

Jesus Christ Is Lord - Lord of the Church (2)

by J. Glyn Owen

The sermon emphasizes the Lordship of Christ as the head of the Church, highlighting His authority, the Church's identity as His body, and the call for obedience and unity among believers.

Duration: 39:44

Scripture: Matthew 22:37-38, John 14:15, John 15:1-2, Romans 12:15, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 3:17

Topics: "Lord"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing Jesus Christ as the head of the church. He uses the analogy of a vine and its branches to illustrate how the life and health of the church come from Christ. The speaker urges the congregation to align their thoughts, perspectives, and actions with Christ's, seeing the world through his eyes and listening to the joys and sorrows of others as he does. The sermon concludes with a call to worship and surrender to Christ as the congregation prepares to partake in communion.

Transcript

In our morning worship of late, we have been seeking to expound the theme of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We have come to consider his Lordship of the Church, having first seen that he is Lord of the Universe. Thinking of his Lordship of the Church in particular, we have thus far been looking at two metaphors that are employed in Scripture in order to describe the Church.

The one, the concept of the Church is the Ecclesia, a word which is often translated as the Assembly, but it should be the Assembly of God's own people. Jesus said, I will build my Church. The concept of our Lord's Lordship comes out there in two ways.

He is the builder of the Church, he says I will build it. And he calls the Church which he builds his very own, it belongs to him. I will build my Church, it's not our Church, save insofar as we have come to belong to it, and save insofar as we are joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ, but it is fundamentally his Church.

Then we also thought of that other metaphor of the Church as the bride of which Jesus Christ is the bridegroom. He takes the initiative, he first loved us and sought us, and he made us his own, he called us, he received us, he endowed us with his grace, and he has covenanted himself to be ours. He is the Lord of the Church, and the ongoing, the continuance of the Church in this world, and the assurance that the

Church will remain to be the Church is due to the fact that his love outlasts everything.

He being an eternal covenant with his redeemed people who trust him, nothing can go wrong. Now this morning, briefly, I want to take up one other metaphor of the Church, and though I may not perhaps this morning stress the concept of Lordship as we would if we were looking at it in an ordinary Sunday morning, I shall just perhaps deal with it somewhat more generally, but I would like to share with you some thoughts this morning concerning the Lordship of Christ manifested in this metaphor which speaks of the Church as his body, and of himself as the head of that body. If you want a text to begin with, we shall refer to a number of passages in a moment.

I guess our starting point could very well be Colossians chapter 1 and verse 18, where Paul says categorically in that great Christological passage, He that is Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the Church. Our theme then, Christ's Lordship of the Church, expressed in terms of his headship of the body. Now, the terms here employed are basically physical.

May be helpful to have this in your mind. We're thinking of the body in general, the extension of the body from the shoulders down, that's the body, and then the head from the shoulders up. The head and the body, and this is the picture that Jesus gives us of his relationship to the Church.

The Church, he says, is my body. I am the head of that body. Even so, both terms, body and head, have assumed a metaphorical significance.

I'm thinking now particularly of the head. We speak of heads of state, heads of government, heads of departments, heads of families, and there are a number of others. And we know full well what we have in mind when we use those terms.

We are speaking of those who have authority in those particular departments or areas of life. Headship implies lordship. It may be a qualified lordship, but nevertheless headship implies lordship.

Now, I want us to look at the picture before us. Jesus Christ, the head of his Church, and the Church as the body that belongs to the head. Three things I would like to say as briefly as I can.

Our Lord's headship implies his authority over the Church, which is his body. Now, this is the fundamental issue. This is the basic truth that is proclaimed here, and it's so easy to forget it.

We've had our annual congregational meeting recently. Now, I didn't find anyone there presuming that we or a group among us, even the elders or anybody else, really are the head or congregationally the head of the Church. But we can from time to time get this stray thought lodging in our minds that the Church is ours.

The reformers were adamant about this. There is but one sole head of the Church, and no company of people anywhere under any circumstances can claim headship. The most we may claim is that we are his servants in the ruling of the Church, but his servants.

The most we may claim is that we are doing according to his word, but according to his word. There is but one head of the Church, and he needs to be honored. He needs to be worshipped as such.

And this perhaps should be the main emphasis in our morning worship today, coming to the Lord's table. If we are really to be in the right spirit this morning, we should not only be able to accept this as an

intellectual concept, but we should be here in the pulpit and there in the pew, and all of us together able to adore the head who is Lord over us. For he has established his right to lordship not only because he is the Son of God, but because he was the Lamb of Calvary.

He has established it not simply by the fact that he was the eternal Savior, but he has established it by the price of his own blood. And he has brought us from the despairing avenues of sin and shame into a place where we share life and share destiny with him, so we should be able to give it and afford him, offer him the gratitude and the worship of our hearts in contemplation of this. But now I want to put this briefly in its context.

Intrinsically, or basically, the authority implied in headship belongs exclusively to God. This may appear to contradict what I've said already, but hang on a moment. Originally, intrinsically, all headship belongs to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now what we are saying is that God's authority over his creatures is sometimes expressed in terms of this image of his headship. There's a beautiful passage in the Old Testament, for example, which I find very useful to turn to sometimes if I do not find it easy to worship at the beginning of a day. Some of you may know it, and you can repeat it.

I'm referring to words of David in 1 Chronicles 29, verses 10 to 12. Listen to him. David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, Praise be to you, O Lord, God of our father Israel! Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the majesty, and the splendor.

For everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom. You are exalted as head over all.

You got it? You are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you. You are the ruler of all things.

In your hands are strength and power to exalt and to give strength to all. Head over all. Now that's where we start.

Paul says the same thing. When he says in 1 Corinthians 11:3, I want you to realize he says, The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man. And then he comes to this, And the head of Christ the Messiah is God.

There is a gradation here, a series of grades. But ultimately he says, God is head over all. Now, that brings me to the second statement.

In the task of working out our salvation, in matters of redemption, redemptively, the authority of headship has been vested by Almighty God in the God-man. In the one who assumed our nature in the virgin's womb by the Holy Spirit. In the one who became known as Jesus of Nazareth and who walked among men nearly 2,000 years ago, lived and died and rose again and ascended upon high.

For the purpose of our redemption, God has vested headship in him exclusively. God has done this in no other case. There is no other deity in inverted commas.

There is no other divine person so-called with whom God has done this. He has vested headship in his son, Jesus Christ our Lord, the mediator, the God-man. As son of God, he always had it.

But as the God-man, he was given it. Let me just make one or two statements. Let me refer again to Colossians chapter 1 and verse 18.

He is the head of the body, the church. He is the head of the body. God has made him that.

Let me read from Ephesians 1, the very end of the chapter. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, raised him from the dead and seated him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. Now listen.

And God placed all things under his feet, and appointed him to be the head over all things for the church, which is his body. The eternal God appointed the God-man, Jesus of Nazareth, the divine human Christ, to be the head over all things to the church. He is the head of the church, appointed so.

Evidently that's what our Lord had in mind when he said to his disciples after the resurrection, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth, therefore go and make disciples of all nations. Mine is all authority. It's been vested in me.

It's mine. I have a right in every country. I have a right in every part of the world.

Go to the north, go to the south, go to the east, go to the west. All authority has been given to me, rich and poor, black and white, anywhere, everywhere. I have a right to the hearts and the minds and the wills and the service of man.

God has ordained it. And there is no other rival in the purpose of God save his only son, Jesus Christ our Lord. He stands alone.

Now, derivatively, the authority of headship may be entrusted by God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to human beings for a while and in a limited way. Of course, such headship as mortals may be given is always qualified, always circumscribed. It is never of the absolute order, but is everywhere conditional.

And where anyone to whom such headship is delegated attempts to exercise such derived authority in a manner that runs counter to God's purposes, as revealed in Christ and in his word, then that person disqualifies himself from the claim to obedience. Those under him or her can rightly say what Peter said to the authorities of his day. There comes a point where we must obey God rather than man.

The Christian view of the state would require Peter there in the first place to acknowledge the heads of state as having divine authority. But because the heads of state were overstepping their authority and moving into the territory of the conscience, Peter said to them, No! And he was right. You are impinging upon the prerogatives of the sole headship of the God of the universe and of the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ over his people.

And because you're interfering in an area that doesn't belong to you, we must obey God rather than man. Against that qualification you have in scripture, and I must refer to it, you have the headship of the state, the headship of the rulers in the state, which need our respect. And I think in days like this it's sometimes very difficult to concede due respect to those who rule over us in the state.

I acknowledge that. But I think you and I as men and women who live by the book and by the spirit of God need to be very careful. Don't let's take everything we read to be true.

Unfortunately, it isn't true. There are many things that we read in our newspapers, written yet right here in this city, which are not true. They're colored.

And they're colored by the prejudices of the men that write or the people that talk on the television or on the radio. And you and I do not always get the truth. Let's make sure that we get the truth, that we can give due respect to those whom God has placed as heads of state.

If they go beyond the prerogatives that God has given them, then we must say to them, we must obey God rather than men. But until they get there, they deserve our respect. Same goes with the husband in the home.

A husband is the head of the wife, says the Apostle Paul in more places than one. But if the husband usurps the kind of authority that God has never given him, and impinges upon the conscience of the other person, and intrudes into a territory that was not ever put under his authority, then we have to say in that circumstance too, we must obey God rather than men. All of which, you see, brings us back to this point.

And this is where I want us to leave this part of our study this morning. God is the only head, but he has delegated unqualified headship to his son as the head of the church. And his son can be entrusted with a headship that has been given him never to coerce us contrary to the will of the Father, or do disservice to our own mind, or our consciences, or our wills.

Jesus does not coerce us and make us chattels. But in our obedience to him rather we come to ourselves and we blossom into the fullness of life that God was meant us to be. In obedience to him we come to our own and we come to ourselves.

Christ's headship then is an important image and metaphor. There is no headship in the world today that matches this. This is what we should honor under the general headship of God, of the Godhead.

Before I move from it, let me just say one word about the practical issues of it. You may well ask me, now it's all very well to talk in general terms. We need to talk in general terms because whatever illustration I may give, two-thirds of you good people sitting here this morning may say, well, that doesn't apply very much to me.

That's the difficulty of giving precise or exact illustrations. There are always people in the service who will say, well, that doesn't apply to me. Let me try and give some illustrations that may apply fairly generally.

He's the head. What does he require of us? He requires us to recognize that he is to do the thinking in the church. The mind, the brain is in the head.

And he wants us to live and to act as men and women who accept his thoughts, his mind as supreme. That's what it means to hold Christ as head. He asks us to look out upon the world as men and women who see things through his eyes.

The eyes are in the head. You see, you and I don't see everything anywhere, anyway. We only see what is very visible, and sometimes the things we see are not the important things.

There's much of the iceberg under the water out of sight that we don't see. In every given circumstance, he sees all. And the eyes are in the head.

The vision is in the head. And he wants us to take his view of the world and to look upon the world as it were as he says he sees it. That's what it means to hold Christ the head.

He wants us to listen to the groans and sobs and sighs and see the tears of men and also hear their joys through his ears. The hearing is in the head, you see. And your blessed Lord and mine this morning can hear possibly a sob in this service that I can't.

Or there may be here that someone this morning who's absolutely rejoicing. Everything in the garden is so lovely. You've never seen everything working together for good as they are today.

And you've come into the sanctuary. You've got nothing but a song. Praise the Lord.

We are told to rejoice with them that do rejoice. God bless you. Do you see the point? My eyes don't see what he sees.

My ears don't hear what he hears. He wants us to hear what he hears. How am I going to know what he hears? Read his word.

Live in his word. Receive his spirit and let the spirit control you and don't let any sin come between you and him. And you'll be sensitive to the head.

He asks to be Lord. He is Lord. That's his place.

Not yours, not mine. Can I go further? He wants us to speak with his mouth. Let me go one step further without adding to that because the time is going.

I believe if you'll forgive me for saying it like this, he wants us to breathe his own breath upon the world. And when you exhale the breath of the Lord Jesus Christ, you bring gladness. And you bring peace.

And you bring grace. And you bring hope. And you bring heaven down to earth.

You see the point? He is the head. You and I are members of the body. Oh privileged beyond, beyond words, beyond comparison.

There is no, there is no privilege like our privilege of being members of the body of so exalted the Lord. Lord of lords, king of kings. God the son, our mediator, the God man.

Members of his body extended into time and into space. But we are under the head. And we can only know our own well-being.

And we can only serve the purpose for which we have been thus called insofar as we acknowledge the head. I wonder whether there is someone here this morning who, who really needs to be challenged far more than I can do. May the spirit of the Lord do it then.

Because you're rebelling against the head. And if the truth were known this morning, though everybody else thinks that you're walking obediently, in your heart there are the seeds of rebellion. You like to be your own boss.

Brother or sister, I ask you to bring your sword. And in the name of my Lord, I ask you your sword, please. Put it down at his feet.

Don't make war with him. Pack it up. Make your peace with God and with his son, the sole head of the church.

Receive his word. Receive his truth. Receive his plan.

Bow to him. Worship him. Don't begrudge the surrender of everything, but worship him in the surrender.

Now I don't know what's happened. Time has gone as usual, hasn't it? Can I add one other word? And it must only be one. The Lord's headship provides and promotes the maturity of the body.

The maturity of the body. We are in Christ by his infinite grace. We are members of Christ by the mercy of salvation.

But that's only the beginning of the privilege of God's people. God has called us in Christ not just to be babes spiritually, but to be mature. And the portrait given to us in scripture, especially in the passages that I was going to quote before you this morning from Ephesians in a number of places, chapter 4 and chapter 5, is to grow up toward the fullness of the stature which is Christ Jesus our Lord.

But the question is this. How on earth can I, a newborn babe in Christ, a young Christian, recently born, and I'm not so sure of myself or sure of my feet or sure where I am, I'm just a newborn babe and I've just begun. How can I move from where I am? How can I be different? How can I develop? How can I mature? And you know, my friends, the marvel of it is this, that all maturity is in the head too.

In the analogy of Christ and his body, all life and the perfection of life comes to the limb in the body from the head via the other members of the body who according to Paul's physiology are linked together by ligaments and joints. We are linked to one another. If you want to start from the body, we are linked to one another and we are knit together in a remarkable unity in the physical body, but we are also knit to the head.

How does health come into the distant limb in the foot, shall we say? Well, it can only come from the head, but sometimes coming from the head, it comes through the other members of the body. And we're all knit together, but ultimately it has to come through the head. Now, I don't know whether you and I have ever got this picture.

We are sometimes very conscious of the person that is a blessing to us, a Sunday school teacher, a godly mother or a godly father, rightly so, and we give thanks to God for them. An evangelist, somebody who comes into the congregation from time to time and expounds the word of God in a way that you've never heard it before, and there you see the glory of the Lord, and there you come to recognize him and trust him and obey him. That's just as it ought to be.

Now, wait a moment, don't let it stop there. Whoever that other limb of the body was that brought blessing to you, listen, it only came ultimately from the head, from the head. He is the giver of life, and as the giver of life, he's the giver of health.

To quote our Lord's own illustration, I am the vine, you are the branches. Now, sometimes things go wrong with the vine, so my father, my father is the gardener, and he attends to the pruning of the vine, so that the sap from the main stem penetrates and percolates into every branch, and that every branch in the vine shall bear fruit, and then later more fruit and still more fruit. But it comes ultimately from the main stem.

Now, we're changing the analogy, changing the metaphor, but here it is. Christ is our life, says Saint Paul. All fullness dwells in him, says Saint Paul.

He is the depository, the repository of all truth, and of all grace, and of every needed thing that you and I will ever require. God has made him to be the one mediator between himself and men, there is no other, everything is in him. Wesley was right when he sang that great hymn, I think we sang it here last Sunday evening, it always makes me, lifts me up and enables me to worship as some other hymns don't.

Thou, O Christ art all I want. Thou, O Christ art all I want. Listen to the next line.

More than all in thee I find. That's the head of the church. Everything is in him.

What do you need today? What do you need? The Apostle Paul has another image to use of the same thing. He says that in Ephesians, in Romans chapter 5 and verse 1, that we have been introduced into grace. Now he's thinking of our Lord.

And the picture there is this of the believer having been introduced into grace so that he is, as it were, in an ocean. And whatever he needs, he's only got to turn to the left or to the right, in front of him or behind him, there is the grace of God in Christ. A man in Christ is a man within the reach of every conceivable thing to grow up.

Towards the head. Who is Christ Jesus our Lord? Brothers and sisters, I have to leave it there this morning. Can you see the picture? Hasn't the Holy Spirit done us a great favor in giving us these marvelous metaphors in Holy Writ? He is the builder of his church.

The Ecclesia is his. The assembly of God's people. It's his building.

I will build it. And it is my church. The bride is his.

His peculiar people, says the King James Version, meaning, of course, his unique, his exclusive people. You have no right to do as you please. You have no right to give your heart, Christian, to anybody else.

You have no right to go after, flirting after other gods and other religions. He's your exclusive lover and husband. He's the head.

And he wants his body to be seeing things with his eyes, hearing with his ears, thinking with his thought, thinking his thoughts, speaking his word, that with one mouth, yes, and Paul adds in Romans, one heart. Sensing the pulse of the head, the passion of the head, with one heart as well as one mouth, represent our God and our Savior in a world that is dying for the knowledge of him. Will you give him his crown rights today? As you come to the table and you partake of the broken bread, behind which you see the Lord's body, broken for you, will you acknowledge his headship and worship him, not begrudge it, worship him? As you take the cup and as you sip of the wine which speaks of the blood of the cross, the blood of atonement, the sacrifice of Golgotha, will you acknowledge his crown rights? Will you concede to him his headship with love and gratitude? Have you and I got to be bullied by difficult circumstances and chastisements galore to concede to Christ his due? I trust not.

I trust that as we come to his table today, the sum total influence of this morning's hour, the reading of the scriptures and the attempt briefly to expound just one segment of it and the Spirit's ministry upon our hearts and minds and our fellowship the one with the other, that the sum total influence of it will be this,

that when we come to the table and you take that piece of bread and you take that little cup in your hand, you're giving him back the life you owe with joy, with worship, with gladness. So to do. Let us bow for a moment before God.

Heavenly Father, by whose grace alone we have been able to come thus far in our thinking, in our understanding of your truth, and in our experience of yourself, please draw us now nearer, still nearer, to the cross where the Savior died, and not just to the cross, but to the crucified Lord whom you have set to be head over your church. We grant to each one of us the grace to respond and to respond with respect and with heartfelt gratitude to his claims upon our lives and upon the whole church. Forgive our sins of rebellion, be that rebellion in the area of the mind and of our thinking, or in the area of our action and behavior and service, given or refused.

Rule over me, Lord Jesus, is the cry of our heart this morning. We ask it now in the blessed name, the name of our Master. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26597.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-glyn-owen/jesus-christ-is-lord-lord-of-the-church-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net