

September 10, 2011 Is Jesus Your Lord?

If you've been at our website recently to view segments 24 thru 27 on passive aggressive behavior in our [Way of the Lord](#) series, you've probably noticed that we've added four more segments on the *Lordship of Jesus*. It's no surprise that people who've contacted us lately have all found they still have symptoms of *passive aggression*. Recognizing these emotions, responses and behaviors is one thing. But *mutually cooperating with others* until they've been changed into Christ's character is going to take deliberate perseverance until the symptoms are gone and you're transformed as the Spirit has His way in you. Jesus can never be Lord of your life as long as *you* want to be in control. Remember, your ongoing battle in life is over *who will rule* your mind, will and emotions. This isn't a minor issue you can put off. Either Jesus is *LORD* of your life, or demonic strongholds and your sin nature are prevailing.

We noted in our last email how refreshing and uplifting it is to talk in the Spirit with those for whom loving and living in Jesus is their highest goal. It's not just the words spoken that are edifying; it's that these conversations reflect a *heart motive* that eagerly yearns to do whatever it takes in loving and obedient trust to become more like Jesus and to live with Him as Lord of our lives. Consistently seeking His guidance and relying on our Lord's power through His indwelling Spirit is the only way we can bring glory to our Father. Nothing less will do!

Lessons of LORDship from Luke 14:25-35

The parables our Lord Jesus narrates in this passage are tied together as a package of intentional determination to set *following Him* first above all things and *staying the course* out of love for Him.

- Jesus makes the startling statement that coming to Him calls for us to *hate* our closest relatives, and even our own life (v.26). That's strong stuff! But what He's saying is that our *love for Him* must be so committed that our love for others as well as our desire for self-preservation seems like "hate" - it's a Hebraic comparison thing. Our Lord really means it when He emphasizes we're to have "no idols" alongside or before Him — and how many people do you know (even yourself?) who treasure their family more than they do Him? Think about it.

- The very next verse calls us to "carry our cross". The cross was an instrument of *death* — not just a difficult marriage, an argumentative boss or a rebellious child, as some might say! The cross was a one-way ticket to *death to self*, so that we might hear and obey *only Jesus* as His very own. Out of our own free will to carry our own custom-designed-for-us cross, we are to *put to death our self-determination* on a daily basis— and replace self-in-charge with persevering determination to follow through with *Jesus*

in control right up to the end of our earthly journey.

- The parable message then switches to building a tower and *counting the cost* of finishing it (vv.28-30). If you're halfhearted in following Jesus, you'll only lay a foundation of intellectual belief but find yourself unable to build on it something "fruitful and useful" in the Spirit that endures to the end. Determination to persevere again is key. A superficial "belief" can easily be chipped away by the cares of this world, the desire for earthly possessions and gain, or even by the mockery of others. Don't count on words you recited years ago to represent to you who Jesus is. Humble your heart to see your need for His Lordship *daily* no matter *what* it costs you!

- Next we hear of a king considering war against another king (vv.31,32). When you think about it, isn't the Kingdom of God indeed comprised of warriors in Christ who battle the demonic forces of the enemy king who rules this world? The "king" in this parable must also consider the *cost to himself* before he chooses to follow the Lord Jesus as His disciple, knowing that the world's goals and values will always be in opposition to the ways of our Lord.

- Not only are we as His disciples called to give up our own worldly desires, our "idolatry" of relationships, our complacency with mental agreement that Jesus is Lord just because some religious institution says so. Jesus makes clear that we must give up the *self-reliance of ownership* of all that we have in order to follow Him — to have already made whatever we have secondary to His Lordship in our lives (v.33). Does that mean running out at this moment and giving it all away? *Only if that's what He's telling you now to do!* Make sure *your heart* is free from entanglement with whatever you have, with clinging to anything that would prevent you from following His will for you.

- Finally, Jesus brings up salt, a substance that's essential to physical life. If salt loses its capacity to nourish and sustain our bodies, it's useless. Not only does "spoiled salt" not help; it actually hinders by poisoning the soil so that crops can't grow. It even spoils manure so that it can't fertilize. So that brings us to His Lordship: Maybe at one point you *were* following Him but you've since walked away from the joy and love of living for Him, yielding instead to the world's goals, values and ways of doing things. If that's the case, are you not only *incapable* of coming alongside someone spiritually to bring nourishing encouragement, but also *hindering* those by your own lifestyle who might otherwise be seeking Jesus? Think about this.

- In His final statement Jesus sums up these interconnected thoughts with an admonition to have "ears to hear." From a Hebraic context, this phrase means that you purpose to *do something* with what you've heard, i.e., put into practice in your own life what His Spirit is making known to you. When you *hear* what the Spirit is saying in Scripture, you *obey!*

Following Jesus as LORD of your life has an *intentionality* of purpose and determination that is created and grown by His Spirit in you in an ongoing way. That kind of love for Him that's lived out daily is a pattern vividly portrayed by those who have been faithful to

the end: *"They overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death"*(Revelation 12:11). These words are proclaimed about people for whom Jesus is LORD of their lives. Have you allowed worldly goals, relational idols, and self-rule to keep you from loving and serving Him the way His Word calls for and His Spirit would empower you to?

Your personal goals—what's most important to you — will define your values. And your values, the reflection of your character, will dictate your methods of how you go about your life. Your methods will reveal the fact that you either live by goals that are noble enough to be commended by our Father, or you have goals that make you His enemy because you're serving the ruler of this world and his ways. (See James 4:4; 1John 2:15-17.)

Justification + Sanctification = Salvation

Justification, which is the payment for your sins so you can stand accepted before our Father, is free. Jesus already paid that price because He loves you so much.

Sanctification, which is the lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus, will cost you everything — possibly your very life.

Far too many people "play at" being Christian. They live under the deception of *pretension*, pretending that they belong to Jesus but living in a way that evidences that they're lord of their own life (see 2 Corinthians 10:5). But ask yourself this: how does *Jesus* see you? Does **He** see Himself as truly LORD of your life? Your response has eternal significance. Please, don't let yourself or those you care about go through life deluded that His Lordship is just a matter of terminology. Stop now and prayerfully count the cost of living with Jesus as Lord. That's what *loving Him* with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength is all about. Ask Him to strengthen you to live as if He were you. If you're bearing the title of Who He is, then you are responsible and privileged for others to see Him at work in and through and around you!

Journeying with you in HIS faithfulness,

Mike & Sue