

## Lord? Or (just) Savior?"

- ROMANS 14:7-9

**By Pastor Tim Dodson  
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*For we are not our own masters when we live or when we die. While we live, we live to please the Lord. And when we die, we go to be with the Lord. So in life and in death, we belong to the Lord. Christ died and rose again for this very purpose, so that he might be Lord of those who are alive and of those who have died.*



Our modern church age today has quietly begun to present a faith life essentially with two options: the basic package and the deluxe package. The basic package contains Jesus Christ as Savior. The deluxe package includes Jesus Christ as Lord. It seems that one can apparently now simply check the box for Jesus Christ as Savior and not go for the upgrade with Jesus as Lord. For many of us, the Jesus Christ as Savior package is essentially our fire insurance policy. It's affordable. The Jesus Christ as Lord package is however more like a complete home renovation project. More than most of us want to get in to.

That's not the good news. That's actually bad news. Because the biblical gospel makes one offer. The late missionary E. Stanley Jones once stated: "Jesus Christ will be Lord of all or he will not be Lord at all."

Ephesians 2:8 tells us that "...by grace you have been saved through faith." The sign that one has or is being moved by grace is that we are moving in faith. People for whom Jesus is Lord are necessarily living and moving in faith. If a person is *not* truly moving in faith, chances are he or she is/was not moved by grace but by something else. Real Christianity demands that we become brutally honest with ourselves and one another about matters of such gravity.

Savior or Lord? I can't just pick which one is more palatable. Such would be an attempt to treat Jesus like a personal buffet line, choosing what I think my life-diet should be like. In fact, I would be deceived to think that I could have Jesus as my Savior without him also being my Lord. Making him Savior means making him Lord. Truth is, I can't have one without the other. It's all or nothing. It's a one-package deal.

Jesus did not die to save us so that he could then be the accomplice in our own idolatry or a servant in our own worldly courts. Rather, He served us before the Father, by saving us from the Father's wrath, so that we could then serve Him ...bond-slaves for the Father's joy. Wanting Jesus as only a savior is self-serving, self-preserving, and self-protecting. But wanting Jesus as Savior and Lord is God-serving, God-magnifying, and God-following. If you want Jesus as Savior but not Lord, you will get neither. But if you want Jesus as Lord, you'll get both.

It is a fact that we as Christians simply cannot live our lives apart from Christ...apart from the Holy Spirit. It is not an issue of *may* not, but rather *can* not. That truth is more than just a spiritual metaphor! It is a structural fact...a “organic foundational truth.”

Many of us live our lives, make our decisions, and take our personal positions without considering the proverbial “whats next? What follows our initial decision? What is the “B” that follows the “A” decision, not to mention what is the “C” and “D”? One must bravely take their truth to its natural end. But often the problem lies in the fact that often one’s truth is not *the* truth; it is indeed merely *their* truth.

If Jesus is your salvation but not your surrender, then I would ask you today: *where are you going?* Because if it were possible to receive Jesus as Savior without making him lord, it would mean limiting him only to save you *from* something (hell) but never to saving you towards anything. Asking Jesus to be savior but not lord indicates that you are still lord, still in control of areas that you don’t want him to touch. Many times when we say we want to follow Jesus, what we really mean is that we have now given him permission to follow us.

To claim Christianity while attempting in any way to live apart from Christ says we are in rebellion and thus sin, *or*, we have never been born again in the first place. Both of those scenarios should be intensely troubling to our very soul. Either answer is potentially disastrous on the eternal scale!

When we dig deeper into the meaning of the word “Lord,” we find the following definition...

*“he to whom a person or thing belongs; one who has power of deciding; the possessor and disposer of a thing; the owner; one who has control of the person; the master.”*

According to scripture, we all will one day have to give an account of the things we have done in this life. 2 Corinthians 5:10 tells us that “...*we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*” (2 Cor. 5:10)

Today is Easter, the day we recognize that Christ died for us and rose again from the grave. We generally grasp the common by-line that He did so for the redemption of mankind...to bring salvation to all who desire Him. Jesus died to bring us positional salvation. But we must come to terms with the parallel truth in our text today...*that He also died so that He might stand in the Lordship position of our lives!*

As believers, we are called to live our lives for our Lord and be ready to even die for Him. That’s the “B” and the “C” in this “crossing.” It’s part of the deal. And make no mistake! This is not a bait and switch or a “fine line” in the contract. Scripture has always been upfront on this matter, even if it is “news to us.”

Ironically, such a state of commitment and dedication is a concept seldom debated in the earthly

realm. We openly praise those who will live and die according to the expression of their passions.

A man or woman can give their lives to sports, or to their career, or to their country, and we admire and praise. We have great ceremonies for these folks...with parades, trophies, and medals! For those who dedicated their lives to their country and have lost those lives in the effort, we bring out the flags and 21-gun salutes...along with all the pomp and splendor one can muster.

But when a person attempts to commit his or her life to God in the same manner...to truly embrace the Lordship of Jesus, that individual is immediately called into suspicion. Often ...like Jesus Himself, that treatment will even come down from our own friends and family!

He's "crazy" ... "controlled by a cult"... "simple minded!"  
"What a waste" they say... "*fanatical!*"

Is Tiger Woods a cult driven fanatic? Why is golf ok to give your life to, but not Jesus? Has Michael Jordan wasted his life and is he controlled by the cult of the NBA? No? Why then is Jesus and His committed followers immediately suspect? People climb mountains, go the moon, and hike the 2190 mile Appalachian trail and we applaud and even cheer them on. Put Jesus first and people are calling social services.

Do we not get it? He gave his life...*literally*, for us! They beat Him unrecognizable and then executed Him...*murdered* Him in the most brutal way they could think up. He said he came to 'live a servant, and to die as a sacrifice.' And yet the vast majority of us are still negotiating for a better deal, marginalizing Him for participation in the "good life." Loving the premise of eternal life and a free ticket out of hell, but unwilling to surrender our daily lives and living. It is the greatest con of Satan that there is. Because such there is no salvation outside of Lordship. There is no redemption without surrender. He is the "kinsman redeemer." He is buying us out of debt and bondage, but make no mistake...by doing so, *He owns us now*.

1 John 2:2 ..and other passages, use the word "Propitiation." The cross is...His death is... "*the is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*" Propitiation speaks of the satisfying of a debt. Essentially a "purchase." He "purchased" us that day upon the cross...therefore he owns us.

Note:

**Ac 20:28** "*Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*"

**Heb 9:14** "...how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

"Lordship" in practice, innately permeates every aspect of our lives. In fact...despite having

seemingly lost that basic principle in our modern culture, it is in fact an intrinsic quality... an ***inherent characteristic***, of the practice of authentic “Christianity.” To argue this fact is to rewrite the meaning of the word and therefore to become revisionist historians! Even the secular dictionary definition defines LORD as: *a person who has authority, control, or power over others; a master, chief, or ruler.*

As a redeemed believer, there is therefore nothing withheld from God...nothing “private.” The modern practice of the compartmentalizing of our lives between spiritual and secular is an impossibility. Not impossible to make happen, just an impossibility to maintain as a servant of Christ!

Modern man has reinvented Christianity in his own image. A faith that fits the modern individual and backs his lifestyle, his flesh, his ideals, and his politics.

Outside of this fantasy, the biblical version still stands. It hasn’t changed and He hasn’t moved to acquiesce to the world. For the born-again children of God, everything we do and everything we are is ‘under the thumb’ of the master. Everything we fail to do and fail to surrender is subject to judgment. Thus we are responsible for both the sins of ‘*omission*’ as well as the sins of ‘*commission*.’ We will be judged upon *that which we did and were not supposed to* as well as *that which we were supposed to have done and did not!*

The cross was and *is* to be a motivation for our complete devotion. Yet it has been denigrated now to a piece of jewelry and a spiritual ideal, instead of what it is in truth...an ‘element of death, and a call to lordship’...an eternal reminder of what was paid so we can be called “Christian.”

In the Old Testament, God called upon the children of Israel to offer a sacrifice—a payment—for their sins. In fact, God gave them a detailed system...a *method* to cover the sins committed. Such involved a surrogate...a *substitute*...a “stand-in” in lieu of one’s self.

God Himself provided this “proxy,” as well as the ritual of the animal sacrifice, in which an animal would stand in as our representative, our agent, or our delegate. The animal...a lamb or a dove, had to be without flaw, perfect in appearance and essence. This “stand-in” would be killed...and its blood given, to *cover our sin*...albeit not to ***erase*** or ***free us*** from sin.

Why must blood be shed? Because it is the blood that carries the very life of a creature. No blood, no life! It was the “sacrifice of ***life***” that made the payment...

While this system kept us in good standing with God, it did nothing to free us from the bondage to sin, and it had to be repeated again and again. In time, even this sacrifice lost its power and meaning amongst the people. It became a religious ritual...a “hoop” through which men would jump to stay “even with the house.”

So God finally did something about this problem...something wonderful...something only he could do. He came Himself...in the form of his only son, and then actually became that perfect lamb... “without blemish or spot,” and sacrificed Himself ...and spilled His own blood...gave ***HIS*** life...His own life, that our sins might not only be covered, but erased...along with the power

that stood behind them.

*But...* in time, this act too, has become lost in formalism and religiosity. We still acknowledged such... but it's significance and impact has faded beneath the years of time and the spirit of humanism.

We, like the Israelites before us, readily embraced our righteous standing in light of the sacrifice, but we all failed to grasp the impact of propitiational sacrifice. That blood the cross and resurrection has acted as a "purchase" of our very lives. He owns us now. Yet even in light of such a truth, there remains an incredible air of blessing and freedom.

Sadly our response to such a relationship is to so often withhold what little He DOES require, and cry "grace! grace! We're under grace!" We bristle at any suggestion of holy lifestyle expectation, a disciple's life and priorities, and the giving of ourselves in righteous response.

How is the view of the cross from where you stand?

Christ was "sold" by Judas for 33 pieces of silver...the common price for purchasing a slave. He sacrificed Himself in our place so we might be free. And oh how we embrace that freedom!

Yet like it was for Israel, we can believe that this freedom means we are then beholding to no one...that we can now come and go as we please and answer to no one except ourselves.

#### **NOTE: Isaiah 1:1-20 NLT**

The followers of Jesus during His earthly ministry, were not "part time disciples." They sacrificed their living and in many cases their very lives for Jesus. In this they shared in His life, and they shared in His death.

For these early believers, Christianity was not merely a belief *of* Christ, but a belief *in* Christ. They believed that He held "all the answers to life" as Peter declared before Jesus. He was not *part* of their lives. He *was* their lives! Every aspect of their being was filtered through the sieve of faith.

The Lord's dominion over us extends through every aspect of our existence. No matter where the believer is or what he is doing, he is Christ's. If Jesus is his Lord, then the believer has placed his life and death under His care and keeping. Christ is the Master and God of his life, as well as his death. The believer *lives* for Him, and *dies* unto Him...everything is about Christ...every decision, every direction, ...every *breathe*...

The believer has literally been purchased by the Lord's death and resurrection. Christ died, taking the sin of the believer upon Himself, so that the believer would be freed from the coming judgment upon sin.

When Christ hung upon the cross, we *symbolically hung* upon the cross with Him. When we are born again, we *symbolically die* with Christ.

God loves mankind so much that when a man truly embraces the death of Christ for his sin, God takes that man's *faith* and counts it as *our* death. And then we are spiritually “resurrected” to life. A life abundant. A life large. This is the essence of rebirth...the power and effect of the salvation transition!

The point is this: it was for this purpose that Christ died and arose—that He might be the Lord both of the living and the dead. He is the Lord of all true believers whether they are living on this earth or deceased and passed on into heaven. The true believer has been purchased by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Now the believer does not belong to himself: he cannot act selfishly and sinfully in making decisions about life. He must obey and please the Lord, for the Lord has purchased the right to the believer's life and death. Moreover, out of our great love, nothing is more important to us!

Mt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*” **Pick up** your cross and **follow** me. Pick up and follow...

Where is *your* cross today? On your necklace? Back in the halls of history? Or is it on your shoulder?

Luke 17:11- 19 *Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 "Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."*