

# Until Christ is Formed in You

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of Christ's Lordship in believers' lives for true spiritual growth and transformation.*

**Duration:** 45:41

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:11, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 4:19, Ephesians 4:13, Colossians 1:27

**Topics:** "Christ Likeness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of God and the presence of Jesus in various biblical stories. He explains that the power of God enabled Moses to lead the Israelites through the desert and provided for their needs. He also mentions the story of the three friends of Daniel who were protected by a fourth person in the fiery furnace. The preacher highlights the importance of having the spirit of God within oneself, which brings joy and peace. He concludes by urging believers to surrender to the lordship of Christ and allow him to rule over every aspect of their lives.

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## Transcript

Will you kindly turn with me for the word of the Lord this morning to Galatians chapter 4 Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia Chapter 4 and I would like to read verse 19 reading it again from the New International Version my dear children For whom I am again in the pains of childbirth Until Christ is formed in you how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone Because I am perplexed about you. This is a very tender passage passage in which the Apostle Paul Speaks of himself as a mother giving birth to her children the Churches of Galatia were brought into existence by the human agency of the ministry of Paul God sent him forth and by the Holy Spirit used him To bring into existence in these several locations Men and women who came to a knowledge of Jesus Christ the Savior and who were baptized into the body So that they were members of Christ in very truth since then however, many things have happened and among the many things that happened there have come into the Situation there in Galatia those whom we should probably speak of as quite heretical They may have had elements of truth in their teaching, but they were certainly heretical they had heretical aspects of truth at any rate and they are Infiltrating into the communities of believers and are turning their hearts away from the simplicity Which is in Jesus Christ our Lord They're turning them backwards as it were diverting them backwards to a kind of legalistic approach to life and indeed, they are Tempting them to give vent as Paul tells us in chapter 5 very especially to give vent to passions and to the flesh and Are suggesting that you can live very much as you like now in consequence Paul Tells us that or rather tells them in chapter 3 and verse 1. He says that you've been

bewitched Who has bewitched you he says Because as he goes on to say in chapter 4 They have now turned back from the principles that operated in their early Christian life and are living very much According to the principles or absence of principles that ruled their pre-christian days with the result says Paul Whereas I originally thought that I had given birth To healthy children Real converts Men and women boys and girls who were born again of the Spirit of God I Am now he says quite perplexed about you chapter 4 and verse 20. I really don't know what to say And so he says I'm going through the through the through the pains of childbirth all over again I'm literally like a prospective mother in labor and I will continue to be in that Condition he says until I see something not the sound of a cry heralding the birth of a baby That's not enough spiritually speaking Not just until I see a form of a child that has apparently been born.

That is inadequate But I shall be going through the pains of childbirth for you until I see Christ Formed in you The Apostle was perplexed. He didn't know whether they were Christians on What? How can you rectify a situation such as that Some of us this morning may be in that in that situation Some of us may be pastors. It's good to see a number of pastors here this morning We salute you in the name of the Lord pray God's blessing upon you as you go back your several ways See some friends here who've been coming here around this time of the year for a number of years It's great to have you from the United States and others from other places Some of you pastors are looking at converts that you think you have led to Christ brought to birth And then a little time has elapsed and you really don't know what's happened.

They're just like children of the world They haven't grown up. They haven't moved from where they were born Parents are concerned about children that have gone through what appear to be an experience of conversion They've not got very far sometimes Children have such concern for their parents Sunday school teachers for those that they teach and so forth Now, how is it that you can prove to your pastor to your parent or to someone that's concerned for you? That you really are a believer That you've really been born Of God that you're a new creation in Christ Jesus Well, here's the answer Paul has much else to say about the theme in Galatians and elsewhere in the New Testament But here is something which seems to cover the whole gamut of his teaching elsewhere. He says I'll not be satisfied I'll not be persuaded I'll not be able to breathe freely about you until he says I see with my own eyes Features of Christ's life in you Christ Formed in you so that looking at you.

I see the Christ now There's much to say there that I have no time really to develop this morning. It says something about Paul's evangelism. I Can't develop this Paul's evangelism was not simply a declaration of the gospel.

Take it or leave it I'm not suggesting that there are evangelists to do that Anyway, but I just want to make it clear that was not Paul's evangelism of standing on the square or in the synagogue or elsewhere Declaring the truth and leaving it to people take it or leave it. No, no, no Accompanying the proclamation. There was there was a Struggle like a woman in travel Evidently he is referring to his intercession To his life of prayer to his ministry at the throne to that which must always accompany biblical preaching namely biblical praying But now we come to this Paul is concerned that there must be Evident in the life of a genuine Christian the Manifestation of the Christ till Christ be formed in you And no Christian pastor or teacher or parent should slacken his prayers or ministrations until this happens This is not a new concept by the way in the New Testament.

You have it in the old in Isaiah 53 the prophet says Jesus the Messiah that is coming he will see of the travel of his soul But Before he ends that section of Isaiah. He says this as soon as Zion was in labor as

soon as Zion traveled She brought forth her sons Are there conversions among us here in Knox are there conversions in the departments? Do people come to birth here in Christ or in your congregation or assembly? If not, may I ask the question could it be that we do not bring our own travel? Alongside of the travel of Christ because the promises as soon as Zion was in labor She brought forth God has joined these two things together the preaching of his word and gospel and the intercession of his people and When these two things are wedded together and our practice day in and day out Year in and year out there must be men and women claimed from darkness Who are born anew into the kingdom of God and where this does not happen. It may very well be That we're lacking somewhere Now this is the kind of difficulty then that Paul envisaged and I want to come to this very practical question this morning What do you do in a situation like this? I want to apply to ourselves particularly How would you speak to someone in this condition who has made a profession of faith But who's very much where he or she was on that particular day never grown up never shown evidence of the Christ life There is no real indication that Christ is formed or being formed in that person What would you say to such a person? Now I may be charged with over simplification this morning But there are certain things that I want to get across as basic It's a theme that is endless, but may the Spirit of God enable us to take up one or two things that are absolutely vital to this And I come to you this morning I acknowledge that this has been burning in my soul ever since I stood in this pulpit before I went away for a little vacation Now the first thing I want to say is this If Christ is to be formed in any of us There must be an extension of his rule Over the whole of our life.

I'll put it in another way The reason why Jesus Christ is not evident in some of our lives is this because Jesus Christ is not Lord Over our life and we have somehow Imbibed the devil's lie That Jesus can be our Savior without being our Lord That's not true. Now the acknowledgement of the fact of Christ's Lordship is inherent in the very act of saving faith Of course it is Paul makes that clear and so do others Paul says in Romans 10 and 9 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 No question about that That's as clear as crystal the acknowledgement that Jesus is Lord.

Jehovah God Is integral to the confession of a Christian now if you do not confess Jesus as Lord this morning You may be a very good man. You may be morally upright but listen The New Testament does not give you the right to call yourself a Christian It denies it to you Implicit in the Christian confession is the acknowledgement that the incarnate Lord Jesus of Nazareth is God Having faith in him is essential to being a Christian At the same time the application of that Acknowledged fact to the issues of daily life and living may very well become a fool And become modified in practice So that we are in constant need of checking up on this Let me repeat Christ is formed within us to the extent in which Christ is Lord over us If he is not Lord over you his character will not be seen in you You may play around with scriptures You may claim any kind of experience you like but if Jesus is not Lord over you Jesus will not be formed in you now I want to say in the first place concerning this that Jesus Christ has well Established the right to rule thus in the lives of his people And to do so regularly and exclusively Constantly and without any rival He has done this in many ways. Shall I summarize what I would like to say? He has proved his saving interest In every one of his redeemed people he has proved that he has your well-being at heart So that you should be able to trust him as Lord he did this of course by his very incarnation Why did Jesus become man? Why did the Son of God become man? Why did he take our humanity to his deity? Why was he born of the Virgin? Why did he leave the mansions of glory? It was for you believer, you know that it was for for you for me He Didn't come down here on an escapade to see what things were like he had made all things He knew the universe it had been fashioned by him, but he came down for you men and women who are redeemed with his blood Every one of you he came for you Bethlehem was organized for you Why was he tempted of

Satan for you and for me? Why did he live the simple? Self-abnegating life he did for for over 30 years for you and for me Why was he humbled by Satan and by men for you and for me Why did he die the atoning death of the cross it was for you and for me He had your good in mind.

He had your salvation on his heart. He wanted to save you and Redeem you from all iniquity to be his own treasure for all eternity. That's why He became man and lived as man and died on the cross of Calvary.

He had your good at heart As I was meditating over this yesterday and and and previously and again this morning The thing that thrilled me was this Jesus did not only enter a state of humiliation Because he had our good at heart But now that he is ascended at the right hand of the majesty upon high what's he thinking about him? What's he doing? What's his business? What's he thinking about this morning? Shall I tell you? He is there says the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews and he ever lives To make intercession for you. Now, let's get that Jesus the Lord, what are you doing this morning? I'm pleading for my people Are you sprinkled with his blood are you born of his spirit? Do you know him? Do you love him? Are you his listen, my friend? He's alive and he's living only for you. I Say to you if that doesn't establish his claim to be rule ruler of your life.

What does in? his humiliation and in his glorious Enthronement it's all for you. He lives for you as he died for you But I must focus attention very especially of course as the New Testament does upon the fact that he paid the price of your ransom and mine the price of our redemption Paul puts it like this and I'll only refer to this Scripture there are so many to which one could refer Christ redeemed us. He says it here in Galatians 3 13 He redeemed us from the curse of the law By becoming a curse for us The curse of the law You who are saved men and women do remember this you were under the curse.

I was under the curse We were all under the curse the curse of a holy God the wrath of a holy God and Justice could do nothing for us other than condemn us There is none righteous no not one there was not one Solitary individual who could claim acceptance with God not one neither. There is there today? Those who do only prove that they know nothing about God in his holiness They have come near to God know the depravity of their hearts and the rebellion of their wills All of us are under the curse of God, but God in Christ came and he took our curse and took it away and We can live Now that's the gospel And he did that for you. Therefore my friend hasn't he some right to rule your life and mine? Isn't he the kind of person that you can trust to make decisions for you to be your master to be to be the one To lead you through life to be the one to serve Indeed he died for this very purpose He says so categorically that he died says Paul for all that those who live through his death Should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again Jesus had this in mind when he died for you.

He was dying to have the right to rule over your life So that Paul challenges the Corinthians with this Remarkable stab in their complacency and rebellion. He says to them look men and women don't you know, you're not your own It don't belong to yourselves You were bought with a price And I want to say to anybody that may be in our service this morning a member of Knox or a visitor here If you are rebelling and living your own life to the flesh and according to your own lust I tell you you have no right to it. You are not your own and Heaven would have us shout at one another and we have no right to live to ourselves Never mind what the world says never mind What your passions say to you heaven says if the blood of Christ has redeemed you and you claim it as your own You've got no right to go on sinning as if there was no Christ and no Lord You're as guilty as they were who crucified him on the tree Were it not for his grace that could be no hope for you you are not your own he died for that He lives for that and he deserves nothing other than the crown of Lordship upon his brow Now, let me come back The right Which our Lord

has so evidently established must not only be acknowledged But respected and honored now, I'm going to ask you this morning though.

I'm not through with my message yet I'm going to ask you right where you are here and now If you're a rebel against the Lordship of Jesus Christ put it right now Honor him in your heart now set him aside in your heart now Worship him now. You can't worship him if he's not your Lord Make him the Lord of your life now right now the only thing I have time to say about this aspect of it is that The late dr. A W toes are somewhere.

I don't remember where Says that the position of Jesus Christ in the life of many Christians so-called May be likened to that of a king or a queen in a limited constitutional monarchy Now, you know what that means, don't you? In a limited constitutional monarchy the king or the Queen is just a symbol just like the national flag or the national anthem a rallying point useful But has no real power You know, it is written into the Dutch Constitution. We have some Dutch people here this morning. It's a joy to have you You know, it is written into the Dutch Constitution these words the monarch may reign But not rule.

Oh, yes, it's the monarch you find in the palace and on occasions It's the monarch that will rule that with that that will read what statement has to be made on formal occasions But he doesn't compose those statements He doesn't make those speeches the real rulers behind the scene make the speeches he or she reads them The monarch may reign but not rule many of us have that concept of Jesus Christ We call him Lord, but he doesn't rule We say he's the Son of God but we don't let him take charge of of hands and feet and ears and eyes and lips and heart and will He's not in control And what I'm saying is this my friend there must come a moment in your life and mine when we realize it's not enough to call Him Lord, we must make him Lord We must hand over the scepter to him So that henceforth we look not upon ourselves as our own property, but as exclusively his Now the second main thing I wanted today and this will be all that I'll have time for insofar as Jesus Christ is Lord over us and rules over us then we may know something about the Exploration and the experience of his power within our life the power that Transforms the power that transfigures the power that beautifies the power that makes us like him. I know many Pardon me. I know many people who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and a few months later They wonder what happened because they're not aware of any Real mighty power in their lives that they had been given to understand would be theirs as Christians So they falter into direct gloom and disappointment and What can be the trouble? The trouble may be invariably traced I believe to the attempt to limit the rule of Christ For the moment you limit the rule of Christ You are saying to God that You can't trust me God with your power the power of your spirit The man who doesn't acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord would do anything if he had power and authority in the church But the man who is under the lordship of Jesus Christ can be trusted with power trusted with God's best To me.

This is something very serious. I I wish I were able to declare it and to expound it better. I Had a friend who was born in Africa He was the son of missionary parents Still have him by the way this is not in the past, but as a boy of 16 he was very fond of the gun and a very fond of shooting birds But in the part of the world where he and his father were there were certain birds that you should never shoot And it was against the law But whenever he got hold of the gun he had his eye on certain birds and they were Prohibit you shouldn't you were not to shoot them But he couldn't be trusted with a gun so his father who would honor the Lord and honor the people that he was serving got the gun and the cartridges Locked up and Stephen was very hurt about it One day his father said to him Stephen when I can trust you to do what is right I'll open the door and I'll unlock the lock and I'll let you have the gun and I'll let you have the cartridges, but so far I can't trust you with that power That illustration may fall down at many points, but

surely surely it is suggestive My friend do you know could it be that you and I can't be trusted with certain dimensions of divine power? Simply because we couldn't be trusted with it We would use it for our own glory We would use it for this and for that rather than for the glory of God But you see the moment you put yourself under the yoke of Jesus Christ and say this Jesus is my Lord He will govern what I look at what I listen to what I say what I do with my hands where I go with my Body with my feet.

He will rule me. No, you see you're saying to the Lord Lord, whatever I will do I will do it under the Lordship of Jesus Christ And so whenever God sees fit he can pour the mighty spirit upon you in Pentecostal benefits And he can trust you you won't use the grace or the power of the spirit to your own ends I believe you may argue with me somebody. I believe that there are vast Dimensions of divine power shut off from the carnal men and women who come to our churches in the 20th century Just because we do not honor Jesus Christ as Lord we sing about it we talk about it and if the preacher were not Believing in it.

We would soon get rid of him and rightly so But we do not practice it Jesus is Lord on paper Jesus is not Lord in our hearts and in our lives Brothers and sisters, there is so much I would like to say But you see then once we get this issue resolved about the totality of the Lordship of Jesus Christ We are now on the threshold into a new territory of Christian experience and living and usefulness for God Because the power of our Lord Jesus Christ is a power that is Always adequate Always adequate and especially for the promoting of Christian character as well as for Christian conduct The power of Christ to save and create his image in our lives is not dependent upon any natural capacity in us It is a it is adequate for the most profligate and debauched You remember how Paul speaks of some people in Corinth having given a list of the most terrible sins of the age He says such were some of you but you're washed You're sanctified. You're justified in the name of the Lord. Jesus.

You're washed You're not what you were and he expects them now mark this he expects them now To have Christ formed in them Just like the Galatians Christ's power is adequate to keep his people despite the subtlety of Satan and the end of sin He is able says Jude to keep you from falling and to present you before the his glorious presence without fault and without wrinkle Christ's power is adequate to keep his people in all Inconceivable circumstances Paul in Romans chapter 8 envisages Such a variety of what we would call evil circumstances difficult circumstances But you remember what he says in all these things We are more than conqueror Through him that loved us in them in the middle of them So many of us are brave before the event before the trouble comes Many more of us are very brave after the trouble has come and gone and we Read a lot of things in but we're not true to the fact when we when we talk about it in retrospect No, no says Paul in all these things in all these things in the loneliness in The world of temptation in all these things. We are more than conquerors. I guess power you see Where does it come from? The power comes By the grace of the Holy Spirit's indwelling To those over whom Jesus Christ is Lord The ever adequate power of Christ is everywhere available.

I find this one of the most precious things in the New Testament You don't have to run here for it or run there for it beware of people who say they've got to get go here or Go there in order to get grace or to get power Jesus taught this lesson very early in his life when he told the woman of Samaria The water that I will give you will be in you like a well of water Right inside you. You don't need to run hither and thither The man of the world has got to run. He's got nothing in him.

No joy. No basis for peace and so forth He's got to go hither and thither but you have the mighty spirit of God in you within you I Read the other day of a tragedy in Western Australia But a whole family father mother, I believe and three children were traveling in the car They were going hundreds of miles between

certain two locations and they didn't have enough gas They went out of gas there were no gas stations anywhere and the heat was absolutely terrifying And the father and the mother died carrying the three children my friend You need not perish like that spiritually You need not wilt like that spiritually because if the Spirit of God is within you you may have power anywhere Everywhere always available Was available even in the Old Testament. Yeah, I know what I'm saying.

I Say to you that the power of Christ was available in the Old Testament Abraham rejoiced to see my day afar off. He saw it and was glad How did Abram March over a hundred over a thousand miles along the Euphrates Valley? To a place to which God had called him How did he manage it when there were people of his own family who didn't want him to go? He had the power and the grace of the Spirit of God the power of Christ by the Spirit the power of the coming Messiah by the Spirit in his heart How was he able to lay his father at rest in Haran and go into the Interior of the promised land where God was waiting to speak to him face to face. How could he do it? Well, you see the power of God That's why the power of the Messiah was given him there the Spirit was given him How were the Israelites able to walk in the desert? Well, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10 that they were able to go because the rock that followed them and Satisfied their needs was Christ In the wilderness before he was born of Mary.

That's what Paul says What about those three young men those three friends of Daniel you remember how they were hurled into the into the cauldron of fire? Don't you remember that? It says there was a fourth there and the form of the fourth was like a son of the gods What did Nebuchadnezzar see I believe he saw the mighty presence of the Lord Jesus given to them Not only was this power adequate then of course, but when we come to New Testament times and we come to the time of Pentecost Well, I don't need to talk to you about these I see that early church just a handful of people today very frightened and bewildered Tomorrow going out into the streets of Jerusalem where their Lord was crucified. Remember that But Difficulties in Jerusalem were not that the streets were narrow or anything like that But difficulty of preaching in Jerusalem was this that's where the headquarters was of those would crucify their Lord Jesus was crucified there. All his enemies were there.

They were there in concert They go out into Jerusalem Into Jerusalem to preach that Christ was risen from the dead Ascended at the right hand of the Father had sent forth the Holy Spirit you see into Jerusalem Didn't that require power? I tell you it did but they had it And I see those men moving into all parts of the globe Carrying the gospel with them taking the name of Jesus to Rome taking the name of Jesus to to Greece taking the name of Jesus crucified risen and reigning to Europe How do they have the power they were ordinary simple men and women ah But the Spirit of God was welling within them Christ was Lord over them. The Spirit was within them. That's the secret Until you come to the post biblical times.

I especially like to look back and I'm closing with this. I Especially like to look back to those early days of the apostolic fathers and just after that There are some illustrations, you know that come from those eras that we need to read We should appreciate what God has done through me and not simply the Apostles but others after them The Apostles are unique, but the grace of God was available when the Apostles were gone. I Often like to read these words of Tertullian one of the early church fathers Talking to his persecutors who were threatening his life and you know what he says to them We he says talking about Christians We are a wonder to you We conquer when we are killed You may call us food for the faggots and Burn us bound to the stake in the circle of fire That is the fashion of our victory.

He says That is our festival array That is the chariot in which we ride home in triumph Or listen to Latimer Speaking to his fellow martyr Ridley in in England You remember as the fire was burning around them And

faggots were added Dear old Latimer turned to his friend be of good cheer master Ridley By the grace of God we shall this day light such a candle in England as shall never be put out Where does he get the power from? I'll tell you my friend Jesus was his Lord Not a paper Lord, but a real Lord and As Jesus Christ was his Lord the grace and the power of the provisions of the Spirit were released When the need was his So we could go on I could speak of Savonarola in Another part of the church People trying to offer him this and offer him that to be quiet because he was preaching the Word of God Against the sins of the church as well as the sins of princes Italian reformer as he was he was at one of the most daring preachers of the gospel and He was offered a cardinal's hat by the Pope of the day to be quiet But you couldn't silence Savonarola. He says I will have no hat but that of a martyrs read in my own blood For I am dedicated to the truth of the gospel of my Lord Brothers and sisters we're living in a different world We're just like men and women gathering and on the table to play a little few religious games Come to church when you feel like it Come to prayer meeting when you feel like it give of your money to the Lord's service if you feel like it If you feel like it, this is the rule today the common rule. There are glorious exceptions Blessed be the name of the Lord But this is far too prevalent if I feel like it.

It's not if I feel like it The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ means this Christ is Lord He has established lordship over our every life who believe in him. He has the right to rule us and Christian Honesty requires that we hand back to him the right the crown rights Of the Redeemer Christ. I ask you to do that this morning as This operates in our lives what will happen is this Christ will become formed in us.

His life in us will begin to express itself even in the look of our eyes and in the attitude that we Manifest wherever we are and wherever we go as well as in what we do That is obvious to all people in character and in conduct in attitude in action But Christ must be Lord, what are you prepared to do this morning my friend? To implement this in your own life forget about everybody else Forget about the people next to you forget about the people on the gallery. Just think of yourself Are you prepared this morning to tell the risen reigning Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you? by your great grace, I Will not only make you Lord, but Live under your Lordship, whether you give me great experiences of the spirit And deeper things than some other people may know is neither here nor there But I want to be at your disposal To do with me and in me and through me what is pleasing in your eyes. I Therefore is incapable of Experiencing the deep things of the Christian faith or of being used to serve your end.

Let us by the grace of God Put the crown on his brow. Let's pray our Heavenly Father. Thank you for this morning This new day this new hour in the sanctuary You will forgive us all Lord for you are a merciful God that we preachers and people alike can so often get into the routine of things and we become So accustomed with truth that we treat it as if it were not truth.

Oh God have mercy upon us We are champions at mouthing truths that have no real impact upon our lives. I acknowledge my sin Help my brethren and sisters here this morning to do the same. Oh Lord Take us a new take us over we place the scepter in your right hand and Asked that you will reign over us Lord Jesus In every solitary respect to the glory of your name To the good of your church to the in gathering of the lost and to the well-being of a society that is disintegrating in its sin and misery for lack of men and women of saline properties under the lordship of your son Lord hear us and use us where that may please you through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

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