

I Believe

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
(Genesis 1:1 ESV)*

*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
(Hebrews 11:6 ESV)*

*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God,
that you may know that you have eternal life.
(1 John 5:13 ESV)*

Our Lord

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Philippians 2:5-11

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Introduction:

Good morning everyone! I hope you have your Bible with you and that you are able to open it now to Philippians 2 verses 5-11. We continue today to work our way through this middle section of the Apostles' Creed. As we mentioned last week, 70 of the 110 words of the Creed have to do with JESUS – and that makes sense because Jesus is the Gospel. Jesus is WHO we need to know and WHAT we need to know in order to be saved. And part of what we need to know is that Jesus is Lord. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 10:9

“if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9 ESV)

So, this is a big deal, right here.

According to the Apostle Paul understanding that Jesus is Lord – and confessing that Jesus is Lord is THE ESSENCE of what it means to become a Christian. So we're pretty close to the heart of the heart of the heart of the whole matter. We'll talk this morning about what it means to call Jesus OUR LORD – what that entails, what all is involved with that - and then we'll talk for

a few minutes about how we should respond. Hear now the Word of the Lord beginning at verse 5 of Philippians chapter 2.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2:5–11 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to God!

Amen – what a glorious passage that is! And what a wonderful promise that is: that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

That will happen. On the last day. Willingly, or unwillingly. Gladly or regretfully – every knee will bow – in heaven and on earth and under the earth – and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father – FOREVER.

So since we are all going to say that, one way or the other, we better understand what that means. First of all, and I think most obviously, to say that Jesus is LORD is to acknowledge him as God's Vice-regent over all creation.

What Does It Mean To Call Jesus Our Lord?

1. He is God's Vice-regent over all creation

We might not intuitively use those words, but those probably are the best words to describe what the Bible is saying here. A vice-regent is one who REIGNS on behalf of another. He exercises all the power of the Sovereign but is himself subject to the Sovereign. And that is exactly how the Bible describes the relationship of Jesus to US and also to God. In 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 the Apostle Paul describes the end game – he tells us where this is all going. He says:

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:24–28 ESV)

So when this is over, Paul says, EVERYTHING will be UNDER the feet of Jesus – he is bringing all things in subjection to himself – but then Paul clarifies. “I’m not talking about the ONE who PUTS everything under Jesus’ feet. I want to be clear about that,” Paul says.

“When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.” (1 Corinthians 15:28 ESV)

So in the eternal kingdom, EVERYTHING IN EXISTENCE will be in subjection to Jesus Christ OUR LORD – excepting of course, God the Father Almighty Himself. Jesus will be under Him, that God may be all in all.

Are you seeing that?

What the Bible is saying is that in the end Jesus will be what Adam was supposed to be in the beginning.

In the beginning God the Father Almighty made Adam – made humanity – in his image and in his likeness. Adam was supposed to OBEY GOD and RULE everything else. But he didn’t. He wanted to RULE EVERYTHING ELSE without obeying God. But that’s not a thing. That didn’t work. That brought only darkness and chaos. So Jesus came to do what Adam didn’t. He came to OBEY GOD PERFECTLY – that’s what Paul says in the passage we just read. That Jesus:

though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the

likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by **becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6–11 ESV)

That's how God designed the Universe!

God is a Spirit and does not have a body like men – so he is GOD OVER CREATION but he intended for a human being in his image and likeness to be LORD IN CREATION. And that now is JESUS.

He is perfect in deity – but having become perfect in humanity – perfectly obedient – even to the point of death on a cross – he is now LORD.

He is what Creation has been waiting for.

He is God to us. God with us. Lord of heaven and earth – thanks be to God!

Secondly, to call Jesus our Lord is to acknowledge him as the Son and Lord of David.

2. He is the Son and Lord of David

Jesus made that point himself in Matthew 22:42-46. He was having a conversation with the Pharisees and he asked them:

“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.”⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,⁴⁴ “‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”’?”⁴⁵ If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?”⁴⁶ And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. (Matthew 22:42–46 ESV)

Yes! In general, it is not a good idea to debate with Jesus! But the point he was making is actually very significant. He is referring here to a very strange and enigmatic line in one of the Psalms of David. In Psalm 110, David, in the Spirit said:

The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” (Psalm 110:1 ESV)

So David – in the SPIRIT – speaking prophetically, sees TWO CHARACTERS who are both superior to David and who are having a conversation about future rule.

Now that begs the question: How could there be TWO people SUPERIOR TO DAVID in terms of earthly rule?

David was the King of Israel! David was a type or anticipation of CHRIST; David was the anointed one of Israel and God had willed to rule the world through ISRAEL – so how could there be TWO PEOPLE superior to David in terms of earthly rule?

Obviously one of those people is God – that’s a no brainer and that fits in perfectly with David’s theology. David understood himself as the Vice-regent of God. He was exercising authority on BEHALF of God the Father Almighty. But then who was this other Lord? Whom David called “my Lord”?

The Pharisees couldn’t answer that because they didn’t realize the extent of Israel’s failure to be God’s Vice-regent on the earth. They didn’t know that they needed Jesus. Which is why Jesus asked them the question.

Jesus is the one whom David – in the Spirit saw talking to God the Father about his future rule. Thus in a great twist of irony, Jesus is both the SON OF DAVID and DAVID’S LORD. He is the rightful king of Israel and the long-awaited King of the World.

Thirdly, to call Jesus our Lord is to acknowledge him as the Good Shepherd prophesied long ago in the Book of Ezekiel.

3. He is the Good Shepherd

That of course is the prophesy that the Pharisees should have remembered. In that prophesy God rejected the current Kings and leaders of Israel. They were bad shepherds. Ezekiel 34:10 says:

Thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my sheep at their hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep. No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them. (Ezekiel 34:10 ESV)

So, you had your chance to serve as my Vice-regents, but you proved yourself unworthy. You fed yourself and not your sheep. You used power to provide and protect yourself instead of using it to provide and protect for my people.

So you are done, God says, but I am not done in terms of providing leadership and regency for my creation. In verse 15 God says something incredible. He says:

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁶ I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. (Ezekiel 34:15–16 ESV)

So God himself is going to be THE KING. God himself is going to SHEPHERD HIS PEOPLE. How will that work? How can the invisible God who dwells in unapproachable light be a King and a Leader for his people? That's confusing.

It gets more so in verses 22-24. God says:

I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. ²³ And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. ²⁴ And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken. (Ezekiel 34:22–24 ESV)

So I will be their King and David will be their Prince – but David by this point had been dead for hundreds of years.

This is the text that the Pharisees should have been thinking of. Because in this text what God is saying is that a Leader will come from the line of David who is like David in terms of all his best qualities but who will also be in some mysterious way GOD HIMSELF.

The Good Shepherd is the other LORD in David's vision.

And Jesus took that prophesy and applied it directly to himself. He said:

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10:11 ESV)

I am the King you've been waiting for! I am not like the kings of Israel who killed you to feed themselves – I am the King who will lay down my life for your safety and salvation. I am the King who will rule as GOD and as the Greater David over all creation.

Jesus said that in John 10 as well. He didn't come just to rule the flock of David – that would be far too small a task. He said:

I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. (John 10:16 ESV)

To call Jesus LORD is to recognize him as the Good Shepherd - the Prince of Israel and the King of the world.

Fourthly, to call Jesus OUR LORD is to acknowledge him as the Son of Man.

4. He is the Son of Man

Jesus often referred to himself this way. In Matthew 8 verse 20 he said:

“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but **the Son of Man** has nowhere to lay his head.” (Matthew 8:20 ESV)

Leon Morris says about this expression:

“It is used over 80 times in the New Testament and, with the exception of Luke 24:7 and John 12:34 (both quoting Jesus) and Acts 7:56, it is always on the lips of Jesus. It was his favorite way of referring to himself.”¹

The expression goes back to a vision that Daniel had and that is recorded for us in Daniel chapter 7. In Daniel 7:13-14 the prophet says:

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one **like a son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13–14 ESV)

So apparently, Daniel and David are having very similar dreams! David overheard a conversation in the heavenly court between God the Father and God the Son – and Daniel, apparently, was seeing exactly the same thing. He saw one like a Son of Man – a human, but clearly something more than merely a human – coming to the Ancient of Days – coming to the Eternal Father – and being given dominion and glory and an everlasting kingdom over all the peoples of the earth.

For Daniel this was part two of a dream that he had interpreted back in chapter 2 – that dream was given to Nebuchadnezzar but he forgot it so he needed someone to tell him the dream AND its interpretation – God used that little mechanism to promote Daniel to the highest office in the land. God gave Daniel the exact same dream and told him what it meant and he was able to take that interpretation to the king. The dream itself was pretty interesting.

King Nebuchadnezzar had seen a giant statue. The head was of gold, the chest was of silver, the middle and thighs of bronze, the legs were of iron and the feet were of iron and clay. What he

¹Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary. Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 201.

SAW was a succession and DECLENSION of human rule. Each metal represented a world empire – each of descending quality – until finally, he saw the ultimate end of frail and fallen human rule.

Daniel 2:34-35 says:

As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:34–35 ESV)

Daniel saw JESUS – the STONE CUT BY NO HUMAN HAND – coming to the earth LIKE A METEOR! He struck the statute on its feet of iron and clay and broke it all to pieces. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

So Daniel saw the coming of an OTHERWORLDLY KING whose arrival would be CATASTROPHIC but also, surprisingly, SLOW IN SPREADING.

That's JESUS!

At the moment of his coming the world was changed forever – and yet his Kingdom may be compared to a mustard seed – it starts very small but it grows and grows and grows until it fills the entire earth.

Jesus stepped right into that imagery. He grabbed hold of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 and he applied to without apology to himself. And it was doing that, finally, that got him killed. In Matthew 26:63-64 the Bible says:

And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see **the Son of Man** seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (Matthew 26:63–64 ESV)

Jesus said that under oath! “I am all that you have said and more! I am the Christ. I am the Son of God and I am the Son of Man. I am Daniel’s ROCK and David’s LORD. I am the one to whom all GLORY and DOMINION has been assigned and I will reign over all peoples, all nations, all languages – all things – to the glory of the Father – FOREVER.”

That’s what it means to call Jesus OUR LORD.

It is a title of COSMIC significance. And it is also a title of INTIMATE significance. To call Jesus OUR LORD is to refer to him as the husband and head of the church.

5. He is the Husband and Head of the church

Of course this understanding goes back to the teaching of Jesus himself. Jesus often referred to himself as the Bridegroom and to the church – his people – as the Bride. So for example in Matthew 9:14-15 it says:

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. (Matthew 9:14–15 ESV)

So here Jesus says that his time on the earth in his earthly ministry with his disciples is sort of like an engagement party. The church is happy because she is with her Lord. Her love. Her bridegroom. Of course, when the groom goes away for a while, she will mourn, but then when he comes back for the wedding ceremony, she will rejoice.

The Apostle Paul found this imagery useful in a variety of ways - he even taught young men how to be husbands by appealing to the example of Christ’s love and care for the church. He said:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or

wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25–27 ESV)

So to be a husband like Jesus is to love your wife, to sacrifice for your wife, to wash your wife with the water of the word and to empower and enable your wife to become the person that God created and intended her to be. That’s how Jesus loves the church and therefore that is how husbands should love and care for their wives.

Jesus is LORD OF ALL CREATION – and he is also head and husband to the church. Thanks be to God!

How Should We Respond?

Now in the few minutes we have left let’s talk a little bit about how we should respond to all of that – and there is no excuse for not responding. J.I. Packer says here:

“If Jesus Christ is God the Son, our co-creator, and is also Christ, the anointed savior-king, now risen from the dead and reigning (sitting, as the Creed puts it, “on the right hand of God the Father Almighty,” in the place of authority and power), then he has the right to rule us, and we have no right to resist his claim.”²

I think that is well and helpfully said. So how should we respond to Jesus Christ OUR LORD? Let me suggest first of all that we should respond by submitting to him.

1. We should submit to him

Paul was making that very point earlier in Ephesians 5. He said:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (Ephesians 5:22–24 ESV)

² J.I. Packer, *Affirming The Apostles’ Creed*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 63.

So again, this imagery of husbands and wives is intended to point us toward the greater truth of our relationship to God through Jesus Christ. He is our husband. He loves us. He died for us. He feeds us and protects us and washes us in the water of his Word. So we should respond to him by submitting to him. We should let him lead. We should trust his Word. We should rest in his authority and care.

Now, don't get lost in the illustration – maybe you don't have a PERFECT husband, PROBABLY you don't have a perfect husband, but regardless of whatever FLAWED reflection you might be dealing with, Paul's point is that Jesus is a perfect husband to the church. He is sacrificial. He is generous. He is selfless. He is wise. He is attentive. Therefore you should be willing and eager to submit to him.

That is means to confess Jesus Christ as your Lord.

Secondly, we should respond to Jesus by obeying him.

2. We should obey him

You aren't in submission to Jesus if you are not obeying Jesus – there have always been people who struggle to understand that. In Luke 6:46 Jesus said:

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (Luke 6:46 ESV)

That's what it MEANS! You can't meaningfully or authentically confess Jesus Christ as your Lord if you are not prepared to receive his Word AS THE WORD OF GOD to you. Which of course, it is.

So if Jesus is TRULY your Lord – then you will LISTEN TO HIM. And you should because his word is right and leads to life.

And lastly, if Jesus is truly your Lord, you will follow him – where ever he tells you to go.

3. We should follow him

Doing what Jesus says and going where Jesus CALLS is the ultimate test of his Lordship in your life. We see that illustrated in the encounter that Jesus had with the Rich Young Man. The rich young man wanted to be saved – he wanted to inherit eternal life, so he very wisely came to Jesus, but he didn't respond to Jesus the way he should have. Jesus said to him:

“Go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” (Matthew 19:21 ESV)

So, go and unload your idols and then come back and follow me. That's what Jesus said but the rich young men didn't do it. The text says:

When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Matthew 19:22 ESV)

He didn't trust, he didn't obey, he didn't follow – and so unless he changed his mind later on in his life, he was not saved. He did not inherit eternal life because he did not truly confess Jesus Christ as his Lord.

To confess Jesus Christ as your Lord is to let go of whatever it is that is keeping you from following him. If something else controls you – then he is not your Lord. If you won't let it go and you won't get in line then you will not be saved. But if you listen to him, if you obey him, if you FOLLOW him, if you truly trust him as your Lord and Leader then - you will inherit eternal life.

That's what the Bible says; that's the Gospel!

Come and follow Jesus. He is Lord of heaven and earth. He is Daniel's Rock and David's Son. He is the Good Shepherd. He is the King we need and the Husband who loves us. He is God and he is good.

So come. Come unto Jesus – confess him as YOUR LORD and Savior today and be saved.

Thanks be to God, let's pray together.