

## **He Is Christ the Lord**

Names are important, aren't they? All of us have gone by different names throughout our lives. We have one name given us by our parents at birth but we also acquire other names in a variety of ways. Richard Borek, Sr. from our church acquired a new name just last week. He was member of the cast of *The Gift* and, if you attended, you'll remember that there was a place in the drama where Peter denies ever knowing Jesus. As he made his third denial, there was supposed to be a rooster crow sound effect but, in two of the performances, when the sound person hit the button to play the rooster crow, it didn't work! So Richard took it upon himself (twice!) to supply the sound effect live. The other cast members have now lovingly dubbed Richard with the name "Rooster." Some names we're proud of, others we make every effort to hide. But Richard, this is one name you should be proud of!

We come now in this third week of Advent to a third name for Jesus. Again, just like last week, it is more of a title than a name, except that, in this case, it really has become a name by which many people address Jesus, especially in prayer. It is the name/title Lord. Today, we want to examine two issues regarding this name: what the meaning of this name is and secondly, what the message of this name is.

### **I. The Meaning of the Name "Lord."**

The word "Lord" is found in Scripture 6,551 times. That's twice as many times as the word God! One reason for this is that "Lord" in English is used to translate at least three Hebrew names for God: *Yahweh, Adonai and Elohim*. The English word "Lord" only translates one Greek word, which is *kurios*. So, what does this all mean? Well, first, the Greek word "*kurios*" had a common usage as well as a theological usage. It was used as a title of respect for addressing human masters (Matt. 13:27), public officials (Matt. 27:63), and teachers (John 4:11). In English it could also be translated by the word "Sir".

But in theological usage, because the single Greek word "*kurios*" translated several Hebrew names for God, it had four meanings when it was applied to Jesus. These four meanings pointed to "four rights" of the one who carried this name. **First was the right to respect.** If someone held legitimate authority over you, like a king to a subject or a father to his children, you addressed him as "Lord," "Sir." **Secondly was the right to be served.** British servants of that country's aristocracy epitomize this as they address those they serve as "My Lord," "Yes, my Lord" or "Yes, my Lady." **Thirdly, the biblical usage of "Lord" as applied to Jesus also implies the right of disposal.** This seems harsh when applied to a servant, but this is truly a 'right' the title carries. If we use the English Manor example again, the Lord of the Manor had the final say as to whether a servant worked, rested or was dismissed. There's no servants' union in that system. The servants don't come to the Lord of the House and say, "We've taken a vote and have decided that we won't be *servng* dinner tonight.

You'll have to cook it yourself." No, no, that never happened. The Lord of the House always had the final say.

Now, if you grew up in this country, this concept of "the right of disposal" may set your teeth on edge because it is such a strong part of our democracy that "all men are created equal," which is part of the genius of our biblically based constitution. But we need to remember one thing: this phrase does NOT refer to our Lord, Jesus the Christ. He is not like "all men" because He was not "created." So, while we should rightly resist putting ourselves "at the disposal" of any other human being, the same is not true of putting ourselves at the "disposal" of Jesus the Christ. I'll have more to say about that a bit later.

The fourth right of the Lord when applying it to Jesus is the right to rule and hold authority over others. This right is based directly on His deity, the fact that He is God. Remember, the Greek word *Kurios* was used to translate the three highest and holiest Hebrew names for God: *Yahweh* – the name so holy that the Jews wouldn't even pronounce it, *Adonai* – the divine Master name, and *Elohim* – which referred to God as the source of all things.

As time went on, the disciples increasingly addressed Jesus as "Lord" more than any other name – more than "teacher," more than "master," more than "Christ." The gospel of John is constructed, to lead up to Thomas' spontaneous outburst when Jesus shows up and has doubting Thomas put his finger in His wounded side. The text says that Thomas cried out, "My *Kurios* and my *Theos* – my Lord and my God!" (Jn. 20:28). Because Thomas acknowledged Jesus' deity, it was possible for him to fully serve Him as Lord. These then are the four rights which Jesus possesses because He is Lord:

1. The right to respect
2. The right to be served
3. The right of disposal
4. The right to rule and hold authority

This is simply what the title 'Lord' means. Are you granting Him all four of those rights in your life? Next, we must ask...

## **II. What Message Does This Name Carry for Me?**

The second two passages from Luke read earlier are quoting Jesus on this issue of whether or not we are acknowledging these rights of Jesus. First, He says:

**"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Lk. 6:46)**

After seeing what the title "Lord" means, do you see why Jesus asks this? It's an oxymoron. If I call Him Lord which means "boss" or "the one I serve" or "the one who is my legitimate authority," then on what grounds would I ever disobey Him?

Now, we can all think of examples of other disobedient Christians, right? We have 20-20 vision when it comes to how other people live but I don't think that's what Jesus is asking here. He's not saying, "Why do THEY call me 'Lord, Lord.'" He's saying, "Why do YOU call me 'Lord, Lord?'" It's very personal. "Why do you call me boss and not do what I say?" What's His point?

First, let's be clear on what ISN'T His point. This is NOT a salvation issue. Jesus is not talking about how you will know if you are saved or not. Being saved is based on grace through faith. "...it is by grace you have been saved, through faith –"

[Eph. 2:8] All the New Testament writers are crystal clear about this – the work of obedience has nothing to do with being saved!!

Okay, then what is this about? This is about joy. This is about life satisfaction. It's about fruitfulness for the Kingdom. And yes, this is about whether you will have anything to lay at Jesus' feet when you see Him or if you will show up empty-handed.

So, let's talk about joy and satisfaction in life. Do you have any or are you feeling like something BIG is missing? Yes, you believe in Jesus; yes, you know your sins are forgiven and you're going to heaven, but do you ever feel like something's missing, like "Where's the joy"?

Well, you're not alone. A recent Barna Research study found that 78% of self-identified Christians strongly agree that spirituality is very important to them. Yet, only 22% claimed to be "completely dependent on God." Which is probably why 52% (almost exactly the size of the group between those first two statistics) believe that there is much more to the Christian life than what they have experienced. <sup>i</sup>

Let's talk about fruitfulness. Is your life producing spiritual fruit? We sometimes get confused between the "Gifts of the Spirit" and the "Fruit of the Spirit." Each Christian is given at least one gift of the Spirit like hospitality or leadership or mercy. Every Christian gets at least one gift and no Christian gets them all.

But the Fruit of the Spirit is different. The list of nine fruits in Gal. 5 includes: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. But the idea is that EVERY Christian will possess and display ALL NINE FRUITS! So, do you have all nine? If not, have you ever wondered why? Why do so many Christians lack deep joy and satisfaction and a fruitful life?

In Luke 14, Jesus is talking about what it will be like when you are following Him very closely. In verses 25 through 35, He uses three examples of what it will cost you to follow Him. He says it could cost you close relationships, maybe even with family members. It could cost you your reputation and in the end Jesus says:

**In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:33)**

So, this is like a warning label for those who want to be a Christ-follower. Did you take this warning label seriously before you became a Christian? Did anyone even show it to you?

I read a story this week that says that Schutt Sports, which is a major supplier of football helmets for the National Football League, now has placed the following warning label on their helmets. It reads:

**"Warning... no helmet system can prevent concussions or eliminate the risk of serious head or neck injuries while playing football."**

It then lists the symptoms of a concussion and concludes with this statement:

**"TO AVOID THESE RISKS, DO NOT ENGAGE IN THE SPORT OF FOOTBALL."**<sup>ii</sup>

You know what? I think Jesus has pretty much given us the same warning. He said:

**If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ...if they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. (John 15:18, 20)**

I think Jesus is saying the same thing Schutt Sports is saying. "If you want to avoid the risks that I just listed, then don't follow Me! These risks are real and will

probably come your way.” Of course, Jesus also said, “Yeah, there’s risk. Yeah, there’s a cost. But if you will take the risk, you’ll also find something else - life like you never imagined it!” In John 12, Jesus said:

**I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. (John 12:24-26)**

Watchman Nee, a Chinese Christian writer of another era, comments on this passage by pointing out:

Life is in the grain. However, there is a shell outside of the grain, a very powerful shell. As long as this shell does not break open, the grain cannot grow... What is this death? It is the action of the temperature and moisture of the earth upon the grain which results in the breaking of the shell. When the shell breaks, the grain grows... According to the Lord the outer shell is our own life, and the inner life is the eternal life that He dispenses. In order for the inner life to be released, the outer life must suffer loss. If that which is outward is not broken, that which is inward cannot be released. <sup>iii</sup>

In Rom. 7 Paul gives the classic description of his own struggle between his “flesh,” the powerful shell of his outer life and what he literally calls “*the inner man*”:

**For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh... I find then the principle that evil is present in me (in the flesh, the shell around the grain) For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish... For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, (the grain where the Spirit of God dwells), but I see a different law in the members of my body, (the shell) waging war against the law of my mind... (NASB Rom. 7:18, 21, 19, 22, 23)**

So, in Gal. 5, Paul is making this argument about whether we are living by the power of the inner man, which is under the control of the Spirit of God, or by what he calls “the flesh,” which is the shell or our own natural desires. He says:

**But I say, walk by the Spirit (power in the inner man), and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh (power in the outer man).**

And in verse 24 Paul tells us how this is possible:

**Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh (the outer shell, the outer man) with its passions and desires. (Gal. 5:16, 24 NASB)**

There it is! This is the key! And is this a one-time act? No, this is what Jesus was talking about when He said anyone who wanted to follow Him:

**...must deny himself and take up his cross DAILY... (Lk. 9:23)**

We crucify the flesh daily!

By now, I believe you’ve all received the announcement of our Grace and Mercy Celebration Banquet being held next month on Friday night, Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>. As I mentioned in that email, Dr. Clive Calver, Senior Pastor of Walnut Hill Community Church, will be our speaker. Clive recently wrote a book about this very subject entitled, *Dying to Live; The Paradox of the Crucified Life*. In that book, Clive talks about how Christians generally speak only about Christ dying for us and not about

us dying with Him. But this is exactly what Jesus was talking about and what the apostle Paul was explaining in Rom. 6 when he said that our baptism is a demonstration of the fact that we have been baptized into his death (v.4). But then Paul says this: (Rom. 6:6)

**For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin -**

What does it mean that *'our old self was crucified'*? In Clive's book, he tells the story of the British Navy admiral, Lord Nelson, who defeated a French captain in a battle at sea. The captain boarded Nelson's ship expecting to be offered sympathetic condolences and a glass of wine. But before the hospitality could begin, Lord Nelson said, "First, give me your sword." <sup>iv</sup>

Are you expecting joy, satisfaction and fruitfulness in your life with Christ? Have you surrendered your sword or are you still engaged in rebellious skirmishes against His will? Total surrender is the way. There is no other. In Luke 14: 33 where Jesus said, "*...any one of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple,*" the Greek word there doesn't mean "give away" everything. It means "give up control" of everything. Have you done that? Until you give up your sword, you're living out of the power of the outer man not out of the power of the Spirit in the inner man. "*Unless the seed falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone.*"

A woman in Bethany came to Jesus and demonstrated that she was giving up control of everything by anointed Him with her flask of very expensive perfume. It says that when she did that, "*...the house was filled with the fragrance...*" (Jn. 12:3) Watchman Nee makes this comments:

Whenever you meet... someone who has gone through experiences with the Lord that have brought limitation, and who, instead of trying to break free... has been willing to be imprisoned by him and has thus learned to find satisfaction in the Lord and nowhere else – then immediately you become aware of something. Immediately your spiritual senses detect a sweet savor of Christ. Something has been crushed, something has been broken in that life, and so you smell the [fragrance]... Let me tell you dear friends, you cannot produce such impressions of God upon others without the breaking of everything, even your most precious possessions, at the feet of the Lord Jesus... That kind of life creates impressions, and impressions create hunger, and hunger provokes men to go on seeking until they are brought by divine revelation into fullness of life in Christ. <sup>v</sup>

Jesus said that the one who saves his life (the outer shell of "me-in-control") will lose it, but the one who loses his life, who surrenders his sword and gives all control to the Spirit, will find it. We cannot truly call Jesus "Lord" until we finally surrender all to Him. That's the only path to real joy, satisfaction and fruitfulness. You're forgiven? Great! But have you laid down your sword? Lord Jesus is ready, willing and able to fill your life with joy, deep peace and explosive fruitfulness. But first He needs your sword. Will you surrender it today? Let's pray...

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<sup>i</sup> Barna Group, “Self-Described Christians Dominate America but Wrestle with Four Aspects of Spiritual Depth,” Sept. 13, 2011

<sup>ii</sup> From the homepage for Schutt Sports, Schuttsports.com

<sup>iii</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit* (Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1997), p. 8, 9

<sup>iv</sup> Clive Calver, *Dying to Live* (Colorado Springs: Authentic Publishing, 2009), p. 35

<sup>v</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1978), p. 281, 282