

I Believe

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
(Genesis 1:1 ESV)*

*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
(Hebrews 11:6 ESV)*

*I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God,
that you may know that you have eternal life.
(1 John 5:13 ESV)*

Our Lord

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Psalm 2

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Introduction:

Good morning! Please turn with me in your Bibles to Psalm 2.

Today, in our study of the Apostle's Creed, we are going to spend our time reflecting on two simple words:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son **our Lord**

Do you understand the implications of those two words when you recite them? It is one thing to acknowledge the existence of God the Father Almighty and Jesus Christ His only Son.

Understanding is good, but it is insufficient. The Apostle James warned us that we need more than right theology. He wrote:

You believe that God is one; you do well. **Even the demons believe—and shudder!**
(James 2:19 ESV)

The demons have right theology! Up until this point in the Creed, demons would be happy to recite along with you. However, the demons are stopped dead in their tracks at these two words.

Here we have moved beyond theology and into confession. Jesus is Lord, but he's not just a Lord, he is OUR LORD. Only a Christian can declare that. We submit to Jesus.

Do you want to be a Christian? Do you feel like you're on the outside looking in? Do you want to know how you can receive forgiveness for your sins and life everlasting? Declare this morning that Jesus is the Lord of your life. In Romans 10, the Apostle Paul taught us:

if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, **you will be saved.** (Romans 10:9 ESV)

As Albert Mohler puts it:

The shortest and most universal claim of any Christian is simply this: "Jesus is Lord."¹

But I want to make sure that you don't proclaim these words without first considering the massive implications. When you declare that Jesus is your Lord, you are pledging allegiance to him. You are laying down your right to be the leader of your own life. You are handing him the reigns and saying, "Here, Jesus. This life belongs to you now." I want to make sure we unpack very clearly and comprehensively what the Lordship of Jesus Christ means. Jesus was always very careful to warn people to count the cost before they made a willy-nilly profession of faith. He said:

For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' (Luke 14:28-30 ESV)

It is an embarrassing thing to embark on a project and then to realize halfway through that you don't want to go any further. P.S. haven't we seen this to be true in the church? This city is littered with men and women who were waving the Jesus flag for years but who never settled in their hearts to surrender their whole lives to him. They walked with Jesus while maintaining their pet sins and assumed that that was Christianity. But it was a fraud. It was powerless. The Lord saw right through it. The world saw right through it. Eventually they saw through it and they finally decided to confess where their true allegiance resided. They were never willing to let go of that

¹ R. Albert Mohler Jr. *The Apostle's Creed - Discovering Authentic Christianity in an Age of Counterfeits* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2019), 30.

sin. Do you know why? Because they had never really acknowledged and surrendered to Jesus as Lord. And they left a terrible witness in their wake. Everyone you seek to share the gospel with in this city has ten stories of people like that – “Christians” who lived a powerless sham of a life and who eventually walked away altogether.

Here is a truth that is easy to see in the Bible but difficult to hear: Half-hearted allegiance is absolutely powerless to save and it hurts everyone in its path. It robs God of glory. It puts stumbling blocks in the way of unbelievers. And it is all too common in the church.

If you are listening right now and you have only given Jesus a half-hearted allegiance, I hope and pray that the Spirit of God will use the Word of God to push you off the fence today. My prayer is obviously that He would push you into complete allegiance to Christ, but truthfully, either option is better than fence-sitting.

To that end, this morning we are looking to Psalm 2 in order to better understand what it means to call Jesus “Lord.” Psalm 2 describes the reign of the perfect King, and while it served as a prayer for the kings of the line of David, it clearly pointed forward to a divine King who was yet to come. Commentator Willem VanGemerren notes:

While it is preferable to understand the psalm first in its historical and literary setting as a “royal psalm,” the eyes of faith much look beyond it to the powerful message of the full establishment of God’s kingdom in Jesus Christ.²

This Psalm unambiguously points forward to Jesus, and the New Testament authors cited it frequently to explain the implications of Jesus’ Lordship. So, this morning, we’re going to read Psalm 2 and then we are going to meditate on what it teaches us about Jesus Christ our Lord. Hear now God’s holy, inspired, inerrant, living and active Word to us today:

Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
² The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,

² Willem A. VanGemerren, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Psalms – Song of Songs)*, ed. Frank A. Gaebelin, vol. 5, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 65.

³“Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”
⁴He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
⁵Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
⁶“As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”
⁷I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
⁸Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.
⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”
¹⁰Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
¹¹Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
¹²Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (Psalm 2:1-12 ESV)

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Jesus Christ Our Lord

The first thing we learn about our Lord in this text is that:

1. His authority is despised by the wicked

Look again at verses 1-3:

Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
²The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,
³“Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.” (Psalm 2:1-3 ESV)

When we truly comprehend Jesus' claim to authority, there are only two legitimate responses. We will either joyfully surrender to the perfect King, or we will willfully resist so as to keep the authority for ourselves.

It is important to be honest about ourselves and about our sin. Our sinful nature HATES the authority of God. It always has and it always will. William Plumer notes:

The *authority* of Christ human wickedness greatly abhors. Had he taught the great principles of morality found in the Gospels, but done it as a pharisee or philosopher, merely proposing things, there had never been such an outcry against him. But he asserts his *right to rule* mankind, and so men rebel against him.³

Isn't that exactly right? There are heaps of people in this city who self-identify as Christians because they don't understand this truth. They treat Jesus as if he were nothing more than a wise teacher who came to offer helpful suggestions. They point to Jesus as a moral exemplar who has much to teach us about how to treat our neighbors, but they look at you with fire in their eyes if you dare to suggest that his authority carries over to our sexuality.

Listen: If Jesus is nothing more than a mentor to you – if you feel freedom to use a “take-it-or-leave-it” approach when you listen to him – then you are NOT SAVED! I take no pleasure in saying this, but I want to be crystal clear: If there is sin in your life that you see but that you refuse to let go of then quit playing games and be honest about where you stand! You have rejected the Lordship of Jesus Christ. With your actions you are saying the same thing that the wicked rulers said in verse 3:

“Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.” (Psalm 2:3 ESV)

Ever since the Fall in the garden, the Lordship of Christ has been resisted. But this resistance is temporary. And, we see in the text that it is futile because the next thing we learn about Jesus in this text is that:

2. He has already won

³ W.S. Plumer, *Psalms* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 40.

Look again at verse 4-6:

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
⁶ “As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.” (Psalm 2:4-6 ESV)

The Father looks down at this temporary resistance to the Lordship of Christ with unshakable confidence. He laughs! He laughed as Judas plotted his scheme with the pharisees and the Sadducees. He laughed as the stone was rolled over the tomb. He laughed as the early church was chased out of Jerusalem. He laughs as the government in China seeks to silence the church. He laughs! Because this battle is already over! Jesus IS the LORD!

After the victory on D-Day, there were still skirmishes to be fought, but that war was over. The Germans won a few more skirmishes and shot down a few more planes and made a few more threats but the allies weren't wringing their hands because the war had already been won!

That's what we see here. As VanGemeren notes:

The psalmist was neither surprised nor worried by the rebellion of the nations.⁴

Friends, we are currently engaged in the skirmishes between D-Day and V-Day. These skirmishes aren't fun, by any means. We're going to see some of our brothers and sisters fall, and sometimes we're going to feel like the enemy has the upper hand. If we take our eyes off of Jesus for long enough, we might even begin to wonder how this story ends.

But God's not wondering how this story ends. The plot has been written. The antagonist has been dethroned. Jesus reigns! His Lordship is not dependent upon your favourite political party. Jesus' Lordship is not dependent upon your favourite Christian leader. Jesus' Lordship is not dependent upon your best efforts. Parties will be voted out, leaders will fail you, and you will inevitably fail

⁴ Willem A. VanGemeren, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Psalms – Song of Songs)*, ed. Frank A. Gaebelin, vol. 5, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 66.

yourself, but Jesus will STILL be Lord because the Father Almighty has set him on the throne!
And He will NEVER fail you! As one commentator puts it:

The confidence of God's people rests in God himself, who is unmoved by the political machinations on earth.⁵

Even when it feels like the darkness is creeping in, the Maker of heaven and earth laughs! He is unmoved. He is unfazed. His plan unfolds as it was decreed to unfold before the foundation of the world. And thus, Jesus has already won.

And because he has already won:

3. He reigns over all

Look again at verses 7-8:

⁷ I will tell of the decree:

The Lord said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession. (Psalm 2:7-8 ESV)

In our text last week, we celebrated the Sonship of Jesus. Here, we discover that his Sonship and his Lordship are intricately connected. In fact, the author to the Hebrews made the same connection. He wrote:

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say,

"You are my Son,
today I have begotten you"? (Hebrews 1:3b-5a ESV)

⁵ Willem A. VanGemeren, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Psalms – Song of Songs)*, ed. Frank A. Gaebelin, vol. 5, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 68.

Here he is quoting Psalm 2:7 and applying it directly to Jesus. He's teaching us that Jesus is the Son who has inherited the nations. Which, by the way, is exactly what Jesus said in the great commission. He said:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

The next time you read the great commission, it should direct your mind back to Psalm 2. Jesus is clearly and unambiguously claiming that he is the King of all the earth.

That is wildly offensive.

Think about the implications of what Jesus is saying. His way is not simply one more way of doing things – it is THE way. So, for example, if I were doing overseas missions, I would need to be careful not to impose any of my North American sensitivities on the people I ministered to. But, because Jesus is Lord over every nation in the world, while I would be passive with my cultural sensitivities, I would also need to be BOLD and straightforward about Jesus commandments. Because Jesus is Lord over every culture and therefore Jesus has authority to challenge and correct every culture.

Have you ever thought about that? On every corner of this planet, in every remote tribe and on every secluded island, Jesus is the Lord. He is right now the Lord of your neighbor. He is right now the Lord of the Middle East. He is the Lord of your workplace, the Lord of your home and the Lord of your life.

Therefore, our approach to evangelism ought to shift. I have often made comments about why I think the model of “attractional church” is wrongheaded, but I often catch myself employing a “seeker sensitive” model to my evangelism. I often lack courage and conviction. I soft sell the gospel because I am so Canadian. To my shame I wonder many people have walked away from my evangelism thinking, “Hmm... Maybe I should give that some more thought sometime. That sounds reasonable. Perhaps this might be helpful for me.”

The evangelism that we see in the Bible – the great commission that Jesus has left us with – is a bold, clear, unapologetic, URGENT announcement that King Jesus is on His throne! One day every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, so you should do that now! You are currently living in rebellion to the King – the King who has been appointed as the judge over all the world – the King whose throne is unchallenged and whose victory is sure. I'm not asking you or making a suggestion to you, I am TELLING you that JESUS is LORD! Right now! Over the whole earth! Over you! So:

Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled. (Psalm 2:12a ESV)

We need to insert some urgency into our evangelism because, as we learn in this text:

4. He will come to judge

We're going to fly through this because we will be dedicating a whole sermon to this in later weeks, but look with me at verse 9:

You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (Psalm 2:9 ESV)

Christian, that verse is about Jesus.

I think it would be helpful for us to sit with that truth for a moment. Jesus is going to return, and he is going to break the nations with a rod of iron. He is going to dash them in pieces. I know right now that some of you who are listening to this sermon are resisting this point. But, as William Plumer notes:

The objections made to the clear statements of this verse seem to arise not from the words used, but from a dislike to the exercise of divine authority in the punishment of the wicked.⁶

⁶ W.S. Plumer, *Psalms* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 45.

Your response to this verse provides a good litmus test as to whether or not the Jesus of your imagination is shaped by the Scriptures or by your culture. Have you ascribed to him a mercy that mutes his wrath and a grace that distorts his justice? Have you reconstructed a Jesus that looks more like a 21st century Canadian than he does the righteous, holy King? Do you think it is love that motivates you to misrepresent our Lord?

If you are feeling rebuked this morning, rest assured that I am feeling it too. So, let me be clear: Our evangelism is dishonest and unbiblical if it is not preparing people to encounter Jesus as we see him in Revelation 19. Let me read this to you:

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. (Revelation 19:11-16 ESV)

Now, think back to all of the people that you have evangelized over the last five years. When they see HIM, will he look anything like the Jesus that you described? Will they curse your name for not warning them that the King is also the Judge? If we would be faithful in our evangelism, then we need to be brutally honest about the futility and the consequence of rejecting the King. As William Plumer puts it:

He who spits against the wind spits in his own face. He who strives with his Maker makes certain his own ruin.⁷

Jesus is Lord. Therefore:

5. He demands whole-hearted allegiance

We conclude this morning where the Psalmist concludes:

⁷ W.S. Plumer, *Psalms* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 49.

¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
¹² Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (Psalm 2:10-12 ESV)

One commentator notes here:

To kiss was to profess loyalty and allegiance.⁸

We began this morning with a word to the fence-sitter and that is where we will end. The Bible only recognizes two responses to the King.

Some will outright reject his rule like the rulers that we encountered in verses 1-3. They will refuse to bow their knee and they will refuse to acknowledge His throne because they want to live this life under the delusion that they are on the throne. They will live their best life now. And then they will succumb to the terrible judgement described in Revelation 19. The King with His bloodstained robe will strike down every rebel against his reign. He will do it just as he has said.

Others, however, with the help of the Holy Spirit will joyfully surrender to his rule and reign. They will confess their sin and they will hold onto Jesus Christ with all of their might. They will proclaim with the saints down through the ages, “I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord!”

They will live wholeheartedly for him. That is not to say that they will be perfect. They will fall short time and time again. They will take two steps forward and one step back. They will daily wage war with the sinful pull of their former self. But, by the grace of God, they will not make peace with their rebellion. Because they only acknowledge one Lord – the Godman Jesus Christ. And when he returns in power, they will be caught up with him in glory, and he will put an end to their struggle with sin. He will clothe them with his righteousness and wash them once and for all

⁸ W.S. Plumer, *Psalms* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016), 47.

with his blood. They will be white as snow, and they will rule with the King forever in the new heavens and the new earth.

Those are the only two options.

Which means, fence sitter, it's time to declare once and for all who the Lord of your life truly is. You may object, "But this sin is temporary! I'm going to let go of this someday, but I'm not ready to do it now, Lord!" And Jesus replies:

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? (Luke 6:46 ESV)

If he is your Lord, then by the grace of God GET OFF OF THAT FENCE! Let that sin go, once and for all. Deal with it urgently. Do whatever it takes. Your eternal soul is at stake. Jesus said:

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. (Matthew 5:29-30 ESV)

I love you, and it's because I love you that I am telling you this today. The sin that you have made peace with is going to drag your soul to hell. Is it worth it? Your King – your Saviour – your LORD is commanding you to let it go. If he truly is your Lord and if you truly trust Him to lead your life, then it's time once and for all for you to bow your knee and to submit.

¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

¹² Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (Psalm 2:10-12 ESV)

Blessed are all who have surrendered and submitted to the Lord. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.