

**Articles and Sermons :: Yielded To The Lordship Of Christ -olford****Yielded To The Lordship Of Christ -olford - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/10/22 16:58****Yielded To The Lordship Of Christ***by Stephen F. Olford*

The central message of the Bible is that "Jesus Christ is Lord." All of history moves to that moment, in God's timing, when every creature will declare that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11).

If we start with that presupposition, then it follows that the crisis of yieldedness in the Christian's life is surrender to the lordship of Christ. To think and work this through, let us turn to the opening verses of Romans 14, where Paul's aim was to silence a dispute threatening the church at Rome. The two vexing questions upon which a difference of opinion had arisen were the keeping of the Sabbath and the eating of certain meats.

Without attempting to defend or condemn the opposing groups, Paul taught that the final solution to all matters of faith and conduct was submission to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. Where Christ was Lord of thinking, speaking and acting, there would be a corresponding oneness in the life of the church. Thus he reaches a climax where he declares, "For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord" (v. 9). To understand this issue of yieldedness we must note carefully:

**The Rights Of Divine Lordship**

"To this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord" (v. 9). The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are associated inseparably with His lordship. Indeed, we completely misunderstand the purpose of our Savior's redemptive work if we lose sight of the fact that He died and rose in order that "He might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (v. 9). So Paul asserts in unmistakable terms that:

**As Lord, Christ Alone Has  
The Right To Purchase Us**

"To this end Christ died...that He might be Lord" (v. 9). Already in this epistle Paul has declared that we are "carnal, sold under sin" (7:14); but the wonder of the Gospel is that seeing us in this condition, the Lord Jesus came from heaven's glory to redeem and set us free. In order to do this, however, He had to purchase us and make us His very own, for only in Christ can any man be set free.

It is not without significance, therefore, that the idea inherent in the word Lord is ownership or proprietorship. So Paul reminds us that we belong to "the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28); and again, "You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20). Peter also recalls that we "were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold...but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). It is clear, then, that Jesus died to purchase us completely.

So as we consider ourselves in the totality of our faculties, we are obliged to acknowledge that there is no part of us that has not been bought outright. Christ alone owns our eyes to view His world. He alone owns our hands to serve His will. He alone owns our feet to walk His way. He alone owns our minds to think His thoughts. He alone owns our hearts to love Him fervently. He alone owns our personalities to radiate His charm and glory. Failure to recognize this is a refusal to recognize His sovereignty.

**As Lord, Christ Alone Has  
The Right To Pardon Us**

"To this end Christ died and rose" (v. 9). Earlier in this epistle Paul has affirmed that Christ "was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Rom. 4:25). During His life and ministry here on earth, Jesus demonstrated His right to pardon men and women. Recall the occasion when the paralyzed man was borne by four men to the house where Jesus was preaching. They uncovered the roof, lowered the infirm man, and laid him at Jesus' feet.

et. And we read, "When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you'" (Mark 2:5). When His authority to forgive sins was challenged by the scribes who were sitting there, He declared, "The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2:10).

It is out of love and compassion that your sins and mine have been forgiven. Because of these mercies it is only our reasonable service to surrender our all to our Lord and Savior. This is what Paul underscores in Romans 12:1, where he writes, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

"As Lord, Christ Alone Has  
The Right To Possess Us

"To this end, Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord" (v. 9). His living here means the entering into that heavenly life after His human death. By virtue of that resurrection life, He can now penetrate and possess our personalities through the Holy Spirit, and so live again in us.

In certain circumstances there is no more dangerous area than a vacant lot or house. It is the trouble spot for seducers, murderers, robbers, and fornicators. Likewise, there is no more dangerous area in a person's life than the one that is not committed to the sovereignty of Christ. God created men and women to be inhabited, and until the Lord Jesus possesses us, we are open to all manner of satanic attacks.

It was because Peter had refused the way of the cross that he ultimately collapsed under pressure and denied his Master with oaths and curses. Jesus had to turn to him and say, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. 16:23).

It was because Ananias and Sapphira had not enthroned Jesus as Lord that there was a bridgehead for Satan to enter and fill their hearts with duplicity and deceitfulness. You will remember the searching word to each of them was, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3-4).

The Bible gives no hope to any man or woman who does not know Jesus Christ as Lord. As we have observed already, a life that is not possessed by God is open to the control of the Devil. It is only a matter of time before the behavior of that person will manifest the evidences of satanic intrigue and intention. This is why it is so important to state quite categorically that when Jesus Christ possesses us as Lord, He does so with utter completeness; or to put it in the words of Hudson Taylor, "Jesus Christ is either Lord of all or not Lord at all." To be halfhearted in this matter of personal dedication to the sovereignty of Christ is tantamount to the repudiation of His sovereign authority.

This leads us to consider, in the second place:

The Realms Of Divine Lordship

"If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (v. 8). It is plain from these words that in life we are responsible to the lordship of Christ, while in death we are accountable to the lordship of Christ; so that whether we live or die, we can only move within the orbit of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. Let us look at this a little more closely.

In Life We Are Responsible  
To The Lordship Of Christ

"Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of...the living" (v. 9). One of the great problems in the church today is that of irresponsible living. It is the result of misinterpreting the doctrine of grace. By preaching cheap grace, we have produced a generation of antinomianists, or lawless ones. Paul, however, makes it plain that one of the functions of the grace of God is to discipline us to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:12).

Such grace involves living a life indwelt and controlled by Jesus Christ. Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who

o loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). And then he adds, "I do not set aside the grace of God" (Gal. 2:21).

Such a Christ-indwelt life is the utter antithesis of self-centeredness. The question never arises as to what I think, what I speak, or what I do; the issue has been decided once and for all: "No longer I...but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

#### In Death We Are Accountable To The Lordship Of Christ

"Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of...the dead" (v. 9). Death is not the cessation of life; it is only a change of life. When a person passes from this scene, he is ushered immediately into the august presence of his Lord. Paul describes this state as being "absent from the body and...present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

But more than this, there is a day coming when "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). The apostle amplifies this in the passage before us, where he quotes our Lord as saying, "'As I live...every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:11-12).

Before that judgment seat we shall have to answer for service we have rendered, as well as the motivations that have inspired such service. Every life that is lived under the control of the sovereignty of Christ will receive the unqualified "well done" of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, every life that is lived under the mastery of self will suffer unspeakable loss. In the graphic language of 1 Corinthians 3, it will either be "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw" (v. 12).

So we see that, whether dead or alive, Jesus Christ must be Lord. That brings us to the third consideration:

#### The Rules Of Divine Lordship

"Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord" (v. 9). When we examine the context, it is evident to us that Paul has both a prophetic as well as a present application in view when he speaks of every knee bowing and every tongue confessing to God (v. 11). The apostle still has in mind the issues of mutual recognition and personal toleration. This is why he asks, "Why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (v. 10).

The reason, surely, is plain. This matter of submission to the lordship of Christ relates to all aspects of life. There are rules of divine sovereignty, and they are succinctly comprehended in two all-embracing obligations:

#### There Must Be Unconditional Submission To Christ In All Relationships Of Life

"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to " (v. 11). As we have noted, this is a prophecy of what is going to happen in heaven, on earth, and under the earth in a day yet to come. All angelic hosts will own Christ as Master. Every man, woman, and child will bow to that sovereignty, and even in hell Satan, with all his powers and principalities, will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).

However, there is a present application of this truth, and we need to understand it and then to heed it. Mere talk about the lordship of Christ in some abstract or nebulous fashion is pointless. If Jesus Christ is Lord, then this will be evident in the sphere in which every Christian is to be found.

#### Christ Will Be Lord In The Home

Addressing husbands and wives, parents and children, Paul says, "submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21). This calls for the loving submission of the wife to the husband, the loving consideration of the husband to the wife, the loving concern of the parents for the children, and the loving obedience of the children to the parents. Jesus Christ is Lord where these relationships are under the control of a sovereign Lord. If only we knew this in terms of practical experience, all our basic problems in the home would virtually vanish.

#### Christ Will Be Lord

## In The Church

Speaking to church members, the writer to the Hebrews exhorts, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account" (Heb. 13:17). Here is an area that is utterly disregarded in most of our churches today.

By the infiltration of a false concept of democracy and worldly government, we have nullified God's purpose in the local congregation. The consequences are that we have produced a state of anarchy. Like the days of spiritual declension in the Old Testament times when there was no king in Israel, sadly it has to be stated that "everyone what right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6).

There can be no doubt, however, that God's intention is that the sovereignty of Christ should be recognized in the pastoral leadership of the church, working out through the appointed elders and deacons. Only when such divine authority is respected and obeyed will unity, blessing, and abundant life be enjoyed throughout the membership.

## Christ Will Be Lord In The State

Peter exhorts, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good" (1 Peter 2:13-14).

Every Christian should recognize that there is no power that is not ordained of God. A study of Romans 13 makes this unmistakably clear. In the measure, therefore, in which such authority is in accord with the will of God, the Christians is to comply without complaint or reserve. What a difference this would make in the relationships of the vocational world, the educational world and the governmental world of our day! This is God's purpose for every life, and we miss the blessing when we fail to submit.

So we see that there can be no question as to what we mean by an unconditional submission to Christ in all the relationships of life.

## There Must Be An Unashamed Confession Of Christ In All Relationships Of Life

"Every tongue shall confess to God" (v. 11). Once again, these words refer to that glorious day when "every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). In the meantime, we are called upon to glorify our God in the present relationships of life, as we confess the Savior as Lord without shame, sham or shrinking.

Earlier in the epistle Paul states that if we confess with our mouths the Lord Jesus and believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead, we will be saved (see Romans 10:9). We must remember, however, that salvation is not only an initial act of God in us, but also a continual activity of God through us.

The apostle goes right on to say that the unashamed confession of Christ in all the relationships of life is an outreach of evangelism, even to the ends of the earth. This is why he asks, "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15). The answer, of course, is that they cannot be sent until Jesus Christ is Lord. So God waits for that redeemed remnant in every age who are going to say and mean, "Jesus Christ is Lord."

Are you prepared to look up into the face of Jesus Christ and say,  
Lord of every thought and action,  
Lord to send and Lord to stay;  
Lord in speaking, writing, giving,  
Lord in all things to obey;  
Now and evermore to be.

E. H. Swinstead

Nothing less than this is submission to God's sovereignty.