

# Jesus Christ Is Lord - Lord of the Mind

by J. Glyn Owen

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*Jesus Christ is Lord of the mind, and sin begins in the mind as a rebellion against God's rule and laws.*

**Duration:** 1:01:32

**Scripture:** Isaiah 14:12-15, Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:19-20

**Topics:** "Lord"

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## Description

In this sermon, John Stott discusses the similarities between humans and animals, highlighting that while animals behave by instinct, humans have the capacity for intelligent choice. He emphasizes that humanity's rebellion against God has had devastating effects throughout history. Stott also mentions the remarkable feat of the space shuttle returning to Earth safely, showcasing the capabilities of the human mind. However, he warns that when humans suppress their knowledge of God and rely solely on their own intellect, their thinking becomes futile and their hearts become dark.

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## Transcript

In our morning worship over recent times, we have been considering the major New Testament theme, Jesus Christ is Lord. We have seen that he is Lord in his person. We have seen with equal clarity that according to the scriptures and according to the testimony of history, he is Lord of the universe.

He is Lord of the church and he is Lord of each individual disciple whom he calls. It is involved in our Christian calling that we confess Jesus Christ as Lord and not simply confess him with our lips, but acknowledge him as such in our lives. The New Testament knows of no discipleship which can be called truly Christian other than a discipleship to Jesus Christ the Lord.

There is no such phenomenon as the Jesus people in the New Testament. The Jesus people are the Lord's people. He is more than Jesus, he is Lord.

Now, at this point in our study, we are moving from the general towards the particular. And we have now to come down and examine the question, how really, according to the New Testament, how really is the Lord Jesus to exercise his lordship in the lives of individual men and women who bear his name? Now, this is a major theme, of course, a major subject, and you can start at one end of the spectrum or the other. Indeed, you can start almost anywhere.

And I was really puzzled as to where I should really begin. You see, the point is, Jesus claims to be Lord of all. But not only Lord of all, Lord of the wholesome parts that go up to the making of the whole of our individual lives.

He claims to be Lord of the body as a whole. He claims to be Lord of the hand and of the lips and of the foot and of the eye and of the ear and of the mind. He claims to be the Lord of all, but he also requires to be the Lord of each individual segment that goes to the totality of that which we call ourselves, body, soul, and spirit.

Jesus requires to be Lord of all. Now, I have chosen to start this particularizing process by calling your attention to some of the things that the New Testament has to say about Jesus as Lord of the mind. Now, we begin a little way back.

I want to begin by making the first statement along these lines. The essential glory of man is clearly reflected in his endowment with a rational mind, with its capacity for thought and reflection. Now, that's not saying anything new.

All you good people could have said that to me, and I'm very much aware of that, that I'm saying something which is a truism, something which is very, very obvious. But it is an integral affirmation of the Judeo-Christian faith that God made man in his own image. And something of the glory of that image is reflected in the fact that man was made a thinking being.

He is able to think, in Kepler's words, God thoughts after him by God's good grace. In order to be very brief in this point, I think I will just quote to you a few words from John Stott's very exciting little monograph, *Your Mind Matters*. Scripture assumes, he says, and portrays this from the beginning of man's creation, that is, that your mind matters.

And he expresses it in this way. In Genesis 2 and 3, we see God communicating with man in a way he does not communicate with animals. He expects man to cooperate with him consciously and intelligently in tilling and in keeping the garden in which he has placed him, and to discriminate rationally as well as morally between what he has permitted to do and the one thing he is prohibited from doing.

Moreover, God invites man to name the animals, symbolizing his lordship over them, which he has been given. And he creates woman in such a way that the man immediately recognizes her suitability as his life partner. The theme, says John Stott, is clear and compelling.

There are many similarities between man and the animals, that the animals were created to behave by instinct, human beings by intelligent choice. So when humans fail to do by their own minds and consent what animals do by instinct, they are contradicting their natures, contradicting their creation and their distinctive humanity. And they ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Now, that's all about this first point, but we have to start there. God made man after his own image. That image has become marred by sin.

But still, man is a thinking being. And God addresses him in the scriptures in terms of propositions, in terms of truth addressed to the mind, even though man's capacity to accept this, as we shall see in a moment, has been terribly disturbed. Nevertheless, God treats him as such, and as altogether different from the higher apes or any other creature.

And that brings me to the second main statement I want to make. The supreme tragedies of history have resulted from the rebellion of the human mind against the divinely fixed laws governing its own well-being. The supreme tragedies of history have resulted from the rebellion of the mind against the laws that God ordained to safeguard the well-being of the mind.

The God who constituted man as a thinking and reflecting being ordained certain laws to safeguard his well-being. Man rebelled. Man rebelled against God's rule with devastating effects for the whole human family right down through the centuries, right up to this very moment in time.

Today, for example, as we worship here, I guess we're all anticipating that the space shuttle will return to Earth safely tomorrow, the American space shuttle. We're thinking of one of the most remarkable feats of the human mind, that it is possible for two men to go orbiting in outer space and to come back to a spot prearranged at a certain time. This is surely something of a mammoth, of a gigantic nature that should stagger our imaginations afresh.

We're becoming acclimatized and used to things that should always amaze us. The human mind, even though fallen, is capable of that. And there's another side to the coin.

You know of the growing, swelling tide of concern, not only in Canada, but especially in the United States and in Europe. The growing tide of concern not just among people who love to meet and make a noise on the city square or somewhere, but among all kinds of people concerning the threat of a nuclear war. A kind of nuclear war which, if it comes about, will make all the accumulated effects of all the wars of history seem as nothing more than the kind of mess that is left in a garden after a garden party, in comparison with that Holocaust and this total destruction that can come about.

But if man's mind is allowed to go uninhibited, unharnessed by the grace of God, and if man himself is to be the ruler of his fate, the human mind is capable of doing all kinds of things, good and evil, things noble and ignoble, things for the benefit of mankind, things that are certainly for the destruction of man and civilization and even of mankind as a whole. Now, it is implicit in the biblical and Christian understanding of things that in the explanation of life's major problems, the rebellion and subsequent disorientation of man's mind by sin has played a major role. The Christian understanding of things is this.

Sin has done something terrible in the human mind. And you may not be aware of it this morning as you sit in the pew, but my friend, the Bible says that it's done something to your mind and mine. Sin has radically affected the minds of men.

But let me now at this point refer to two or three of the major things in history, the major facets of this disturbance of the mind, this disorientation and distortion and darkening of the mind, three of the major events, if we may so speak of them, that have caused chaos in their train. First of all, the fall of Satan. Now, scripture everywhere speaks of a malign, wicked being, supernatural though not divine.

We call him Satan, the adversary, the devil. Jesus called him such. And he's everywhere around.

And most of us, I trust, know something of his being after us and can discern his, not his footmarks, but his influence. The fall of Lucifer, son of the morning star, and the emergence in our world of a satanic being is traced in scripture to a mind in rebellion against God. Now, I want you to distinguish two things, the existence of Satan and the explanation of his emergence into history.

I'm going to refer now to a passage in scripture, which some people say offers an explanation of the fall of Satan from being an angelic being, pleasing God to becoming the adversary that he is. Now, this understanding may be subject to certain queries. But if this normal, this customary way of explaining the origin of Satan is true, it proves the point that I'm trying to make.

I believe the point is true even if this does not prove it. The point is this, that the rebellion of Satan and the existence of Satan began in a mind that rebelled. And when the mind rebelled, other things followed.

I want to read to you from Isaiah chapter 14, verses 12 to 15. How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn. You have been cast down to earth, you who once laid low the nations.

You said in your heart, says God, I will ascend to heaven. I will raise my throne above the stars of God. I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.

I will ascend above the tops of the clouds and listen to this, I will make myself like the most high, but your broad low, down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Now, whether or not that simply describes the king of Babylon, who is the main subject in that chapter, or whether, as the so many people throughout history have interpreted it, it also reflects a being behind the human, I'm not so concerned. But if this is true, if that is the correct understanding and exposition of the passage, then it very clearly points us to the rebellion of the mind that made a satanic being.

You can sense it in that fivefold, I will, I will ascend, I will raise my throne, I will sit enthroned. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds. I will make myself like the most high.

The main spring of that rebellion you see was in the mind. Now, in the second place, the fall of Adam and Eve takes place in exactly the same way. The fall of Adam and Eve was equally occasioned by an attitude of mind that rebelled against the rule of God.

Satan first poisoned Eve's mind, you remember, when God had said that everything in the garden is yours. There's only one thing that I don't want you to touch. I command you not to touch that on threat of death.

But everything else is yours. The whole garden is yours. The world is yours.

It's all yours. Just this one tree and its fruit. God said you will die if you touch that.

Satan comes in. He's fallen now, you see. His mind becomes depraved and darkened and hostile to God, and he comes on the scene.

This is what he says, you will not surely die. The serpent said to the woman, for God knows, now notice this perversion, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. With her mind thus polluted, Eve again eyed the forbidden fruit, and it had come to look so attractive now, more attractive than it was before.

And this is what we read, when the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, wisdom of course that would make her like God, she took some and she ate it, and she also gave it to her husband, who without a question, poor fellow, ate it. Now again, you see, a frame of mind that would usurp the creator from his throne is the key to an understanding of the gravity of that offense. Let me repeat, here is a creature made by God, placed in the

most congenial environment imaginable, allowed to do anything and go anywhere and eat everything apart from the fruit of one tree, and now with a mind poisoned by Satan and her own self responsive to that, she can't take that one solitary restriction, and the rebellion begins.

First in the mind, then indeed. First in the inner man, then in the outer man. Now I don't need to tell you this morning that the fallout of that endemic crash has spilled down the centuries and still putrefies life from Vancouver to Vladivostok, from the cold north to Cape Town, and all across and up and down our land, and right here in the heart of the city of Toronto, and in this church this morning.

But you may say, ah, I don't believe in Satan anyway, and I don't believe in the garden of Eden and the story of Genesis. Well, all right, I won't argue with you for a moment. Become a little nearer.

The New Testament tells us that the story of every individual fall generally begins in the same way. Your fall, your pride, your arrogance, your selfishness, your self-centeredness, your egoism, it starts in the mind, and from the mind it moves to other areas of your life, and it gets hold of your body and of your life, and you use yourself to do what you want, your thing, rather than the thing of the Creator who made you and sustains you and in whose hand your next breath is. And this is the thing that turns the world upside down.

I have never had the courage before to read that passage from Romans chapter 1 in a public service of worship before, but I felt I had to read it this morning, not because of its details. I'm not going to refer to some of the details that are referred to there. That's not within the orbit of my concern this morning.

But because it points unerringly to what Paul describes as the way in which sin comes starting in the mind, the more personal fall of individuals takes place exactly in the same way as Lucifer's and Adam and Eve in the garden. It starts in the mind. The mind is the key to every fall, hence the importance of what influence it has and what influences emerge upon the mind.

I was flabbergasted when early this morning I happened to turn on the radio and I heard that there is a movement afoot in the United States. Please forgive me, any Americans here, I'm not down on the States at all. This could be in Canada or anywhere else, that the month of April is to be a month when you wear a sticker on your court saying, I'm reading forbidden books.

I haven't got the exact word now. Reading forbidden books. I'm reading bad books.

That's it. I'm reading bad books. Now imagine, imagine a people wearing that kind of a thing.

And the month of April is to be the month for reading bad books. That's exactly what Paul is describing in Romans chapter one. Paul explains men's individual fall.

He's talking, of course, about the pagan Gentiles here, and he's distinguishing somewhat between the Jews. It comes to the same thing. All are guilty before God, but he's talking about the pagans.

How does it start? Well, Paul affirms in verses 19 and 20, there is a certain knowledge of God which is as wide as creation. Doesn't depend whether you were brought up in a Christian mind or in a Christian country. It's as vast, it's as wide as creation.

That's why we chose our opening hymn this morning. It spoke of that based on Psalm 19. A knowledge of God which is as wide as creation.

It's not detailed, doesn't tell you everything you want to know, but it tells you at least two things. It tells you of the creator's eternal power. His is not a temporal power.

It was there when things started and it seems to be going on when men and nations and generations pass away. It is a power that lasts and outlives men and nations and what have you. His eternal power and of his divine nature as the creator.

Men, however, says Paul, men reject the knowledge of God and they suppress it. They hold it down. They don't, in other words, accept the implications of it.

And two things happen. Because of that, they don't honor God and they don't give him thanks. One of the things that challenged me as I was brooding over this is how we so often gloss over the apparent unimportance of an unthankful person.

We say, well, he's not thankful for anything. But, well, people are like that today. They take things for granted.

Listen, my friend, ingratitude, ingratitude towards God can be one of the most perverse expressions of sin. A man that doesn't recognize God as God to whom he owes everything is a person who will sooner or later degenerate into something much worse than he is now. Although they knew God, says Paul, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him.

But their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts become darkened. You simply cannot suppress knowledge of this kind and remain unaffected. Something happens to the faculty of thought.

Something happens to the mind. And in due course, you will reap the results. If you suppress the knowledge you have of God from his creation, and what is described here will sooner or later happen to you.

Their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were dark. Now, I am not going to deal with a process of degeneracy that you have in Romans 18. Suffice it for me simply to mention to you how it goes.

There are five stages here. The line of regression goes like this. They became irresponsible.

They suppressed the knowledge of God. No respect for him, no thanks to him. That's number one.

Two, they became what J. B. Phillips says, fatuous. What the NIV translates, futile in their thinking, darkened in their minds. And that's the point I want to underline.

But you notice it never stops there. When men become fatuous and futile in their thinking, they become idolatrous. They change the glory of God and they make a little God after their own image and they bow down and worship it.

The God who made all things, they cast on one side as it were, turn their backs upon him, close their minds to him, and they make a little idol of their own. And they say, isn't this wonderful? This is the one true God. And with all their apparent intelligence and so-called wisdom, they bow down to it and they'll do anything for it.

And they'll go anywhere to talk about it. That's happening today. That leads to immorality.

I'm not going to say a word about that. And to ultimate depravity, fixed on godliness and unrighteousness, a daring defiance of God. And not only that, knowing that God has condemned a certain way of life, they not only do it, but they commend and approve those who do them.

We're living in that world today. That's our society. And I'm afraid there are many, many ignorant Christians about who actually fall into that terrible trap.

And they think that because we live in a pluralistic society, you must more or less give your blessing to every conceivable thing that is conceived in the arrogant, depraved minds of men. Be careful, says Paul. That's a collision course with a God of the universe.

Now that process described in Romans 1 is going on throughout the world. And the rebellious mind is emerging, and with it the darkened mind and the polluted mind and the resolute mind against God. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2.14 that this is the measure of it.

He says the natural man, that is, a man who has not been redeemed by the grace of God or regenerated by His Spirit, the natural man, doesn't receive the things of the Spirit of God, doesn't receive the word of God, doesn't receive anything that the Spirit of God gives or says, neither can he. Brothers and sisters, do you get that? This is the serious situation. Neither can he.

Why? Because you need the supernatural and divine enabling of the Spirit of God to quicken you and to work a miracle of grace and transformation in you in order to see that this is God speaking and this is God's Word and to receive it and to begin to obey it. It's as bad as that. Now, you may call me an extreme this morning.

Well, I am, because I believe the Scripture is very extreme at this point. This is revolutionary teaching. This is telling men and women that by nature they cannot receive the Word of God.

Though you command them to repent and you call upon them to obey, you must say at the same time, you can't do it. You say, that's not logical. What can they do then? This, of course, cry to God for His grace and for His Spirit.

And that's the whole point of the exercise. You call men to repentance and you know they can't repent. You call men to believe and you know they can't believe.

Well, what then? You pray for them. Get them to pray and seek the grace of God and the Spirit to breathe on them wrath of God until my heart is pure. So Paul thus unhesitatingly describes the Christian ministry as a warfare in these words.

Now, I'm coming to my subject, please. You may think I've gone to all the world to preach the gospel today and not coming home again. Well, I'm going to come back now.

The weapons we fight with, he says, are not weapons of the world, carnal weapons. On the contrary, we have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.

Now listen. And we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. Paul, what's the ministry that you're involved in? Fundamentally, it's this, he says.

It's my armaments, my power, my energy, my ability is not from anything that you gather from this world. It's colleges or it's civilization or it's church or it's whatever. My power, he says, is the power of the mighty Spirit of God.

And what we're doing is this, bringing every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ. And this is the aim of the Christian gospel. You may say the battle is a terrible battle.

We take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ. It is, indeed it is. But that's the battle.

And if you're a Christian this morning, a real Christian, and by real Christian I mean accepting the understanding of what it means to be a Christian from the word of God rather than from the carnal ideas that are in vogue in the 20th century, then this should be your ministry and my ministry wherever we are from day to day, from week to week. Now that brings me to the remedy for such human depravity and rebellion. Is there a remedy? Is it possible to renew the human mind that it thinks right? Is it possible, is it conceivable, you who know what it is to have your minds running astray even when you pray, and we all know that, don't let me talk as if I don't, those of us who know the way the mind can roam and wander after things illicit or certainly not the noblest and the things that we should be thinking about.

Is it possible, is it possible that the mind can be renewed to think the right things and to be harnessed so that it thinks along a pattern, a schema which is glorifying to God and which reflects the thinking of that mind as an aspect of the very image of the Creator? Is it possible? Does Islam promise this? Does your Buddhism promise anything that approximate to this? Do your modern cults offer you this? Of course they don't, but the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ offers nothing less. And Paul introduced his epistle to the Romans by saying this, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because it is the dynamic, it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first, then to the Gentile, and then immediately afterwards he begins to explain this putrefying nature, this putrid nature of the human mind. As if to say, my gospel which is the power of God unto salvation comes into this situation, into this arena, and it does, it accomplishes this.

And when he addresses the Philippian Christians he says nothing short of this, let this mind be in you who was also in Christ Jesus. And notice how he goes on to say, Lucifer, son of the morning star, said I will climb, I will get higher, I will go up and up and up and up until I'm above the most high. But the mind which is in Christ Jesus comes in the other way.

He already started with an equality with God, but he didn't cling to it. He says I'll become a servant. And he laid aside certain prerogatives of his deity, and he assumed humanity, and he was born of the virgin, and then he became humble and acted like a servant.

A servant to his father, of course, but also a servant of men, even washing their feet. That's not the end of it. He went on to die the death of the cross.

You see it? The mind which was in Christ Jesus is a mind that comes down from its sense of bloated arrogance and pride, whereas the mind of the natural man wants to climb and get higher and be over everybody else, even above the Almighty. Interestingly, from the theological point of view, the first word that describes the major or one of the first terms that would describe one of the first major tokens of this change is the word metanoia, repentance, the Greek word for repentance. And the Greek word for repentance, metanoia, simply means this change of mind.

Change of mind. What kind of a change of mind? Well, first of all, a mind that comes down from where I think I ought to be, wrongly think I ought to be, down in humility, down in penitence, down to a place of submission to God where I want to do His will. Now, the Apostle Paul was very aware of the gravity of the situation of the human heart.

I'm not going to dwell now, my time is going so fast. I can't possibly dwell upon this aspect of it to prove to you that Paul is not dealing, thinking lightly or superficially about this problem. And then on the other hand, the other side of the coin, you read Paul's prayers in the New Testament and you find over and over again that in his prayers he is really expecting the total renewal of the mind, that we may know things that are otherwise unknown.

He says somewhere about knowing the love of Christ, he says, which passes knowledge. He's almost contradicting himself. The love of Christ, he says, passes knowledge.

But now he says, there is a way of knowing that which you can't know. What does he mean? Well, this, you may know all that you think you can know about it, and you're so satisfied with that knowledge and that knowledge is so transforming and sanctifying and ennobling. But when you come to the end of it, always there is more and more and more.

The change envisaged is a remarkable one, just looking through the eyes of the Apostles of the New Testament, what they prayed for their saints and what they expected in Christian believers. Now, I am concentrating on one main thought. The Apostle Paul, in Romans 12 and verse 2, held before the Romans the preciousness of this work in the mind of men as a kind of attraction for every Christian to focus his eyes upon.

I guess Paul, like others of the Apostles, was a very practical man. We think of him largely as a thinker. He was a thinker, of course.

He was a theologian. He was a philosopher. He was a poet.

He was much else. But we need to realize that this man was also very practical, extremely practical. And he seems to imagine the Roman Christians asking him, well, now, you've given us this marvelous letter.

In the beginning, you called upon us to hear the call, or you told us that we had heard the call to belong to Jesus Christ. Now, what difference does it make as far as this problem of the mind is concerned? How is it going to affect our mind? Now, listen to what he says in Romans 12 and verse 2. Then he says, having done something that he's referred to in verse 1, and we'll come back to that in a moment. Then he says, if you do what I ask you, you will be able to test and to approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

Now, that's the NIV. Some of you know it better in other terms, that you may know what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Now, get that.

What is it that Paul is holding out there? And there's a kind of attraction for those who are asking the question, where do we go from here? What happens if we listen to what you're saying? If we follow your teaching, what will happen? This, he says, you'll know the will of God for you. And many people here are asking today about the will of God for them. And I know that this is oversimplifying it, but may I dare suggest to you that this is the heart of the matter.

Other things coming, but this is the basic. What is the basic? Well, there's something that you've got to do before. It's in verse 1. I'm not coming to it yet.

And when you do that, you will know the will of God. Not only that, you will not only be able to know it, but to approve it. Now, this is marvelous.

Inwardly, you'll be able to approve it, and you will be able to discover as you walk in it and accept it that this is God's good. This is God's perfect. This is God's acceptable will.

It's exactly what you were made for in the first place and what you've been redeemed for in Christ and indwelt for by the Holy Spirit. The will of God is good and acceptable and perfect. And you'll know it if you do what I ask you to do.

Your mind will recognize in it the perfect will of God. This is Eden in reverse, you see. This is paradise regained on the personal level.

It is nothing short of a complete metamorphosis, transfiguration of the mind. What was upside down has been put right side up. But now, says Paul, you've got to pay for this.

There's no way into the enjoyment of the knowledge of God's will, there is no way into it that is not going to cost you. And this is the way he puts it. Let me read.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, he says, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind and then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, His good, pleasing and perfect will. Now, what I want to stress at this point is this.

In order for the mind of the individual Christian to be brought back onto its proper keel, to think God's thoughts with him and after him, to accept the truth that God gives, to know God and know His will and enjoy it and be able to live and die in it, you've got to do something, says Paul, and it's this. You've got to hand over your body as a living sacrifice. Your body, yes.

Now, I've not gone off my subject, please. I'm right on on the ball. I'm talking about the mind, but it has to do, I'm talking about the body here, but it has to do with the mind.

I'll show the significance. If you want to have a mind that is capable of discerning God's will and enjoying God's will and capable of doing God's will, you've got to do something about the body, says Paul, and what you've got to do will involve a sacrifice. Now, you'll read any commentary on this and they'll tell you that these two verses are absolutely bathed in sacrificial language.

I have no time to explain how in detail, safe to say this, that really we have exactly the same imagery here as you have in the Old Testament when the priest brings a lamb or a sheep or a goat or some other animal and he offers it upon the altar to be, what, not on show, but to be sacrificed. Sacrificed. And what Paul says is this, look, as the priest in the Old Testament brought that sacrifice and put it on the altar to be sacrificed, you have got to take your body and you've got to put your body right on the altar.

What for? Now notice the difference. Not to be killed, but as a living sacrifice. What does that mean, you say? Well, it means this.

You don't put your body on the altar in order to be slain, that somebody should put a knife in you and you'd be slain there and then, but you put your body on the altar as an indication of the fact that you want to use that body for the glory of the Savior in the service of your God as a living sacrifice. And that in the body you are going to offer the sacrifices of your physical strength and all that relates to the body, you're going to offer the body and all its capacity to God. Now, says someone, I'm terribly puzzled.

Your sermon this morning is awfully confusing. You started off talking about the mind and the subject is Jesus Christ is Lord of the mind. How on earth, how on earth is this related to the mind? We know the brain is part of the body, but what's the connection? My friends, the connection is here and I'm not going to be long with it, but I tell you, it's very, very crucial.

You cannot know the full renewal of the mind as the Bible conceives of it, whilst your body is so-called your own. It's got to be in the hands of the Savior. You say, how on earth can that be? What's the point of it? What's the reason for it? The renewal of the mind begins when God does a work of grace in our hearts.

Paul is addressing people here who are justified, they're forgiven. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to them. They belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and they are united in life to Him like the branch to the vine, so that they share in His death and in His resurrection.

A man in Christ, that person is a person who has the Holy Spirit in him. Romans 5 and Romans 8, also in 6. Now, says Paul, that's how the renewal of the mind begins, by your being joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, like a branch in the vine, and His life begins to penetrate into you. His mind becomes yours as His Spirit becomes yours.

That's how the renewal of the mind begins. It is by the Spirit and your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Okay.

What's the body got to do with it? There are two, there are three really, but two I'm going to refer to now. Main hindrances to the ongoing work of the renewal of the mind. Now, you all know about it and you all experience it as I do.

What is it that hinders the work of God in the inner man, in my mind and in yours? One, the influence of the world outside of us. Isn't that so? Anybody who doesn't agree to that, put your hands up. The influence of the world outside of us and the influence of the old nature within us.

Now, how can we deal with these two? If we want the mind to be renewed so that we think God's thoughts after Him and we can understand things through the eyes and with the mind and help of God and see God's point of view and know affinity and fellowship with God in the way we think and in the way we live. How does this relate to it? Let me put it to you like this. How does the influence of the world get into the mind, into the inner man? Well, by the senses.

How does the world outside and its philosophy and its influence, how does it get into me? I'll tell you, through my senses. It comes in through the eyes. What I look at, what I read, what I watch.

It gets in through the ear gate, what I listen to. Sometimes it gets in through the mouth gate, what I eat and what I drink. It can affect my mind, oh yes.

Sometimes touch and so forth. But now, listen, if the body and its senses are already busy, devoted to be a living sacrifice for King Jesus, for the Lord Jesus, and the world comes up with its pictures and is trying

to get in through my eyes, I say to the world, sorry, my eyes are not yours. My eyes belong to King Jesus.

I can't look at that. And when the world comes bombarding with its philosophy of one kind or another, be it materialism or anything else, and it says, listen to this, listen to this, listen to this, and I say to the world, world, my ears are not available for that. I've put my body on the altar to be a living sacrifice for my Lord.

Do I need to go further? The world cannot get in, my friend, when your body's on the altar and active in the work of your King. The key to your mind, the bombarding of the mind is the body and its senses, and the gates into the soul. And if every gateway is barred because we are given to the Savior, then the world can't get in.

What are you reading these days? You need to go over your library books and check them out and get rid of some of them. What are you singing these days? Check up your words. Have a good look.

Do some of them need winnowing? Some of them need the fire, the pit. Now don't you tell me I'm being narrow-minded. I am being narrow-minded.

I'm trying to be as narrow as the Word of God requires it. Now let me move to the other side, and we're drawing to a close. The world cannot get in through the eye gate and the ear gate and the mouth gate or any other gate if my body is given as a living sacrifice to my Lord, to live for Him as an ongoing process.

What about the old nature in me? You know anything about the old nature? Do you have any passions, any lusts? Or not like some of those that we read of in Romans 1? What about the lust for money? What about the lust for power and position? Oh boy, don't we have it? How do these lusts express themselves? They clamor for the use of the body, the use of the tongue, the use of the eye, the use of the mind. They clamor for one way of expression or another, and they want this organ of the body or that organ of the body, whatever it is. But you see what happens? If the body is already in the King's use, if the body is already on the altar, if the body is already given, if the body is already in the use of the Lord, the Lord Jesus, then the body is not available for the flesh.

The body is not available for illicit passion. The body is not available because we are dead to sin and alive to Christ. Let's pause theology.

He puts it at the end of chapter 13 in the verse which J.B. Phillips translates like this, Let us be Christ's men from head to foot and give no chance to the flesh to have its fling. The King James says, Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust. What does he mean by this? Put your body on the altar and let the Lord have it and use it.

Now men and women, I'm coming to brass tacks this morning. Who's got your body? Who owns your body? I'm after the lordship of the mind. But in vain do we plead for the lordship of Christ in the mind, if the areas that pollute the mind are open to come in through the body day after day, day after day, night after night, from this direction and that.

So you see we've got to get a step further back. Who's got your body? Is it on the altar? There are many of you young people, you just have never known the thrill of the Christian life. You've never known the power of the Holy Spirit.

You've never known intimacy with God. You know why? Your bodies are in your own hands. And there are many older Christians here in Knox that have never touched reality.

Oh, I'm being terribly judgmental. I fear it's true. You know why? Basically it is the same reason.

Your body is in your own hand and you're coddling it as if it were the one thing that matters in life. Nothing else matters, just the body. And the devil's knocking at the door and the world comes clambering into your mind and you think like the world and the flesh gets hold of any organ of the body and uses it to an evil advantage.

What then must we do? How do we close? What's the practical implication of this? Come, I close like this. Listen to Paul. I beseech you therefore, brethren, he's talking to Christians, by the mercies of God.

His infinite mercies creating you, sustaining you, keeping you in life, but above all giving his son to die for your salvation. And keeping that work of grace going on in you, though sometimes you're your worst enemy and you do the very things that are wrong and yet God keeps the work of grace going in you so that you're in this house worshiping today. Heaven only knows where you were last night and where your heart was last night, but you're here this morning under the sound of God's Word.

It's because of his mercy. If the influence of some of the films some of us were looking at last night, if the influence of some of the people we were with last night was to carry us to their logical conclusion, where would we be this morning? But the mercy of the Lord has brought us here. So what? This.

Hand over your body as a living sacrifice, a sacrifice in which you mean to live day by day. Hand it over deliberately, an act that may need to be renewed every day of your life, I don't know, but hand it over to become the exclusive property of the one who is pledged to renew your mind after the image of God as seen in himself. We'll be singing in a moment when I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died.

My richest gain, I count that loss and poor contempt on all my pride. Will you survey that cross with me for a moment? There on the cross of Calvary, Jesus gave his body and his blood for your salvation. He set his mind upon it in a distant eternity and he refused to turn back.

Nothing frightened him. He went on and on until he cried, it is finished. He claims the right to rule your mind and to possess your body.

Jesus yielded his head to the crown of thorns, his face to the spittle, the buffeting, and the bloody sweat of his dying agony. He asks for you to use your head, your mind, your ears, your mouth, your lips, your whole body for him. Jesus gave his arms and his hands and his shoulders to bear the cross and to be nailed for you, and he gave his back to receive those angry furrows that were as massive wheels ere he touched the cross.

Today he asks you to give him your strong shoulders to bear such burdens as he gives you, and your arms and hands to serve his purposes right here in the world. He gave his body, he gave his breath, he gave his blood for you. I'm sorry I can't hold it in.

He gave his blood for you. Will you not now acknowledge his blood-bought right to your body, your breath, and if needs be, your blood? Jesus requires that you voluntarily hand over the control of your body to him in order that he should daily renew your mind, and with the renewal of your mind enable you to know God's will and delight in it and live for it as long as days are given you in this world, and then as he takes you to be with himself. Will you make that seat you're sitting on your altar? I'm serious.

I'm standing, you're sitting. Will you make that seat you're sitting on right now an altar? Will you sincerely say to the one who died for you and bought you, I hand over my body to live for you? Will you do that now? Then do it. Just do it.

When you get away from this service, write a little note and say, today, April the 28th, 1982, in the morning service at Knox Presbyterian Church, I obeyed the injunctions of the Apostle Paul in Romans 12, 1 and 2, and henceforth I'm looking forward to the knowledge of God's will and the enjoyment of being able to do it every day. It is good, acceptable, and perfect, and let me know about it, and we'll pray together and chat together if needs be.

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