

Jesus: both Lord and Christ

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[0 : 0 0] Well, one of my favorite books growing up, one of my favorite books continue to this day, is a novel called To Kill a Mockingbird. It's an American novel written by Harper Lee.

It's set in the American South in the 1930s in a rather racially divided town, a fictitious town of Maycomb, Alabama. And the main character in the story is a young girl named Scout.

She lives with her brother, Jim, and her dad, Atticus, who's a lawyer. And it's really a story that just tells about the goings-on, the common life in the small town in the south of the United States.

And it really addresses some really unique themes of compassion and prejudice and justice. And there's one scene in this book where Atticus, the father, this lawyer, is sitting at home with his brother who's come to visit.

And they're talking about this really serious matter as the plot continues to thicken, where Atticus has been tasked with representing this black man who's been falsely accused of abuse and assault.

[1 : 0 3] And so he's talking with his brother, how is he going to deal with defending this black man in a rather racially divided south? And he's concerned not only for himself, but for his children.

How are his children going to be treated, and how are they going to respond to this likely controversy that's going to ensue? And what we see, that conversation ends abruptly at the end of the chapter.

And when we jump into a new chapter, it's a totally different scene that seems totally unrelated to what Atticus had just been talking about. Because it's now Scout and Jim who are outside who discover this rabid dog that's coming down the street in the neighborhood.

And so what happens is Atticus, who had been at work, is called home along with the sheriff to deal with this rabid dog. And the sheriff actually hands Atticus the gun and says, here, you shoot the dog.

And it's to the surprise of the children because they had just been talking about how their dad was old, and he was kind of lame, and he never hunted, he never fished, he never drank, he never smoked.

[2 : 0 4] They had no idea that their dad had ever even touched a gun before. And so what we see in this episode, this quick change in scene, is something that's revelatory to Atticus' children.

Because they realized that they had sorely misunderstood, and they had underestimated their father before. And even as a reader, we recognize that we gained some insight into this character Atticus that's going to be really monumental as we see this challenge that he faces in the future.

And so what we see in our text is a similar shift in our passage today, because what I mentioned before, Peter is giving this speech to try to explain the coming of the Holy Spirit. And so you may think, well, he's going to continue talking about the Holy Spirit.

He's going to tell us more about who the Spirit is and what he's done and what he's going to do. But we see this sudden shift in his message here. He turns his focus from the Spirit and he begins talking about the Son, Jesus, who's just ascended.

You may think, well, why talk about Jesus? He's no longer here. The Spirit has now come. And what we see in this transition, this shift, is this reframing of our understanding. He's wanting his audience to know the relationship between the Son and the Spirit and how that relates together in this redemptive historical event.

[3 : 24] So if we think about the Holy Spirit just for a minute more, we recognize that some theologians have called the Holy Spirit the shy member of the Trinity. Now, that may sound a bit derogatory.

It may be other terms we can use, self-effacing or modest member of the Trinity. But that doesn't mean that he's a lesser member of the Trinity. We only have to turn to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which helps us understand and articulate our faith.

And it talks about the Trinity as this. It's three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory.

And so when we think about the Spirit, we need to recognize just a change in role that he has from the Father and the Son. It's been described as a floodlight ministry. The role of the Spirit in the lives of the believer is to reveal Christ to us and to allow us to be united to Christ.

And so this is why the Spirit has come, that we may understand and know Jesus. And so again, this new covenant era, rather than the Spirit simply being with the believer, he dwells in the believer so that we can be found in Christ.

[4 : 37] And so when we think about this day of Pentecost, you may think, well, okay, this day of Pentecost, we think it's all about the Spirit, right? But what we see is that the Spirit is all about the Son.

And so this is the focus of Peter's sermon. This is the focus of our passage today. Three things I want us to consider when we consider the life and ministry of Jesus. I want us to think about the guilt of man, the work of God, and the role of Jesus.

The guilt of man, the work of God, and the role of Jesus. So let's first look at the guilt of man. Now, Peter begins this portion of his sermon with a rather forceful accusation.

If we look back in verse 23, he's talking to this crowd and he says, you, with the help of wicked men, you put Jesus to death by nailing him to a cross. Now, this may not be a method that modern-day evangelists would likely employ.

It's not a seeker-sensitive model of immediately accusing your audience of murder. This may not be the best way of joining a crowd and getting them on your side here. But what Peter's doing here, he's really flipping the script on them right from the beginning because he had just been accused of being drunk.

[5 : 47] And now he is rightly accusing this audience of murder. Undoubtedly, some people that would have been there that day would have been the same people that would have seen Jesus at trial and called out, crucify him, crucify him.

But certainly not all of them. We see that there's likely a big crowd here. You may think, well, some there would say, look, I know nothing of this Jesus. I came for this religious ceremony. I maybe heard stories or maybe I've heard nothing about him.

Don't accuse me of murder. Peter calls out and he says, he calls them lawless. This is a term to describe Gentiles, to call a Jew lawless. This is shameful.

This is offensive. But what Peter's doing here, he's lumping them all together. Jew, Gentile, Roman, leader, follower. When he says, you put them to death, he's speaking in the plural here.

Talking about everybody. He makes this accusation again later in Acts 4. And he's actually a little more specific about who he's targeting. He speaks of Herod specifically. He speaks of Pilate. And then he says, all the Gentiles and all the people of Israel.

[6 : 50] And so, again, it's not just the Jewish leaders. It's not just the Roman soldiers. He's saying, you, everyone. Jesus' blood is on your hands. And so, Peter's message to that crowd is actually the same message for us today.

The blood of Jesus is on our hands. And so, you may think, well, look, this is the first time I've been at church. This is the first time I've heard this gospel message.

Anything about Jesus. He can't be on my hands. I don't know the guy. Or I'm totally indifferent. I don't care if he lives or dies. So, don't blame me. But what Peter is saying here is, it doesn't matter. We are all guilty.

It is our sin that sent Jesus to the cross. And so, think about the words of the hymn that we sang at the very beginning. How deep the Father's love from us. Think of the stanza that we sang.

It says, behold the man upon the cross. My sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.

[7 : 54] It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished. The Bible is very clear that we all have sinned.

That we have rebelled against God. And the penalty for that rebellion is death. And so, what Peter is saying to his audience here. He wants us to consider each one of us what we have done.

How we have participated in Jesus' death. Whether we are physically at the crucifixion or not. Consider how we have rejected God in our hearts. How we have chosen our own ways.

How we have refused the need for a savior. We recognize here that Peter, though he's making this accusation. He's not wanting his audience just to remain guilty.

That's not the goal of his sermon. It's just to make everyone feel bad. But we recognize, as Calvin says, its guiltiness is the preparation for repentance. And so, it's following this guilt that he carries on with this message.

[8 : 59] And this brings us to point two. The work of God. In verse 22. Fellow Israelites, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you. By miracles and wonders and signs which God did among you through him as you yourselves know.

This summer, many of you know, my family and I had a number of weeks back in the States. And it was the longest time we'd spent back in the States in five years. So, I had the opportunity to see family and friends and acquaintances.

Church members who we'd not seen in a long time. And inevitably, most of them, the first comment was when they see our children, just how far, how much they've grown, how big they are. And another comment, especially directed to my son, Henry, was, wow, how much you look like your dad.

Poor guy. But we recognize, I mean, I remember getting that same comment when I was growing up as well. But it's these, they recognize by his appearance, by his mannerisms, this likeness that we share.

And so, we see something similar here. This miracle of Jesus, they would have been witnessed by countless people. Right? These works of power, raising the dead, healing the sick. Word of this would have spread far and wide.

[10 : 06] But the purpose of these miracles was not simply to show Jesus to be some sort of musician. Or, not a musician either, but not a magician. These signs and miracles were performed by God through Jesus in order to reveal Jesus' family resemblance to the Father.

And so, what God is doing here, he's demonstrating the quality, the specialness of his son. They're indicators of Jesus' divine identity.

His plan of salvation. They prove that he's not only a man, but he is the son of God who's come to serve and to save. And so, not only then did God empower Jesus in his earthly ministry in doing these miracles, but we see the work of God continue.

Because it says, Peter makes clear that God allowed Jesus to suffer by his deliberate plan and foreknowledge. And this really points to a theme that we see throughout the gospel of Luke and this book of Acts that's also written by Luke.

It's that one of the sovereignty of God. Over and over again, Luke speaks of God's predetermined plan. He makes clear that Jesus' death was not a mistake or an accident.

[11 : 19] Now, many of us have probably made rash decisions before. Right? Either we're short on time and have to make a decision or we don't really care in advance when we make a decision and we end up regretting it.

That's not what happened here. Jesus in his providence doesn't make rash decisions. Not only does he know the future, he determines the future.

And so, it's not as though God sent his son Jesus to earth to be the Messiah and was just shocked to find out that no one wanted to receive him as Lord. No, this was a part of God's plan from the very beginning.

Before the creation of the world, there was this plan made for the redemption of God's people. There was this agreement, a covenant made between father and son that the father would appoint the son as a mediator.

That the son would assume this appointment, accept this appointment and become obedient to death on a cross, securing salvation for God's people. And as a result, he would share in the eternal glory of the father.

[12 : 20] So, this was always plan A from the very beginning. And so, this may leave you questioning though. Okay, if it was God's plan to kill his son Jesus, then why in the world are we guilty of it?

And this is where we need to understand and try to, it's difficult to do, but recognize how we hold in balance the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. And we don't have time to dig into this deeply, but I think we can say this.

That when we sin, we act against the will of God. But not without the will of God. God's will cannot be thwarted by our actions and our actions do not occur outside of his will.

And so, the guilt remains ours. And the purpose remains God's. And so, you say, well, maybe that doesn't make total sense or maybe I still don't like that sound of that.

Recognize this. Recognize what the promise is. The purpose of Jesus' coming. The purpose of his death was not to judge, but to save. Not to condemn, but to rescue.

[13 : 31] And so, this is what Peter says later in his letter of 1 Peter. He says, Jesus himself bore our sins in his body on the tree. That we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

By his wounds we have been healed. The work of Jesus goes on though. It doesn't end just simply at Jesus' death. We see in verse 24.

But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death. Because it was impossible for the death to keep its hold on him. Now, this phrase in the NIV, freeing him from the agony of death.

The ESV says, loosening the pangs of death. It's actually a Greek word that's used to describe birth pains. And so, I'm sure we've all heard stories about a woman who's pregnant.

Who goes into labor and doesn't make it to the hospital in time. Right? And his baby is delivered on the way. Or at home. Or in a car park somewhere. This is kind of what we're seeing here. The same imagery.

[14 : 27] That death could not hold Jesus any more than a pregnant woman can hold a child in her body during labor. Death was unable to hold Jesus by its powerful and painful grip.

And so, we see two reasons that are given for this. One, we just talked about. It was God's plan. God's plan does not fail. But a second reason we see here. Because death has no claim on Jesus.

We just said that the penalty for sin is death. And so, you and I, because of our sin, death rightly has a claim on our lives.

But Jesus here. Death had no claim on our sinless Savior. And so, it was impossible for Jesus to be defeated by death when he is the perfect author of life.

And so, it's faith is based on this point. It's based on the reality of the resurrection. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then our preaching, then our faith is totally in vain.

[15 : 37] We see here that God's work even continues beyond the resurrection, though. Peter says that not only did God raise him from the dead, he exalted him to his right hand. And so, we've seen this ultimate contrast here.

Between the degrading work of sinful man and the glorifying work. Of a sovereign God. This full fulfillment of the covenant.

This is what we're seeing here. This promise between father and son from the beginning of time. This is where it's fulfilled. Upon the achieving of salvation for God's people. Now the son gets to share in the father's glory. And so, that brings us to our final point then.

The role of Jesus. Our passage ends in verse 36. Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this. God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Messiah.

In the Greek, kurion, kai, kriston. Lord and Christ. If we think back to that book, To Kill a Mockingbird.

[16 : 42] After Atticus is given that gun, he shoots that rabid dog with a single shot. And the sheriff comes over to him to retrieve his gun. Pats him on the back. And he calls him a nickname that his children have never heard him called before.

One shot finch. And it's this nickname that's revealing to the children and to the reader. That not only is he this unrivaled marksman.

But for the children, it's this hidden skill that was unknown. To the reader, we get a bit more understanding of this complexity of Atticus' character. That will play out through the rest of the story.

And so here, Jesus doesn't merely receive a nickname. He receives royal titles. With deep significance that reveal more about his person and his character.

This would have been something that would have been veiled or hidden before. In his earthly ministry, Jesus humbly assumed human nature. He took the form of a servant.

[17 : 45] Isaiah said there was nothing attractive about Jesus. But following his resurrection and ascension, Peter is highlighting his exalted and glorified state.

He is the Lord and the Christ. And so I want us to think about each of these titles just briefly. Thinking about Christ first. Peter uses two psalms.

Psalms 19 and Psalm 110. These are the same psalms that we sang this morning. And so when we think about this title, Christ. It's not simply Jesus Christ. We hear that all the time. It's not his surname.

Right? This is an official title. It means that he's the anointed one. He's the Messiah. He's the deliverer. And so if we think back to the Old Testament. God comes to a young man named David.

And he promises him. He makes a covenant with him. That David, even though he's this scrawny shepherd boy. He's going to be the future king. And God says to him. He said, I'm going to make your name great.

[18 : 40] And I'm going to give you a kingdom. And your throne will be established forever. And so that's the basis upon which David is writing this psalm. Psalm 16 that we see in verse 25. David is remembering God's promises to him.

And he's actually speaking in the first person. And so we see him say, the Lord is always before me. I will not be shaken. My flesh will dwell in hope. You will not abandon my soul to Hades.

And the question that Peter wants his audience to ask is, how can this be? Did God break his promise? Because David's dead. We know where his grave is.

How can he be saying this? But Peter makes very clear here that David is not talking about himself. Yes, he was the anointed king.

But his reign points to a greater one who will reign. A king from his own line. A king who is the Christ. The true anointed one.

[19 : 38] The Messiah who will rescue his people. And so Peter says, David, not only is he acting as king here, he's really acting as a prophet. Because he foresaw and spoke of the coming of this Jesus who would fully and perfectly fulfill the office of king.

What is that role? To rule and defend his people. To restrain and conquer all of his and our enemies. Even the greatest enemy of all, death.

And so by calling Jesus the Christ, Peter is calling him the deliverer. The one who delivers people from death to life by his own resurrection.

And then we see this title, Lord. And for this title, Peter turns to Psalm 110. This is the most quoted psalm in the New Testament. In verse 34, we see it written.

The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. Now, if you've ever read through parts of the Old Testament before, you've certainly come across that word Lord that's written in all caps.

[20 : 41] It's a translation of what would be God's proper name, Yahweh. And so this is what David is saying here, that Yahweh is saying to David's heir, sit at my right hand.

And so this verse, it's actually an interesting question comes out of it. And actually, Jesus poses this question to Pharisees during his ministry back in Luke 20. And he asked the Pharisees, he said, how can they say that Christ is David's son when David calls him Lord?

And the Pharisees have no answer. They fall silent. But what we see here is that Peter is very clear in giving an answer. David can be called the son, his son Lord, because his promised heir is greater than he is.

Because of what Jesus, the son of David, accomplished on the cross, he now can sit at his father's right hand, a place of ultimate honor and glory. And so Peter tells us then what Jesus does in this position of honor.

Verse 33, exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the father, the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see in here. Oftentimes, I think we can we can mistakenly think that Jesus's work finished on the cross.

[21 : 57] He ascended to heaven and was able to take a break until he decides to come again. Kind of put up his feet. We see that he is active in his service at his father's side.

He is the mediator of the blessing of the spirit. In his lordship, he gives the spirit to his people just like he promised that he would. And so this is the explanation of the day of Pentecost.

The spirit has come as evidence that Jesus has risen and that he reigns. It's marking the beginning of this new kingdom. Kingdom. Do you believe that?

Do you recognize the majesty of that? I think many of us who have lived in Edinburgh for any amount of time, we we're appreciative that we live in a beautiful city.

But we can also begin to take for granted the scenes around us, the architecture, the landscape. I ride my bike every day to and from work and so often I don't even look up to pay attention.

[23 : 01] I usually just become annoyed when tourists are in the bike lane taking pictures or have their head up looking around. But I think we can often do that with Jesus. Those of us who have grown up in the church, who have heard this message before, we hear that Jesus Christ is Lord.

We say, yeah, yeah, I know that. And we can take it for granted. We can lose a sense of majesty and beauty and significance of this reality that God sent his son to earth, who he died on the cross.

He rose from the dead. He ascended to heaven and now rules and reigns at the father's right hand. This is the core of the gospel message. I've heard it said it's so marvelously deep that theologians can swim in it.

But yet so simple that children can grasp it. And so this message that Jesus Christ is Lord, it's the same message that's announced by the angels at Jesus' birth.

It's the same message that's preached by Peter at Pentecost. It's the same message that we will hear upon Christ's return when all the saints will say he is king of kings and Lord of lords.

[24 : 10] And so that needs to mean something to us today. If we believe this, this is the message that we preach. This is the message that's going to influence how we live our lives, that we put away the other idols and lords in our life and elevate the one true God to his deserving status.

But maybe you're here today and maybe this is the first time you've heard this message or you've heard this message over and over again but yet have rejected it. Understand this.

Understand this. That there's no neutral response to Jesus. Either you believe that Jesus is the Christ or you deny him.

Either you accept that he is the Lord or you reject him. The Bible is clear that Jesus is Lord over all. That means he is Lord over you.

And guess what?