

Jesus Christ Is Lord - Lord of Each Individual Believer

by J. Glyn Owen

The Christian's calling is a call to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, to belong to Jesus Christ as Lord, and to behave like Jesus Christ.

Duration: 42:57

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:19

Topics: "Believer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes four main points for believers. Firstly, believers are called to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. This means acknowledging and accepting Jesus as the ultimate authority in their lives. Secondly, believers are called to belong to Jesus Christ as Lord. This implies surrendering ownership of oneself and recognizing that they have been bought with a price. Thirdly, believers are called to behave as those under the Lordship of Christ, following His example of humble and selfless service. Lastly, believers are called to become like their Lord, imitating His character and actions in various aspects of life. The speaker emphasizes the importance of following Jesus wholeheartedly and not allowing anything or anyone to hinder their commitment to Him.

Transcript

We continue this morning with the theme that has been occupying us of late in our morning worship and will continue to occupy us for some months to come in the goodwill of God. Jesus Christ is Lord. We began this series by noticing that Jesus is Lord in his person.

He is and always was and always will be Lord. We do not make him Lord, God has made him Lord. We are to acknowledge that lordship which belongs to him and failure to do so is sin.

We saw that Jesus Christ is Lord of the whole universe. We spent two Sunday mornings considering how he is very especially the Lord of his church and now we are moving as you see from the general toward the particular. The message this morning, Lord of each individual believer, this is a kind of introduction to the particularities that we are going to mention and going to try to deal with in the weeks that lie ahead.

What I want to do today very especially is this. I would like us to notice, God helping us, that the acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as Lord and the ensuing acceptance of that and the significance of that

is something that is involved in the very call to become a Christian. Now this is not generally conceded.

There are many people who believe that they can be wholly Christian, fully Christian, totally Christian without consciously, deliberately submitting to the total lordship of Jesus Christ. The emphasis that I want to bring out this morning from scripture is this. Implicit in the call to become a Christian is the summons to bend beneath the yoke of King Jesus.

Right at the heart of the summons to repent and to turn to God and to believe and to live according to his word. Implicit in all that is this. Jesus is Lord and you are called, if you are called to become a Christian, to live under his lordship.

Now there are so many things that could be said about this. What I want to do this morning is to make two, three or four perhaps main statements. I shall not be able to go into them in any considerable length but I'll tell you what they are before we begin and if I can't deal with them in any significant measure I trust you will ponder them as you go your homeward way.

We are called in the scriptures first of all to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. Called to believe. Secondly, we are called to belong to Jesus Christ as Lord.

Thirdly, we are called to behave as those who are under the lordship of Christ and following in his footsteps. And fourthly, we are called to become and therefore to be like our Lord. And the fourfold call, fourfold aspects of the Christian calling, all you see make much of the lordship of Jesus Christ.

He determines what we believe. He determines to whom we belong. We belong to him.

He determines how we behave. He determines what we become. He's Lord and I trust that the spirit of God will enable us, preacher and people, not only to see this clearer than we've ever seen it but in our hearts to enthrone him and acknowledge him and worship him and delight to cast our crowns at his feet to his glory and to our good.

First of all then, the Christian's calling is first of all a call to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. This is basic and fundamental. Whatever measure of Christian doctrine we may believe, short of this, it is of no saving importance unless we believe that Jesus is Lord.

A Jesus who is less than Lord does not satisfy as the object of faith. He cannot save. The only Jesus who can save must be the one who is victorious over death, over sin, over Satan.

He is Lord. Therefore the object of saving faith is none other than Jesus the victor, Jesus the king, Jesus the Lord. It is not enough simply to believe in Jesus of Nazareth, great and glorious as his life was.

We must see Jesus of Nazareth to be the Lord. Jesus Christ, for he alone is worthy of our faith. Can I say three things about this? The confidence inherent in genuine Christian commitment is to the effect that Jesus is Lord.

When we commit ourselves to him, savingly as prospective Christians, the kind of confidence that we need to have is essentially this, that he is Lord. Now in the Gospels, the terms used are somewhat different. And therefore we need to explain this.

In the Gospels, though we do speak of Jesus as Lord, we do meet the title Lord there, there was a development probably in the understanding of the term Lordship until Jesus rose from the dead, probably.

But in the Gospels, especially in the Gospel of John, the way he puts it is somewhat different. When men are summoned to faith, they're largely generally summoned in this way, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, or to believe better, more consistently to John, to believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

But you see, the Son of God is King. To be Son of God is to be Lord. Though John calls us to believe in the Son of God, to be Son of God is not inferior to being Lord, it means being Lord.

The Lord is King, God is King, God is Ruler, and if he is the Son of God, he is King. The terms are different from what we generally encounter in the epistles, but the substance is the same, the thrust is the same, the demand is the same. The concept of our Lord's Lordship is also hidden in that word Christ, which is of course so common in the Gospels.

Jesus is the Christ, and we are asked to believe that Jesus is the Christ, or that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The Christ is the Anointed One, that not only was he anointed to be prophet and to be priest, but to be King. So you see, to believe that Jesus is the Son of God is to believe that he's King.

He's more than I am, more than you are, greater than we are, greater than anybody else, greater than the scholars over there in the U of T. He's greater than our theological leaders, he's greater than all the leaders of the church, all the ecumenical leaders, whatever they are, whatever names they bear. He's King, he's Lord, he's Son of God, and the kind of confidence that he requires is something infinitely greater than you give to the greatest of men at any time. Now, we need to remember that when we read such glorious passages as John 3.16. The Lordship of Christ is there because his Sonship is there.

God so loved the world, I quote the NIV, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life, for God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son, and if that Son is the only Son of God, he's Lord. The kind of confidence which is implicit then in the profession of faith in Christ, if that is a genuine Christian profession, is a confidence that he is Lord and can be trusted as such.

The confession of faith upon which Jesus said he would build his church is an acknowledgement of faith in Jesus the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, and it comes to the same thing. He is Lord and the confession of every Christian requires to make that clear. Our faith is in Jesus as Lord.

Paul, in the classical statement on faith in Romans 10, brings that truth out in the language that is still more familiar to us. How can I be saved? How can a man become a Christian? Let Paul answer. If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

And then he goes on later on to say this, for there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. I ask you therefore this morning to come to terms with this first basic and cardinal Christian truth.

The object of our faith is not just Jesus. I'm not attempting to demean or to diminish from the glory of the man Jesus. Please, please, please.

But the Jesus of Nazareth was never a mere Jesus. And as the object of our faith, he is Jesus the Christ, the anointed prophet, priest, and king. And as Jesus Christ, he is the only Son of God.

And as the only Son of God, he is Lord. Is your faith a Christian faith? Is it reposed in our Lord Jesus Christ? Or simply in the man Jesus of Nazareth? That brings me to the second main affirmation. A Christian's call, secondly, is a call to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Did you notice, reading this morning from Romans chapter 1, how the Apostle Paul makes that so very, very clear? In terms that make it beyond, really, there's hardly need to say anything about it. Did you notice, first of all, how he introduced himself in the first verse? Paul, he says, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart. Now forget about the called and set apart.

Just notice those words, a servant of Christ Jesus. The word literally is slave. Slave.

Paul, what's happened to you? Well, he says, this is my glory. This is my joy. This is how I fulfill my ministry.

I am and I'm glad to be a bond slave of Jesus Christ. And of course, the man lived in this manner and in this spirit. He went where the glory of his Lord took him.

He went where the will of his Lord dictated. He did what the will of God required. He was, he was, he was possessed.

He was owned by Jesus Christ. He was his slave. And then did you notice in verse 6, how he says exactly the same about every Christian in Rome? You notice how he refers to them? And you also, he says, are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Oh, my friends, I would like to thunder this forth, though the volume of the voice does not necessarily get it across. What is the Christian calling? It's a call to belong to Jesus Christ. Neither is this the only place where Paul speaks of it.

He brings it out in Romans 14, 8. So whether we live or die, he says, we belong to the Lord. We belong to the Lord. Let me ask you a question before I go any further.

Who do you belong to? Who holds the reins in your life and who rules? Your friends, your circumstances, your family, or is it the Lord Jesus Christ? You're called to belong to him. Inherent then in the Christian calling is the summons to yield to Jesus Christ the right to rule their lives. We are called, brothers and sisters, we are called to be his property.

Now, literally to be his property so that he can say concerning that man there, that woman there, that young fellow there, he, she, she belongs to me. They belong to me. They're my peculiar people.

They're my very own. I can send them here. I can tell them to do this.

They'll do it. They belong to me as the body belongs to the head. Oh, it shows how far we have rebelled against biblical truth in our easy going age with its cult of softness and compromise and easy going.

We'll be long to anybody but to Jesus Christ, our rightful Lord called to belong. Now, however, this notion may have developed and crystallized during Jesus' public ministry. We see clear implications of it from a fairly early stage.

Can I just indicate just one or two ways in which this developed and in which it has worked out in the gospels and later on? I have to do it briefly. Take, for example, a very familiar passage. Peter confesses Jesus in Caesarea Philippi, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

And the Lord said to him, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, etc. The next thing that happened is this. Peter tried to dissuade his Lord from going to the cross.

Remember? Remember what Jesus said to him? Satan, get behind me. Get behind me. Now, it doesn't stop there.

You read on in Matthew 16 or in the other gospels, you read on and this is what you will find. Jesus said to his disciples, if anyone would come after me, now notice anyone, anyone, anyone, that means you, that means me. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. And whoever loses his life for me will find it. Jesus demands that we follow him and we follow him in this sense, that we die to ourselves.

In this immediate context, it was particularly a reference to Peter having to die to his own ideas of messiahship. Peter said to Jesus, you're not going to die. This is the last thing that can ever happen to you.

You mustn't die. Get behind me, Satan. He says, die to that concept.

It's not from my father, it's from beneath, it's from hell. It's appointed that I should die and you are not attuned to the divine appointments. And to come after me, you've got to die to your own ideas and you've got to accept the divine ideas.

Are you in process of dying? You die to your own ideas, you die to your own views, you die to your own self. There must be a death to follow into life. And every step is a step of dying.

Jesus said so. In fact, actually, in the gospels, you remember Jesus goes so far as to say this, that comparatively speaking, we must be prepared to hate father, mother, brother, sister. Now, not deliberately to hate father, mother, brother, sister, as Matthew makes quite clear, but we cannot love father, mother, brother, sister more than we love the one to whom we belong.

We belong to him. That comes out very clearly, and this must be my last reference under this heading. That comes out exceedingly clear in John chapter 21.

You remember how Simon Peter by this time had denied his Lord three times, and then Jesus poses the question to him three times over, do you love me? First one he asked him, do you love me, notice, more than these. Now, there's an ambiguity there. What was he referring to? Well, can I take it for the moment that this could very well have been what he was referring to without trying to prove it.

Do you love me more than you love these, these other disciples, or more than you love the boats and the fishes and the sea? Jesus requires priority in our affection. Now, I think it could, that could well be the required explanation there in the light of what follows. Peter, being the typical man that he was, he saw John.

Jesus had spoken to him after he had confessed that he loved the Lord Jesus three times. Jesus spoke to him and said, all right, feed my sheep, feed my lambs, feed my sheep. And then he said this to him, Peter,

I tell you the truth, when you were younger, you dressed yourself and you went where you wanted.

But when you were old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. Jesus said this, says John, in order to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Jesus told Peter there and then that in following him, Peter was going to die a martyr's death.

And having said so, he follows his statement to completes his statement to Peter at that point with these words, follow me. Now, Peter, being the man he was, saw John there and he said, John, and he was such great friends. What about this one, Lord? He says, what about him? I'm following you and I've got to follow you to death.

Okay, but what about John? You remember how Jesus said to him, if I want him to remain alive until I return, what's that to you? Mind your own business. You must follow me. Brothers and sisters, this is pointed.

This is biblical Christianity. Jesus doesn't toy with his property. He says, I claim that you follow me alone, away from your best friend, John, break your friendship.

If it means following me and die. One of the classical statements of that elsewhere in the new Testament is Paul, found in Paul's words to the Corinthians. Do you not know? He says that your body is the temple of the spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God.

You are not your own. You were bought with a price. Call to belong.

Who do you belong to? You know, there are many, I'm quite sure among us that don't know anything of the joy and exuberance and grace of God in our daily lives, because we still think that we are our own property and we make our own decisions for ourselves without reference to our Lord. Thirdly, the Christian's calling is also a call to behave like the world. No.

In the family tradition. No. Like the church.

No. Unless the church is actually walking in the words of me. But he adds, as I also am of Christ.

And if we in the leadership here or your Sunday school teacher or anybody else in the church says, follow me, do exactly what I do and say what I say, believe what I believe, we must be able to say also, as we follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Ultimately, the only example for Christian men and women is Jesus Christ, our Lord. Ultimately, he's the only perfect one that God requires us to follow.

There was a great volume written, I think, toward the end of last century by Dr. James, the late Dr. James Stalker, a great Scots theologian, from whom I certainly have learned a lot. And he has a book dealing with Christ as our example. And he goes through all the various aspects of life.

Some of the titles of his book go as follows. Jesus is our example in the home, in the state, in the church, as a friend, as a pilgrim in society, in prayer, as a student of scripture, as a worker, a sufferer, a philanthropist, a winner of souls, a preacher, a teacher, a controversialist, a man of feeling, and a person of influence. Brethren, you and I are called to follow in his footsteps, to go where he leads and to do what he bids.

And he is our example. I can only refer to one or two things this morning and let you read into them what I trust the Holy Spirit will make clear. First of all, Jesus Christ is our example in humble, lowly service.

Those whom he calls to follow him are called to follow him in a service in which self is crucified in order to do his will, as he was crucified in order to do the Father's will. Our Christian service is essentially executed in an attitude of submissive, humble obedience to our Lord. If you see the minister of Knox becoming arrogant in the pulpit or anyone else, take the liberty to whisper in his ear, for it is a veritable contradiction of our calling that we should be pompous and proud and arrogant and lording it over anybody else.

So Jesus, he called them to him and he said, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life away a ransom for many.

You see, he's the pattern. He is the pattern. Our life, our behavior is to be patterned after his.

He's Lord, you see. He determines the pattern we must follow, all of us. Oh, we have so many illustrations.

You call me teacher and Lord, says Jesus in John 13, and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done to you.

Romans 15, verse 2 and 3, even Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, the insults of those who insulted you have fallen upon me. He did not please himself. He was obedient to the Father.

That classical statement in Philippians 2, 5, 8, let this mind be in you also which was in Christ Jesus. What kind of a mind? Not a cling to our supposed dignity or authority, but rather to be prepared to let go anything in order to come down and to be humble in service for our God. Jesus Christ is the one then whose humble, self-effacing service for others is to be the standard for us.

Then he is our example also in the kind of love we should have for one another. A new commandment I give you, love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another as I have loved you. And again he's our example in suffering.

To this end, says Peter, you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps. All of us are called to suffering. It's part of our calling.

There's nothing strange happened to us as Peter tells the readers of his first letter. Don't think that anything strange has happened to you. And James says the same.

When you suffer, it's all in your calling. To this end, you were called. Read the last two verses of Philippians 1. It's part of our calling.

He is to be the one that we are to follow. He is the example. How did he suffer? Well, Peter tells us.

And I can't go into that this morning, but all so much depends upon it. Our un-Christlikeness in behavior is so often an offense to the world, a disgrace to the church, and a dishonor to our Lord. Who knows, my dear friends, how many people in the world have been near to Christ but have been put off by un-Christlike arrogance and pride in members of the ministry and in members of churches.

You will all have heard, probably, how the great Mahatma Gandhi of India, when he went to England, was going through a period when he was puzzled by the caste system in India, and had almost come to the conclusion that there was no answer to it. And then he read the New Testament, and he became almost convinced that this must surely be the only answer. But here is Jesus of Nazareth apparently making men anew.

So he decided one Sunday morning to go to church. And the ushers saw him coming in, and they didn't like the look of him. And they suggested to him very calmly but very firmly that he should go and worship with his own people.

And they turned him out. And he said to himself under his breath, well, if Christians have got a caste system too, I don't suppose there's much more to this than to Buddhism. Oh, brothers and sisters in Christ, there is nothing which is more terrifying than those of us who bear the name of the Lord Jesus, who have our caste systems and our arrogance and our pride, and we put people off.

How many a Mahatma Gandhi, how many a potential leader from other nations that come to our doorstep may be put off by some coldness or pride or whatever in you and in me? Let's be very, very careful. There is one example that we may follow, and if we do so we shall never blunder. He had compassion among multitudes.

He built bridges. He crossed over gaps and chasms to seek the airing of every kindred and tribe and people and nation. And when at last we gather in the heavens, they will be there, black and white, red and yellow and every other color, from every clan and every tribe.

Can you hear them singing? You and I have got to have a heart like that and an attitude like that. He's our example. The last word, and I can only just refer to it.

The Christian's calling, not an optional extra, but the Christian's calling is to become like the Lord Jesus Christ. You notice I didn't say to be like him, because we can never say that we are like him, but we are always in process of becoming, nothing more than that. And we are called to be becoming more and more like him.

Now notice there's a difference here. There's a similarity between our conduct and his, there should be, but conduct is external. What we say with our lips, what we do with our hands, but you and I know full well that's not the deepest level of our beings.

It's what we are. I can say the right words, but I don't necessarily have the right spirit in saying them. You and I can do the right things, but we may be doing them all together for the wrong motives.

Character is something which is deeper. It is what a man is. What was Jesus Christ? Well, I can't possibly summarize it other than to say that this reflects it and this reveals it.

I delight to do thy will, O my God. That's the deepest level. When a man finds his delight in God, and therefore you see what follows naturally is this, he becomes more and more godlike.

Now Jesus of course was godlike from the beginning, but when you and I begin that pathway and we delight in God, his law is not something harsh and bitter to take upon us, and his will is never harsh and terrible, but everything is a joy, and we in process of obedience are changed from one degree of glory to another. Can I conclude this by saying we are called according to the New Testaments, not simply to be

holy, which is another word for Christlikeness, but you know we are called even to share in our Lord's own glory. Now that's your Christian calling.

When you were called out of sin, when you were called out of the world, when you were called out from unfaith and unbelief, when you were called, listen my friend, if you've never heard it before, you were called to share in your Lord's own glory, and the moment you begin to share in the life of Christ, under the Lordship of Christ, you are on the way to glory. But how can that happen because I am so inglorious? Well it can only happen because Jesus Christ is Lord, and whom he makes his disciples, and whom he owns as his disciples, he will get on with a job of changing them, of inwardly renewing the mind, and the heart, and the spirit, and gradually transforming them after his own likeness, and when we shall see him, the job will be completed. When we shall see him we shall be like unto him, for we shall see him as he is.

This means you see he's Lord. The delightful story about Charles Haddon Spurgeon, he read the commentary that just came out from the press in those days, on the book of Leviticus, by Dr. Diganji Barner, I couldn't remember his name, good to have these men in the congregation, Dr. Barner. Charles Haddon Spurgeon was absolutely thrilled with this, but he was very disappointed.

There wasn't a photograph of Dr. Barner in it, and he didn't know what the man looked like, and there wasn't a signature of course. So he sent the book immediately to Dr. Barner and said how greatly blessed he was in reading this book, never read anything like it on the book of Leviticus. A letter came back from Dr. Barner, my dear Mr. Spurgeon, I'm so glad that you've been blessed by this feeble treatise of mine, and so glad to hear of your ministry and so forth.

You will see that I have signed my signature on the flyleaf, and I herewith enclose a photograph. Pity, he said, you couldn't have waited a little longer, because very soon now I could have given you a far better likeness. For my Lord is coming back, and when I see him I shall be like him.

Why? Because he's Lord, and he never left anything half done. And by his providence, and his lordship of the universe, and his lordship of the church, and his lordship of history, and his lordship of destiny, and his lordship of all, he will bring about what he set about to do. He's Lord.

Call to believe. You believe that Jesus is Lord? Call to belong. Are you his property? Call to behave according to his standards.

Does he determine your standard of living? Call to become increasingly like him. Crown him Lord of all. Let us pray.

Father in heaven, your word casts its brilliant light into the dark recesses and hidden crevices of our minds, and of our thoughts, and of our attitudes. And preacher and people come under its judgment. So that we cannot disperse when we have been meditating on a theme such as this, without acknowledging that we are altogether unprofitable servants.

Oh God of grace, forgive us our sins. Forgive us our rebellion against the truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and against the standard of life to which we are summoned. Help us again to set Jesus apart as Lord in our hearts, as Peter calls upon men to do.

Oh Jesus Christ, reign, reign in and over me. Would be the cry of our hearts today. And as we go out into a new week, if you give us life, grant that we may go under your rule and your reign, and thus experience the grace and the providence and the ordering of life, in which you will bring your own image towards

perfection in each one of us, your children.

Amen. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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