

BACK TO THE BASICS: What Does It Mean to Call Jesus Lord? Colossians 2:6-10ⁱ

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you this morning. For those of you that are guests with us today, whether you are in the room or joining us online, we say a very special welcome to you. My name is Chris Wigley, I have the privilege of serving as one of the Pastors here at Trinity. And on behalf of our church family, and our staff team, we welcome you.

We would love the opportunity to be able to connect with you. You can let us know you are here in a couple ways. You can text the keyword, "TBCMP," that stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you do that, a reply text will be sent with a link you can click on. That will direct you to a form that will then provide us with basic contact information to follow up with you.

Or you can stop by the information center in the lobby area. We have a gift we'd like to give you there. Again, we look forward to connecting with you.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

We are working our way, this summer, through a teaching series we have called, "Back to the Basics." We are taking a biblical look at foundational aspects of The Church and Christianity. Today I hope to answer the question, "What does it mean to call Jesus Lord?" So, grab your bibles and turn with me to Colossians, chapter 2. We are going to be in verses 6-10 this morning.

ILLUSTRATION: Outdated Words

Do you know how you can instantly know that you are getting old? Hang around teenagers. By the end of this month, we will have 4 teenagers in our house. We are having a blast, and this has been a wonderful season in our lives. But the reoccurring theme seems to be how old and outdated I am getting to be. Anyone else feel me on this?

Every generation operates with a different vocabulary. And when you say a word from your day around teenagers, you realize how old you have gotten. So, I compiled a list of outdated words. If you are still using these words, you are officially old. You ready for the list?

Rolodex... Icebox... World Wide Web... Videotape... Rad... Gnarly... those are all words that are foreign to younger generations.

There are words, in the Scriptures, that though we read them, they are foreign to us. The word, "Lord," is one of those words. Sure, we understand the word, but we don't really understand the word.

In the United States, we don't live in a monarchy style of government. But certainly, we have seen in movies and read in books how the term, "Lord," was common in that type of system. "Yes, my Lord." Or the word, "Lord," could even be in reference to a title. But because we don't use that word in our everyday language, it can get lost on us the significance of the meaning.

This is a big deal because we will often hear preachers say, "Have you trusted Jesus as your LORD and Savior?" Or we will hear the word, "Lord," in reference to Jesus. But if we don't understand the significance of that word, then we are in a world of hurt in understanding the Scriptures. Make sense?

The term, "lord," occurs 747 times in the New Testament.ⁱⁱ Sometimes it is used as a term of respect or affection. At least 150 of those occurrences are in reference to God Himself. It is used to describe Jesus 250 times.ⁱⁱⁱ So, what does it mean to call Jesus Lord? That is presented to us in our passage of study and will be my attempt to clarify for us this morning.

So, lets read, together, Colossians, chapter 2, verses 6-10. *⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus **the Lord**, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.*

Not only does this passage pronounce Jesus as Lord, but the central message of the Bible is that Jesus is Lord.^{iv} And when we come to faith in Him, we proclaim Him as the Lord of our lives. Those of us that are in Christ, have received Christ Jesus as Lord. So, let's unpack what that means as we seek to answer the question, "What does it mean to call Jesus Lord?"

MESSAGE:

First, it means that we...

1. Give Him our devotion.

We are to walk in Him, devoted to Him. In what ways are we to be devoted to Jesus? Paul gives us 3 identifiers of what it means to be devoted.

First, is to be **rooted**. *“⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted...”* When we come to faith in Jesus, we have responded to the tenants of the Gospel. That we have sinned and fallen short of God’s holy standard. But by faith, we have received Jesus’ atoning sacrifice for our sins on the cross, trusting in His victory over sin, death and the grave, accomplished by His resurrection. Paul is saying that when we, by God’s grace, through faith, embrace that truth, we are then rooted, planted in Christ.

Now, what is interesting about the word translated as, “rooted,” is that it is, for you grammar nerds in the room, in the perfect tense. What that means is that the rooting in Christ is a continual state that is the result of an action completed in the past. In other words, when we come to faith in Jesus, we are rooted, permanently placed in God’s family. That action is secured, eternally, for us by a past event, the finished work of Jesus Christ.

ILLUSTRATION: Adoption

Let me illustrate it this way. How many of you have ever attended an adoption court hearing? I have had the privilege of attending a few. It is very moving. And at an adoption hearing, the judge takes action by granting the adoption of a child into a family. When this action is taken, that child becomes a permanent, cannot be changed, member of that family.

The same is true when we come to Christ. In fact, the Bible uses the picture of adoption to illustrate that truth. Our devotion to Jesus is owed because we have been bought with the price of His atoning sacrifice.^v

The second way we are to be devoted is by being **built up**. Verse 7 continues, *“⁷rooted and built up in him...”* We are being built, a work in progress. And we are to be devoted to the process of The Lord’s sanctifying work.

The thing that drives me crazy is road construction. Can I get a witness? But what do we say about road work? “Oh, once it’s done, it will be nice!” Hopefully,

for some of you, when Jesus’ work is done, you’ll be nice. We are to be devoted to, participants in, Jesus’ continual work in our lives. This is what it means to call Jesus Lord.

The third identifier in being devoted is **gratefulness**. Look at verse 7 again. *“⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”* To be devoted to Jesus is to be grateful for His work in our lives. God’s action in our lives should evoke us to be abounding in thanksgiving.^{vi} When we continue in gratitude for what The Lord has done for us, we find fulfillment in Christ and that changes everything for us. When we are grateful for our jobs, we remain devoted to them.

Now, let’s talk practical for a second. I think we would all agree that to call Jesus Lord means we need to be devoted to Him. But practically, how can we be built up? Paul answers that question in verse 8. Look at it with me. *“⁸See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.* In other words, our devotion to Jesus demands that we only have eyes for Jesus and that we are not distracted by other things. Things like empty philosophies, human tradition, and worldly ideologies.

Now, there is nothing wrong with education and thinking critically about various ideas. Remember we are to love The Lord our God with all our minds. But philosophy in Paul’s day was a general term that basically referred to a worldview. Likewise, there is nothing wrong with human tradition. But most likely, Paul is referring to religiosity, man-made religious traditions. And the elemental spirits of the world point to the basic worldly thought that stands in opposition of the teachings of Scripture. So, to be devoted, to be rooted, built up, we are to be committed to Jesus above all else. This is where a follower of Jesus differs from what is called a “cultural Christian.” A cultural Christian identifies with certain aspects of Jesus but rejects others. But to call Jesus Lord, means that we pledge loyalty to Him.

So, let me give us a measurement tool, a question, to ask ourselves to gauge our devotion. Where have you allowed distractions to take your eyes off of Jesus? In what ways am I allowing empty philosophies, religious tradition, and worldly ideologies to shape me? If we are going to call Jesus Lord, we must have a devotion to Him so deeply that he is our one and only focus.

Secondly, to call Jesus Lord means to...

2. Recognize His deity.

Look, again, at verse 9 of Colossians 2. ***“For in him [Jesus] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”*** To say that Jesus is Lord indicates that Jesus is God.^{vii}

In the Old Testament, the word, “Lord,” was used as a substitute for God’s personal name, Yahweh. The Jews considered that name so holy that when they would come across the name in Scripture, they wouldn’t speak that name. Instead, they would simply say, “LORD.” So, when you read your Bible and you see LORD, in all caps, that is the reference.^{viii} Yahweh.

Another term that is translated as, “Lord,” in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word, “Adonai.” This is best translated as master or owner. When you see the word Lord, capital L lower case o, r, d, it is the word Adonai.^{ix} Master.

Both LORD, all caps, and Adonai were used in reference to God. But in the New Testament, both words were used of Jesus. For example, Matthew quotes Psalm 110 in reference to Jesus which makes use of the word Yahweh.^x So, in the New Testament, the writers are intentional in teaching that Jesus is God. He’s not like God or a god, He is God.

When it comes to Christmas time, we refer to Jesus as Emmanuel. The name, Emmanuel, means, “God with us.” Jesus is God with us. And Paul in Colossians 2:9 reinforces this idea when he says, ***“the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily [in Jesus].”*** To call Jesus Lord is to call Him both God and Master.

Now, to recognize Jesus as God has profound implications in our lives. Scripture teaches, and we can observe in our culture, that we can have a god in our life other than The Lord God. In fact, the first of the Ten Commandments is to have no other gods before Almighty God. So, it is possible to confess Jesus as God, but actually have another god, lower case g, in His place. In this sense, our god is whatever is first priority in our lives.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, ***“No one can serve two masters [lords], for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”*** Money here, not being

evil, but the priority that can be before The Lord. And the truth is you can insert whatever priority in the place of money. Our kids, our careers, our reputation, and our goals. To call Jesus Lord is to recognize His deity and deserved priority in our lives.

Again, a measurement tool. Is your relationship with Jesus priority number 1? Is Jesus my first priority? If we are going to call Jesus Lord, He must become our one and only master.

So, we have established that calling Jesus Lord means to be devoted to Him and to recognize His deity. Thirdly, it means to...

3. Surrender to His authority.

Colossians 2, verse 10. ***“and you have been filled in him [again, Jesus], who is the head of all rule and authority.”***

The declaration, “Jesus is Lord,” means that Jesus holds authority. In the Great Commission, Jesus’ words to His disciples following the resurrection, He says, verse 18, ***“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*** All authority belongs to Jesus. Think about that for a moment.

For us to call Jesus Lord, it means that we not only recognize His authority, but we allow Him to be the boss, the master, and the ruler of our lives.^{xi} We abdicate the throne of our hearts and surrender it to Jesus.^{xii} We allow Jesus to call the shots.

But let’s admit it, this is extremely difficult for us, right? That’s because we compartmentalize our lives. We say there is our job compartment, our health compartment, our financial compartment, our calendar compartment, so forth and so on. And for those of us that are believers, we are willing to give Jesus certain compartments. But truth be told, we like to hold onto others.

We say, “Here, Jesus, take my heart, but don’t touch my career. Jesus, you can have my struggles, but don’t control my finances. Lord, please take charge of my health, but I’ve got my calendar.” Beloved, to call Jesus Lord means we are willing to say, “Jesus! Take it all.”

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. We say yes and amen to that! But have you and I given Him the authority of our lives? While

Jesus is ruling and reigning from Heaven, I have to realize that because I've placed my faith in Him, He is to rule and reign my heart. When we are in Christ, we are under new management.^{xiii}

One of the most haunting verses in all the Bible, at least to me, is Luke 6:46. Jesus says, ⁴⁶ *"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"* If we are going to call Him Lord, we must be willing to yield our lives to Him.

You know, one thing I've learned in my adult life is that we always submit to an authority. As kids, we submit to the authority of our parents, teachers, coaches, so forth and so on. But even as we grow into adulthood, we still have an authority over our lives. For some of us that authority is a professor, a friend, an ideology, or even a group. For others, they are their own authority. But for a believer, our authority is to be Jesus. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end.

And here's the truth when we really think about it. We do not make Jesus Lord. He is already Lord. He's not running for office. The question is not whether or not He is Lord, it is whether or not we've allowed Him to be The Lord of our lives. All people must decide to either yield to Him or not. And God gives us the opportunity to make that decision on this side of eternity. He doesn't force us, but it does confront us.

And here's another truth. One day, whether on this earth or in glory, everyone will bow the knee to Jesus. Philippians 2:10 and 11 says, ¹⁰ *"so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,* ¹¹ *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* As the great preacher Adrian Rogers once said, "If you don't confess it in this world, you'll confess it in the next."

CONCLUSION: I want to ask the band to come back and lead us in a time of response.

I think the measurement question for us to this point is evident. Where do you need to yield to Jesus? What areas of your life have you yet to hand over to Him?

Let me be clear with you about something. Please don't hear me say that you have to be perfect in your yielding to Jesus. To confess Jesus as Lord doesn't

mean that we will at all times be perfectly surrendered to Him. But it does mean that we will be willing to work toward that goal. How can we only want Jesus for His grace and forgiveness and not for His leadership in our lives? Doesn't He know what's best for us?

I've heard it said, "In every heart there's a throne."^{xiv} Who's on the throne in your heart? Have you bowed the knee to Jesus? Do you have questions about that? Listen, our elders are here this morning, and we would love to settle that for you today. You come during this time of response.

For others of us, The Holy Spirit has been highlighting an area of our lives that is not completely surrendered. Give it over to Him today. We would love to join you in praying for you and over you.

Still others of us in the room are carrying burdens. There are challenges in our lives. And you would benefit for allowing us to pray over you. Can we all be okay with know that every one of us in wrestling with something. Don't delay. You come this morning.

I'm going to pray, and I simply want us to respond to The Lord's promptings on our hearts. [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation of this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 1-7*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1985; John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Colossians & Philemon*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1992; David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Colossians/Philemon*, Zondervan Publishing: Grand Rapids, 1998; Skip Heitzig, “Jesus, Lord at Thy Birth,” article written December 1, 2018, published by Decision Magazine, accessed: <https://decisionmagazine.com/jesus-lord-thy-birth/>; Madeline Arthington, “What It Really Means That Jesus Is Lord,” article written January 12, 2018, published by the International Mission Board, accessed: <https://www.imb.org/2018/01/12/jesus-is-lord/>; Adrian Rogers, “Why Do We Call Jesus Lord?,” published August 1, 2021, Love Worth Finding, accessed: <https://www.lwf.org/articles/why-do-we-call-jesus-lord/>; Christianity.com, “What Is The Real Meaning of ‘Jesus Is Lord?’,” article published February 1, 2012, accessed: <https://www.christianity.com/jesus/is-jesus-god/names-of-jesus/what-does-it-mean-to-call-jesus-lord.html>; Roger D. Willmore, “The Lordship of Jesus Christ,” published by Union University, accessed: <https://www.uu.edu/centers/rqlee/fellows/spring03/willmore.htm>; GotQuestions.org, “How Do I Make Jesus Lord of my Life?,” accessed: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-Lord.html>; GotQuestion.org, “What is Cultural Christianity?,” article accessed: <https://www.gotquestions.org/cultural-Christianity.html>; GotQuestions.org, “What is Lordship Salvation?,” article accessed: <https://www.gotquestions.org/lordship-salvation.html>; Theocast, “A Critique of Lordship Salvation,” Theocast Podcast transcript accessed: <https://theocast.org/a-critique-of-lordship-salvation/>; Jack Graham, “It’s All About Jesus,” sermon preached at Prestonwood Baptist Church, February 6, 2022, accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JliCWeE-B6A>; Michael Youssef, “King Jesus,” published by Leading The Way, accessed: <https://www.ltw.org/listen/teaching/king-jesus>; ReKnew, “Christ is Lord: What Does it Mean?,” article published by ReKnew, accessed: <https://reknew.org/2019/05/christ-is-lord-what-does-it-mean/>.

ⁱⁱ Mentioned by Adrian Rogers in his article mentioned above.

ⁱⁱⁱ Charles T. Carter, “How many times is Jesus called Lord in the New Testament,” accessed: https://www.answers.com/Q/How_many_times_is_Jesus_called_Lord_in_the_New_Testament.

^{iv} Roger D. Willmore, “The Lordship of Jesus Christ,” mentioned above.

^v Adapted from Madeline Arthington, “What It Really Means That Jesus Is Lord,” article written January 12, 2018, published by the International Mission Board, accessed: <https://www.imb.org/2018/01/12/jesus-is-lord/>.

^{vi} David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark*, Zondervan Publishing: Grand Rapids, 1996, page 140.

^{vii} Line taken from Christianity.com, “What Is The Real Meaning of ‘Jesus Is Lord?’,” article published February 1, 2012, accessed: <https://www.christianity.com/jesus/is-jesus-god/names-of-jesus/what-does-it-mean-to-call-jesus-lord.html>.

^{viii} Skip Heitzig, “Jesus, Lord at Thy Birth,” article written December 1, 2018, published by Decision Magazine, accessed: <https://decisionmagazine.com/jesus-lord-thy-birth/>.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Ibid.

^{xi} Adapted from Roger D. Willmore, “The Lordship of Jesus Christ,” mentioned above.

^{xii} I got this quip from Adrian Rogers.

^{xiii} Ibid.

^{xiv} Ibid.