat. See, those people hadn't got anywhere in their spiritual lives. Yes, they knew that the Lord had been born.

Yes, they knew He did miracles. They knew He was good to them. But that's as far as their Christianity went.

As long as the sun was shining, well, why not join the crowd? Are you as good as those people? I hope that we're better than that. And that at least we don't just serve them when the sun shines. But someone who serves them when there are loaves to be had, when there are loaves to be had, to be eaten, but he's not prepared to serve Him and call out for Him and stand for Him when he's being accused before Pilate, such a person hasn't got far in his spiritual life.

His growth is not evident. He's made no progress. And even if he did maybe experience something with the Lord, but he hasn't got much further than that.

But then you get those that have been at the cross. People who have experienced what it means to have one's sins forgiven. Not just being at the cross because your mother happened to go to the cross as well and she took you by the hand and took you there, but those that have been there of their own accord.

Not people who have just confessed their sins because the mother said, my child, did you do something wrong today? Or where someone else challenges them? But people who without being told, no, I've done

something wrong today. I've sinned against God. I know with this thing in my heart I won't see God.

And because of that, he comes to the cross. But then there are those that have to go to the cross. Yes, we all have to go to the cross over and over again.

But you find some Christians, it's as if they serve a Lord Jesus that is still in the grave. They've never experienced Easter Sunday. They've never experienced Christ, the risen Lord.

As the child of the Lord said, oh, that I may know Christ and the power of his resurrection. Do we know the power of his resurrection? That power that raised him from the dead. That power that overcame death, overcame hell and the devil and all his power.

But sometimes we Christians, we don't experience that. We've been Christians for 20 years, but we don't know what victory over sin is. But we get stuck at one point.

And my life as a Christian just revolves around confessing the same sin every day, every single day of our lives. I got irritable and annoyed 20 years ago when I became a Christian. And before I became a Christian, it was the thing that troubled me.

And today, 20 years later, I still get irritable. The only difference is now every day I go to the Lord Jesus and confess it. And I say, Lord Jesus, for the last 30 years, and for the last 20 years as a Christian, this sin troubles me.

And today I come again. And the Lord Jesus knows that by tomorrow night, you'll be coming again, confessing the same thing over and over again. Well, it's good.

You've got to confess it when you've sinned. But the Lord Jesus says, if you confess your sin and forsake it, you will be forgiven. Sin must be a terrible accident.

We all sin and we all fall short of the glory of God. But sin must be an accident, not a scheduled stop in our lives. That I confess my sin today, I say, Lord Jesus, I'm sorry I got irritable today.

I confess it. But while I'm confessing it, I already know that tomorrow I'll be confessing the same thing again. I know.

It's just part of my life. It's like a scheduled service, like with a train. You confess the sin of bad thoughts.

But I already know that tomorrow I'll be confessing these bad thoughts again. Tomorrow I will have got cross with my wife again. And I'll have got cross and irritable at work again because someone didn't do the work I gave them to do.

That's if you haven't experienced the risen Lord. We need to experience all these things in our lives. We need to experience that the Lord Jesus is born in my heart.

Then we also need to experience what it means to come to the cross and have one's sins forgiven. Then I also need to experience what it means to have victory over the power of sin. That I won't be stuck in the mud.

That I'll experience the risen Lord who stretches out His hand and He helps me out of that mire of sin. To see how we can grow in our spiritual lives from one step to the other. And that's why when we celebrate

Christmas, we celebrate Good Friday.

When we celebrate Easter Sunday, and then when we stop to pause and think about Ascension Day. These are opportunities for us to stop and to check in our lives whether we've experienced these things in our lives. And what does Ascension Day mean to me? For those that were here on Thursday heard the message.

The Lord Jesus had to go so that this Holy Spirit could come. And then we go to the next step. We go to Pentecost.

Where the Holy Spirit came down in power. Where He took control of people's hearts and minds and lives. That where a person walks in the Spirit, it's like something I experienced recently.

It was in a work situation. And I praise God for all the opportunities He's given over the years through the work. It's not just a normal job.

It's a way that God uses to reach people. And one wonderful experience I had just recently. One very successful businessman.

That we have to do with in business. He called me aside. He said, I need to speak to you.

I've known this man to be a Christian. And I've honoured him for his example. Even at work, his workers testify about his Christian stand.

And he said to me, but I need to speak to you. He says, you know, I've been a Christian. But just recently I've experienced the Lord in a new way.

He says, you know, I used to walk next to the light. But he says, now the Lord has told me He wants me to walk in the light. And he says, you know, there's a big difference.

And he says, please, can I talk to you? We need to talk about it. I need to learn what it means to walk in the light. Can you help me? I need to learn what it means.

And so the Lord opens wonderful doors. But you see how one needs to grow spiritually? This man said, I've been a Christian, but I found out that I was only walking next to the light. But now I'm learning to walk in the light.

Now I need to walk in the Spirit. Now God needs to take full control of my life. Tell me, dear Christian, has God taken you in your life into the fullness of His life? Have you got any further in your Christian walk just over the last few weeks or months? Is it evident to others? Yes, maybe they've seen your progress with your football talents or maybe your talents at school.

You're making progress. But now the most important question of all, is your growth in the Lord evident for all to see? But now because we are close to Ascension Day, let's just look more at the significance of it. I just want us to look at one more aspect.

Where in Acts we read where Peter on the day of Pentecost spoke and he referred to Ascension Day. And in Acts chapter 2, he says that he refers to the Lord in verse 34. For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand.

Until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet. Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ. God raised up the Lord Jesus.

He ascended into heaven. He sat him at his right hand. And he made him Lord and Christ.

He is the Messiah. And all authority was given to him. In heaven and on earth.

That's amazing. That's what God did for the Lord Jesus and with him. That's what Ascension Day means.

Tell me, have you got to Ascension Day in your life? God made Jesus King and Lord, giving him all authority. Have you done it? Have you got to that point in your life, to Ascension Day in your life, where you've handed all power, all authority in your life over to the Lord Jesus? Every aspect of your life. Your goals, your ambitions, your desires and wishes.

Have you put your whole life on the altar for the Lord yet? If you haven't, that's maybe why you're not getting anywhere in your life. We just have to look at Thomas. How that decision in his life changed, revolutionised his life.

You remember Thomas. We all know Thomas, don't we? And we to this day refer to the doubting Thomases. I think it's a bit unfair.

Because we always remember that he doubted. But that was the beginning. But we know that after he had doubted, and when he met the Lord Jesus, or maybe it was because he said, I need to see him first.

I have to see him Lord, I have to experience you. And the Lord granted him his wish. But when he saw the Lord and experienced him, that doubt disappeared.

He fell on his knees. And he said, my Lord and my God. See, he experienced ascension day in his life.

And my, how that changed his life. Then suddenly this doubting Thomas, who was busy with other things when the Lord revealed himself to the other disciples. See, that can also happen.

While the Lord is revealing himself to others, we're not there. We're missing out on it. I don't know what held him away.

Maybe it was his doubt. Maybe there were other things. But doubt is a terrible enemy for a Christian.

But the day came in Thomas' life where that doubt disappeared, when he made the Lord God in his life. And the next time when the Lord revealed himself to the disciples, Thomas was there. He was mentioned specifically.

You see, his life changed. And that does change your life. When you make him Lord and King in your life, things change.

Suddenly life, and especially Christianity, has a brand new meaning. Suddenly the one who before wasn't present, the Lord was working, the disciples are busy, they're working together with the Lord, but he's nowhere to be seen. But suddenly that same person, after this ascension experience in his life, where he makes the Lord God in his life, suddenly that same person is totally different.

Suddenly he's busy working there with the Lord. That's the difference. When someone has experienced that in his life, then he wants to serve the Lord.

He's there. Where the Lord is at work, he's involved. He's not just one of the congregation that happens to be in church every Sunday.

But now he suddenly becomes an active member. Someone who's involved in what the Lord is doing. And he does it with joy.

He loves doing it. And there's nothing as wonderful as when someone serves the Lord with joy. Some people, they are very depressed Christians.

They don't know what it means to serve the Lord in the joy of the Lord. And I've never experienced what it means that the joy of the Lord is our strength. That's what gives us strength to carry on.

Because we enjoy serving the Lord. We serve Him with gladness. We serve Him willingly.

And then we become self-propelled. Then you're driven from within. In fact, from above.

Then you stop being a wheelbarrow Christian. That only moves as long as someone is pushing it. And you go, you move along.

Have you heard a wheelbarrow with a squeaky wheel? Most Christians that are wheelbarrow Christians have squeaky wheels too. That's all they are. Oh, they squeak.

And they moan. And they groan. And it's Apple, Obdrander, Alipat.

That Christian just sits in a heap. But then eventually one day you think, I actually need this chap's help. And you get him and you start pushing him.

And then, oh, then the squeaking starts. It's like, can't you do something for the Lord? Yeah, well, yeah. What do you want me to do? Do you really? Have you tried everyone else? Can't someone else do it? Oh, but this burden is heavy.

Why do you load so much into the wheelbarrow? That's what some people sound like when they have to go to church. Oh, my toe is sore. Oh yeah, I've got a headache.

And maybe it's not even true. You know, I've had a tough week. You know, I'm not feeling so well.

It's not like one elderly man who was such a blessing to us, Mr. Dube, when he was sick, seriously ill, in fact, almost on his deathbed. They say when it was Sunday, he wanted to go to the service. And then they told him, they said, but you can't go to the service.

You're too sick. Then he said, no. When the Lord Jesus walked this earth, all the sick people went to him.

They are the ones that really needed him most. Now, I don't say by that you must come here when you're half dead. But let's not be squeaking wheelbarrow Christians.

But let us be Christians that have experienced the Lord as the one who was born in Bethlehem. As the one who has forgiven us our sins, as the one who has given us victory over sin and over the world, and as the one who we've made Lord and King in our lives, as the one whom we've handed all authority in our lives, that we won't be guilty before God one day if he says to us, but I gave Christ all authority. I made him Lord and King.

Why didn't you do it? So that we'll be Christians who've handed over everything to the Lord. So that he can make something wonderful out of our lives. Something which we could never have done.

If I try to mold my own life, I have my extreme limitations. But hand over your life into the greatest potter's hands and he'll make something wonderful out of you. He'll make something out of you you could never have made yourself.

He does it according to his riches and glory. And then to experience his Spirit ruling our lives. That is wonderful.

To walk in the Spirit. Not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And that all the time.

Pentecost is going, we're going to celebrate it soon Lord willing. May when we celebrate Pentecost, may we celebrate it knowing what it really means to walk in the Spirit. So dear friend, I don't know whether you've understood.

But the simple question is, are we growing in our spiritual lives? Are we making any progress? Maybe that's why Christianity doesn't mean anything to us, because we are just sitting in one heap, getting nowhere. But how wonderful if we can sing in truth, I'm pressing on the upward way. New heights I'm gaining every day.

Let us close our eyes. Our God, in the beginning we asked you to speak to us. Lord, we thank you for speaking to us in a clear way about things that we know.

Help us Lord to be honest and to answer the question that's been put to us, and that we will take it along and not forget about it. Help us also in this next week that you will help us always to have that desire to grow in our spiritual lives. Lord, may your life grow in all of us, in the parents, in the children, in everyone who's a member of the congregation, that we will all grow.

Lord, we pray that your grace and your love and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit will be with us all. We ask it Lord Jesus for your name's sake. Amen.

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