

Salvation - Sin & Repentance

Confessing Christ as Lord: Not Optional for the True Christian

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Part two of a three-part series. Read [part one](#).

The Lordship of Christ is not a subjective matter. It is objective truth confessed by every true believer in Him.

In our last article, we quoted from a sermon by Martyn Lloyd-Jones in which he addresses this vital question from Romans 10:9-10. We saw, first of all, what it does *not* mean to confess Christ as Lord. As he continues, Dr. Lloyd-Jones takes up the heart of the matter: *The Lordship of Jesus Christ is objective truth, and genuine confession of that truth is not optional for a Christian.* We do not, as so many teach today, "make Jesus Lord" as though it were our decision. Every true believer confesses the fact that Jesus *is* Lord.

So we must put it like this: whatever else the content of the Christian faith may be, it is objective truth. That is the starting point. It is what Paul emphasizes. But what is it about? It is about Jesus, a person who belongs to history. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus ..." It is about this Person. So if you describe Christianity without mentioning Him, you are not describing Christianity, whatever else you may be describing. This is almost incredible, is it not? But here we see the wiles of the devil, that people can talk about Christianity and not mention the name of our Lord at all. But He, says Paul, is the very word which we preach; He is the essence of Christian faith; He is the content of our whole position.

So the Christian faith is about this Person, who He is, what happened to Him, and the meaning of it all. That is the content. The Christian faith is centered on

the Lord Jesus Christ. It would not be called Christian otherwise. He is not incidental to the Christian faith; a helper of it. He is essential to it; there is no Christian faith without Him! Take Him out and you have nothing left. It all depends upon Him and upon Him alone. He is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" [1 Cor. 3:11]. There is no other.

Now that is what the Apostle is telling us here, and you notice that he puts two things in particular before us about this Person, Jesus of Nazareth. The first is that He is Lord! And the second is that God raised Him from the dead. Those are the two absolute essentials to the Christian faith. There is no salvation unless we are clear about them.

And, of course, when you read the Acts of the Apostles, you find that those are the two things that the Apostles preached at the beginning -- "Jesus and the resurrection" [Acts 17:18] -- the two things we have here.

The first statement, then, is that "Jesus is Lord". We must be careful to observe that though this became a password in the early church, it is infinitely more than that. It is a tremendous, a staggering statement which along with the reference to His resurrection, sums up the whole of the Christian faith.

"The Lord Jesus" -- what does that mean? Well, the word translated "Lord" is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to stand for the Hebrew word "YHWH" (Jehovah) -- the name by which God wished to be personally known. [Old Testament scholars have constructed the word "YAHWEH" from the consonantal form "YHWH". This is no more than an educated guess at how the word was to be pronounced.] We are told in the early chapters of the book of Exodus that God had not previously manifested Himself by this name as He would by means of the deliverance of His people from Egypt. Through the

meaning of this name He committed Himself to them as the "I am that I am" -- the covenant keeping God [Exod.6:2-4].

Now the Jews regarded this name of God as being so wonderful, so glorious, that they were afraid to use it and they avoided doing so by substituting other words. When they came to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (called the Septuagint translation), they translated YHWH by a Greek word meaning "Lord". Paul uses that same Greek word in verse 9. So this statement, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus," means, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Jehovah [YHWH]! Jesus is the Lord God Jehovah!" This means, of course, as we know from the rest of the New Testament, that he is asserting in the strongest manner possible the unique deity of our blessed Lord and Savior.

Let us analyze this further and consider what this means. The Apostle is saying that those who confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, Jehovah, God, and believe that Christ, this Jehovah, has been raised from the dead, they are the men and women who are saved. These are the points, you see, by which we test ourselves. To say that "Jesus is Lord" is to make a statement about His Person. You are here stating what you believe concerning who He is. You say, "My faith rests upon Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, but I say that He is God, He is Jehovah." This is the Christian confession.

Now the Apostle, of course, has told us this at the very beginning of this Epistle and also at the opening of chapter 9, where he says of Christ that He is over all, "God blessed for ever". This is the great statement, of course, of the whole of the New Testament; indeed, it was really written in order to assert and to establish this very point. I think that we often fail to understand many of the

things that we are told in it because we forget that. The Gospels and the Epistles were written to establish and confirm the faith of the believers.¹

Next: "Jesus is Lord" -- No Christianity Without It

References:

1. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: An Exposition of Chapter 10 „Ÿ Saving Faith* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997), pages 92-94. Used by permission.

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