

At The Feet of Jesus – Pt. 1

I'm beginning a 3 part series today based on the words of Jesus. I thought it would be interesting for us to hear what Jesus said to the disciples – and asked them to pass on to us. We live in an age when many people dabble in religion. As we talked about a couple of weeks ago, there are many people who are “interested” in Jesus, but He is looking for disciples. So that is what this series will be dealing with – the subject of discipleship, or Lordship.

Charles Colson said, *"The greatest challenge facing the church today is to reassert the Lordship of Jesus Christ."* What he's saying is that if the church is ever going to be all that God has called us to be, it will be because of the commitments made by individuals.

Jesus said something at the conclusion of His Sermon on the Mount that very few people catch, but the statement and its implications are profound. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said, *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."* So, what is Lordship?

1. Lordship is accepting the sovereignty of God.

"A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.'"

- Matthew 8:2

This man with leprosy understood one thing about Jesus - He was sovereign. The power to heal was in His hands. All it took was for Jesus to be willing. He came and cast Himself at the mercy of Jesus; Jesus healed him.

God is an absolute sovereign. He reigns over everything. What He says - goes, no exceptions. The Bible teaches us that God created all things from nothing "ex nihilo". *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* What understated power.

God is omnipotent - He has all power. Hebrews 11:3 tells us *"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."*

God is omniscient - He has all knowledge. Hebrews 4:13 tells us that *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight."*

God is omnipresent - He is everywhere. The Psalmist David wrote in the 139th Psalm, beginning at verse 7, *"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there."*

There's a quote from S. M. Lockridge which speaks of God's sovereignty. I've said it here before, but it's worth repeating.

"God came from nowhere because there was nowhere for Him to come from. And coming from nowhere He stood on nothing, and the reason He had to stand on nothing is that there was nowhere for Him to stand. And standing on nothing He reached out where there was nowhere to reach and caught something where there was nothing to catch and He hung something on nothing and told it to stay there. And standing on nothing He took the hammer of His own will and He struck the anvil of His omnipotence and sparks flew from there. And He caught them on the tips of His fingers and flung them out into space and bedecked the heavens with stars... and nobody said a word. And the reason that nobody said anything is that there wasn't anybody there to say anything. So God Himself said, 'That's good.'"

C. S. Lewis said that, *"In God you come up against something that in every respect is immeasurably superior to yourself - unless you know God as that and therefore know yourself as nothing in comparison with Him you can be of no use to God at all."*

Anyone who has accomplished anything for God has first settled the sovereignty issue. They know that God is in charge.

2. Lordship is placing God first in every area of your life.

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

- Matthew 22:36-40

There were a total of 613 commandments given in the Law. On top of these the scribes and Pharisees had added thousands that literally made lives miserable. But Jesus said everything hinges on these two: Love God and Love People. The 1st of the Ten Commandments said: *"Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me."*

God demands first place. Not second, not in the top ten; not right after your family: first.

William Booth said this: *"God had all of me that there is, there have been others that have had greater plans, greater opportunities and greater potential than I, but from the day that I had a vision of what God could do in my life I made up my mind that God would have all of William Booth that there was."*

There are a lot of people in this world who acknowledge God. According to a 2007 poll, 72% of Canadians believe in God. But it's a big step from believing in God to placing Him first in one's life. At the end of the service we ask who would like to say a prayer to make Jesus Christ their Saviour and Lord. Most don't have a problem with that Saviour part - it's the Lord part that causes the problems.

“You mean to tell me pastor that if I become a Christian, Jesus can tell me what to do?” Yes, that's true. “Well, what if I don't want to?” Then you're being disobedient. “What gives Him the right to tell me what to do?” Well, for one thing, He created you. He knew before you were born how you would turn out. He knew where you would fail and how you would sin. Knowing all of that, He

died for you anyway, so that you wouldn't have to spend eternity in hell. That's why He has the right to ask for that #1 spot in your life.

Another thing we need to remember is that He's got an awful lot better perspective on things than we do. He sees the end from the beginning. He's invited us and given us the privilege of becoming a part of His Kingdom. I don't just join a bunch of people who look nice when I become a Christian; I become a part of the Kingdom of God. He is my King. All that I have is placed at His disposal, and He is now responsible to meet my needs - I'm in His Kingdom. What, or who, is first place in your life?

3. Lordship is accepting responsibility and accountability.

God owns everything... Chew on that for a while. He doesn't just own a lot of things, or most things. God owns everything. He owns everything but He has given us gifts, and talents, and abilities. Lordship is accepting what God has given us and doing something with it.

Matthew 25:14-30 - The parable of the talents. (Tell the story)

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s

happiness!’ Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. ‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”

Observations about the parable of the talents:

1. God has entrusted blessings to us. (v. 14)
2. God's gifts are not equally given. (v. 15)
3. People respond differently to what God has given them. (vs. 16-18)
4. All of us will be accountable for what we do with what God gave us. (v. 19)
5. All of us will be rewarded for how we developed God's blessings. (vs. 20-30)

Two men looked at the Master's expectations as a *blessing*.
One man looked at the Master's expectations as a *burden*.

The Master knew that servant could not handle more than one talent.

We increase our gifts, abilities and talents when we use them for the Kingdom and it is a fact that what we don't put to use for the Kingdom, we will lose.

LESSONS LEARNED:

1. Our responsibility is clear.
 - Develop the gifts God has given us.
2. Our accountability is certain.
 - Someday we will give an account to God for what we have done with what He gave us.

4. Lordship is doing the will of God. (Matthew 7:21-27)

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

- It's not just knowing or hearing!

Do we put P.S.'s on our prayers to God. You can send me anywhere except... I'll do anything you ask except... I'll love everybody except... I'll forgive everybody except... We're already educated way beyond the level of our obedience.

Jesus is not into professions; He's not into words. He said by our fruit the world will know us. What is the fruit of our lives?

5. Lordship is personal obedience regardless of the cost. (John 21: 15-22)

“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘you know that I love

*you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’ Again Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ He answered, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Take care of my sheep.’ The third time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ He said, ‘Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my sheep. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.’ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, ‘Follow me!’ Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, ‘Lord, who is going to betray you?’) When Peter saw him, he asked, ‘Lord, what about him?’ Jesus answered, *If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?’**

Peter's three questions: Do you love me?

Notice that Peter's response was to look at John and ask "what about him?"

We don't mind going through difficult times if everybody else is going through them as well. But we have to understand that we're serving God and His purposes. His perspective is far different from ours. Sometimes we'll go through very difficult times; but He sees the end from the beginning. He's already figured out the way of escape.

That's why the Apostle Paul was able to write in II Corinthians 4:16-18, *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."*

Lordship means different things for different people, but obedience for all.

Checklist:

- Do I accept God's complete ownership and sovereignty in my life?
- Is God first in every area of my life?
- Am I ready to give an account to God today of my management of His possessions?
- Am I now doing everything that I know I should be doing?
- Have I personally settled this Lordship issue? If not now, when will I?

The most miserable people in the world are some who call themselves Christians but who haven't settled the Lordship issue. They're always wrestling with God. Every time God tells them something, they've got to go fight Him for it. You never win when you fight against God - never. So, the first key in is to acknowledge that God is God – and you are not.