

QUESTIONS WE WANT ANSWERED

9 What Is Meant by the Lordship of Christ?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

The Queen of England recently celebrated an important anniversary marking her coronation. It is this queen's custom to open Parliament each year with the words, "My Lords and members of the House of Commons." She addresses first the lords of the realm. That address to the lords present harks back to ancient days when under the king, there was a nobility to whom the king had granted land. A lord was one who had been given a parcel of land by the king. This piece of land was called a domain. It was in turn given to others who were under the authority of this lord, these people were known as vassals. They in turn made use of serfs who were bound to the land as tillers of the soil. Thus, lords were sovereign under the king and their sovereignty extended throughout the domain or area entrusted to them. Hence, they had supreme authority there. They were, "lords."

The Lordship of Christ is a multiplied version of this kind of authority. The verses noted above were written long before the medieval period when there were lords and vassals and serfs. Yet, this recollection may be helpful in our understanding of what is meant by the Christian teaching that Jesus Christ is Lord. He is "Lord" because of the sovereignty and power He is to have over his people. It is never an easy thing to consider the Lordship of Christ. It is a very demanding concept and a decisive one. I make bold to suggest to you this morning that no one has ever experienced real Christianity until the Lordship of Christ has been known. Many there are who say they have tried Christianity and found that it doesn't work. They are wrong. They have not tried the Lordship of Christ, for this has proven to be a workable relationship.

Why is Jesus called Lord? It is because believers belong to Him. What has happened is that they have been purchased. We will take as our text the 20th verse of I Corinthians 6 where Paul states this truth. From these words the following doctrine can be drawn: **Because Jesus Christ purchased us with His blood he has the right of pardon and possession.** Three times over during the past week I have been asked if it is right for a Christian to do certain things. The answer to these questions, upon which even believers cannot agree, lies in the

Lordship of Christ. A given activity is right and proper for a Christian if it does not violate the Lordship of Christ. Order in the Christian life is based upon this authority, otherwise the Christian is a sitting duck for whatever comes along. Consider,

I. THE PREMISE – “*For Ye Are Bought With a Price.*”

A price has been paid. This is the basis upon which our teaching begins. We have been purchased. We are not our own, but we belong to another. Notice,

1. The Price:

The Apostle Paul does not explicitly declare what the price is at this point, but we know from other Scripture that the price was a very great one. It remains for Peter to speak of it clearly in his First Epistle. *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish without spot.”* (I Peter 1:18)

This price which was paid was one of a kind and therefore incalculable in value. It was equal to the value of that which was purchased, the human soul. It is that which separates and causes the great divide between man and brute creation. It is that real person behind those eyes, that face, and personality. It is that which lives on long after the body goes to dust. The Christian teaching is that the life blood of Jesus drained from His body as a sacrifice offered up to God to purchase humankind from the effect and influence of sin in this world.

2. What that Price Effects:

a. First:

It brings about a rescue from the guilt of sin, *“blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”* (Colossians 2:14) An action is never an end in itself, but has consequences. If you are not careful while working on a roof you may fall off and be seriously injured. The action of carelessness will thus have its unfortunate consequences. Now, the action of man in the Garden of Eden was not significant in itself or an end in itself. It had consequences. Consequences which have come rolling down through the centuries to touch our lives today. One

consequence is guilt. We all feel it. It remains from the blood of Christ to rescue us from the guilt of our sin by blotting out our past. The Christian has no past. *“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”*

b. Secondly:

It delivers from the power of sin. *“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace.”* (Romans 6:14) A sinful nature within us exercises its power throughout our activities. It motivates what we do with our bodies and our minds. But Jesus Christ came to rescue us from the authority of this evil. A person who is caught by some besetting sin has hope in Christ. Jesus has the power to strike the shackles from him. Man is made in such a fashion so as to gradually disintegrate or go to pieces, it is just a matter of time. Life seems to go out of control. The redemptiveness of Jesus' Lordship effects a coordination which brings about a harmony and nobility. Jesus Christ came to release us from the power of sin.

c. Thirdly:

There is a rescue from the punishment of sin, which is death. No person has been born without having within a great concern about death. Perhaps there is not one who lives without a measure of fear when it comes to death. Yet Jesus Christ came *“to deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* (Hebrews 2:15) Christ enables His people to live without fear of death. He it is who delivers them from the dread of the grave.

Let it not go unsaid that Christ also delivers us from eternal death which is separation from God. Jesus said, *“If a man keeps my sayings he shall never see death.”* (John 8:51) Surely, one of the great reasons to take Jesus seriously has to be His serious warnings about eternity and the price He paid to bring eternal life to those who would trust Him.

d. Lastly:

There is a deliverance from the hold Satan is able to have upon our lives. Now, Christ did not die to pay Satan anything. We have never belonged to Satan. It is not said anywhere in Scripture that we are the possession of Satan. We have been, however, under His power. He has influenced

our decisions, our actions, our lives. So Christ came to rescue His people by setting them free from demonic influence. So does He enable them to live.

II. THE DEDUCTION – “Therefore Glorify God in Your Own Body and in Your Own Spirits.”

We know very little in these days, thanks to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, of the institution of slavery, which until one hundred years ago cursed this nation, and much more recently a large part of the rest of the world. But time was when human beings were taken from their native countries under unbelievably poor conditions and placed upon auction blocks to be purchased by money. These poor people were sold to the highest bidder. And when they were sold to the highest bidder, they became the property of the one who had bought them, and were at his disposal. He could do with them what he pleased.

1. Jesus Christ has purchased us. Because He has done this, we belong to Him. He owns us. Hence, we are at His disposal. We are no longer free to follow our own pursuits. We are no longer free to follow the propensities of our natures. We are not at liberty to do what we want to do outside of the framework of our love for Him and His Lordship over us. No longer are we at liberty to indulge ourselves freely. In the sense that masters once owned slaves, so the Lord Jesus Christ now owns us, save for this, that Jesus Christ owns us body, soul and spirit which could never be said of a human master.
2. It is very penetrating to note that in the New Testament, research will find not one instance where any person is invited to receive Christ as Savior, before acknowledging Him as Lord. This truth, can be better understood by saying that no one has the right to accept what Christ has done unless they are prepared to acknowledge who Christ is. There are some who believe that faith is not Biblical unless it is first of all associated with Jesus as sovereign. Such a doctrine would soon rid Christianity of so-called “easy believism” which has been so damaging.
3. There is a meaningful story told of the historic battle that took place between England and France in the year 1805. Horatio Nelson, later known as Lord Nelson, was then Admiral of the Fleet. France had been completely conquered. Lord Nelson commanded that the French Admiral be brought at once to his stateroom. As the Frenchman stepped forward to congratulate Nelson on his victory, the Englishman stepped back, and with consummate

dignity demanded: "Sir, your sword first, and then your hand." The incident helps us to understand what is meant by the Lordship of Jesus. Before Christ can extend His hand of blessing and power, He wants our sword. He demands first the weapons of our rebellion and hostility.

III. THE APPLICATION - This Deduction Has Some Very Important Implications:

- 1.** Christian, be glad! Be glad this morning that someone thought enough of you to be so gracious as to rescue you from death, spiritual and eternal. Be glad that you have been delivered from the power of Satan and a nature which can only pull you down. Human love is very precious. You may have warm memories of the love that your parents showered upon you when you were young and in the childhood days. You look back, many of you, with great longing because you were secure in that love. Your parents cared for your needs. They supplied your wants. They did for you what needed to be done. But when you left home you were on your own, you had to do these things for yourself, and at once you became conscious of responsibility and of the great weight of duty which comes with the passing years. Now, the love of Jesus Christ transcends parental love. It goes on to rescue men and women from the sense of hopelessness under responsibilities too heavy for them to bear. O, who can tell the love of Jesus, the love which yearns over us today.
- 2.** You must know that as Jesus Christ has purchased you, He will keep you. This is a very important aspect of this doctrine. There is a comforting verse to be found in Philippians 1:9, "*For I am confident of this very thing that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ.*" When we purchase our homes we do so realizing that we may not keep them for the rest of our lives. But the house is at our disposal and we may do with it what we please. We may do so because we have paid the purchase price. Now, when we were purchased by the blood of Christ no such thoughts were in the mind of God. We are more to Him than what may be disposed of. We are more to him than wood, stone, mortar, nails and shingles are to us. We are His children and possess His very nature. We are His temples wherein He has been pleased to dwell. Therefore, we will be kept.
- 3.** Because we have been purchased by Christ, it is God's business, even more than our own, what becomes of our lives. We live under the delusion that we are free agents, and that it is permitted us to do as we please with our lives.

But when the truth is told we find that we shall have to give accounting for what we have done with our lives, how it is that we have spent and made use of these days, weeks, months and years of our lives. Do we realize that we have no free time. That we are not permitted to go about what we are doing without accountability? Do we realize that day by day as we discharge our duties at work, live before our children, conduct ourselves within the family and engage in the work of the church, associate with friends, that every single aspect of our lives, every single quantum of time belongs to God, and that we are responsible to Him for it? It is His business more than our own what we do with our lives. To impress that upon us we are reminded again and again of the day of accounting.

4. Because we belong to Christ nothing else is to get hold of us. This is the essential teaching of Jesus' Lordship. Nothing else is to direct our actions. These verses are from I Corinthians and the first chapter where Paul deals with sins current in the Corinthian church. Paul explicitly declares that these sins are to be avoided, because nothing else is to have sovereignty over the Christian. He says there is nothing in the world which has not been created by God for some purpose or other. But it may very well be that I am not to make use of some of these things; it may not be expedient for me; it may cause somebody else's hurt; it may injure my testimony.

Furthermore, all things are lawful but because of sin's entrance into human experience, they tend to get hold of a person and to make him habituated to their use. I will shun them too, because I am Christ's. What detracts from His sole Lordship. Many things are good, but oh, how many of them tend to get hold of us to make us their slaves in the place of Christ.

5. Now, we are responsible to God on our own account. No man may tell us how to live. No man can be our conscience. No one may give us a catalogue of things to do or not to do. Yet, we are not free from the analysis of our own conscience and understanding of Scripture. We can ask if there is anything this morning which detracts from Christ's sovereignty over us. Is there anything which keeps us from complete dedication to Him? Is there anything which has us, to which we are habituated, from which we are not able to extricate ourselves. Then we should know that whether we enjoy it or not, or whether in itself it is legitimate or not, it has no place in our lives, because it has mastered us. We have not mastered it. Under what government do we live? Under whose government do we prefer to live? Who do we feel knows

best? Jesus Christ shed His blood and sent His Spirit to give us new life, to give us a new heart and to snap the power of those things which would spoil our lives, and to become our Lord. This is the essential message of Christianity, Jesus is Savior and He is Lord.

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