The Lordship of Jesus Christ By Vance Havner



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In 2 Corinthians in the fourth chapter and the fifth verse. Paul tells us what he does not preach and then he tells us what he does preach.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."1

If I were to ask you tonight do you believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ you would probably say very comfortably that you do. But if I could come around and ask you one at a time is he your Lord, is he Lord of all you are and all you have and if you told me the truth that might be different.

Any congregation can sing and bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all, but not all of them who are willing to crown him with their lips are willing to obey him in their lives.

It has been said that there are some truths that are regarded as fool proof, that they lose the power of truth and ride bedridden in the dormitory of the soul. That is a great statement. There are some things that we have heard so much and so long and so often that we have got used to them and they don't move us. They do lie bedridden in the dormitories of our mind and of our souls. One of these truths is the lordship of Jesus Christ. It has been said that the word Lord is the most libelous word in the vocabulary of the average Christian and yet Dr. A T Robertson says that the lordship of Christ is the touchstone of the Christian faith and Dr. Campbell Morgan used to say it is the central verity of the Church.

I want to say three things about it. First of all, the Lordship of Christ was the initial confession of the Church to begin with, Romans 10:9. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."²

The early Christians understood that. They understood that when they confessed Jesus as Savior they were confessing him also as Lord. Dr. Robertson used to say when a Jewish believer confessed Jesus as Lord he was really saying that Jesus is God because to a Jew Jehovah meant God. And he also said that when a Gentile Christian in the Roman Empire said Jesus is Lord he had better mean it because Caesar was not only the emperor, also

¹ 2 Corinthians 4:5.

² Romans 10:9.

the God of the Roman people. And when a new Christian in Rome said Jesus is Lord he was [?] with Caesar, you see, and he might have to pay for his devotion with his life.

I have heard my friend Howard Butts tell about one of the early martyrs of the Christian Church who was being marched out to the place of execution and the rough Roman soldiers were manhandling them. And one of them asked, "Where now is your carpenter God?"

And he answered, "He is making a casket for your emperor."

My what an answer. And that is just about what happened.

All the way through the New Testament, beloved, it is never Christ and. You never have to add anything to Jesus. He is alpha and omega. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end and he is the whole alphabet, not just the first and last letter.

When you write a letter you don't have to go out of the alphabet [?] they are all there. All that you need. You never need to leave Jesus for anything. When they had a crowd and nothing to eat, you remember how he answered that predicament. He said they need not depart. Give ye them to eat. That is a great missionary text.

This old [?] never needs to leave Jesus for anything. He doesn't have to turn to Communism. He doesn't have to turn to anything else. The world doesn't need to leave Jesus. It is our business to get the food out to them. They need not depart. Get the food to them.

But all the way through the New Testament it is Christ all. It is always a matter of alternatives, Christ or Caesar, Christ or Belial, Christ or the world. It is always Christ or. Early Christianity demanded a clean break with the world, the flesh and the devil. A Christian understood in the early Church that he was supposed to part company with this world when he became a Christian and that lasted for several centuries until Constantine became emperor and he made it fashionable to be a church member and the pagans began to join bringing their idols with them and the Church lowered her standard to accommodate the [?] of its new members and we have never gotten over that mistake.

And to this day although Nero is dead we have too many church members who are trying to serve two lords, Caesar and Christ, God and mammon. Our churches have been filled with baptized pagans living double lives, fearing the Lord and serving their own gods, [?] our God with their mouths and honoring him with their lips while their hearts are far from him, calling him Lord, Lord, and doing not the things which he says.

The second thing I want to say about the lordship of Christ is that it is the authentic confession of a Christian any time, 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."

³ 1 Corinthians 12:3.

Now that is a terrific statement. You can call him Lord and not mean it, but you can't call Jesus Lord and mean it by yourself. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. You can't get saved by yourself. You can't regenerate yourself. You can't understand the Bible by yourself. It is the work of the Spirit. You can't confess Jesus as Lord by yourself. It is done by the Holy Spirit. It is not a voluntary operation that you can take care of. You can say it and not mean it because Jesus said, "Why call you me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?" He even said there would be preachers at that last day would say, "Lord, Lord, we have prophesied and cast out demons and have done wonderful works in thy name," only to hear him say, "I never knew you."

You can say, "Not me," but you can't say it and mean it by yourself. It is through the operation of the Spirit of God. You couldn't save yourself, but when you wanted to be saved and were ready to be saved and ready to trust Christ then the Holy Spirit did what you couldn't do and you were born again.

So if you are willing to make Jesus the Lord of your life and if you want him to be the Lord of your life and if you will to make him your Lord, then the Holy Spirit comes in and accomplishes what you are not able to do.

So it is true all the way down the line.

I am afraid we preachers have created a false impression without meaning to do it through the years. I think we have given people the idea that accepting Jesus as Savior is one thing and confessing him as Lord is something else. We have made two things out of it and it isn't two things.

We have a great many people today who say, "Well, I took Jesus as my Savior. I could ask you tonight how many of you have taken Jesus as Savior and most of you would say you have. But if I ask you is he your Lord, most of you if you told the truth would have to say no. Well, then you are not saved.

If you are willing to take Jesus as your Savior and not willing to make him your Lord. If you willfully and deliberately reject him as Lord you don't even have him as Savior and it is high time that our people were shocked into learning this. Salvation, beloved, is not a cafeteria line where you can go along and take what you want and leave the rest. You can't take the Savior part and leave the Lord part and be saved. You can't take Jesus on the installment plan. You can't take him on approval like you buy a stock of goods. You either take him for all he is or you don't take him.

Now some people may not understand all that Jesus is. I don't suppose anybody does when they get saved. If you take him for all you know him to be at that time, you are saved. But while I am saying that any person who will confess Jesus as Savior and deliberately and knowingly and willfully reject him as Lord is not saved.

Paul said to the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

He gave him all three names, Master, Mediator and Messiah all at once. He didn't say, "Now, you accept him as Savior and we will baptize you and you will join the Church and you can think over this lordship of Christ and maybe later on sometime when we have a dedication meeting you can come down the aisle and take him as Savior, but you don't have to do it now."

Somebody said that let's have it all over right at the beginning. Jesus Christ demands more absolutely loyalty than any dictator that ever has lived. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, no dictator has ever demanded as much allegiance as Jesus. The only difference is he has a right to, loves so amazing and so divine demands my soul, my life, my all.

You have only one option in this world. You can take Jesus or not take him. If you ever really take him your option ends. You don't have any more option. You belong to him lock, stock and barrel. You don't have any right to your life. You don't have any right to your pocketbook. You don't have any right to your future. You don't have any right to anything in this world. You are the bond slave of Jesus Christ bought and paid for by his blood. You are not your own you are bought with a price. You belong to Jesus Christ.

[?]

I don't have to tell you. You have been told. You belong to Jesus Christ. You don't have any say so over your life from the moment you are saved.

I remember when I came to Jesus as a country boy in the hills of western North Carolina. I went out into the woods and the bets way I knew how I trusted Jesus. I came back, I remember, to the home and I didn't understand much about the plan of salvation. You don't have to understand it [?]. But I remember that I was trying to sing that old song, "Jesus, I my cross have taken all to leave and follow thee. Destitute, despised, forsaken, thou from hence my all shall be."

I didn't have much sense as a green country boy, but I had enough to know one thing. I realized I was under new management. I realized that. No theologian had to explain that to me. I realized that I had given myself away to Jesus Christ.

Now, have you ever done that? That is what being saved is. And I think our churches and our Christians are in such a sad condition today because we have got a cheap believism that doesn't believe and [?] never confess as Lord.

After all, the word Savior is found [?].

That is his name. Romans 14:9 says, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

⁴ Acts 16:31.

⁵ Romans 14:9.

That is what he lived for. That is what died for. That is what he rose for.

A Christian is a believer, a disciple and a witness. He ought to become all three at the same time and be all three the rest of the time.

Acts 11:26 says we were called disciples before we were ever called Christians. The Great Commissions says, "Go make disciples." It doesn't say make believers. Of course, you have to be a believer to be a disciple. But it says make disciples.

Now there is a difference between a believer and a disciple. God is not out today, beloved, just saving sinners. God is not making saints out of sinners and they become saints the moment they are saved and then [?] making saints out of them all the rest of their days. It is instantaneous and it is progressive and, in some days, it is going to be fine. But he is working on it. He is having a terrible time with some of them.

The crisis of conversion must be followed by continuance. I think this morning on, "If ye continue in my word..." That is what makes you a disciple.

I meet some folks that say, "Well, I took the stand 25 years ago." [?] still standing. They haven't moved since they took it.

I was up in New Hampshire in a Bible conference and the missionary sister said up there the trouble today with most of us is we are singing, "Standing on the Promises," when we are just sitting on the premises. And I think that is where most of the saints are today.

When a child is born into a home that is a thrilling experience, but it takes 20 years to make a man or a woman out of that child. Evangelism is great business, but it is only the beginning. Now let's make this plain, salvation is free, thank God, not cheap. A thing can be free without being cheap. It costs a plenty. It cost God his Son and it cost the Son his life. It is free to you, but the minute you become a Christian you not only become a believer you become a disciple and that will cost you everything you have, every thing.

And it is about time we believed that and that we found it out.

The New Testament teaches not only faith in Christ, the new birth, it teaches following Christ the new life.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

They not only come to me, they come after me. A believer comes to Jesus, a disciple comes after Jesus. Peter followed Jesus by the sea of Galilee and then he denied Jesus later on and for some days he was not a disciple.

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⁶ John 8:31.

⁷ John 10:27.

How do I know? Because the angel at the sepulcher said, "Go tell his disciples and Peter"

Now, you see, he was in a different classification. And then Jesus met him by the sea of Tiberius and said, "Follow me," and he took up where he left off and followed him again.

We hear a lot about prospects today. We are always going after prospects. Has it ever occurred to you that Jesus lost some of his best prospects? And, as far as I can see, he didn't try to go after them and lower the terms to make it easier so they would follow him. In the ninth chapter of Luke he had three prospects in the last six verses, two verses to a prospect. And they looked like they meant business.

The first one said, "I will follow you wherever you go."

And Jesus said, "The foxes and the birds have a place to stay, but I don't," as if to say, "Now, do you know what you are talking about? Have you ever counted the cost?"

The second said, "Let me first go bury my father."

That little word at first tells the tale. When anything is first ahead of Jesus Christ you are not going to follow him. [?] first.

Whenever you hear [?] it was a custom to stay around home. The father did die and bury the father. But, anyhow... whenever anyone says [?] me first, look out there is a corpse.

[?]

And then the third fellow said, "Well [?] let me first go tell everybody [?] at home."

Well, now that sounded innocent. What is wrong with that? Well, there was enough wrong with it that Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

And he had said to the other fellow, "Let the dead bury their dead."9

Now that's pretty strong, isn't it? Jesus was saying to these fellows, "If you are going with me, let's go. If you are going to stay here, stay. But the kingdom of God is no place of a man with his faith pointed one way and his feet the other. God is not taking people to heaven backwards and if you are going with me let's get going, all of you heading one direction. We don't need any of Lot's wives looking back towards Sodom."

We have an awful lot of people today who have never said good bye to this world. They say they are headed to glory and they are looking the other way. I grew up on a farm. I

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⁸ Luke 9:62.

⁹ Luke 9:60.

couldn't plow straight looking straight ahead. And I know I couldn't have if had been looking the other direction.

Have you ever studied the difference between our Lord's attitude toward sick folks and sinful folks on one hand and prospective disciples on the other. Now if anybody came to Jesus sick or sinful and willing to admit it, he dealt with him immediately in all love and kindness and tenderness. But if some prospective disciple came along and said, "I will go with you anywhere you go," Jesus could rebuke him to his right side in very short order

And he lost some of his best prospects. How about the rich young ruler? There was a good one. He had manners so he came kneeling. He had morals for he had kept the commandments. He had money for he wouldn't turn it loose. If he is trying to join the average Baptist Church today they would say get him in here in a hurry and don't ask him any questions. Make a treasurer out of him.

The Lord wasn't after joiners. I want to know what is the matter with us today that we don't use this psychology now. Here was a crowd of people who followed Jesus and we got so excited. We preachers were then so excited that we just said, "Well, this is a wonderful opportunity. I am going to make it easier and the more the merrier."

"And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them..." 10

He gave them three cannots in a row.

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Now that thinned them out.

And then he said next, "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." 12

Then he told about the men building a tower and the king going to war and said, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.¹³

Now that is not our psychology today. He made it hard. And I am sure a lot of those folks walked out on him. They did in the sixth chapter of John. I am sure of that. It says so.

We try to make it easy. We try to make it easy. Our Lord didn't.

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¹⁰ Luke 14:25.

¹¹ Luke 14:26.

¹² Luke 14:27.

¹³ Luke 14:33.

When Paul met Jesus he asked him a who question and a what question. "Who art thou, Lord, God?"

[?] in the first question and first in the second question. After you meet the Lord he will always come first.

"Who art thou, Lord?" ¹⁴

"Lord, what will you have me to do?" 15

Thomas said, "My Lord and my God." ¹⁶

I want to read to you what one of the greatest Baptist preachers of all time said. If I said this you would think I was overstating it. "If the professed convert distinctly and deliberately declares that he knows the Lord's will, but does not 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 is glorified by going to worldlings 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 and that is the truth.

Dr. E Y Mullen says that in applying for membership in a Baptist Church two things are necessary: faith in Christ and ... now what? Baptism? No. Faith in Christ and acceptance of his lordship.

Now, you don't hear much about that now. I quoted here the other morning Dr. George McDaniels said, "Whoever accepts Jesus as his Savior and submits to him as his Lord and takes the New Testament as the law of his life is a Christian."

And George Pruett stood on the steps of the capital as a young man and said, "First of all, and explaining all the rest of Baptist principles is the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ."

Dr. Mordecai Ham when he started out preaching took time out to prepare and build his entire ministry in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

We have a lot of people today whose attitude is come in, Savior and stay out Lord. We can't get saved with that kind of an experience.

¹⁴ Acts 9:5. ¹⁵ Acts 9:6.

¹⁶ John 20:28.

Peter said, "Not so, Lord," well that is a contradiction if he is Lord. You have got not business saying, "Not so."

I want to say, finally, that the lordship of Christ is the final, the ultimate confession of all creation because I read that God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and earth and under the earth and every tongue should confess. There come these three names again. What are the going to confess? That Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father

The time is coming when everybody—this takes in all the territory—in heaven, in earth, under the earth, that's everybody, isn't it? Everybody is going to confess Jesus as Lord sometime. That is not universalism because most of them will be in hell and it won't save them. But everybody ha got it to do. The next time you talk to somebody who wants to argue about this don't ask that person will you confess Jesus as Lord because they have got it to do. Just ask them when, now or in hell.

Don't ask them will you. Tell them next time, my friend, you have got it to do. It is just a matter of picking your place and time. You are going to do it now while you can be saved or then when it will be too late.

Now, you see that is the wonderful thing about preaching the gospel, brother, we are on the winning side. The time is coming when everybody is going to admit we are right. They don't do it now. But we have got eternity on our side of the scale, you see, in this proposition. I am glad I have a Lord like this. When he was down here on earth he had power, all power, but he didn't use it. He used just a little once in a while. I gave it kind of a little sample case he carried around with him, sort of a little specimen of the power that he had once in a while. He would give us a sample.

Do you remember the taxes came due one time? Oh, pardon me for bringing that up. But you remember that the Lord said, "Now, there is a fish out yonder with the money in its mouth. You go out there and catch it and that will be the tax money."

Wouldn't you like to know where one was with the tax money in its mouth? Only thing is you would have to catch a whale these days.

But anyhow the Lord said there is a fish out there with some money it its...

You say, "That's foolish."

No, sir, not when the Lord of the universe is talking. He ought to know which fish. You see what a wonderful Lord we have? He got into the boat one day and took a nap. The storm came up and the [?] disciples forgot they had the Lord with them and said, "Aren't you... don't you care that we perish?"

¹⁷ Acts 10:14.

Then he arose and said, "Peace, be still," And it looked like a looking glass, that old lake was so calm.

I know that a big preacher today says that he said that to the disciples and not the sea. I like the way it reads. I like it because, listen, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" 19

While when he rode into Jerusalem nobody has ever ridden that donkey before. If you had tried it you would have wound up with your head in the sand and your feet in the air. But the Lord rode in to town because he was Lord of donkeys just like everything else. And that ought to be a real assurance to some of us in particular.

He was the Lord of disease. Wouldn't you like to have been in a sick room and here was a loved one about to die and the Lord comes in and just touches that brow and next thing you know they are helping get dinner back in the kitchen just like that.

He was Lord of death. Nobody ever died around Jesus.

You can't find out how to conduct a funeral in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They didn't have any. Thank God they were all resurrections. They didn't have any funerals. You can't find a funeral service in the four gospels. Nobody ever died around around Jesus. He broke up funerals. And if he hadn't have said, "Lazarus, come forth," if he hadn't called his name every dead man in the neighborhood would have come out of the grave because my Lord is a Lord of death.

And yet after I think of all that the thing that bothers me, beloved, is that I have to stand in churches all over America and beg church members to make that wonderful Lord the Lord of their little lives. They will sit back there and dig their heels in church floors and say, "Yes, I know he is Lord of the universe, but he can't have me. He can't have my little [?]."

That is why we don't have revival today. Hey, revival is not a thing in this world but making Jesus Lord of our lives. That is what it is. When you make Jesus... you can call it a dozen other things, but you will have a revival when God's people make Jesus Lord. That is what it is. It is not necessarily a lot of noise. They didn't pause other things, but when you make him Lord that takes care of everything.

Now I want to ask you tonight: Is he your Lord? Is he the Lord of your body?

All the sins of the body that are such a disgrace to the Church of the living God today, the way people in Christian work today some of them have to leave town before day light because their sins caught up with them. Christian workers, church workers, church staff,

¹⁹ Mark 4:41.

²⁰ John 11:43.

¹⁸ Mark 4:39.

sins that I never heard about when I was a boy, sins of the body. Is he the Lord of your mind

You say, "Well, I have so many bad thoughts."

Well, you can't help the bad thoughts coming to you, but you don't have to open the door and invite them in, tell them to make yourself at home.

Is he the Lord of your tongue and the Lord of your temper? Is he the Lord of your spare time? Is he the Lord of your pocketbook? Is he the Lord of your family life? Is the Lord of what you look at one television? Is he the Lord of your habits? Is he Lord of all?

We talk about stewardship a lot today. I think we ought to talk more about lordship. Stewardship is our side, but when you make him Lord I know what you will do, like your stewardship. We ought to emphasize his Lordship. Is he Lord of all?

And I want to ask you in closing. I haven't preached long. It is not necessary. If I would ask you now everybody that claims Jesus as Savior to stand I know what would happen. I am not going to ask that. But I am going to ask you one thing. Is he your Lord? Have you ever made him the Lord of your life?

The Bible says that if you are not willing to for him to be the Lord of your life, you are not saved. Now a lot of our dear people they haven't found that out. Now we have got a strange kind of religion that you can't find in the New Testament. Anybody pretty nearly is willing to say, "Sure, I will take Jesus as Savior. I don't want to go hell. I want to go to heaven. I'll take him as Savior." And then they won't have him as Lord. Well, then, my dear friends, you still don't have him. If you are not willing for him to be the Lord of your life he is not coming in just to be Savior if he can't be Lord.

Because this verse says that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus, that means Savior. That is what Jesus means. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth he is Savior as Lord, I want to ask you in all seriousness, beloved, is he your Lord?

Let's bow our heads in prayer. You have been very attentive tonight. I want to ask you just this. If he is not your Lord, if he is not Lord of your life would you be honest enough and humble enough to slip up a hand out there and say, "Brother Havner..." By lifting up your hand you are saying, "No, I must tell the truth tonight. I claim to be a Christian. I say I take Jesus as my Savior, but to tell the truth tonight he is not the Lord of all I am and have."

God bless you. Yes, I see that hand already. Yes, yes. All over the place. He is not Lord of all, but I want him to be. How many? Put up the hands. He is not Lord of all in my life tonight, but I want him to be. Yes, yes. There are many hands. Put them up. Everywhere lift them high. It is a little hard to see back there. Yes, God bless you.

He is not Lord of all. Out here on the edge, yes. I claim to be a Christian, but Jesus is not Lord of my life, but I want him to be.

God bless you boy over there. If there are others, lift it up. He is not Lord of all in my life.

Now revival is making Jesus Lord. Are you willing for him to be willing to be Lord of your life beginning tonight? Are you willing for him to be Lord and master of all that you are and have?

I am not going to ask you to come down to the front. The Bible doesn't say anywhere any that thou shalt walk down the aisle and shake hands with the preacher.

It says here in Romans 10:9 and that is the way we are going to do it tonight, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus..."

I am going to ask you that lifted a hand and anybody else that is willing to mean business, we don't want anybody to do it just to be passing away the time. This is serious. I want everyone that is willing tonight for Jesus to be the Lord of your life from this moment on, Lord of all that you are and all that you have, if you [?] I am going to ask you to stand and say just this, no more. This is not a testimony meeting. I am going to ask you to stand and say just this, one to one.

"I confess Jesus as my Lord."

My Bible says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men,"²² and that is what we want you to do tonight, "him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."²³

There is a great day coming. Jesus said if we are not willing to confess him before people down here he will not confess us up there.

I am going to ask you. Several hands went up over here on this side to my right, to your left, up and down this side a number of hands went up. In order to keep quite a number from getting up at one time I am just going to ask over on this side, were you, if you are willing for Jesus to be the Lord of your life beginning now, I am going to ask you to do the way the New Testament says to do it. Will you just sand where you are and say just this.

"I confess Jesus as my Lord."

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²¹ Romans 10:9.

²² Matthew 10:32.

²³ Matthew 10:32-33.

If you mean it, you said you wanted him to be Lord tonight. I said a while ago: How many of you are willing for Jesus to be the Lord of your life? And you said you did.

Well, let's do it the way the Bible says to do it. If you are willing for Jesus to be the Lord of your life will you stand wherever you are back there and just say it as the Bible says?

"I confess Jesus as my Lord."