



Thoughts on the Topic of Lordship

Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote, "Next to sound doctrine itself, no more important obligation rests on the preacher than that of preaching the Lordship of Christ to Christians exclusively."

One passage of Scripture that demands lordship is Romans 10:9: "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

In the New Testament, the word κύριος ("Lord") has several meanings. It is used (a) of an owner (Luke 19:33); (b) of a master, that is, one to whom service is due (Matt. 6:24); (c) of an emperor or king (Acts 25:26); (d) of idols (1 Cor. 8:5); (e) as a title of respect (Matt. 21:30) or courtesy (John 12:21), and (f) as the equivalent of the Hebrew Yahweh, the name of God.

Paul uses the metaphor of (a) owner and slave when referring to those called to salvation by the Lord in 1 Corinthians 7:22: "For he who was called in the Lord while a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise, he who was free when called is Christ's slave."

Matthew 6:24 is an example of (b), master. Jesus says, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other." No one can belong to two owners; Jesus is making the point that, in the full sense of the term, to be a slave meant to belong wholly.



Being in the service of God is no part-time affair but something that calls for one's whole devotion and which requires obedience.

Matthew 4:7 is an example of the name of God meaning: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." This is a quotation from Deuteronomy 6:16, which has the word Yahweh. So Jesus was referring to Himself as God, possessing full deity and being one in essence with the Father. Christ assumed for Himself the title of Lord (Matt. 7:21–22; Mark 5:19)

In Matthew 28:18 ("And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'), Jesus declares that he is God, who holds all authority in heaven and on earth.

Vine commented: "His purpose did not become clear to the disciples until after His resurrection, and the revelation of His deity consequent thereon. Thomas, when he realized the significance of the presence of a mortal wound in the body of a living man, immediately joined with it the absolute title of deity, saying, "My Lord and my God," John 20:28.

Thomas is clearly and succinctly distinguishing between Christ as God and as master of his life in this profound confession of faith.

The question then is, if Jesus represents the full deity of God, has authority on heaven and earth, is the master of all who are his, and is the Lord of Lords (Rev. 17:14), what then does one do to make Jesus the Lord of our life? What does that look like in the walk of a believer, and how does it manifest itself in our intentional pursuit of sanctification?

As we are being sanctified, we are being made more fully into the image of God; we are at once to be submitted to and obedient to the Lord, and to all that he commands.



We are as slaves of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as such, we are to follow his commands willingly. Our motivation is found in both our love for the Lord and our intentional desire to “walk in a manner worthy” (Eph. 4:1).

As we come to know the Lord, we will love him more, and the more we love the Lord, the more we will develop a heartfelt desire to please him, honor him, and pursue obedience.

Note that this act of sanctification comes after salvation; submission to his lordship is not a prerequisite for salvation. Obedience in and of itself is impossible due to the flesh. The focus is on how to live in a manner worthy, a life pleasing to the Lord, one in which there is spiritual growth through the conforming work of the Holy Spirit in the daily life of the believer, defined as one who has professed faith in Christ.

Obedience and submission are only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit. As we yield ourselves more fully to the Spirit's guiding control, we naturally desire to be obedient to the Lord. The desires of the Holy Spirit and the desires of the Lord are the same and ultimately manifest the glory of God and the furthering of the Kingdom.

Coming to ginosko-know Jesus as Lord is not:

- An act of the flesh, which is antithetical to God (Galatians 5:16-18).
- A works-based, legalistic, task-based approach to God
- A resignation, that “oh well, I guess I should, etc.”

Coming to ginosko-know Jesus as Lord and live a life reflecting his Lordship is:

- A work of the Holy Spirit
- A chosen desire to “put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:24)



- An intentional willingness to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

Ginosko-knowing, digesting, and applying the Lordship of Jesus Christ in and to your life is the moment-by-moment recognition that you “have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

He (Jesus) gave Himself for you because of His love.

He elected and chose you unto Himself because of His love.

Your coming to know Him and be saved was an act of His love.

The Lordship of Jesus in your life is a Biblical truth that flows from His saving grace.

As a pastor said, you cannot declare salvation without declaring Lordship.

As a result, Jesus’ Lordship flows from your love for a deep, meaningful relationship and a relinquishment of the right to be ruler of your own life.

References:

1. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 3:387.
2. W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, 3 vols. (London: Oliphants, 1948), 3:16–17.