

Urbana 87 - the Lordship of Christ

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of recognizing and living under the Lordship of Christ in all aspects of life.

Duration: 32:00

Scripture: Mark 12:30

Topics: "Radical Faith", "Lordship Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a vision and taking action in our faith. He encourages the audience to increase their vision for the whole world and to be proactive in sharing the gospel. The speaker also highlights the need for honesty and examines how we use our time. He shares a personal struggle of finding ways to redeem his time, such as reading the Bible in the car. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the urgency of living a radical and transformative life for God.

Transcript

...who is now going to speak, so we'll switch to the platform. Well, I am very nervous, because I'm known as the longest preacher in Europe, and everything is very much scheduled here for television and for whatever else. I remember this meeting in Germany.

I was going on about an hour and a half. Young people seemed to be listening, but someone way in the back, I think, wanted me to stop, so they held up their wristwatch. I was preaching about world missions and discipleship and forsaking all for Christ.

When I saw this watch, I said, Whoa, praise the Lord, look at this man, he's donating his watch for missionary work. But I can assure you, InterVarsity USA has more effective methods than that. I have... I find it frustrating, these big meetings, because I like small meetings, just one or two people at a time, I get to see them.

And so I brought my binoculars here, if I can get them out of... I can't even see... I especially wanted to see if there's anybody here from my favorite country, the land of Turkey. Not turkeys, but the land of Turkey. Is there anybody here from Turkey? Somebody up there.

These are not so effective as I thought. Really, I thought I was going to come completely unglued last night when I met Billy Graham. He's my spiritual father, I never met him.

I've read his books, I've listened to his tapes, his Urbana 57 tape, I've listened to over 15 times. I listened to it again last week, if you want to hear a bombshell, message, Urbana 57. That was a required listening for everybody that came into Operation Mobilization for many years.

And I guess I got overdosed on Billy Graham, I read so many books and tapes, I started to have Billy Graham dreams, Billy Graham nightmares. And I... you know, I was... I was wanting to meet him, but I wasn't wanting to meet him, and suddenly he was there in that little room down in the hole where we meet. And I thought I was just going to come completely unglued.

Anyway, that was 32 years ago. I had a minute for each 10 years. Praise the Lord, I'm still here.

You know, I share this because some of you stood up last night, you made this decision, maybe you were like me. I didn't understand it, I was from a nominal Christian home. I actually brought binoculars to that meeting in Madison Square Garden because I thought... heard he maybe was a hypnotist.

I wanted to see just how... what he was doing. And he preached a very basic message as he did last night. And in fear and trembling, I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you know the psychology books tell us that's just a late adolescent escape from guilt trip, and many people say it doesn't last. But I can tell you, and I do not exaggerate, that what happened to me in Madison Square Garden 32, 33 years ago has been a precious reality every single day ever since. Jesus is real.

Not Billy Graham. I beg of you to give me extra time on this clapping. I have not time for the clapping.

Or laughing. Let's try to be more serious. Thank you.

I have a burden to just pray, and it is very serious. Many things are on my heart and mind that I can't talk about. And I want to just pray.

We've already prayed just for some things that are going on right now around the world, like the Ethiopian famine. We need to pray. We're going to pray more, but I would like to get this off my heart.

This isn't something I'm performing. I have been praying like this almost every day since my conversion. And I want to pray together with you right now for some of the crisis situations around the world, and that will help me then to get on with my message.

Let us pray. Living God, we just come to you thanking you for answers to prayer, thanking you for bringing us here. Thank you for bringing your servant Billy Graham here, and for his perseverance through all of these years.

And Lord, we unite our hearts right now for the Ethiopian crisis. We unite together that those rebels will change their minds and let those trucks with food get through to starving people. We unite also together right now for that crisis in Afghanistan where fighting has increased, where so many have died.

We pray for those 3 or 4 million refugees. Raise up workers. Raise up finance.

You know the setbacks. You know the heartbreaks. We pray, Lord, for the ongoing crisis in Kampuchea.

We pray for the work among those refugees. We pray together right now, and we bind the enemy in that crisis that goes on in South Africa. Lord, that land is upon our hearts.

People of different races, different backgrounds who love you. Bring peace out of chaos in South Africa. We cry out to you for the Nicaraguan crisis.

Lord, we pray that you would give wisdom to the leaders of our country and other countries. Oh, Lord, the world is on our hearts. We've been stirred by these audiovisuals.

We hardly know how to express the burden that is so deep, so deep, oh, God, for lost men and women. Shake us from our lethargy. Enable us tonight to somehow do something we've never done before, to take steps of faith we've never taken before, to die to self like we've never died before, and to be a people of praise and a people of power, to go where you want us to go, and to do what you want us to do.

Grant this, we pray, in the authoritative name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Turn with me in your Bibles to the most important commandment in all of Scripture.

There are many voices, there are many principles in the Word of God. And we're living in a day of mega information, and sometimes I find many people are confused. And we have a lot of misplaced priorities.

We have a lot of people shooting mice. We have a lot of people majoring on minors. And we want to deal with just some of the most basic issues in our entire Christian faith this evening.

And as our text, we're taking Mark chapter 12, verse 30 and 31. Some of you know that I love books. And while you're finding that in your Bibles, I just want to urge you to just invade that book and exhibition area.

God is using Christian literature. Fill your bag with books. Now some of you, if I didn't push particular titles, those of you who know me would think I were either ill or intimidated.

So I want to just mention one or two books. By the way, I thought I would offend people if I didn't have a tie, so I brought one there. I got it for... Can I borrow that for today? You can have it.

My sister gave it to me. But I get so excited about books because I've seen God use books like John White's Eros Defile, like David Seaman's Healing for Damaged Emotions, one of the most significant books of our generation. But I want to just mention what I consider the overall best Christian book I have ever read in these 30 years.

I've gone through about a thousand books. And that's Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones' book Spiritual Depression, Its Cause and Cure. The title is misleading.

It's about basically living for God. He was the man that introduced A.W. Tozer to the British Isles. And I hope that you will get this book.

They'll probably run out quickly here, but you can get it in your bookshop and some of these other great books that are available. Now from the Word of God, the Book of Books in a category of its own. Chapter 12 or 13... 12.

Bingo. Sorry about that. A little nervous.

You come up here. Yeah, you. Come on.

No, no. Stay there. Mark chapter 12, verse 30 and 31.

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. Let's remember that.

With all the other emphases, all the books, all the cassette tapes. We no longer have bookworms now in O.M. We got a whole army of tapeworms. Incredible.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like namely this.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. I was wrestling with this message on the Lordship of Christ more than almost any message I've ever wrestled with.

And if some of you are in the French section, in the Spanish section, and I'd love to speak to you in Spanish. I speak Spanish, but that may be a little difficult. Gloria a Dios.

If you have that manuscript of mine that you're trying to follow, you'll do well at this point to put it under the chair. But as I was wrestling with this and praying and reading books and listening to tapes, seven words just came out into my heart. Now, I know you're getting so many messages here, so many words.

How can you take notes? It's difficult. But I would like you to just write down these seven words. And I pray that if you look back at my feeble message some years down the road, you will remember these seven words.

The first word, which is the title of this talk, Lordship. We believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You know, I was so challenged by this presentation of lphes.

I just believe that is one of the greatest spiritual missionary movements in the world. I am not with InterVarsity, as you know. I'm with Operation Mobilization.

But we consider it a great privilege to have a partnership relationship with your great movement across the world. And I have the burden to see far more finance released for that great work. I don't know if you can imagine how short-staffed and how weak the work is in some of the nations, like Italy, a land very much on my heart.

There's not time to speak of that, but I hope you will get more information. See Brother Chua Wee Han about that great international work. And let's pray and believe God for great things.

We believe in IVF, in OM, and I'm sure most of the fellowships represented here in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It's amazing that Billy Graham has been criticized for giving sort of an easy believism. There are extreme people.

I had them outside of my meeting some time ago in the East Coast. Giving out very extreme literature about Lordship. And giving really the idea that hardly anybody is saved except them.

And it's amazing how Satan can try to take any precious doctrine and try to get it into extremes. And brother or sister, if you begin to move for God in these days, if you've made a commitment last night, if you make a commitment in these coming evenings, Satan is going to counter-attack. And it's almost as if

Satan had two basic strategies.

First of all, he wants to keep you from really knowing the fullness of the Spirit, commitment, the Lordship of Christ. And when you do begin to move in that reality, then Satan seems to change his strategy and try to get you into extremism. Beware of extremism.

And try to find a balance of scripture. Another example is this famous cliché that says, if Jesus Christ isn't Lord of all, he's not Lord at all. I thought when I heard that, boy, that's great.

Sounds great. Let's dump people on the head with that one. But then I asked, is it biblical? And I'm convinced that we can come to know Christ as Savior in a moment.

Some did last night. I did in Madison Square Garden at 16 years of age, though I've been prayed for and the real founder of our work is a dear praying elderly lady who when I was 15 or so, 14, she put me on her hit list. And she prayed for me regularly.

She sent me a Gospel of John through the mail. That Gospel of John prepared my heart. And I ended up going to that Billy Graham meeting in New York City.

I believe you can come to know Jesus Christ in a second. I believe you can begin to know the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a second. But I believe to know the Lordship of Christ in all that God wants that to mean in our lives is a lifetime.

It is a lifetime of constantly growing and repenting. Praise God that he doesn't reveal his blessed Holy Spirit, doesn't reveal all the self life to us in one glimpse. We wouldn't be able to handle the site.

But God lovingly, as we grow, as we get more in the word, as we get into various training experiences, exposes self and we repent and we grow. We need a greater emphasis on spiritual growth. You may have a crisis experience in your life.

You may have a crisis this week. Hallelujah. I'm not against that, though I personally have had too many.

But if that crisis, if that crisis, you can ask my wife. If that crisis is not followed by a process, it will become an abscess. Brothers and sisters, spiritual balance is not compromised.

It's not mixing the world with the church. It's not mixing truth in error. Spiritual balance is taking one biblical truth and uniting it with another major biblical truth.

And it's the only way to live, I believe with all my heart. Lordship. We need to ask ourselves the hard questions during these days together.

Is Jesus Christ really Lord of our lives? What if we take just four categories of our lives? We could take more. Is the Lord Jesus Lord of our time? A great man of God said the greatest sin in America is wasting time. It just blows my mind the way people are investing their time.

And I personally feel that oftentimes people in the political arena, the sports arena, the academic arena, even the arena of theater and the arts, they're more committed, more disciplined than many of the average evangelical fish we have swimming around today. We need a little sanctified imagination. Now I know I got extreme in the whole thing of redeeming the time.

Again, it happened this summer. I think the greatest invention since the printing press is the Walkman. This is the this is I got this at a discount for five bucks.

And you can put the scriptures. I don't know what I have on here. Amy Grant.

No, New Testament. And get these earphones on. And this summer, my wife and I finally decided to take a little vacation.

And so, you know, I put one ear for scripture and I left the other ear off for my wife as we walked along. And that got me in serious trouble. But, you know, I don't think extremism is the problem of most of you.

Forgive me if I'm wrong. You can you can write to me. I don't know if you've read much of A.W. Tozer, but I believe he's one of the most laser beam writers that this country ever had.

And I hope you'll read his books. You know what he said about worrying about too much enthusiasm and extremism in the average church? You know, is that the big problem in your church? People are too excited about Christ. They're always running off witnessing.

They're neglecting the church supper. Is this the problem in your church? Great. Send me some photos.

Make a video. But I'll tell you, A.W. Tozer said this, and I'll never forget it. He said to think that too much enthusiasm was the greatest problem in the average church was like sending a squadron of policemen out to the nearby cemetery to guard against the demonstration by the residents.

I find very few people today are memorizing the scripture. I find many people acknowledge they have lazy minds. When I shared here 20 years ago, I gave an invitation for people to repent, for people to enter into a radical, life-changing walk with God.

4,000 people stood up at that invitation. I've had letters from many of those people. I never wanted to write a book, but out of the Urbana Convention came my first book or second book called Hunger for Reality.

And the letters I've received from the people who've read that book, 15,000 letters, I've read all of them over 20 years, have helped me to know what to say here tonight. And I'm indebted to those ordinary people all over the world, many languages, who wrote to me. And we're willing to be honest.

I want to get to that in a minute because that's my second word, honesty. But I want to ask you to examine how you're using your time. I've been praying for a long time how to redeem the time more when I'm going along in a car.

Sometimes the vehicles, they don't have very good lights. And it's hard to read. And I just hate to sit in the back of the car not doing something.

Sometimes, of course, you can witness. Praise the Lord, look what I got for Christmas. Have you ever seen anything like that? It's really great.

You can just read the Word of God in the dark or wherever you go. Hallelujah. It's amazing.

I'm sure John Kyle will have them at the door as part of the book of the night. You know, it's good to laugh because sometimes the situation is so serious we either have to laugh or cry. And I believe that sometimes, and I don't try to be humorous, but I believe sometimes God uses humor and funny things in

life to drive truth home.

And I pray you will seriously examine what you are doing with your time. And that covers many other areas. But is it also, Lord, over your tongue? What about your mouth? This has been my problem.

My mother wasn't a prophet, but she said when I was a small son, you got a big mouth. I've hardly ever had anyone compliment me about my mouth except once a dentist working on a back tooth. Said there's plenty of space in here.

If you, brothers and sisters, oh, wait a minute, I've lost my watch. Oh, there it is. If you are thinking about being a cross-cultural communicator, then you must deal with the sins of the tongue.

As a young baby Christian, I read Billy Graham's sermon on the sins of the tongue, and I repented and I cried to God. And I said, Lord, if you don't change my vocabulary, if you don't do something about my impatience and my irritability, I cannot serve you. It was not until I got desperate in Mexico City after offending my young Mexican workers and really repented and got in God's word that I started to get more mouth control.

Don't give up. If God can give victory and change a character like me, I can tell you there's hope for everyone else. And then thirdly, under this great topic of the lordship of Christ, can you say that he's lord over your social life, lord over your emotions? This perhaps is the biggest battle of all.

In fact, Billy Graham in 1957 said that if you don't win the battle, this is a paraphrase, but basically what he said, if you lose the battle against impurity, you lose the battle of the Christian life. And I believe, I have said this for 20 years in this country, though I live in Europe and Asia and have been over there 28 years, I have the privilege of coming on preaching tours and to meetings in this country. And I've been saying for 20 or more years that impurity is an epidemic in the church of Jesus Christ today.

And I tell you, it scares me far more than AIDS. I thank God for John White's book, Eros Defiled. I thank God for Erwin Lutzer's book, Living With Your Passions.

And I believe even if you have a slight struggle and problem in this area that you ought to get those books and you ought to memorize those chapters in Proverbs and look at the many other verses in the Bible on the subject of sex. In fact, there are over 500 scriptures about sex, even in the King James Version. That's right.

And I'm going to share something with you because I think it's a great mistake if you think this battle is just going to be, you know, immediately taken care of when you pray a nice prayer. In my own life, I have battled my strong sexual drive all of my life. I knew as a teenager it would make me or break me.

I knew that there was no middle ground for me. I had to be filled with the spirit every day. I had to be crucified every day or I'd get in trouble.

I'm a natural backslider. I go for I would go for sin like a grasshopper for wheat if it wasn't for the power of Jesus Christ. And it isn't all victory.

And I want you to know that we as Christian leaders, we are vulnerable. We are weak. We are strugglers.

I had an experience even during a prayer walk. I live in London, England. I love to go in the woods and worship God.

I often go for days of prayer. And here I was out in the woods praising and worshiping God. And there, my old trouble, a pornographic magazine hanging in a tree.

I'm a pornoholic, just like an alcoholic. If I stay completely away, no problem. And there I was walking in the woods and that magazine was in the tree.

A \$10 magazine. Someone had used it for target practice. Now, what a wonderful testimony.

I can stand in front of 18,000 people and tell you how George for the founder and leader of Operation Mobilization with one laser beam of power. Holy Ghost magazine. But the truth is that that magazine some years ago made a complete fool out of me.

And I tell you, I stand here not as the true disciple. I stand here not as a Christian leader or as a public speaker or a spiritual revolutionary. I stand here as just a product of the grace of God.

God uses ordinary people. And I pray that you may understand, though you may have struggles, you may feel that you're a failure. That failure can be the backdoor to success.

I had this great vision for the Soviet Union. I had no interest in Western Europe. I was Muslim world, Spain because it was under Franco and the Soviet Union.

I was learning Russian. I went into the Soviet Union. I got across the border with my printing press, with my Gospels in the cornflakes boxes.

Some of you know my good friend, Brother Andrew, God smuggler. So now you've got Brother George, God's bungler. Yeah.

The second day in the Soviet Union, I was arrested by the secret police and accused of being a spy due to my own stupidity. A first class fiasco. But I went back and spent a day in prayer there in near Vienna or in the mountains.

And it was there that God first gave me those two words, operation mobilization and the vision that European young people would be renewed, would mobilize and evangelize hundreds of millions across the world, reaching them with the gospel of Christ. And to some degree, that has happened. There's a book out by Erwin Lutzer called Failure, the Backdoor to Success.

Hallelujah. What a fantastic book. I haven't even read it.

Just the title touches my heart. And fourthly, can you say that the Lord Jesus Christ is Lord over your resources? That perhaps is the toughest issue. Materialism doesn't go out easy.

We seem to have trouble even acknowledging it. It's always the other guy that's more materialistic than us. A.W. Tozer said materialism will not go out easily by raising your hand.

It will go out like a tooth being extracted from the jaw. My dear brothers and sisters, if we don't deal with materialism in the church, if we don't deal with that in our own lives and put our resources and our money on the altar and use it as God would have us use it, then I don't believe we will reach these unreached people. You may ask what some of those other words are that burn upon my heart.

The second one is simply honesty. I give a plea for honesty and integrity in our publicity, in describing what we do, in our conversations with one another. Let's not pretend we're living up here if we know we're living down here.

Let's get an honest fellowship with one another and share and confess our faults one with another as the word of God teaches. The third word is reality. Reality with God.

Knowing God must be our first priority, even more important than world missions. Read some of those great books by men like Tozer and Andrew Murray and J.I. Packer and others. The fourth word is purity, which we've already touched on as we've talked about Christ being Lord over our social and emotional life.

We often, when we talk about purity, are reminded of David. Praise God for the forgiveness we see in David. It needs to be emphasized.

I believe in it. But for young people, I've got something more exciting than David. Those of you who are just beginning your life.

Joseph. Joseph. That's the guy that challenges me because I want to stick as close as I can to plan A. Plan A means that you live a life of purity before God and before man from the moment of your conversion.

Joseph was tempted. This voluptuous beauty. Can you imagine? I don't even like to imagine it.

This chick. And get offering Joseph. You know, he's lonely.

He's a man. And he says, I will not do this wicked thing. And he wins the victory.

Now, we always think, well, when you win a victory like that, you really get a reward, right? You get a lovely Christian girlfriend the next day. No, no, he got prison. Prison.

And that was before, you know, coeducation. The fifth word I leave with you as we come to a close is discipline without it. And the message of First Corinthians nine, where Paul says, I buffet my body and bring it into subjection.

We're not going to go very far because the way ahead is going to be rough and it's going to be tough. That sixth word is vision. Let's pray as we close in prayer now that God would increase our vision for the whole world.

For the fields that are ripe under harvest. And finally, my favorite word action. If you believe this roof was going to fall in, what would you do? What would you do? Write a little chorus about falling roofs.

Have a theological discussion about falling rooms. No. If you believe this roof was going to fall in, you would move.

You would mobilize. And last night, I don't know whether you know, at the last night, a terrible fire broke out at this time in Champaign and destroyed a complete city block. Let's pray for the people who are involved.

I don't think anyone seriously hurt. If we believe right now that a fire was starting underneath this building, as we had underneath the escalator system in London, in the subway recently that destroyed so many

people. If we believe there was a fire about to come here, what would we do? We would move.

Brothers and sisters, the world is on fire. The harvest is plenteous. The labors are few.

Satan is trying to hinder on every road. Let us rise up. Let us mobilize.

And let us go forth, making Jesus Christ absolute Lord every day of our life until we are with Him. Amen.

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