

# Jesus Is Lord

by Vance Havner

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the absolute sovereignty and authority of Jesus Christ as Lord, and the consequences of denying this truth.*

**Duration:** 33:02

**Scripture:** Luke 14:26-27, Luke 14:33, John 8:31-32, Acts 10:14, 2 Corinthians 4:5

**Topics:** "Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of continuing in the word of God after experiencing a crisis of conversion. He highlights the verse 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,' but emphasizes that it is crucial to understand the preceding verse, which states that one must continue in Jesus' word to truly be his disciple. The preacher criticizes the moral relativism and situational ethics prevalent in society, asserting that true morality is determined by God's word. He uses examples of a boy stealing a watermelon and the dedication of a famous pianist to illustrate the need for consistent practice and commitment in the Christian life.

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## Transcript

A word that tells us what Paul did not preach and what he preached, he tells us in 2 Corinthians 4-5. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and thou savest your servants for Jesus' sake. I like that triangle there in the last half of that verse, thou savest your servants for Jesus' sake.

If I were to ask you tonight, do you believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, you would probably answer very comfortably that you do. But if I were to come around and ask you one by one, is he your Lord, Lord of all you are and have and do, what would you say? Any congregation can sing, and you sang it gloriously a while ago, bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all. But not all who are willing to crown him with their lips are ready to obey him in their lives.

Coleridge said, there are some truths that are regarded as so true that they lose the power of truth and lie bedridden in the dormitory of the soul. And there are some things we've heard so much and so long and so often that they don't move us anymore. They do lie inoperative in the dormitories of our minds.

One of these is the Lordship of Christ. It has been said that the word Lord is one of the most lifeless words in the Christian vocabulary. And yet Dr. A.T. Robertson used to call the Lordship of Christ the touchstone of the Christian faith, and Dr. Campbell Morgan called it the central verity of the Church.

Before we proceed further, let me remind you that the problem the world over tonight, as always, is authority versus anarchy. The last verse in the book of Judges tells us there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes. No king, authority, every man did as he pleased, anarchy.

When authority goes out, anarchy comes in. Our Lord told us that in the last days lawlessness would abound, and Paul writes of the mystery of lawlessness heading up for Antichrist. You remember that in the book of Judges, all the misery in that book was due to the mistakes in the book of Joshua.

The mistakes they made when they got into the land. They were told to exterminate the inhabitants, and they didn't, and I think I know what happened. They won a few battles, and then I think they said, I'm getting tired of fighting.

I'm getting tired of getting up every morning and taking off for a battle. These Canaanites aren't such bad people. Let's have a little peaceful coexistence.

Peace without victory. We've been trying to have that in one way or another ever since. And you know what happened? The conquerors became the conquered, and the victors became the victims.

In America, we've tried peaceful coexistence with communism. We tried it with the Nazism at first, with Hitler, and found out you couldn't do business with Hitler, and they had to exchange Mr. Chamberlain for Mr. Churchill. And then we tried it with Mr. Stalin, and it still won't work, because communisms like cancer, you do not peacefully coexist with cancer.

If you don't get the cancer, the cancer gets you. Douglas MacArthur stood before Congress and said, in war there is no substitute for victory, and that'll stand for all time. This recent Israeli-Arab war was won in a hurry, because as the top general of Israel said, we had one element that we don't think any other nation has, no alternative.

We had to win. We couldn't fight a long war, we couldn't fight a stalemate, we had to win. And I watched the NBC presentation of that war, Sunday, an hour and a half of it, and it was titled, Victory or Else.

They had to win. It would be a fine thing if we could get some of God's people to go about holy warfare that way. Well, as a consequence of this denial of authority, we have anarchy in all realms, no matter which way you look.

I was in Birmingham two weeks ago, and the magazine section of the Sunday paper had on its front cover a picture done by an ape. He had rubbed his nose in various paint jars, and then rubbed his nose on the paper, and I thought it was just modern art. Of course, I'm not surprised that an ape can do that.

Any ape ought to be able to do modern art. We have sown the wind and reaped the harvest. Well, tonight is an asylum, and the worst thing about it is the inmates are trying to run it.

Turn on your TV any time you'd like and you see howling mobs around the world. The cities of America are on fire, literally. Set ablaze by demon-possessed maniacs, this is not ordinary wickedness.

This is not run-of-the-mill meanness we're reading about now. This is demonism. Now, we've got lots of good grassroots folks, black and white, in this country who want to live in peace.

And here we have to be terrorized by these maniacs. It's time that politicians in Washington got their eyes off the next election long enough to tell the truth and face this situation as demonic lords. Authority's out

and anarchy's in.

James Bond philosophy. Ten commandments have been thrown out the window. Now we have situation ethics and contextual morality, right and wrong are relative, not absolute.

And if I've heard it once, I've heard it a hundred times, it all depends on how you look at it. It doesn't any such thing. It depends on what God says about it in his word.

I heard of a family on a picnic some time ago. In the summertime, a boy stole a watermelon from a patch nearby, and his mother said, Now, don't do that again. You don't know what they've been sprayed with.

See what I mean? Not a word about the Ten Commandments, not a word about stealing. And not all the looters in Newark and Detroit, not all the looters are colored people. White folks in the majority stole \$600 million worth of goods last Christmas in shoplifting.

And I'd hate to think how many church members were in that aggregation. You see this anarchy in the home. There's as much authority in the homes as ever.

The only difference is the children use it. It is changed hands. The Supreme Court of the United States has more sympathy for the criminal than for the victim.

We treat hoodlums like daffodils. While we tie the hands of policemen, I marvel that any man is willing to be a policeman anymore. Used to be an object of respect, now he's a target for brickbats.

Authority out, anarchy in. And what with the hippies and the beatniks in America having struck six o'clock, the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ is denied. He is Lord of all.

It all boils down to this, the denial of the absolute sovereignty of Jesus Christ. Romans 14.9 says, For this cause he died and rose that he might be Lord of the dead and the living. And the day is coming when everybody in heaven, earth, and under the earth shall confess him as Lord.

It won't save the lost, not then. But everybody's got it to do. And all the anarchy and all the violence and all the war and the rioting and the looting and the crime are because men refuse the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

And we're wasting our time laying the blame on secondary issues and trying to solve them by education, legislation, reformation. You can give every disgruntled, dissatisfied, yelling, maniac, throwing Molotov cocktails today. Give him a home in suburbia and two automobiles and color TV and a boat and all the status that he wants.

And next week he'll be howling for something else until he bows. As bow he will in hell, if not here, to the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ. But even those who accept Jesus as Savior deny him many times as Lord.

Our personal problems and our church problems today boil down to the denial of the supreme Lordship of Christ. Christians who are living in inner anarchy. Somebody said, I'm not a man, I'm a mob.

I'm appalled by some things I'm reading even in evangelical papers today. We're getting away from the total authority of the word of God. Old-fashioned standards of morality and honesty and purity and modesty have been thrown out the window.

I know some people say that that's old fogeyism. I looked up that word fogey the other day in the dictionary and never had looked it up before. It said a person of old-fashioned habits.

Well, what's wrong with that? What's wrong with purity and morality and honesty and modesty? We have anarchy in conservative Christianity. Strife, division, schism, debates, variance, contentions. We have a breakdown in separation from the world.

Christians smile indulgently at the fashions of this age. Clothes and conduct, dress and deportment. In our music we've come all the way from hymns to hootenannies.

And church discipline is a thing of the past. The trend is toward anarchy, away from the authority of Jesus Christ as Lord. Just that.

Let me say that the Lordship of Christ was the initial confession of the Church, Romans 10.9, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. When an early Christian said Jesus as Lord, he meant it. He better mean it.

To a Jewish believer, Lord meant Jehovah. He better mean it. To a Gentile in the early Roman Empire, he better mean it, because Caesar was not only the emperor, he was the God of the Roman people.

And if a Christian said, I have another king, he's gone, but he's coming back one of these days, and my total allegiance is to him, he was headed for trouble. All the way through the New Testament, beloved, it's never Christ and, you don't have to add anything to Jesus, he's Alpha and Omega and all the letters between. When you write a letter, you don't have to go outside the alphabet, everything's there that you need.

I think one of the greatest missionary takes in the Bible, one I've never heard used in a missionary message, I suppose it has been, I haven't heard it used, Jesus said concerning the hungry multitude, they need not depart, give ye them to eat. They don't have to go to communism, they don't have to go anywhere else, we have what they need, let's get the food out, give ye them to eat. They don't need to depart.

But all the way through the New Testament, it is Christ or, Christ or Belial, Christ or Caesar, Christ or the world. Early Christianity demanded a clean break with the world, the flesh and the devil, and that lasted until Constantine became a church member and tried to Christianize paganism and wound up paganizing Christianity. The church tried to control the culture of those days, didn't Christianize it, never has been Christianized, it was Constantine-ized, but not Christianized.

We've never gotten over that mistake, the mistake of Constantine, and to this day, although Nero's dead, there are too many church members trying to serve two lords, our churches have been filled with baptized pagans, living double lives, fearing the Lord and serving their own gods, drawing nigh God with their mouths and honoring Him with their lips while their hearts are far from Him, calling Him Lord, Lord, and doing not what He says. Let me say in the second place that the Lordship of Christ is the authentic confession of a Christian anytime. 1 Corinthians 12, 3, Wherefore I give you to understand that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed, and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

You cannot confess Jesus as Lord by yourself. You can't get saved by yourself. You can't understand the Bible by yourself.

All of these things require the operation of the Holy Spirit, not a do-it-yourself religion. You can call Him Lord, not mean it. Jesus said there would be preachers at the judgment day who would say, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied, we've done wonders, we've cast out demons, only to hear Him say, Depart, I never knew you.

Luke 6, 46, Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? But it is an authentic mark of the work of the Holy Spirit to truly confess Jesus as Lord, for the old Adam never bows to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I think we preachers over this land have unwittingly created an artificial distinction between accepting Jesus as Savior and confessing Him as Lord. We've made two things out of it, and it's not two things, it's all one thing.

And there are a great many people today who have the idea that I can take the free part, salvation. I'll take Jesus as Savior. I don't want to go to hell.

I'll take Jesus as Savior. I'm not taking Him as Lord now. I'll think it over, and maybe sometime at a dedication meeting I'll go for it and take Him as Lord.

In the meantime, if I never do, I'll go to heaven anyhow, and the only thing I'll lose will be my reward. Now, that's a very strange doctrine. It certainly isn't New Testament doctrine.

Salvation is not a cafeteria line where you go along and take what you want and leave the rest. You don't get saved on the installment plan if your fingers crossed and enter reservations. You can't take Jesus on approval like you buy a stock of goods.

To be sure, a man may not understand all that's involved and all the rest of our lives. Fresh areas are opening up that need to be subjected to the Lordship of Christ. If a man takes Jesus for all he knows Him to be at that time, God will save him.

You don't have to be a theologian, but no man can take Jesus as Savior and at the same time willfully and deliberately and knowingly refuse Him as Lord and be saved. Paul said to the Philippian jailer, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. He gave him all three names at once.

Master, Mediator, and Messiah. He didn't say, now you make a profession of faith, and we'll take you in the church, put your name on the row, and give you a box of envelopes, and you'll be all right. He said, let's have it over, all of it, with the stock.

Lock, stock, and bank. You have only one option in this world. You can take Christ or not take Him, but if you ever take Him, friend, your option ends right there.

From then on, you become the personal property of Jesus Christ, bought and paid for by His blood. You're not your own, you're both with the price. Jesus Christ demanded more absolute loyalty than any dictator, Charlemagne, Caesar, Hitler.

None of these ever demanded the absolute allegiance that Jesus demands, but He has a right to love so amazing, so divine. Demands my soul, my life, my all. I remember when I came to Jesus as a country boy down the road here in old Catawba County, out in the country while a revival was going on at Corinth Baptist Church.

I wandered out in the woods one summer afternoon, the best way I knew how to trust Jesus. I didn't understand all about it. You don't have to understand it all, you have to stand on it all.

I don't understand all about electricity, but I'm not going to sit around in the dark until I do. I came to Jesus as I was, trusted. That afternoon I was trying to do up the chores around the place, to go back up to service that night, and I was trying to sing that old song, Jesus, I, my cross have taken, all to leave and follow thee.

I haven't heard that in ages. This affluent society would have an awful time with that verse, wouldn't it? Can you imagine a well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed crowd of Americans standing up singing, destitute, despised, forsaken, thou from hence my all shall be, Lord help us. I didn't understand much about it, but I understood one thing.

No theologian hadn't explained it to me. I understood that I was under new management. That was perfectly clear.

I had a new Lord. I believe that the sad state of our Christians in churches today is due to a cheap believism that doesn't believe, and a cheap receivism that doesn't receive. After all, the word Savior is found only 24 times in the New Testament, and the word Lord is found 433 times.

He is wrong! A Christian is a believer, a disciple, and a witness. He ought to become all three at the same time, and be all three all the rest of the time. We were called disciples before we were ever called Christians, Acts 11.26. The Great Commission says go make disciples, not make believers.

You have to be a believer to be a disciple, but let's get it straight, make disciples. God's not out just saving sinners. He's out to make saints out of sinners.

And the crisis of conversion must be followed by continuance. It's a great mistake to take a text that starts with the word and. I've seen on streamers and placards in the last few years, you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

That's a good verse, but you wouldn't want to rise up in the middle of Africa and just take off on that. You have two absolutes there. You have truth and freedom, but you have to get a head start.

And after all, that verse begins with the word and. That means something has gone before. And the verse that goes before is if you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed.

And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. Now, don't you see what a difference that makes? Oh, beloved, we've got to take not just a step, but a walk. Keep on stepping.

Some dear folks say, well, I took a stand for the Lord 25 years ago. Still standing, some of them. We're singing, standing on the promises, but we're sitting on the premises, really.

We're not getting anywhere. You have to practice. You have to work at it.

You have to learn of him. Come and I'll give you rest. That's an obtainment.

Take my yoke upon you, you'll find rest. It's an attainment. It's both.

You don't learn how to do anything else without plenty of practice. You don't learn how to be a musician without practice. I was in a Texas city some time ago holding a meeting on Sunday morning.

The world famous pianist, Van Cliburn, came to church, played the offertory, gave us quite a thrill. This charming young fellow went over after the service, before the benediction, to avoid the crowd. He slipped out to get away from autograph hunters, but the children all took after him for his autograph, including yours truly.

We got over there in the pastor's study and I had a chat with him. He's a genius, yes, but genius isn't enough. The way that fellow practices would drive most people crazy.

Practice, practice, practice, practice. When I think about that and think of the sloppy and slovenly living of most of our church members, I'm not surprised that we're not making much of a dent on this situation today. They resent the preacher who stands in the pulpit and says, Thou therefore endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Have you watched on television the post-graduate classes of extra-special students studying violin under Heifetz, cello under Casals, guitar under Segovia. I mean classic guitar, please, not electric. But have you noticed this? And you'd think, my, they're good enough already.

I can't see anything wrong with their playing, they sound perfect to me, but not to Heifetz. And he grumbles, he grumbles, he says there is no discipline, there is no discipline. I listened to that one evening and I found myself praying, Lord, have mercy on me when I think I'm pretty good.

I want to be a workman, not ashamed, approved unto God. Are you a dropout? What does your report card look like? Are you anywhere near a post-graduate course? How is it with you, dear friend? You don't become a good Christian, you don't become a good soldier of the cross without working at it. You don't become a good acrobat.

Don Amici says when acrobats are not performing, they're practicing. And that's just about it. They do only two things, practice and perform, practice and perform.

You don't get up some morning and get a balancing rod in your hand and decide to take off on that tight wire. No, no, you'll take off all right. But you just don't learn that way.

It takes infinite practice. And beloved, it takes that in the discipleship of the cross. When a child is born in a home, that's a great day, but it takes twenty years after that to make a man or a woman out of that child.

Evangelism is great business, but it's only the beginning. It's only the beginning. Salvation is free, yes, I know, but it's not cheap.

It costs God a plenty. It costs him his son. It costs the son his life.

It's free to you, but the minute you take it, you become a disciple and that will cost you everything you have. The New Testament teaches not only faith in Christ, it teaches following Christ. My sheep hear my voice and they follow me.

Come unto me, that's the believer. Learn of me, that's the disciple. The believer comes to Christ, the disciple comes after him.

Peter followed my Lord in the Sea of Galilee and then he denied him one day and for some days he was not a disciple. How do I know? Because the angel at the sepulcher said, go tell his disciples and Peter. Then he was reinstated by the Sea of Tiberias, you remember.

We're great today for going after prospects in our churches. We're great prospectors. But did you ever stop to consider that Jesus lost some of his best prospects? And as far as I can make out, he did not lower any prices, he didn't take out after them and say, well, now maybe we can talk this thing over and arrive at some kind of a conclusion.

Three fellows in the last six verses of the ninth chapter of Luke, you remember the first one said, I'll go with you wherever you go. And Jesus said, the foxes and the birds have a place to stay, but I don't. The second said, I'll go, but let me first go bury my father.

Jesus said, let the dead bury the dead. The third said, I'll go with you, but I must go tell the folks goodbye at home. Jesus said, no man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Now, if you're going with me, let's go, and if you're going to stay here, stay here, but the kingdom of God's no place for a man with his face pointed one way and his feet the other. God's not taking people to heaven backwards. If you're going with me, let's get going, all in one direction.

Now, there was one prospect that stood head and shoulders above all the rest, and he was the rich young ruler. He had manners where he came, and very politely. He had morals.

He kept the commandments. He had money. If you tried to join the average church today, they'd say, take him in quick, make him treasure, and don't ask him any questions.

My Lord said, sell out. He didn't give him a massage. He gave him a shark treat.

Sell out. And that's just what he wouldn't do. Now, he was a good catch, but the Lord didn't catch him.

You see, my Lord wasn't after joiners. There are a dime a dozen. Americans are professional joiners.

They'd die if they couldn't join something. Give them a red button and a certificate, and they'll join anything on the face of the earth. The Lord wasn't after joiners.

He was after disciples. Dr. Fleece read to you from Luke 14. Jesus had a crowd on this occasion.

There went great multitudes with him. What kind of psychology is this that would face a multitude? Here he is at a peak of popularity, and he gives them three cannots, three negatives really, in a row. What sort of approach is that? Why didn't he say, well, I'll come along, and we'll not take up any of these thorny issues, but we'll talk it over.

No, no. If any man come to me and hate not father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Whosoever he be of you that forsake him, not all that he hath he cannot. Be my disciple. He never put discipleship in fine print in the contract.

He put it in boldface type clear across the page every time. Don't ever mistake it. Paul said, Who art thou, Lord? Lord, what will you have me to do? Two Lords.

Lord came last in the first question, and first in the second question, and after you meet the Lord, he ought to always come first. Thomas, after the resurrection, my Lord and my God. John Wesley said a few mornings after Alder's Gate, I awoke with Jesus Master in my heart and in my mouth.

One of the greatest preachers of the past said, If the convert declares that he knows the Lord's will but doesn't mean to attend to it, you are not to pamper his presumption. It is your duty to assure him that he is not saved. Do not imagine that the gospel is magnified or God glorified by going to whirlings and telling them that they may be saved at this moment simply by accepting Christ as their Savior while they are wedded to their idols and their hearts are still in love with sin.

If I do so, I tell them a lie. I pervert the gospel. I insult Christ and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.

That was Spurgeon. A. A. Hodge said, Any man who thinks he is a Christian and that he has accepted Christ for justification when he did not at the same time accept him for sanctification is miserably deluded in that very experience. Dr. Cameron Morgan said, I do not believe men are ever brought to a sense of their need of his Saviorhood, save as they stand in the presence of his Lordship and discover their inability, apart from regeneration, to be obedient thereto.

I am concerned today about the multitude of our church members who will take the Saviorhood but not the sovereignty of my Lord. What good is pardon if we are going to live on in rebellion? What sort of business is this? I call it the rebellion of the redeemed. We say we are pardoned and then turn right around and say, No, I will take him as Savior.

I won't have him as Lord. This is a contradiction. It is impossible.

Finally, the Lordship of Christ will be the ultimate confession of creation because we are told that the day is coming when at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and heaven, earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Don't ever ask a man, Will you confess Christ as Lord? Because he will, sometime. You might wake him up if you say, My friend, I'm not going to ask you, Will you? I'm just going to ask you, When? When? You've got it to do.

Will you do it now or when it's too late? Everybody has it to do. Heaven, earth and under the earth, that takes in all the territory, doesn't it? That's everybody. It's not universalism.

It's going to be universal. Everybody will confess his Lordship, but he won't save the man who has waited out his opportunity. Now, I want to ask you in all seriousness, tonight.

Is he your Lord? Is he Lord of your body? Your thoughts? Your tongue? Your temper? Your spare time? Your pocketbook? Your life plans? Your family life? Your habits? Your recreation? What you look at on television? The Lordship of Christ covers everything. We talk a lot about stewardship. We ought to talk more about Lordship.

You get a man right on Lordship, he'll be all right on stewardship. Stewardship's the underside. Get him right on Lordship.

And it's not bondage, thank God. It's liberty for him. Where the Lord the Spirit is or where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

You're free to do everything that's good and right in every relationship. Is he your Lord? Over in Scotland, a young lady said to her old pastor, I think God wants me to be a missionary, and I don't want to be a missionary. What am I going to do? And he opened the New Testament at Acts 10, 14, where Peter had a little argument with the Lord.

You remember? And said, Not so, Lord. He said, Now look at that. That's a contradiction.

If you say not so, he's not Lord. And if he's Lord, you just don't say not so. He said, I'm going to leave this with you.

I'm going out for a while. I want you to look at it, and I want you to pray about it. And then I want you to take a pencil and mark out either not so or Lord.

Because you can't have both. He came back in, and she was in tears, but she had marked out not so. And he was Lord.

Oh, what would happen today if we had churches filled with people with a one-word vocabulary? Lord. No strains, no reservations, just Lord. But so often the lip confession is nullified by the life contradiction.

Is he your Lord? Shall we pray? Before I pray, I've asked this all over this country, and I'm going to ask you. You've listened so well. How many of you would be humble enough and honest enough to say by slipping up a hand, Mr. Havener, I claim Jesus as my Savior, but I'm going to tell the truth.

He is not Lord of all. But I'd like for him to be. Pray for me that he may be Lord of all.

He is not Lord of all in my life. Yes, I see that hand way back there, putting him up all over the place. He is not Lord of all.

Yes, everywhere putting him up. He is not Lord of all tonight. Yes, yes, yes, others putting him up.

He is not Lord of all tonight. Thank you. Now, Father, we sow the hands, but thou seest the hearts.

Help these people to make thee Lord of all tonight, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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