

The Lordship of Christ

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the lordship of Christ and surrendering to His will, demonstrating total commitment through trust, faith, and surrender.

Duration: 40:35

Scripture: Ruth 1:16-17, Psalm 27:4, Psalm 119:116, Matthew 6:33, Luke 9:57-58, Philippians 3:13-14, Revelation 3:16

Topics: "Lordship Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the importance of making a total commitment to God. He references the story of Ruth from the book of Ruth in the Bible. The preacher highlights the excuses that people often make to delay or avoid following God's call, such as being preoccupied with worldly possessions or personal desires. He emphasizes that seeking the kingdom of God should be the top priority in our lives, even though it doesn't guarantee a life free from problems. The sermon encourages listeners to have the same level of dedication and loyalty to God as Ruth had, declaring 'Where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay; your people will be my people, and your God my God.'

Transcript

A short devotional message. I'm sure that many of you will hear it. It worked very hard.

And so, would you turn with me just to the book of Ruth, the first chapter of the book of Ruth, and it'll just be a little change of pace. We won't be thinking about the test of life tonight. Ruth, chapter one, and I'm going to begin reading at the first verse.

Ruth, one and one. Now, it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled that there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife, Naomi, and the name of his two sons, Malon and Chiliran, heirs of Bethlehem, Judah.

And they came into the country of Moab and continued there. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left and her two sons. And they took the wives of the women of Moab.

The name of the one was Corpah, and the name of the other Ruth, and they dwelled there about ten years. And Malon and Chiliran died, also both of them, and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab.

For she had heard of the country of Moab, how the Lord had visited his people and given them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her, and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi set up her two daughters-in-law, who will return each to her mother's house.

The Lord deals kindly with you as he has dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grants you that you may find rest, each of you, in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept.

And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Sure and again, my daughters, why would you go with me? Are there yet any sons in my womb that they may be your husbands? Sure and again, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband all but tonight, and should also bear sons, would ye tarry for them till they were grown? Would ye save for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters, for agreement be much for your sake, though the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.

And they lifted up their voice and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth slayed unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods.

Return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee. But whither thou goest, I will go.

Where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, thy gods my gods. Where thou guidest, will I guide.

There will I be buried. The Lord do so to me and more also, if Orpah doth part thee and me. When she saw that she was just as badly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them. And they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Myra, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi? Seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me. So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabiteth her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab.

And they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest. When I get to heaven, I plan to apologize to Naomi. I have often spoken on her and used her as an illustration of a backslider.

She went out full, and the Lord brought her home empty. The backslider shall be filled with his own ways, etc., etc. But I'm not so sure tonight that Naomi is a good illustration of a backslider, and I'll tell you why.

Her life really had an impact on Ruth. There was something about the life of Naomi that made Ruth want to be like her. That leads me to believe that Naomi's Bible wasn't found in Persian Morocco, or even in polyester, but in shoe leather.

I think she lived out her faith, don't you? It makes me think of two airport officers. One of them was a very consistent Christian. He had a very low profile.

He wasn't particularly a confronter or anything like that, but he lived a consistent Christian life. And there was another fellow there in the squadron, and he was a blatant agnostic. And this Christian really got on his nerves, because there was a spirit of God coming, and he determined that he was going to get this Christian.

So, one day they were straddling together, just the two of them, and this agnostic brought out all his big guns, as it were. He brought out all his agnostic guilt and denial, and he just overwhelmed that poor Christian fellow with all his philosophic arguments and all the rest. And he left him proud that he had carried off the honors of poor Christian fellow, just wasn't able to answer him.

But, the agnostic went to his quarters that night and felt quite defeated. You know why? He couldn't answer the fellow's Christian life. He could meet him, he could beat him with all the arguments, but the life was still there, scaring him in the face.

Really, this is what tells from God in an age of fact, isn't it? What you and I are is a lot more important than anything we will ever do or say. I don't mean that the testimony of our life shouldn't be combined with the testimony of our lives. Of course it should, but there are far more expectations to Godly living in the New Testament than there are to witnessing for Christ, and we need both.

What did Ruth see in Naomi? I think she saw a real mother in Israel. I think she saw a woman in whose life the Lord made a real difference, and created a first in Ruth's life that she might be obsessed. And now Naomi is saying to her daughters-in-law, don't come with me to Bethlehem, you know.

Just stay and find rest here in the country of Horeb. I mean, she said, find rest, you know. Get another husband and settle down.

That's really what it meant. That's what the expression means. And Horeba did.

Horeba stayed. She didn't need much persuasion. But it brought Ruth to this noble statement that we have in chapter 1, beginning in verse 16.

Probably one of the greatest statements of total commitment in the entire Old Testament. We talk about lordship, acknowledging the lordship of Christ. If I'm going to acknowledge the lordship of Christ, I tell you, Ruth's statement here gives me a very good pattern to follow.

It really does. Let's think of it item by item. First of all, she said, entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee.

Don't even suggest the idea that you and I will be separated. Isn't that beautiful? You know, so many today are filled with excuses. The call of God comes to them.

The lordship of Christ comes standing at their door, and people say, let me first go home and bury my father. That's what the young man actually said to the lordship, wasn't it? Let me first go home and bury my father. Is there anything to bury your father? No, there's nothing wrong with it, but I don't think the father had died yet.

I don't think he was even terminal yet. I don't really. I think that the young man was saying, let me go home and just wait until my father dies, and then I'll follow you.

Dear friends, some fathers have extreme longevity, and sometimes they outlive their sons, and it's really a foolish thing. A foolish thing. If a man has any thought of serving God, if a woman has any thought of serving God, to put it off to some indefinite future.

Let me first go and bury my father. Somebody else says, let me first go and bid them farewell, to them which are at home. That's a very decent thing to do before you board the plane for the Orient, at least go and say goodbye to your folks.

I know, but we're talking about Middle Eastern farewells that aren't just so long. I mean, these are elaborate ceremonies that stretch into days and perhaps weeks and months. And what that young man was saying, look, I want to put something first before my obedience to your folks.

Let me first. Get it? Me first. The Lord doesn't play that game with men and women.

Another man says, I bought a piece of ground, and I go to see it. I must go and see this piece of ground. That's a lame excuse, isn't it? Some of our excuses are really quite lame.

He might very well have gone and seen the piece of ground before he bought it. Another one says, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I have to prove them. It's amazing when you think of eternity, and you think of the transiency of five yoke of oxen, and you think of the imperial call of Christ.

It's amazing to think that anyone would put five group feet before the call of Christ. And another man says, I've married Christ, and cannot come. The obvious thing is, bring your wife with you.

There's an interesting verse in Psalm 119. I think it's right about 16. It says, God hates the man who is half and half.

And he's not thinking about a dairy product there, either. He's thinking about a person whose motives are mixed. He's got one foot in the world and one foot in the church.

He has desires this way, and he has desires this way. He'd like to serve God, and he wants to serve men. That's strong language, isn't it? God hates the man who is half and half.

And, of course, in the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus says, he will fuel the good form out of his mouth. You see, I believe they are to return from following after they. I believe that the call of Christ comes to every man and woman.

Every young man and every young woman. We don't have to answer. If we don't answer, we'll get others to answer.

But we'll never get a better Christ to follow. Ruth said, where thou goest, I will go. I like that.

Where thou goest, I will go. She'd never been that pathway before. She could have laid on her bed at night and imagined all kinds of undesirable situations where her mind was made up, her will was resolved.

She was going to go with Naomi, whatever the cost might be. It must be very pleasing to the Lord Jesus when he finds people that are saying it. Where thou goest, I will go.

Dear friends, if we go with Jesus, we have to walk in the light. I cannot go on in fellowship with the Lord Jesus if there are rushes and resentments in my life. If I have an unforgiving spirit in my life, if there's

unconfessed sin in my life, I can't go with Jesus.

How can two walk together except they be free? If we walk in the light, he is in the light. We have fellowship, one with another. But I want to tell you that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

And there's nothing under the counter with God. Everything's only open with God. And that's the way I've got to be if I'm going to walk with Jesus.

If I'm going to say to the Lord Jesus, where thou goest, I will go, all those unresolved things in my life have to be straightened out, and I have to be a man walking in the light with him. Secondly, if we go with Jesus, we have to trust his kind. He's not going with us.

We're going with him. And he knows the way. He knows where he wants to go.

And I know. It's really a milestone in the life of a child of God when he can say with Jeremiah, Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in him. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

And you know, I'd just like to speak for our dear young people that are here, not to preach at you, but to share this with you. It's so easy for us in these days to trust the Lord Jesus for our eternal salvation, but to have very strong plans and desires for what we want to do with our own life. One of the greatest days that can ever come into a child of God's life is when he or she bows the knee and says, Lord Jesus, I trusted you for salvation.

I turned my life over to you for salvation, and now I want to turn my life over to you for service. Mind you, they should happen at the same time, but they don't always. They don't always happen at the same time.

Some of us have to go on making a mess of our own lives, and then we come to the place where we think, I'd rather trust his eyesight than trust my own. I'd rather walk in the dark with the Lord than walk alone in the light. I was telling a young follower at a recent conference yesterday here between meetings.

He was so happy he trusted the Lord Jesus as Savior. I said to him, you never know, but the day you turn your life over to the Lord Jesus, a wonderful thing he has in store for you. Did he say anything to that? It's true, it's true.

When we get down and we turn our lives over to the Lord, we commit ourselves a la Ruth. We never know the marvelous things that God has in store for us. I say to the glory of God that I've had a wonderful life.

I really have. I've had a wonderful life. I started off intent on making a lot of money, and things were going very, very well, had a job in a bank, and I had started the salt of the way, and my career was very well in hand.

And then Pearl Harbor came along, and I found myself in a humble stand, and God began to deal in my life. And I'm not going to go into details, but in a dormitory room I was hung a little one night, and I came to the end of it all, and I bowed to the Lord and said, Lord, I believe you've really called me by your grace, and I want you to take this life and do whatever you want with it. And you know, that was one of the wisest things I ever did.

One of the wisest things I ever did. And that day, that night, I was humble. I had no idea of the joys and the pleasures the Lord had in store.

I want to tell you, I wouldn't exchange the intervening years for anything in the world. It was a step of faith. It really was a step of faith.

But it was really very worthwhile. If we go with Jesus, we have to trust his guidance. We have to let him lead the way, believing that his will is good, and acceptable, and perfect.

It really is. If we go with Jesus, we have to walk by faith. We're called to walk by faith, and not by sight.

When we walk by sight, we value material things. When we walk by faith, we look beyond this passing civilization to that which is eternal, and live for those things that are eternal. An older man said that some young men want to never invest in a dying concern.

That's good advice. Never invest in a dying concern. And dear friends, this world is a dying concern.

It's really on its way out. And even men of the world are apprehensive. God is shaking things all about us today so that the things that can't be shaken will remain.

A fool is a man all whose plans end at the grave. The man who walks by faith looks beyond the grave to that which is eternal. He lives with eternity's value in view.

Worldlings prize their gems of beauty, cling to gilded toys of dust. Boasts of wealth, and fame, and pleasure. Only Jesus will I trust.

Whither thou goest, I will go. Instead, he said, where thou watchest, I will watch. And that's right.

I want to live where you live. Where does Jesus live? That's where I want to live. I think of that young man that came to him and said, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

He would wait in him. And at the cost, he said, lobsters, and wolves, and birds of the air have nest, nest, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. And the young man probably said, oh, excuse me, I just remembered something I had to do.

But the last we ever hear of him. The last we ever hear of him. He wasn't willing to share privations with the Christ of God.

He had to have his water fed with the sheep chained every day. I like David's dad. He said, one thing have I desired the Lord, and that's what I want all the days of my life, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, and behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire into his sacred temple.

Watch out for those one thing men in the scriptures, or women. Watch out for these people who have one thing in their mind, and they go after it with all that they have. All to them.

This one thing I do, getting those things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I often think of those two disciples, and they came to the Lord Jesus, and they said, Master, where dwellest thou? Where are you? We want to know where you dwell. And he took them to his side, and they never forgot it.

They said, it was the 10th hour. Later, when they're talking about it, it's the 10th hour. What a privilege to be on the same roof as the Christ of God on that night.

Dear friends, we can do it. We have that privilege too, just by walking with him, and watching where he lies. And I think that's very poignant, the words of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

They said, abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far extant. I like that. I often say that, and I think of this dispensation ebbing out, you know? Kind of the Lord drawing near.

Abide with me, for it is toward evening, and the day is far extant. Where thou lodgest, I will lodge. And then Ruth said, thy people shall be my people.

Beautiful. She was a, she was a Gentile, really under the curse of God. She was a molded Catholic.

And here she comes in contact with the Jewish people, the people of Israel, and she says, thy people shall be mine. It's a big step. I have no doubt that some of you here in the meeting tonight faced that traumatic, traumatic experience of taking a stand for Jesus Christ that separated you from your own people.

I don't belittle that. The severing of tender, earthly ties, the tears of a mother, and the fury, perhaps, of a father. You've left your parents' religion.

It's a big step, and many are taking it today. It means casting in your lot with God's people, defied by the world, but the excellence of the earth for all that. Years ago, I tucked in my Bible a little quotation by Charles Gideon.

He said, from the first day I set off to the present hour, I have been as highly favored as a moral and sinful being can well be. My intercourse has been with the excellence of the earth, and every one of them striving to the utmost of their power to show me kindness for the Lord's sake. You know, that is a statement of what it's like to be a Christian.

From the first day I set off to the present hour, I have been as highly favored as a moral and sinful man can be. My intercourse, my fellowship, has been with the excellence of the earth, and every one of them striving to the utmost of their power to show me kindness for the Lord's sake. So, it's a two-faced point.

It means the trauma of separating from tender earthly ties, and it means the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ and of his beloved people. It means feeling closer to brothers and sisters in Christ, often times, than you do to your own relatives. How many of you have had that experience? To your own relatives, your loved ones, that's still there, those natural ties, and yet people you know in the Lord are just as close to you as the breath that you breathe.

Jesus, thy God, shall be my God. Now, that's a big step up. I don't know what the religion in Moab was like at that time, but I'm sure there were a lot of idols, I'm sure there were a lot of ornate temples, and I'm sure they had their own ritual that was very pleasing to the flesh, and Ruth had to leave the religion of her childhood to associate with Naomi.

And, you know, she had to do something else. She had to make a clean break. And, I'd just like to pause to say something about that, because I'm afraid that in modern day evangelism, or much of modern day evangelism, people are not being led to make a clean break.

I don't want to be indelicate, but you know, we have the problem out on the West Coast now. I hope it's not like this in Dallas, but we have the problem of singles and married and newlyweds, and women living together outside of bonds and marriage. And, you know, some of them come, and I think part of their

being is under the conviction of sin, although they don't show it too much, and they want to get saved.

They want to get saved, but they don't want to break their relationships. They don't want to get married. There's no clean break.

I don't think the Bible holds any encouragement for salvation in those terms, do you? I mean, where's the repentance of sin in a situation like that? It only hardens a person in their iniquity to suggest that they can receive Jesus, the Lord and Savior, and go on living in a sinful relationship. Ruth made a clean break, and so should we today. And, once again, I come to this, that there was something about Naomi's life that made Ruth want Naomi's God, and I have to search my own heart.

There's something about my life that makes those people in my apartment building want my God to be their God, and I don't feel very happy about it. Years ago, I wrote in front of my Bible a little jingle that said, If of Jesus Christ their only view may be what they see of him in you, McDonald's, what do they see? I've searched me ever since. If so, what do they see? There's an interactive connection between some persons in John's Gospel.

At the first epistle of John, in John's Gospel, it says, No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath fully declared him. No man hath seen God at any time.

Jesus reveals him. But then, when you come to 1 John, he says, No man hath seen God at any time. And then he goes on to speak about loving one another and showing the marks of a true Christian.

And the idea is, people ought to see God today through us. Jesus is no longer here on earth, and we are to take the place and reveal God. Do our lives attract people to Christ? We are really living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men.

And then Ruth says, Where thou diest, will I die. She wanted to be identified with Naomi, even in death. Trouble, trouble committed.

There you have it. She wanted to be identified with Naomi in death. And you know, that's what we should be saying in Believer's Baptism.

If we stand on the waters of Believer's Baptism, we're saying, Where thou diest, will I die. There will I be buried. I'd like to ask you today, have you ever been baptized? You are a believer in the Lord Jesus.

Have you ever been baptized? In the New Testament, they practiced instant baptism. There was never a gap between profession and baptism. It really separated the men from the boys.

It would be a good thing if we got back to that stage, too. And I think it would help to diminish this wave of false profession. Have you ever been baptized? You say, yes, I've been baptized.

I have a second question for you. Are you living the baptized life? You say, what do you mean by that? I thought that was the end of it, being baptized. No, baptism isn't the end of it.

It's only the beginning. The baptized life is the life of a person who lives as one who has died as him, and is alive to God through Jesus Christ. A person who is dead to sin, and dead to public opinion, too.

I like to tell the story of W.P. Nicholson. When he got saved over in Ireland, he got in touch with the Salvation Army. And one of those rough Salvation Army officers said, Do you mean business for God? He said, I think so.

Well, he made a sandwich board for him. And it said on it, dead to public opinion. He said, now go and walk outside with that for two hours.

And Nicholson said, it was one of the best things that ever happened to him. Starting Christian life dead to public opinion. Most of us are too worried about what others think, aren't we? And then he said, where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.

This tickles me, because in other parts of the Bible, people gave instructions that when they died, their bodies or their bones would be carried back home. Jacob said, thou shalt carry me out of Egypt. Remember that? And Joseph said, you shall carry out my bones from him.

Don't bury me here in Egypt. If you get what remains of me, get it up to the land of Israel. Ruth didn't say that.

Ruth didn't say, Naomi, I want to die with you. But when I die, please have my body sent back for burial in Moab. She didn't say that.

She made her team break from Moab, and she was going to be separated from it in life or in death. She didn't say, take me back to Moab. She said, where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried.

And then she confirmed this with an oath, one of these lovely oaths from the Bible. Lord, do so to me, and more also, if aught but death separate thee and me. I want to tell you, those were the words of a woman who meant business.

She didn't have to add those words, but they expressed the intense determination of her heart that this is the way it was going to be. We don't have to use those words, do we? If aught but death part thee and me. In fact, it would be quite out of style for us to use those words, because we know that not even death can separate us from the love of Christ.

And to die is to be with him, to be transported into his very presence. Not even death can separate us from the love of Christ. And so here you have this noble statement by Ruth.

She made her choice, her decision was made. I'd like to ask you a question. Was she foolish, or did she choose the right pathway? Dear friend, by the choice that she made, she became an ancestress of David, and thus of the Messiah as far as his human descent was concerned.

I said before, you never know on the day you commit yourself to the Lord a marvelous thing, he has no reason to despise more of a test woman. I mean, what chance does he see excluded from the congregation of the Lord normally? And yet God overrules, and he says, okay, I heard that, Ruth. I heard what you said, and I'm going to reward you.

Her name existed in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only does she have a happy life, she really did. There's nothing to indicate the contrary in the word of God.

She goes back to Bethlehem Judah, and Boaz finds her fine believing man, and they're married. And she had a wonderful, wonderful life. And, you know, she had the marvelous privilege of having one of the

books of the Bible named after her.

Not bad, isn't it? I could never have dreamed of that in my wildest imagination, but that was part of Ruth's reward. I don't know, but that could never happen to me. Listen.

Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold. Can you figure that out on your little Texas Instruments calculator? It comes to 10,000% interest, which is better than treasury certificates. Shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

That doesn't refer to the obtaining of everlasting life. We get that through faith in the Lord Jesus, but it's entering into everlasting life in its fullness. The reward associated with everlasting life.

The Lord Jesus takes cognizance of every act of dedication, devotion, and commitment to himself, and he's out to reward it. He's committed to reward it. Dear friends, I'd like to just close this evening by saying this.

If you seek the kingdom of God first, you'll soon have problems. You won't be free from problems, but if you seek it second, you'll have nothing but problems, and a miserable life. And the lesson of truth is, make a total commitment to him.

Say, in the words of this lovely verse, it is strictly not to leave thee, but to return from following after thee. Whither thou goest, I will go. Where thou lodgest, I will lodge.

Thy people shall be mine people. Thy God, my God. Where thou diest, I will die.

There will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if I ought but yet part thee and me. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you tonight for this little vignette from the Old Testament Scriptures.

We thank you for this marvelous story, The Dear Believing Woman, living in the times of the Judgment when every man did that which was right in his own eyes. And here was a Gentile maiden whose heart beat true to Jehovah. Father, we thank you for the example of her life.

We thank you for the example of Naomi's life. She so lived before Ruth that Ruth wanted her God, Naomi's God, to be her God. O Father, we pray that you write the lesson deeply in our hearts.

Help us to commit ourselves to your guidance, to do the thing that you want us to do, to go where you want us to go, say and be what you want us to say and be. Give us, Lord, the fruit of a happy, fruitful, fulfilled life in answering the call of Christ. Now, Father, we just want to commit ourselves to the end of this lovely conference.

How good it has been to be together. How we can say to the sons, I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. How sweet to the soul this communion of saints.

To find at the banquet of mercy this room, to feel in communion a foretaste of home. We would commit ourselves to you at this time. And we would pray in the language of Scripture, Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well and pleasing in his sight.

Through Jesus Christ, to whom we glory forever. Amen.

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