

# Jesus Christ Is Lord - Lord of the Heart

by J. Glyn Owen

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*Jesus Christ must be acknowledged as the sole sovereign Lord of our inner life, including our emotions, thoughts, and conscience, for our spiritual growth, protection, and provision.*

**Duration:** 54:50

**Scripture:** Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 22:37, Romans 10:9, Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 3:15, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 Peter 3:15

**Topics:** "Lord"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the importance of having hope in one's heart through Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that when Jesus is set apart as the solitary Lord in one's heart, hope will naturally follow. The preacher encourages listeners to make time to read and ponder God's word, as it is through the mind that God speaks to us. He also highlights the need for Jesus to be Lord in the entirety of one's inner life, specifically in the heart. The sermon is based on 1 Peter 3:15, which urges believers to set apart Christ as Lord in their hearts.

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## Transcript

Our subject this morning, continuing with the main theme, Jesus Christ is Lord, our subject, Lord of the Heart. And I have chosen this morning to base our exposition largely upon one particular passage of Scripture, indeed upon one section of our verse in 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 15, where in the New International Version we read these words, in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. In your hearts set apart, or sanctify.

It's the word that is normally translated to sanctify, which means to set apart Christ as Lord. Now we have long ago established that Jesus Christ is Lord. Lord in his person, in a sense that there is no other like him.

He is the incarnate Lord. In his divine nature he has exemplified that he is Lord of all things. He was Lord of all kinds of circumstances.

We claim for him that he is Lord of the universe, and not without good reason, that he is Lord of the church, doubly so, by creation and by redemption. And if he is Lord of the church as a whole, the church in toto, he is essentially Lord of every individual within the church. How else could it be? He must be.

Now we have begun expounding this on a more intimate, a more personal basis. And we did this by stressing the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord of the mind and must be conceded as such. Lord of the mind.

In dealing with the mind we were already moving into the inner citadel of man's soul. And we took this first because God essentially deals with us. Primarily deals with all his people, with all men as thinking beings.

Now I don't want you to think for one moment that the preacher in the pulpit considers that man is merely a thinking animal. There are other areas of our lives, other areas of our being, that God deals with directly as we shall see as time proceeds. And we all know that of course already.

But fundamentally God addresses us as thinking people. Why do you think we have a bible? Why has God inspired holy men to write this word the bible? Because he is writing something he wants us to read and in reading to think. If you have no time to read God's word and ponder God's thought and God's truth, then you are evading the issue of the reality of God.

He addresses men and women's minds. In this very epistle from which we are quoting this morning, one of the remarkable statements by Peter is this. Come on, he says, let us belt up our minds.

Now that's a strange way of putting it. But what he says to ordinary Christian men and women is they need to get ready to think. Because God addresses us and speaks to us via the mind.

But not only the mind. Now we go deeper into the self life this morning. Into the life of the individual.

And this morning we want to see how the scriptures require that the Lord Jesus should be Lord in the entirety of the inner life. That is in the heart. Lord of the heart.

But in your hearts, says Peter, set apart Christ and that as Lord. Now let's look first of all at the sphere envisaged here. In your hearts.

In your hearts. The heart is to be the sphere of Christ's lordship. What does the term involve? What does it imply? We have to say a word about this because it's not quite as clear as it might appear on the surface.

In scripture the word heart is not only used of the physical organ but also of its spiritual counterpart. Namely of that in us which seems to be fundamentally responsible for the presence and the circulation of life to the whole of our being. Spiritual life, moral life.

Peter speaks of it in verse 4 of chapter 3. He refers to this area of our being as the hidden man of the heart. That's the NIV. The hidden man of the heart.

You look at me and you see the evident person. I look at you and I see the man in the body or the woman in the body. But the real man is not the man that you see.

The real man is the man within that occupies the body. I'm not suggesting that the body is so utterly separate from the spirit or from the soul. Not at all.

But the real man is nevertheless the man within. The hidden man of the heart. Paul refers to it as the inner being.

That again is quoting from the NIV of 2 Corinthians 4.16 and Ephesians 3.16 and a number of other places. The inner being. The man of the heart.

Psychologically speaking the use of the word heart in this context corresponds very almost identically to what psychologists speak of as the ego or the self. Now what does it include? What does the heart include? This is why I wanted to say something about it because generally speaking you see we think that the heart refers to the emotions. Especially to the feelings.

That which genders warm feelings towards some people and cold feelings towards some people. That which genders warm feelings towards some people and cold feelings towards some people. That which genders warm feelings towards some people and cold feelings towards some people.

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We generally feel that in our common parlance, the heart is that within us which causes us to love and to hate. Now, that's included. But when the word heart is used in this spiritual sense in the scripture it envisages much, much, much more than that.

It refers to the whole of your inner life, including your feelings, including your emotions. Now this is something that is absolutely essential for us Christians to come to terms with. Our emotions are important, what we love and what we hate.

Jesus tells us that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart. Jesus tells us that we should hate sin and so it's essential that he should be Lord of the heart in terms of emotions. But the term as such covers a vaster spectrum than simply our emotions.

There are times it is true and the word is used in the Bible to refer to one area of our life more than another and you've got to be careful to understand the context. Let me illustrate. When Paul says in Romans 121 he makes the statement, our foolish heart is darkened.

Now there the heart is a synonym for the understanding or for the mind. The thinking faculty, it includes you see the mind as for when the Bible speaks of the heart it includes the thinking apparatus, the mind, the intellect. When the psalmist affirms I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you, he's evidently referring to the memory.

So the term heart includes the memory. How can I hide God's Word in my heart? Well I can't just take hold of it and push it under the carpet somewhere. I can't get inside and do that.

That's not the point. It's metaphorical. And what Paul, what the psalmist meant was this.

Hiding God's Word in our heart system is to memorize it and live by it and there it is. And when temptation comes to me I remember the word as Jesus did when he was tempted of Satan and I say away Satan

because it is written. That's to hide the word in the heart, in the memory, so that we can call it up and recall it whenever we want to.

Again when John says in 1 John 3 he makes a statement like this, if our hearts condemn us God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. So much more will God condemn us. That could be the understanding of it.

But you see if our hearts condemn us evidently John is referring to the conscience. It's our consciences that condemn us. It's our consciences that prick.

But you see as far as the Bible is concerned a conscience is one area involved under the umbrella term the heart. Now I can't pursue this all the way through this morning or it'll be time to go home before we start it. But let me just make a blanket statement in this way.

The term heart includes those aspects of our natures that are involved in believing Romans 10 10, in speaking out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks Matthew 12 34 and 35. Scheming, planning, devising, Proverbs 6 18. Choosing Ecclesiastes 10 2. Formulating ideas 1 Corinthians 2 9. Discerning and distinguishing between right and wrong 1 Kings 3 9. And willing or deciding to obey or disobey Ephesians 6 6. The heart then is the inner side of our human life.

The spiritual as opposed to the physical. And though the term may sometimes be used to refer more especially to one aspect than to another. It generally comprehends the whole of our inner life, says Peter, in your hearts.

In your affections, yes. In your thinking as well. In your imagining as well.

In your consciences as well. In the way you come to decisions as well. In the whole, the length and breadth and depth of your inner life.

In the totality of the soul. Set Jesus Christ apart as what? A spectator? A guest? He's a guest already. If you're a believer.

But as Lord. Now the next thing we have to say about the heart is this. It's evident but I need to underscore it.

The heart which is to be the sphere of Christ's Lordship is the very center of our life. So he's to rule at the center. And the heart which is the center of our life is the source, the main spring, the well spring of everything we do.

Every word you say with your lips comes from your heart. Every look you give with your eye is inspired by your heart. That which you listen to with your ears, it's because of the quality of your heart.

What you like and love in your heart or what you hate. Your heart and mind determines what the hand does. Your heart and mind determines where the feet take us.

Your heart and mind determines everything about us. Oh our environment may have a part to play and we shall not be able to do what we want to do. But basically fundamentally we are what we are and we do what we do because of our hearts.

Oh let me spell it out. What I eventually do with my hands, look at with my eyes, listen to with my ears, speak with my mouth, and the way I conduct my whole physical life in the body is dependent upon the person I am in the heart. Unfortunately we often blame either our circumstances or something else in our history when we do that which is evidently wrong.

Now we're all we're all very much in the same cart here. We try to blame something else. Remember when our girls were small, they used to read some children's magazines.

I really don't remember the title of them. I should have conferred with my wife before saying this. There was a character very much like a squirrel in the in these books and these series this series and he was a queer character because whenever anything went wrong he scratched somebody and of course somebody would be cross with him and he would say oh did my hand scratch you? Naughty hand he would say and he would smack his hand you see and then he would kick somebody and he would be told sorry did my foot kick you? Naughty foot he would say.

Do you know we behave very much like that so often and we blame the organ that is involved, the hand, the lips, the foot, whereas the real source of our behavior wrong as it may have been all right is in the heart. It's the man within that determines the kind of behavior of the man outside. So the book of Proverbs tells us and rightly tells us and wisely tells us above all else guard your hearts.

Why? For it is the wellspring of life or as the King James puts it out of it are the issues of life. Jesus says if you want to make the fruit of life good you must make the tree good and he's referring to the heart the quality of the human heart. You must change the heart where there are bad men if you want to make them good.

The heart must be changed that's what Jesus meant when he said you must be born again the heart's got to be changed. And I know this is not accepted by the NIV as the correct translation of Proverbs 23 7 and it's a very difficult bit of Hebrew and no one can dogmatize about it but the King James translated it like this as a man sinketh in his heart so he is. Now whether that's a correct translation of the Hebrew there I do not know but I do know that that is true.

What I am is what I think in my heart what you are is what you are in the heart nothing better nothing more just what you are in the citadel of the inner life. You may lust in the heart and never put a hand on the opposite sex. You may murder in the heart and you've never had a pistol in your hand but in your heart you and I may be guilty of all the sins in the book.

When God sent a man to look for a king a young king in Israel to succeed Solomon who was no good he said the Lord doesn't look on the outside but the Lord looks on the heart and so he told Samuel turn down all the other sons of Jesse I want not the man of physical stature and prowess the one that appeals to the human eye I'm looking on the heart and this stripling David looking after the sheep he's got a heart that is set on pleasing me not a perfect heart as history will tell us but a heart that was orientated towards God at least as a few others were. A Christian approach then to deal with everything is to concentrate upon the heart and Peter says in your hearts set Jesus Christ apart as Lord. My dear people who is Lord in your inner life today? Who determines your emotions? Who determines what you love and what you hate? Who determines the kind of atmosphere that you create where you go? Who determines whether you get glum and you don't speak when somebody asks you? Who determines whether you're an awkward customer or not? Oh sometimes other people may be partly to blame but fundamentally it's the condition of your heart and mine and though we may foolishly say that we've got up on the right side of the bed that's got nothing

to do with it.

What has everything to do with it is the condition of your heart and mine. Who rules there? The sphere envisaged now look at the sovereignty demanded. In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

Christ as Lord. First of all there is the notion here of a solitary ruler. It's not a democracy this is something quite different.

One solitary ruler within the heart. What Peter is thinking about leaves no room for any doubt. He requires his readers ancient and modern to concede to Jesus Christ the position of Lordship without any rival whatsoever.

Jesus must exercise solitary and unqualified sovereignty in the heart. Not only the kids but many others of us saw the Queen yesterday and I must say it was quite a for me to see her again on the screen and for others of the family. One of the scenes that I shall never forget from her coronation others will not forget it either because I've seen it referred to in a number of books and heard about it in a number of sermons.

That scene when before the crown was ever placed on her brow in Westminster Abbey the Archbishop of Canterbury cried to the four points of the compass north, south, east and west. If I remember correctly the words he uttered forth, shouted forth, cried forth were these I present unto you the undoubted Queen of Israel. Are you willing to do her homage? And he cried it to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west and only after the cry had come thundering back to his ears from the four points of the compass did he say now we will place the crown on your head or words to that effect and the crown was put in his hands and he placed it on her head and she from that moment forward was the rightful queen and acknowledged as such.

The summons issued by Peter in these words is that every believer should acknowledge Jesus Christ as the sole sovereign Lord of the entire inner life. Can I ask a question here? Did you Christian, did you Christian realize that you are answerable for what goes on in your inner life? I don't answer too quickly. Oh I know if I got caught thieving I know I'd be answerable for that.

I'd be answerable to the law and I'd be answerable to this church, this congregation that called me and to the Presbyterian Church and answerable to God. I know that, I know that. But did you know, are you living as a person Christian, are you living as a person who knows when you go out into each new day you are answerable to someone, do you acknowledge someone as Lord over you to whom you're answerable for the thoughts and the ambitions and the emotions and the imaginations and everything else that goes on inside.

Nobody else knows about them but you do and your God does. Is he Lord of you there, Lord over you? So easy to sing and it's a lovely tune set to it and it makes it all the lovelier to sing. Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, crown Him.

But do we? There is the call, a solitary ruler but now Peter, oh my how the Spirit of God taught these men. I must say to you that in my reading and understanding of Scripture these days, this is one of the things that's coming through and I can never get over it. The way the Lord Himself in the flesh and then the Holy Spirit taught these men understanding.

The Apostle Peter is the perfect pastor here in the context where he puts this. You and I might immediately retort and say, Jesus Christ is Lord of the heart, well where on earth will I get to if I do that?

What will become of my life? I'll surely make a fool of myself because the world won't have me. Well where will I get to? Peter stresses in this context that the solitary ruler of the heart, Jesus Christ, is a sufficient ruler to fulfill everything that God has in mind for you and for me.

A sufficient ruler. I don't need anybody else. Now can I just condense this? One, Peter speaks of the adequacy of Christ as Lord for the protection of His people so that they need not fear.

The protection from fear. Now don't please misunderstand that. This is not giving any of the saints of God or a prospective Christian to believe that you're going to be free from trouble, trial, even persecution.

These people that Peter was writing to were being persecuted at that point. So it's not there. And if you take up the cross to follow our Lord Jesus Christ, you will have to suffer, I have to suffer, we all have to suffer.

So he's not saying that. But what he is saying is this. If Jesus Christ is Lord in your heart, then He is adequate to protect you from any evil, real evil, that men can deal out towards you.

Anything that men can do to you, He will turn it for good to them that love Him. And all things He will cause to work together for your good. Even if you're persecuted, blessed are you, He says.

That's tremendous. When they persecute you, blessed are you. Why? Because you're persecuted for doing His will and for doing that which is right.

He'll see to that. Now Peter actually is quoting here. It may be evident to you if you've studied this passage.

He's quoting from Isaiah chapter 8 and verse 12. I don't want to go into the technical details of it, but the point there in Isaiah is this. The prophet Isaiah and his followers are warned not to conform to the ideas of the people around them.

Don't listen to what the people are saying. See it's sometimes easy for a prophet or a preacher to listen to people and to give people what they want. It's terribly easy to do that.

Now I'm sorry, I mustn't go off at a tangent, but the Lord says to the prophet, don't you listen to the people. You listen to Me. And don't fear their fear.

They're very much afraid that such and such a thing is going to happen to them, never mind what it was. And they're living in fear and their fear of something or other is determining their whole behavior and their whole philosophy of life. Don't listen to them and don't fear what they fear.

Peter gives it a slightly different twist. And then he says, he uses those same words, but gives it his own twist. He urges his readers not to fear anyone, especially their potential persecutors.

Don't fear anyone. Don't fear at all, but rather let your wholesome fear of God, your respect towards God, be the ruling factor in your heart and towards Jesus Christ as Lord. Instead of fearing anything that men are talking about, doomsday is coming.

Total warfare is coming, East and West. Well, we should try to do something to stop that. But you and I, believers, we don't need to be afraid of it as if we were not in the hand of the living God.

We have a protection. We have one who keeps us. Our lives do not end when the atomic bomb or the whatever it is comes.

And we should not live in cringing fear with our lives determined and dominated by the fear of anything. On the contrary, what should dominate our lives is the fear of God, the fear of the Lord in the heart. That is respect for him.

Jesus said the same thing. He was sending out some of his disciples to minister, and he said, now look, he says, don't fear those that are able to kill the body. And when they've killed the body, there's nothing more that they can do.

But rather, he says, you fear him who is able to kill both body and soul in hell. Now that's Jesus, not me. But you see what he's telling them? Let your lives be dominated, determined inwardly by an awesome respect for the Lord in your heart who represents God and his God.

And then he says, you won't need to fear anybody else. Solzhenitsyn says that's true, as one who has proved it. One commentator in referring to this passage in James quotes the words of the famous Scots Covenanter, Daniel Cargill.

He was overheard as he was going up the ladder to his gallows to die for the faith. He was overheard to say these words. Lord knows, he said, I go up this ladder with less fear and perturbation than ever I enter the pulpit to preach.

Cargill, what are you saying? He says, I have no fear going up this ladder. I had fear going up the pulpit steps many a time. Well, why have you no fear going up this ladder and you're going to die? Well, for this reason, that he who is Lord of the whole of my life will see to it that even death can do me no harm and will bring me to his eternal glory.

And because I am pledged to please him, I'm not afraid of death anymore. Its sting is taken out. Brothers and sisters in Christ, this is the gospel.

Having Christ as Lord of the heart, Lord whom he feared with a godly fear and a wholesome respect and worship, he was made fearless of men. And I say to you, if you want to know genuine heart's ease, in days of peril and days of fear amongst the people, there is only one way. Make Jesus Christ Lord of your heart and you won't need to fear what other people fear.

But then Peter goes on, not only to speak of his adequacy in that sense to protect us, but his adequacy to produce within our hearts a genuinely Christian hope. Listen to this, second part of verse 15 where our text comes. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is within you, the hope that is in you.

Now you see what Peter envisages here. He's taking it for granted that when Jesus Christ is set apart in the heart as the solitary Lord, there will be hope in that heart. If you're a hopeless person this morning, if you have no hope, if you're without Christ and without hope in the world, listen my friend, the thing to do is get Jesus into your heart and leave him there as Lord, set him aside as Lord.

You'll have hope and you won't get it anywhere else. But you'll have it when Jesus reigns in your heart as Lord. Now Peter envisaged the situation in that ancient world where those who had Christ set apart as Lord in their hearts would go out into the world to live their normal workaday life and people would notice

that they had hope because if you have hope it's going to show forth.

And because you have a genuine hope people are going to ask you sooner or later, what makes you happy in this kind of day and in this kind of age with all the kind of things that are happening around us and the things that are threatened? What makes you different eh? Where did you come from? What bread do you eat? What do you take for breakfast? Oh they'll ask you that. Peter envisaged that, that every man and woman who has Christ as Lord in the heart will have hope in the Lord of the heart. And the two things are so intimately related that you can't separate them.

Many of you dear people are expecting to have the vital, vibrant, Christian hope of the New Testament, but you're refusing to let Jesus be Lord in your hearts. You can't have it. You may have all the shipoleths.

You may be able to dot all the Christian doctrines and cross its every T. I tell you, if Jesus is not Lord in your heart, you cannot have this quality of Christian hope. Now you can be cross with me, but I cannot apologize. That's true.

Unless Jesus is King and Sovereign in your heart, you will not know the vibrant, vital, victorious hope that Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 15 and Peter elsewhere and others too. Let me quote you. When Paul described the pagan world as having no hope, it was not a mere rhetorical flourish, but plain truth.

The world of ancient Greek and Roman civilization was a world of fascinating beauty. It could boast of splendid courage, high intellectual power, and superb loveliness of poetry and of art. But in spite of all the grandeur and the charm, it was a world without hope.

Warmth there was in the enjoyment of the present, but the thought of the future struck chill. Old age was dreaded as the threshold leading out into the dark and the cold. Life was a Damoclean banquet, sumptuous indeed, but with a threatening sword all the time suspended by a hair.

Now I quote. Within the quote, not to be born at all. That is by far the best fortune.

The second best is as soon as one is born, with all speed to return thither whence one has come. The end of the inner quote. The words come from the greatest period of Greece, from fifth-century Athens, and from a man who was regarded by his contemporaries as an example of supreme good fortune, handsome, rich, a fine intellect, with public service as a military commander behind him, a superb poet, popular.

They occur in a chorus of Sophocles, where the poet may be taken to be expressing his very own personal thought. Over that classical civilization, death reigned as king of terrors, spoiling men's enjoyment of the present with the intruding thought of the future, so that life could seem a gift not worth receiving, and death in infancy preferable to growing up, to the conscious anticipation of having to die. Now over against all that, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, the king of terrors had been dethroned, and the Christian believed it, and they caused that Jesus should sit on the throne of their hearts as Lord.

Jesus lives, they cried. Henceforth is death entrance gate to life eternal. Whilst Christ is ruling within the heart, he is capable of producing that kind and quality of lively hope, as Peter speaks of it earlier in his letter, within the bosom of the believer.

One other thing, the adequacy of Christ as Lord for the pursuit and promotion of God's will in the heart and from the heart. Listen to these words that follow. I want you to notice how all this influences the kind that

goes on in the heart.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is in you. There's hope in the heart. It's one thing.

But do this with gentleness and respect. Now remember they were being persecuted. Keeping a clear conscience be so easy to do the wrong thing in those circumstances, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil, for Christ died in that manner, the just for the unjust. Can you see what Peter is saying? He's sufficient to protect you. He is sufficient to produce hope within you.

He is sufficient to see to the ingoing work of grace in your heart. In all its vastness, whatever the term heart includes, he can make you gentle and respectful even of your enemies. That's grace.

He can enable you to keep a clear conscience whatever you are asked to do or forbidden from doing. He can enable you to behave in a manner that your conscience is clear in the sight of God. And he can enable you to do that which is good.

In suffering for well-doing, we come closest to being Christlike. How do you know when you're Christlike? How do I know when I'm Christlike? Well, I've got to read the scriptures very carefully if I want to apply that test to myself or to anybody else. But I'll tell you one thing and you'll know it.

Do you suffer for doing will of God? Then you're very Christlike. That's exactly how he suffered. At that point, you and I are absolutely like your Lord.

Oh, there's a world of difference between his suffering for the sins of men atoningly and our suffering. There's a chasm that separates the two kinds of suffering, but the principle of it is the same. He suffered for doing good, not for doing evil.

And if you're suffering for doing well, so too is your suffering a replica of his in principle. I conclude then with Peter's summons. In your heart set apart Christ as Lord.

The apostle comes right down to earth here and he issues a summons for a once-for-all action, but for an all-time intention or with an all-time intention. A once-for-all action. You ask me, how do I know that he's asking for a once-for-all action? Because of the tense of the verb he uses, which is an aorist tense.

And the aorist tense in the imperative very specifically calls for one act. You can't argue with it. It asks you to do something here and now, vital, irrevocable, something that you must do and act upon.

And it stands out in your life. It'll be a divide. The call is for a decisive action that is implicit in this kind of sharp action, sharp deed.

And what is it? It is this. Set Christ apart as Lord. Now the word set apart, as I've indicated already, is the word for sanctifying.

Sanctifying means setting apart. Let me give you one or two pictures and I'm almost through. To set apart or to sanctify is exactly what God did with the seventh day, Genesis.

What did he do? Well, it was a cycle of seven days. But when he came to the seventh, God, as it were, put a hedge around it. And he says, now, not that the things that you do from days one to six are wrong, if you're doing my will, but the seventh day belongs to me.

You set it apart. You put a hedge around it. And you say, I acknowledge your right to one day in seven, not to a few hours of my life or a few hours of my thought and attention, but for the whole.

God sanctified Aaron and he sanctified the priests, we read. What does it mean? It doesn't mean to say that they were better people than other people. But God wanted to set these aside to serve in the temple.

And so he separated them. He, as it were, put a fence around them and these people I want to serve in my temple. And he put them on one side, as it were, in his mind and intention.

These people belong to me. They're separate. They're set aside.

Now, my friends, the picture here is this. You're a believer. Okay.

Jesus Christ has come into your heart by the Holy Spirit. And he is Lord. Put a fence around him, not to keep him in, but to keep all intruders from trying to challenge his enthronement and his lordship and his kingship.

You see, your old nature will challenge him every day. The world outside will inspire you to challenge the lordship of Christ in your heart. The whole custom, the whole atmosphere of this world and this life will inspire you to do that.

But listen, says Peter, set him aside, put him on a pedestal so high that nobody can touch him and leave him there as the solitary ruler of the whole gamut of your inner life. And that once for all action must have an all-time intention. And the implication is this, if in anything you find that you succumb to the desires of the flesh or the temptations of Satan, ask his forgiveness immediately and put the scepter back in his hand and say, Lord, I was wrong, but I put the scepter back in your hand and you are to reign, not myself and not anybody else.

And some of you good people will turn to me and you'll say, well, what difference does that make? If I do that, what difference will it make? Oh, my friend, rather than have anarchy in your inner soul, it will bring an order into existence that you never had before. The Bible is concerned about your inner life and mine before it is concerned about the outer. Don't misunderstand that.

He's concerned about everything we say and everything we do. But the key, the source, the wellspring of our behavior is our heart's condition. And I'll tell you the kind of thing that will emerge.

In the heart of the man or the woman where Jesus Christ is, is consistently exercising his lordship and is thus adored and loved and honored and worshiped as such. This is the kind of picture that will emerge. A mind that is illumined by the Word of God.

A mind illumined by the Word of God is a mind that will, will enlighten the conscience and keep it working properly. Illuminate and keep it functioning to say the truth and to be strong. A mind that is illumined by the truth of God and alerts the conscience to what is right and wrong is then something that brings strength and power to your will.

How weak-willed we are. Some of us don't seem to have a spinal cord at all. We make decisions but we can't keep them.

To will is present with me but how to perform that which is good I know not. We don't have this spinal column, this backbone, this moral stamina to persevere in the way of the Lord. But you see this is the way.

If Christ is Lord of the heart and he illumines the mind to understand this truth and alerts the conscience to tell me what is right or wrong, he strengthens the will. And as he strengthens the will, he gets under control gradually. What I think, what I love, what I hate, what I imagine, and the whole area of the inner life comes more and more under his control.

And if there's a slip-up as there will be, oh yes, he will forgive, graciously forgive, and in forgiving will quicken us again and help us to learn as Peter did from that terrible threefold denial of his Lord. He will forgive and he will strengthen us to help our brethren even the better because of our fall. He'll cause the sin of man as well as his folly to praise him.

Have you got the picture of what God wants to be going on in your heart? Have you got it? Oh the Lord forgive me for my inability to make this clear if there's anybody here in the in a muddle this morning. But the key to it is this, set Jesus Christ apart as Lord in your heart and say to him categorically, if he's in your heart as Savior today, say to him, I just acknowledge that you alone have the right to rule there. I'm glad I've got you in my heart.

You would win my heart over again this morning if you hadn't won it before. But I reiterate, I'm glad the crown is on your brow. I want you to be Lord.

It's not easy but I want you to be Lord and I'm sorry that at any time in my life I've kicked the pricks. But if you've never invited Jesus to come into your heart as Lord to be your Savior, invite him in today. Swing your heart's door widely open and let him come and let him come in and put the reins in his hands.

You see there are so many of our desires that are just like a runaway horse. Just as if you the rider, you've thrown the reins on the neck of a horse and the horse is running wildly. Some of your desires, some of your passions, some of your thoughts, they're running like a horse that's gone mad.

And when once you've begun to give in to some of these lusts, then to bring them under control is a terrible thing. Hold a drink before a man who's been an alcoholic. He doesn't ask whether it's good or bad to drink it.

He just drinks. He gulps it down and asks for more. Bring a man who has given his life in sexual vice and give him the opportunity of satisfying his craving again.

He doesn't ask, is it right or is it wrong? He goes for it. But I tell you there is a way of bringing that under control. I know a hand.

I know a Lord. I know a Savior. And I swear to you by Almighty God, He can take those things under control.

And He can bring order where there's chaos. But you've got to let Him in. And you've got to let Him in in the knowledge that He comes as Lord.

And you're not going to treat Him as a nincompoop when He's Lord of glory. Let Him in. Will you do that? Right where you are, sitting, with your eyes wide open if you like, doesn't matter.

But where you are this morning in this Knox Presbyterian Church in the year of our Lord, 1982, and I think it's the 18th of April, swing your heart's door widely open. Let Him in. A once-for-all action with an all-time intention, not just to have a little thrill this morning, whether you get a thrill or not, I'm not sure, but to go out into a world to live the life that God meant for you.

Do it now. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we bow before You with humble, grateful thanks for Your Word.

The psalmist said, It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our going. Let it lead us today, all of us. And if you have a controversy with any of us who call you by the name, by your name as Lord, but do not do the things that you command, please give us a due penitence and an honesty that recognizes your blood-bought right and hands the scepter back to your hand to rule over us.

And should there be among us this morning those who have never, never acknowledged your lordship, though they've seen something of the beauty of this life in other people, grant them grace this morning in their hearts to set Jesus aside as Lord. Bring cosmos out of chaos, beauty out of ugliness, life out of death through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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