

Let's read from the letter to the Romans 10:1-13, where we find the apostle Paul talking about the difference between on the one hand what the Jews believed, that is that you can be right with God through obeying the law of the Old Testament – and on the other hand what the new Christian church believed – you can **only** be made right with God through faith in Jesus Christ. [Read]

I remember one time when I was learning to drive. We were coming up to a busy junction, I was driving, of course and my instructor was sitting next to me. As we got to the junction, I panicked, I don't know why, I just panicked. And I pressed on the **accelerator** instead of the brake. But miraculously, as the engine raced because I was pressing on the accelerator, at the same time we slowed down and came to a stop at the junction. It took me a little while to realise what had happened; my instructor had pressed the brake and clutch pedals on **his** side, which overrode what I had been doing. I was **so glad** that he was in control.

Taking Peter out in the car when **he** was learning, I quickly found out that I was certainly **not** in control of the car – there were no pedals on my side of the car. No harm done, though, except to my nerves and blood pressure!

Are you in control of your life?

We like to be in control don't we? We like to be in charge. It's not just people in authority – like schoolteachers! – we **all** want to be in control. The world we are living in now is built on the idea that **I** am in control of my life and **I** decide what happens to me. We are bombarded with situations that support this idea – the idea that **I** am in total control of my life.

We so often hear of people demanding their rights – people stand on their rights, human rights, right to this, right to that: the right to continue working after retirement age – the right to die when we want – the right to get our child into the school we want – the right to roam, to walk wherever we want, even if it's all over other people's land. We're in control because it's our **right**.

Our scientists are in control of many diseases – they can now create stem cells to treat a multitude of illnesses and diseases. They are in control of people's very survival, it seems. Did you see the other day? - scientists can now make blood – soon there'll be no need for blood donors. They're in control.

We're in control of our leisure times – we have hundreds of channels on our tellies and at the touch of a button we can decide what we want to watch.

We have the power now to even pause **live** television while we go and make a cup of tea or have a bath or put the children to bed. What power. It's ours, at the touch of a button. If we go out we can record it for later.

We're even in charge of our holidays and our memories – through the video camera, or now even through a phone. We can record events on our camera or mobile phone and watch it later, or send it to someone who wasn't there. I personally think it's a bit sad that someone spends all their holiday taking film of the events rather than enjoying the experience while they're there. But **we're** in control – we can watch it later.

We're in control of our finances – are we? In the light of the last six months, I don't think **anyone** can say that any more.

Our politicians like to be in control, don't they? They claim they're in control – Gordon Brown must surely now have moments when he feels he's lost control of events. But not this week – he was fully in control.

Further afield, Zimbabwe's President Mugabe has a Prime Minister in Morgan Tsvangirai, and says he will share government, he will relinquish some of the power he has held for decades. We will see if these are just empty words and whether he keeps full control for himself or not.

Perhaps the most disturbing extension to the desire to be in control is happening among teenagers in our cities – to reinforce the idea that they're in control, they carry a knife: I have a knife – I'm in control.

But we don't have to go that far - we all like to be in control of our lives. We don't like people telling us what to do. **We** can take charge of our lives, thank you very much.

But should we be thinking this way once we become Christians? Can we live the Christian life thinking that **I** am in control?

We've had a theme running through this evening's meeting – you may have noticed - 'Can you tell what it is yet?'

Jesus is **Lord**. Jesus is Lord.

The word 'Lord' appears 740 times in the New Testament, mostly referring to Jesus. So we're just going to go through these 740 references .... (wait for a reaction!). No we're not, you'll be glad to hear! Jesus is Lord.

Surely what I've been saying so far totally goes against this statement. The world does not **see** Jesus as Lord – in the world around us the individual says 'I am lord', 'I'm in control'.

So I just want us to look at these three words, and think about what they mean – Jesus is Lord. What do they mean for the individual? What do they mean for the world? Now and in the future?

Let's focus on verse 9 here in Romans 10, where we read how a person can be saved, in other words, how we can be put right with God, how we can experience and enjoy a relationship with the creator God. Here we read, "*that if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*" [Repeat].

When asked the question, "How do you become a Christian?" someone once said, "Salvation is as close as your own mouth and heart." It's not a complicated process – in this verse we have it, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that Jesus is risen from the dead, you will be saved.

What is the mark of a Christian? Here Paul is saying that a person's confession that Jesus is Lord is the mark of a Christian. Being able to say that Jesus is Lord is the mark of a Christian. 1 Corinthians 12:3 says that "*no-one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit.*"

But surely we see that it has to be **more** than that – I'm sure you remember the time Jesus said, "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of God*" (Matthew 7:21). So there **has** to be more to this than just being able to say the words 'Jesus is Lord'. If we read the whole of verse 21 in Matthew 7, we read "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of God, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*"

Sometimes when I open my mouth to speak to the children at school, what comes out is not what I wanted to say, it's sometimes gobbledygook, especially early in the morning, because my brain doesn't wake up until mid-morning some days! (We're all right tonight, I hope)

This confession that Jesus is Lord is not just empty, meaningless words – this comes from the heart, from a desire deep down to do the will of God.

The **beginning** of doing God's will, and the basis for our salvation is what is talked of in our verse in Romans 10 and verse 9 – *“if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

Paul says, we have to believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, to be a Christian. This has got to be a confession that goes to the very **heart** of our being – it's not just words, it's a heartfelt belief that goes to the very core of our being.

We have to believe in our **heart** that Jesus is risen - the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the **basis** for Jesus' lordship. In rising from the dead, Jesus conquered death but he was also victorious over every power – the risen Jesus is the risen Lord. Because he conquered every evil power, he – and he alone – can bring salvation, he alone can save from all the powers that held men and women in captivity, from all the powers of sin and Satan. If he is not risen, he does not have power, he cannot save, he is not lord.

We have to believe in our heart that Jesus is risen and is victorious over all powers, otherwise we cannot be saved. 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6 says that *“there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, who came and through whom we live.”*

The Jesus who lived, who died and who rose again is the one who saves, and by declaring 'Jesus is Lord' we declare that he is the **only** one who can save from all the powers listed in Romans 8:38,39. Let's read those verses. [Read] Because Jesus is risen, he is Lord, and saves us from every evil power – nothing can *“separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

If people are honest with themselves today, I think they cannot fail to see that although they want **so much** to be in control of their lives, they **aren't** in control. Many feel hopeless and helpless, out of control. Many people are today searching for fulfilment and meaning – but most are looking in the wrong places, they are making “lords” out of other things – pleasures, friends and family, work, alcohol, drugs, money to name but a few. Only when Jesus is their Lord will they find what they're looking for. Only if Jesus is our personal Lord will we know salvation. *“if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

**Jesus is Lord of the individual.**

But what does knowing Jesus as Lord really **mean** in our individual lives?

The first article of the Westminster Shorter Catechism states that “The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” Psalm 37:4, as one example, says “*Delight yourself in the Lord.*”

Having Jesus as Lord means that we are to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Is that any hardship? Surely not – surely it should bring us joy to enjoy a relationship with God, Almighty God, Creator God, God of love and mercy – who would **not** want to enjoy God? Well it seems that there are thousands and millions out there who don’t.

Jesus is Lord – glorify and enjoy Him.

Jesus said, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*” Matthew 22:37. “*God is love,*” we read in John’s first letter, chapter 3. If He is **love**, surely it’ll be easy to love him. Jesus loved us enough to die for us – surely we respond to that great outpouring of love with love in return, don’t we?

Jesus is Lord – love Him.

“*Love your neighbour as yourself.*” With Jesus as Lord, we have His Holy Spirit living within us. With His Spirit indwelling us, we are filled with love, and that love overflows to people around us who also need to know that love.

Jesus is Lord – love others as He has loved you.

Jesus said to his disciples, “*If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me,*” Matthew 16:24. Take up your cross and follow me. Jesus has not said there will not be difficulties. There will be times of trouble – the world hated Jesus, it will also hate those who represent him, those who speak for him. But confessing that Jesus is Lord is recognising that Jesus is bigger than all our worries and fears and problems.

Jesus is Lord – follow Him, through good times and bad.

Jesus said, “*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.*” Matthew 28:19,20. The Christian’s responsibility is to spread the Good News about Jesus. If we truly know Jesus, that he died and rose again to rescue us from hell, surely we’ll want to give others the opportunity to know him too. 5



Jesus is Lord – tell others about Him.

We all have to look at ourselves and ask ourselves the question, “Is this what ‘Jesus is Lord’ means to **me**? Is it just words? Do we feel in our **heart** that Jesus is Lord? What effect is his lordship having on my life? **Is** Jesus Lord? Or are we still allowing other things to be lord in our life? Remember, Jesus said, “*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of God.*” Are we just paying lip-service to God?

But there’s more - **Jesus is Lord of all**. Let’s return to Romans chapter 10, and look at verses 12 and 13: “*For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’*” The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him.

Jesus is Lord of all. Jesus is Lord of the Spanish people, He’s Lord of South Africans, He’s Lord of the Irish, He’s Lord of the Chilean people, He’s Lord of the English (there’s still some English among us!). He’s Lord of rich and poor, young and old, large and small, Chelsea supporters and even Manchester United supporters. He’s Lord of all.

“Oh no He isn’t!” We hear the world cry, just like in the best pantomime.

“Oh yes He is!” The Christian replies.

“Look at the world around you,” the world says, “Surely you’re not saying that Jesus is Lord of all the evil, depravity, sin and disgraceful events going on in the world today? Get real – how **can** Jesus be in control, how can you say Jesus is Lord of **all**?”

Colossians chapter 1 verse 15 tells us why; “*He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by **Him** all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created **by him** and **for him**.*”

**That’s** why the Christian can say that Jesus is Lord of all, because “*all things were created by him and for Him.*” He was before creation, he brought about creation, and - as we’ve seen earlier - in his resurrection the world has seen his demonstration of power over all creation. Jesus **is** Lord of all.

As Derek was sharing with us last week from Acts 2:24, “*The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’*” He was saying that one by one, Jesus’ enemies are being put under his feet. 6

Jesus' Lordship is becoming more and more evident around the world. Millions all over the world are being rescued from Satan's grip and are turning to Jesus for salvation. Make no mistake – Jesus **is** Lord of all and He richly blesses all who call on Him. Even now, this very day, men women and children will recognise Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

The resurrection is the guarantee of the future – though there may be battles to face, Jesus has won the decisive victory when he defeated all powers by being raised from the dead.

Now is the day of grace, now it's 'voluntary' – I say voluntary in inverted commas, because everyone who comes to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour very soon recognises that it is God in his mercy and grace draws us to himself, God chooses us. Now we can **choose** to recognise Jesus as Lord – that's why some don't – but there is a day coming when it will be **compulsory** – **everyone** will recognise that Jesus is Lord of all.

Let's turn to Paul's letter to the Philippian Christians, chapter 2 and verse 9 onwards: *“Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place, and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus **every** knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and **every** tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

At this very moment Jesus' enemies are being placed under his feet. And there is a day coming – make no mistake, it is coming - when He will wind up history, He will come again, he will come back for his own. And on that day **everyone** will bow their knee before him, and **every** heart will confess 'Jesus is Lord'. Jesus **is** Lord of all. Everyone will see. But for some they will recognise it too late – the Bible says **they** will be 'thrown out into the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth' – not a pleasant place to be, and certainly not for eternity!

We must search our hearts. Are we confessing that Jesus is Lord of our lives – both with our mouth and our heart? Do we believe that Jesus is Lord of all? That He is Lord of all the earth? What effect should this have on us?

Well, look at the effect it had on the early believers. That small group of normal people like you and me (well most of us are normal!) they went out in the power of Jesus by His Holy Spirit and they **laid claim** to the whole world for Jesus. They were so bold and in any way they could they proclaimed in every village, town and country that Jesus is Lord.

I'm a Christian today – and if you're a Christian today – it's because **they** confessed with their mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believed in their heart that God raised him from the dead. Because they believed that Jesus is Lord **of all**, they had no fear. What was there to fear? Jesus is Lord of all. They went everywhere preaching the gospel because they were secure in knowing Jesus is Lord.

What is there for **us** to fear? The same as for those first believers – **nothing**, because Jesus is Lord of all. This is an exciting message, isn't it? Isn't it great to know that Jesus is our Lord – our own personal Lord, my Lord. But He is also Lord of all –that should **empower** us to spread the Good News without fear. What are we waiting for?

How is it with you? Do you know anything of what we've been thinking about this evening? There's so much more for us to know, so much more for us to experience at the hands of Jesus, the Son of God, who died to pay the price for our sins, who rose again from the dead, who ascended into heaven, and who one day will come back again. *“And every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

Jesus is Lord.