

Messiah

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 December 2021

Preacher: Dylan Marais

[0 : 00] That was a short little prayer. Here's another prayer that I found that summed up what many people could be feeling about, you know, this very hectic time of year. Dear God, could we please uninstall 2020 and reinstall it? It has a virus.

Right, well that was 2020. We're in 2021. We could still be praying that prayer. It's been a rough year. It doesn't feel like much has changed. Maybe that's a recurring prayer in your life, especially around Christmas time, you know, when things get even more hectic.

And when you get a chance to catch your breath, you wonder, you know, where is Jesus in all of this? What is he doing? When is it all going to get better? Well, as we look in the last now series about why we can't cancel Christmas, let's take a closer look at the good news that Jesus is Christ the Lord and see if that can help us with understanding what God is doing in the world around us. So we're just going to take that phrase we've been looking at in Luke over the last four weeks with the angel's announcement to the shepherds. Luke chapter 2 from verse 10.

And we've looked at each of those different phrases over the past four weeks, haven't we?

[1 : 24] Good news for all people. A Savior has been born. And today we're going to look at Christ the Lord. And Christ the Lord or the Christ the Lord is the highlight of the Christmas message.

It's the highlight of the Christmas message. That phrase, he is the Christ the Lord. If Adrian was reading it for us a few weeks, he would keep saying, the Christ the Lord. Adrian, I don't know, did you do that on purpose or do you remember doing that?

You don't remember doing that? Oh, well, I picked that up. And because we've looked at the fact that Christ is a title, isn't it? It's not Jesus' surname as we keep saying. So he is the Christ the Lord. You can say it like that.

This phrase is the climax of the whole message that the angels have been giving. Christ the Lord ties all the other phrases together. In other words, there's no good news unless there is a Christ. And if there's no Christ, then there can be no salvation. But far too many Christians live their lives overlooking this central, central, central truth about Jesus.

[2 : 31] We can often think that Jesus can be our Savior, but we don't often think of him as our Christ or as our Lord. But just look at how Luke welds together the Messiahship of Jesus again and again in his opening chapters.

So every time he wants to speak about Jesus or about what God is going to do, he uses Messiahship language, Christ language. If you've got your Bibles, Luke chapter 1, verse 32 to 33, in the announcement of the angel to Mary.

He says this, And again in the Magnificat in Luke 1, 69, that song that Zachariah sings, He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.

That's Messiahship language. Every time you see in the Bible something about David, you need to understand that it's talking about the royal line of David and his heirs.

In other words, the Messiah. This king that is going to come, that the Magnificat in Luke 1 talks about, is going to be victorious and invincible in battle.

[3 : 53] And he's going to overcome each and every enemy that stands against his people. A king who is immortal and will have a kingdom that lasts for eternity. Which immediately makes whoever is born the most important person in world history.

Are you with me? If a person is going to get born and he's going to be a king forever over a kingdom that will never end, that makes that person the most important person in world history.

But we're faced with another problem in that so many Christians think of Jesus' rule as only ruling in our hearts or in heaven.

Anywhere but on planet earth. But that is to misunderstand what Jesus' lordship is all about. And so you see in that phrase in Luke 2, he is both Christ and Lord.

Lord, they kind of mean the same thing. They talk about power and authority and rule. But let me give you a definition of where this word Lord comes from.

[4 : 57] Now the Greek word for Lord is kurios. Kurios? Kurios? Remember I've taught you about the Greek word for Messiah? Remember what that is? Christ?

So when you say the word Christ, that's literally the Greek word for Messiah. And so now we're going to look at that word Lord for a bit. And here's a definition of the word Lord or kurios. It's a person who exercises absolute ownership rights.

When you speak of someone as a Lord, when the Bible speaks of someone as a Lord, they're talking about someone with absolute ownership rights. It says, He to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has the power of deciding.

In other words, he's a master or a Lord. That's how we have those. That's the English word. It's used universally of the possessor, someone who owns something, and dispossessor of a thing, the owner, the master again.

One who has control over that person or thing. You get that? So the basic idea behind Lordship is ownership. Now, we don't generally think in terms of Lordship anymore, do we?

[6 : 07] When was the last time you called someone in real world Lord? In England, you might have to do that, but we don't generally do that here. Maybe if you're in front of a magistrate. It kind of sounds outdated.

So how are we to think of this word Lord? Well, funny enough, we still have it in the term landlord. Yep. So if you're renting from someone, whose property is that?

It's not yours. It's the landlords. They own it. And what you have to do then is you have to live by a certain set of rules in their property. You've got to do what they say. For example, they sometimes say you can't have any pets, or no open fires on the balcony, or no rock band practice in the garage.

You can't do what you like with their property. If you want to make any changes, you've got to ask them. You've got to put it in writing. Well, it kind of works like that with Jesus. Jesus. He is the landlord of the world.

The earth lord, if you will. Now, there's a movie where one of the characters is the star lord. Who's got the title?

[7 : 12] Guardians of the galaxy. Guardians of the galaxy. And one of the characters, he calls himself star lord. And, well, Jesus is both star lord and earth lord.

Because he's the king of kings and the lord of lords. He is the rightful owner, ruler of the whole of the created order. In Matthew 28, Jesus himself makes this claim.

It's a well-known passage. At the end of Matthew 28, he says this, Therefore, he tells his people to go and make disciples of all nations.

Because they all belong to him. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and the Holy Spirit. And doing what? Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Can you see that that's all kingly, lordly language? And it's that kind of language. Jesus can use that kind of language because he is the lord of heaven and earth.

[8 : 18] But the funny thing is, it's the earth bit that we tend to have to remind ourselves. Because we so easily put Jesus in heaven and leave him there as a kind of a heavenly king.

But not an earthly one. Or we put him in our hearts and he rules inside us, but not actually out there in the public domain. But Jesus is indeed the lord of all things related to our existence on planet earth.

Funny enough, the lord's prayer actually helps us to remember this. It helps us to have this worldly outlook when we speak about Jesus being as lord.

In the lord's prayer, we pray, may your kingdom come, may your will be done in heaven as it is in heaven. No.

May your will be done where? On earth as it is in heaven. Not take us away from earth and put us in heaven, but may what is in heaven come down to earth.

[9 : 21] Now why do we pray this? Well, because earth is no longer like heaven. But it was meant to be. So that prayer actually takes us all the way back to the Garden of Eden. That's what the whole Eden project was all about, do you remember?

Here's the Garden of Eden, it's beautiful. Now take it and spread it over the whole world. The rule that I've got over you, mankind, Adam and Eve, I want you to take over and spread over the whole world.

Something went wrong and now God has got to step in and fix it. But he's appointed a person to do that. Jesus the Christ. The earth lord. That's why the Bible so often uses Eden-type language when it talks about what the Messiah is going to do.

I don't know if you picked it up in that reading of Psalm 72. I remember when this was pointed out to me. And it's quite astonishing. I'll put the verses up for us. But in that Psalm, it says this.

This is about the Lord's anointed, the king. May he be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth. What does that remind you of?

[10:24] Genesis 1. Genesis 2. May grain abound throughout the land. On the tops of the hills may it sway. May the crops flourish like Lebanon and thrive like the grass of the field.

This is anti-curse and anti-thorn growing language. Remember we looked at the curse and the blessing at our Christmas carols? The Messiah is going to undo the curse and bring back blessing. Where? Into the physical world. Onto planet earth. If Jesus is only a spiritual king living in my heart as my own private personal savior, then the Lord's prayer, which we say, not often enough, but which we do say, makes no sense.

Or let's put it another way. The Lord's prayer only makes sense if you believe that Jesus is the king of the whole of creation. Does that help you? So that's what we mean when we say Jesus is a worldwide king.

We're asking for Jesus' rule, God's rule, through Christ, to spread over every inch of planet earth. But there's a problem. Why then do we struggle so much with the idea of Jesus as Christ and Lord?

[11:41] It's like a little black spot in most Christians' minds, I find. What causes us to kick back against the rule of Jesus in our lives and the world around us? Why don't we want Jesus as Lord?

What is our problem with authority? Well, what we see is that there's a very strong anti-authoritarian streak in culture. Part of the answer comes out of culture, particularly the Western culture, which is deeply anti-authoritarian.

We learn it at school as we're taught to question authority and told no one is allowed to tell you what to do with your life. We see it in the movies, particularly teenage rom-coms, if you remember that far back.

The rebel is the hero and the bumbling dad, the authority figure, just gets in the way of his kids wanting to have fun. We see it in the goal of many women's rights movements, which is the overthrow of male leadership in the home, in business and politics, in all spheres of life, if they can manage it.

We are called in the women's movements to smash the patriarchy, as if that will bring liberation and freedom. Now, sadly, we have to acknowledge that many people's experience of authority is not a good one, especially in the home, with either absent fathers or fathers that are abusive.

[13:00] But the problem isn't authority itself, nor men per se. The problem is men who don't have Jesus as their authority, which makes it so important for men to have Jesus as their Lord, so we can show our families, but also others, what good, godly authority looks like, and how beneficial it can be to society.

So our culture is anti-authoritarian, but the problem is, deeper than that, it goes to the personal level. We're anti-authoritarian. The bigger problem is that each one of us has an inbuilt anti-authority streak running through our wills.

The bottom line is people just don't like authority, because we don't like obedience. We want to be free to enjoy life our own way. But we make a fatal mistake when we put freedom against authority, because the way that God has designed this world is that freedom comes through obedience.

Freedom comes through obedience, which is very counterintuitive. Well, let me explain why. I have a friend who goes mountain climbing, but like serious mountain climbing now, okay, with ropes and harnesses and everything.

One wrong move and you're at the bottom of the ravine a couple hundred meters down. He's got a small dog who also loves climbing. But it's very dangerous to have dogs, because dogs tend to have a mind of their own.

[14:21] So in order for this dog to go with him on the mountain and enjoy the freedom of going on these lovely adventures, he's got to teach his dog absolute obedience. So when he says sit, the dog stays.

Is it sit and stay? He stays. Until he says, okay, we're ready to move now. Once his dog learned absolute obedience, he was free to enjoy the mountainside with his master and friend. Can you see the connection between the two? Life in God's world works the same. In truth, we're all obedient to something. Either we're obedient to our whims and desires, or we're obedient to God and his king.

The thing is, when we give in to our own selfish desires, it leads to less freedom, not more. But when we obey Jesus, we get to be free and to enjoy life.

Jesus himself makes these points in the Gospel of John. You'll know these verses if you've been going to church for a while. John 8, Jesus says, If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

[15 : 33] And later on he says, If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. And later on in John 10, he says, The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. So a king that makes that kind of promise and can deliver on those promises, I think, is worth listening to and worth following.

Okay, now, if Jesus is king in this way, that he's king in heaven, but it means he exercises his authority on earth, How do we live then with him as king?

How do we live with him as king? How do we live with the fact that he rules over the affairs of men in the world, in time and space? He should have an impact on history that we can see. Do you agree with me?

Otherwise, he's not really ruling. In our few final minutes, I want to look at how Jesus has an impact on the macro level, sort of big events in world history, but also on the micro level, on the personal level, because that's where it kind of matters the most.

[16 : 41] Let's see if Jesus' kingship can stand up to scrutiny on the stage of world history. So, here's a diagnostic question. Raise your hand if any of you have ever owned a slave.

Nick moved his hand. You just need to know that. And Gene would know put it down. So, no one has owned a slave here. Oh, that's weird. Because throughout history, most people have owned slaves.

Raise your hand if anyone has been a slave, or been sold into slavery. None of us? A robber you are. Well, that's also strange, because we are a historical anomaly.

For the majority of history, every nation has owned slaves and enslaved people. Do you know when it stopped? Most of us know, because we've done a little bit of history at school. Middle of the 1800s.

Do you know why it stopped? And who stopped it? Yeah, well, the Christian nation of England, they stopped slavery, but it was a particular person who was, based on his Christian convictions, that men shouldn't be slaves, that stopped the institution of slavery.

[17 : 51] It's an incredible time in history. Slavery was abolished because Christian politicians took their Christian conviction and applied it in the political sphere.

So, here's an example of good male leadership under Christ. When men come under the rule of Christ, good things begin to happen to the world. And Jesus, through his people, through the church, is blessing the world.

In this case, literally freeing people from the evils of slavery. The second question to ask. Did you know that all the nations of the world have signed up to fight wars in a Christian way?

I don't know if you've ever seen a war happen in a Christian way. Hello, brother. I love you. I love you, too. I know it sounds strange, but it's true. Have you heard of the Geneva Conventions and the Geneva Protocols?

You may not have no intimate detail of them. Well, they seek to minimize damage to property and death when in times of war. They were started by a Christian from Geneva.

[19 : 02] And because of being a Christian and taking Jesus' words seriously about helping your neighbor in need, he wanted to protect innocent people in times of war. So he started the Geneva Conventions.

Every nation, just about every nation on planet Earth, subscribes to them. You can't just go bombing things and shooting people left, right, and center. And if you do, they'll take you to the War Crimes Tribunal. And they do catch people.

The world literally is a safer place, even in times of war, because Jesus is king and has worked through a person who's decided to implement that in the sphere of politics and relief.

This person also started the Red Cross. One of the largest, if not the largest, aid and relief humanitarian agencies in the world. And he went on to win the first Nobel Peace Prize. Many more examples I could use. Okay, hands up if you've had the vaccine recently. A number of us. Yeah, well, you can thank Jesus for that.

[19 : 59] Jesus has Louis Pasteur as one of his followers who gave the world the first vaccine. And he did it because he understood how Jesus works in the world.

So you see how Jesus works. He works his rule out on planet Earth through his followers through the church. Does that make sense? Maybe what we need, I know there's a book I got at Christmastime some years ago, The Big Book of Heroes.

It's a great book for boys to read. That's why I read it, even though I'm not really a boy. But still, it's great stories. And I think what we need is a book of Christian heroes.

There probably is one. Sandy, if she's Sandy or Barry, you'll point us in the right direction. But we need a good book of Christian heroes. All right, but lastly, though that's the macro level, what God has done through Christ on planet Earth, there's many more examples we could give.

But lastly, what about me? What can Jesus do for me? What does it mean to have him as Lord of my life? Well, I'd like to read an excerpt from the life of Lee Strobel.

[21 : 09] You may know him. He's written many books. The one I'm going to quote for The Case for Christ. And Lee Strobel was a hardened crime reporter from Detroit. He was forced to examine the claims of Christ because he saw the change that happened in his wife when she became a Christian.

And after examining all the evidence, he began to see the same change in his own life. That's what he says. Sure enough, over time, as I endeavored to follow Jesus' teachings and opened myself to his transforming power, my priorities, my values, and my character were gradually changed.

Increasingly, I want Jesus' motives and perspective to be my own. To paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr., I may not yet be the man I should be or the man with Christ's help I someday will be, but thank God I'm not the man I used to be.

In fact, so radical was the difference in my life that a few months after I became a follower of Jesus, our five-year-old daughter, Alison, went up to my wife and said, Mommy, I want God to do for me what he's done for Daddy.

Now here's a little girl who had only known a father who was profane, angry, verbally harsh, and all too often absent.

[22 : 31] And even though she had never interviewed a scholar, never analyzed the data, never investigated historical evidence, as Lee Strobel had done in his book, she had seen up close the influence that Jesus can have on a person's life.

In effect, she was saying, if this is what God does to a human being, that's what I want for me. Friends, Jesus is King.

He's ruling from His throne in heaven, but His rule is being implemented on earth. Let's join Him in His mighty work of saving the world and changing history.

Let's pray. Dear Lord Jesus, what a lovely reminder of your kingly rule and power and authority, that every inch of planet earth belongs to you, and that we get to be part of the great project of renewal. Lord, renew us from the inside out. Help us to follow you as our Lord and as our King. Help that to manifest in our lives at home and at work and in the community around us so that others, everyone we come into contact can say, I, whatever they've got, I want too.

[23 : 51] We pray for the extension of your kingdom to your glory and power. Amen. Thank you. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Excellent. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.