

## **At The Feet of Jesus – Pt. 2** **Whose world is it?**

### **Introduction:**

Last week we began a series on the subject of Lordship - thank you for coming back today, by the way. This series is called “At The Feet of Jesus” because we’re looking at what Jesus Himself had to say about how we ought to live our lives. Let’s review last week quickly. Jesus taught that:

1. Lordship is accepting the sovereignty of God.
2. Lordship is placing God first in every area of your life.
3. Lordship is accepting responsibility and accountability.
4. Lordship is doing the will of God.
5. Lordship is personal obedience regardless of the cost.

I began last week with a series of quotes from Jesus as a reference point to help us realize that this is a subject upon which Jesus placed a great deal of emphasis in His ministry. His desire is that each of us builds our lives upon the solid rock that is the Word of God. As someone who has studied human nature and behavior for the past twenty years I’m pretty certain that many of you went home last week and asked yourselves “*Is all this necessary?*” Perhaps you’ve thought about all of the people that you know who have lived good lives, who’ve been morally upstanding, respectable people, what’s wrong with that? Is all this talk of total commitment to God necessary? The answer to that question is the purpose of this message. Why is Lordship necessary? I’ve sub-titled this message “*Whose world is it?*”

I would like to begin again by reading for you some sections of Scripture. My purpose for this is to demonstrate to you that what I’m speaking of today is not simply my opinion. What I’m trying to share with you is what Jesus had to say to us about Lordship. As we learned last week, Jesus wasn’t shy about calling for commitments from people. He shared His purpose, He shared His truth and then He challenged people to follow Him. If they said no, He simply went on to the next person.

Matthew 7:13-14: *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad*

*is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."*

*Matthew 16:24-25 "...If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."*

*Matthew 20:28 "...The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

*Matthew 25:31-46 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

If you were to analyze these verses this morning you'd find that one of the themes

that runs through them is the attitude towards one's self. Those who are called to follow Christ are asked to forfeit selfishness, and those who are rejected by God are those who live only to please themselves. I'd like to examine this subject of selfishness for a few moments this morning because I believe that it is one of the biggest issues the North American church faces.

We live in what Christopher Lasch has called "The Culture of Narcissism." Narcissus is a figure from Greek mythology who fell in love with his own image so deeply that he turned into the flower that bears his name. The point is that we live in a culture in which people worship and serve themselves.

We've come by that honestly, as we've been taught for years now that we deserve the very best. The commercials on television advertise the latest clothes or gadgets, and a beautiful model breathlessly says, "After all, I'm worth it." And aren't we as good as the next person, don't I deserve to have all of the nicest things? Even some preachers get into the act with their "name it and claim it" theology, telling you that God wants you to have a Cadillac. Right. He wants everyone in North America who's a Christian to have a Cadillac and He wants the little orphan child in Africa to walk fifteen miles a day for water.

Bill Hybels wrote in his book *Descending Into Greatness*, "Never before in modern history has the notion of the bloated human had greater acceptance. It is our generation, after all, that has been named the Me Generation." He goes on to say that "The Me First mindset has led our society to the verge of internal collapse. Escapism, perversion, AIDs, unwanted pregnancies, violence, political scandal, and family breakups are all symptoms of our modern-day madness, our obsession with Me."

What does all this have to do with Lordship, you ask? I would like to contrast for you the life that we point to as the good life with the one which Jesus chose to model. We're going to look this morning at Philippians 2, beginning in the 5<sup>th</sup> verse, written about Jesus. If you'd also like to find Matthew 20 and put a marker there, we'll be going there as well.

Philippians 2:5-11: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being

*made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! 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."*

We like recognition. That is a very human thing. We enjoy when people pat us on the back and tell us we're wonderful. Most of us are very oriented on ourselves. But here we see Jesus, Paul describes Him as being equal with God. Yet He didn't think of equality with God something to grasp onto. Instead He made Himself nothing. It literally means that He emptied Himself. Before we move off of that point we need to understand that by Him the worlds were made. He spoke and the stars filled the skies. Mountains rose and life forms came to be at His command. But He emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant.

Again Hybels writes, *"Step by deliberate step, Jesus chose to move from the pinnacle of creation to the debasement of the cross. From the time He left heaven, He followed only one direction, and that in the straightest of paths; down. He knowingly and actively embraced a life of giving, serving, losing, and dying."*

Let's contrast this now with the scene we find in Matthew 20.

MT 20:20-28 *"Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Do you see the typical humanness in this? James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were using their mother to lobby Jesus for places of authority in His Kingdom. Aren't mothers great? There's nobody who believes in you like your mother or your father. Here they were, standing before the One who had emptied Himself of unspeakable power, trying to convince Him that they were worthy. What was His question for them? "*Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?*" That question was referring to the events that would transpire not too long afterwards. This king they wanted to reign with would be laid on wooden beams and have His hands and feet fastened to the boards with spikes and then hung up to die. If you want to be with Me, Jesus said, learn to serve.

In Mark 9 we see another time when the disciples began to argue among themselves about who was the greatest. Can you imagine that conversation? Jesus took me with Him when He raised the dead girl. Well, I was the one who brought Him the boy with the loaves and fish, and on and on... What did Jesus do? He found a little child and took him in His arms. He told them if they wanted to be great they'd better become servants. Treat this little child like you'd treat Me, that's what He told them.

Children were worth nothing in that day and age. When parents tried to bring their children to Jesus, the disciples would send them away. But Jesus said to let them come - they're valuable. What does any of this have to do with Lordship? Let's look at what we can learn from these verses.

### **1. Lordship is necessary to have a proper view of ourselves.**

If we do not submit ourselves to God, we try to make ourselves, or someone else, God. The disciples eventually learned this lesson, but for a time they were only following Him for what they could get out of the deal. A proper view of Lordship will keep us from yielding to the demon of pride.

Ravi Zacharias wrote of pride in his book Cries Of The Heart. He said "*The utmost evil is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison. It was through Pride that the devil became the devil. Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.*"

Many people refuse to yield themselves to God because they think somehow they

know better than He does. It reminds me of an encounter between a lawyer and a farmer. The proud lawyer asked the farmer, “*Why don’t you hold up your head in the world? I bow my head before neither God nor man!*” The wise farmer responded, “*Do you see that field of grain? Only the heads of grain which are empty stand upright. The well-filled ones bow low.*”

## **2. Lordship is necessary to have a proper view of God.**

When God chose to reveal Himself to us, He chose the person of Jesus Christ. All-powerful God came to us as a servant. God’s power is governed by His character. His justice is matched by His mercy. We can trust God to always do what’s right. Until you trust God, you won’t yield to Him.

## **3. Lordship is necessary to have a proper view of our place in this world.**

Bill Hybels: “*Humility is the wisdom to know that each of us, in the eyes of God, is the same: deeply flawed, yet precious. None of us, regardless of our titles and possessions, is worthy of more than hell. None of us can climb ourselves into a state of grace. God’s redeeming mercy is, by definition, totally undeserved. Yet it is offered freely to all.*”

When we have a proper view of God and a proper view of ourselves, we can then find what Jesus spoke of in John 10:10. He said, “*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*”

This is what everyone I know is searching for. People want to live - really live. Yet they look for it on that broad road to destruction that so many others are on. Like lemmings, people tend to follow the trends and do whatever is popular. So we have STD’s in record numbers. We have staggering numbers of teen girls in Canada having abortions. Alcoholism and drug addiction are rampant. But Jesus said that real life - the joy - is not on that road. True joy is found in doing the will of God. Jesus said that Himself. He said, “*My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me.*” Being a servant of His Father was more fulfilling to Him than eating.

Lordship is necessary to keep us from indulging ourselves to the detriment of those around us.

**Conclusion:**

At the end of the day, it's important to remember that it was God who placed us on this planet, and He did so for a reason. It was not to join the world in its relentless pursuit of more, but rather to join in God's plan of redemption and restoration. John Andrew Holmes said: *"The entire population of the universe, with one trifling exception, is composed of others."*

It echoes what Jesus taught about loving the least of these. That was the motivation that caused Mother Teresa to devote her life to ministering to the poor on the streets of Calcutta. It's what was behind the founding of Habitat For Humanity, Samaritan's Purse and countless other agencies that have looked to carry out God's purposes on this planet. That is what caused the early church to revolutionize society – a recognition that God created this planet, and wants to restore all of it to its original intention. So, when Roman women would abandon their unwanted children by open sewers, Christians would take them in. When epidemics swept through towns and villages and the healthy left, abandoning the sick, the Christians stayed to care for them, trusting God to be with them. They treated slaves with respect, often freeing them, they elevated women to positions of leadership. They fed the hungry and provided for the orphans and widows, and when people asked why they introduced them to King Jesus.

Now it's our turn...

Recommended reading – "Descending Into Greatness" – Bill Hybels