



May 24, 2026 | Dr. Jimmy Stewart

Jesus Changes Everything

Self-Rule → Lordship of Christ

Scripture: Judges 21:25; Luke 9:23–26; Romans 10:9–10; Revelation 19:11-16

Spotlight: If Jesus is Savior, then He is Lord.

Summary: We are living in a period of time much like the final days of Judges, where “all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes,” **Jesus Changes Everything** by calling us out of this self-rule and into His loving Lordship. Self-rule promises freedom, but it eventually leads to confusion, compromise, spiritual collapse and societal chaos. Jesus does not invite us merely to admire Him, add Him to our busy schedules, or call on Him in emergencies. He calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Him. To confess “Jesus is Lord” means more than believing facts about Him; **it means stepping down from the throne of your life and yielding that seat of authority to the risen King Jesus, your savior.** The gospel is not that Jesus saves us so we can continue ruling ourselves or self-governance, or that Jesus gives good advice about how to live but that Jesus saves us from sin, from self, and from death so that we may belong fully to Him and serve Him forever.

Jesus does not come to advise us in our self-rule; He comes to overthrow self-rule with His loving Lordship.

The heart that rules itself eventually ruins itself, but the heart surrendered to Jesus finds life. Jesus changes everything by moving us from self-directed living to surrendered discipleship under His Lordship. Lordship is actively yielding control and direction to Jesus as King.

Salvation is not adding Jesus to your life; it is surrendering your life to Jesus. Luke 9:24

The King who saves us has the right to rule us.

1. Self-Rule Leads to Spiritual Collapse and Societal Chaos.

Judges 21:25

In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

This verse describes more than ancient Israel; it describes the natural condition of the human heart. When there is no recognized King, everyone becomes their own authority. Self-rule sounds like freedom, but it often produces confusion, compromise, spiritual collapse and societal chaos.

A life without the rule of God does not become free; it becomes unstable and chaotic.

Pride and Self-rule go hand-in-hand - Both show up when we say things like:
"I know what the Bible says, but I'm going to do things my way."
"This is just who I am and how God made me."
"I deserve to be happy."
"Nobody can tell me what to do."

Calling 811 or 911 - "Call before you dig!!!" Seek the Lord's direction before act!

Genesis 6:5-8

Self-rule before the flood -The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. 6:5

Exodus 32:8

The Golden Calf -They have turned away from the way I commanded them to live.

Judges 21:25

Everyone doing what is right in their own eyes

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray

Proverbs 14:12

There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.

2. Following Jesus Requires Absolute Surrender.

Luke 9:23–26

23 Then [Jesus] said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. 24 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 25 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.

Jesus does not hide the cost of discipleship. He says we must give up our own way. The Christian life is *not occasional religious interest*; **it is daily surrender.**

Jesus does not invite us to admire Him from a distance; He calls us to follow Him with our whole lives.

Taking up the cross daily means:

- I surrender my *preferences*.
- I surrender my *pride*.
- I surrender my *plans*.
- I surrender my *grudges*.
- I surrender my *hidden sins*.
- I surrender my *need to be in control*.

3. The Saved Confess, Jesus is Lord of All.

Romans 10:9–10

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Paul does not separate *faith* in Jesus from *surrender* to Jesus. The confession of salvation is not merely "Jesus is helpful," "Jesus is inspiring," or "Jesus is important." The confession is: **Jesus is Lord.**

To confess Jesus as Lord is to admit that He has rightful authority over every *part* of life.

The question is not merely, "Do I believe in Jesus?" The deeper question is, **"Am I surrendering and bowing to Jesus?"**

Self-rule says, "I belong to me."

The gospel says, "I belong to Christ."

Self-rule says, "My truth, my way, my life."

Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Self-rule leads to death dressed up as freedom.

The Lordship of Christ leads to life through surrender.

Lordship means Jesus is not a passenger, an advisor, or roadside assistance. He is King.

Judges 21:25 sounds like modern America: everyone doing what seems right in their own eyes. But when every person becomes their own king, homes break, churches divide, truth becomes negotiable, and sin becomes normal.

Revelation 19:11-16

Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. 12 His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. 13 He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. 15 From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. 16 On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

- **Identify** the area where you are still saying, "My will be done," and surrender it to Jesus today.
- **Stop** negotiating with Jesus and start following Him.
- **Take** up your cross this week by obeying Jesus in one area where self-rule has been winning.
- **Confess** Jesus as Lord not only with your *mouth*, but with your *decisions*.
- **Ask** the Holy Spirit to reveal where self-rule is hiding behind comfort, fear, pride, or control.

Jesus is not asking to be added to your already crowded life. He is calling you to surrender your life to Him fully. **He is not merely the Savior who forgives sin; He is the King who defeats sin, rules over sin, and leads us into life.**

The same Jesus who says, "Take up your cross and follow Me," first took up His cross for you. He died for rebellious sinners like me and like you. He rose again as King. And today, He calls us to stop doing what is right in our own eyes and start following the One who is right, true, holy, gracious, and good.

Next Steps: "Who is really in charge of your life? Bow to King Jesus, today."

Life Application:

1. Judges 21:25 says, "All the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." Where do you see that same spirit in our culture today, and how can that mindset slowly influence believers without them realizing it?
2. Self-rule often sounds like freedom: "It's my life," "I deserve to be happy," or "I need to follow my heart." Why do those statements feel so appealing, and where can they become spiritually dangerous?
3. What is the difference between seeing Jesus as a helper, advisor, or comforter and surrendering to Him as Lord? How might a person claim to believe in Jesus while still resisting His authority?
4. In Luke 9:23, Jesus says His followers must "give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me." What does "daily" surrender look like in ordinary areas such as marriage, parenting, money, work, entertainment, anger, or private habits?
5. Romans 10:9 connects salvation with openly declaring that "Jesus is Lord." Why is it important that the Bible does not separate trusting Jesus as Savior from surrendering to Jesus as Lord and are you living in ways that demonstrate you are both trusting and obeying Jesus?
6. What are some subtle ways Christians can try to negotiate with Jesus rather than obey Him? For example, where might we say, "Lord, I'll follow You, but not in this area?" or, "Lord, I'll do that for you if you'll do this for me!"
7. Every heart has a throne. What are some common "rivals" that compete with the Lordship of Christ—control, pride, fear, comfort, success, approval, bitterness, or something else? Which one is most tempting in your life right now?
8. Jesus calls us to lose our lives in order to save them. How does surrender to Christ actually lead to deeper joy, peace, purpose, and freedom than self-rule ever could?