

Who was Jesus? – Answers from the Gospel of John

Jesus – Savior and Lord (John 3:36)

9-6-09

Why the series?

Last day of *Who was Jesus? - Answers from the Gospel of John* which we started on Easter Sunday, April 14th, four months ago. I want to end the series in the same place we began, by looking at doubting Thomas.

We can all relate to Thomas to one degree or another.

John 20:24-25 (NIV)

²⁴ Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.

²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not (never) believe it."

The reason John wrote his Gospel was so that we would believe.

John 20:30-31 (NIV)

³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

³¹ *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

My hope for all of us was that, through this series, we would all come to the same conclusion Thomas did and be blessed.

John 20:26-29 (NIV)

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "*My Lord and my God!*"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; *blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*"

Peter speaks to the blessing Jesus refers to in 1 Peter 1:8-9.

1 Peter 1:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

What's the verdict?

My question for you is this...

If you weren't a believer going into the series can you now exclaim with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"?

If you can, then welcome to the kingdom of God!

Remember Jesus' words in John 3 to Nicodemus? "Unless you are born again you cannot see the Kingdom of God (v. 3). Unless you are born again you cannot enter the Kingdom of God (v. 5)"

If you have moved from questioning who Jesus was to being able to say of Him, "My Lord and my God!", then sometime in the last 4 months you were born again (expound)!

If this is true of you, please let someone know about it. We've been praying for 30 people to go from death to life in the first year of the church plant and it would be such an encouragement to know that we are on our way. We want to celebrate with you! We also want to be able to help you and come along side you as you begin your walk with your Lord.

If you were already a believer going into the series can you exclaim with even greater fervor, "My Lord and my God!"?

No matter how long we've been a believer, looking at Jesus should change us.

Some people think that the Gospel (the good news about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and what it means for our lives) is only for unbelievers but the Bible says otherwise...

It is for unbelievers.

Romans 10:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

But it is also for believers.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

So whether you're an unbeliever or have been a believer for 50 years the thing you need to do to take the next step in your faith is look at Jesus (behold the glory of the Lord), and let the Holy Spirit take care of the rest (this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit).

Is He Lord?

I want to spend the rest of our time today looking at verse that is a challenge to both new believers and long time believers alike, John 3:36. DON'T TURN THERE YET!

Close your eyes and fill in the blank.

First I want to put it in context a little bit.

John 3:14-18 (NIV)

¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,

¹⁵ that everyone who *believes* in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever *believes* in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

¹⁸ Whoever *believes* in him is not condemned, but whoever does not *believe* stands condemned already because he has not *believed* in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 3:36 (NIV)

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever (does not) _____ the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

You would think that it would be believe but in the NIV it is "reject" and in the ESV it is "does not obey" which is actually a better translation of the Greek verb apeitheo (a pay tha oh).

This verse is a challenge to ALL believers, at whatever stage they are at in their walk with God, because we all have a tendency to want to take Jesus as our Savior... but not our Lord. In other words, we want all the benefits of believing in Jesus without the all the hardship of obeying Him. This verse, along with the rest of the Bible, tells us that we can't have one without the other.

John says the same thing time and again in 1 John.

1 John 2:6 (NIV)

⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

1 John 3:9-10 (NIV)

⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

¹⁰ This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

Jesus' half brother James says it in his letter.

James 2:14-19 (NIV)

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?

¹⁵ Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

¹⁶ If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.

And the Apostle Paul says it throughout his letters as well.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV)

⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

So John's challenge to us is this, if we say we believe in the Jesus the Son then we must obey Jesus the Son as well. In other words, Jesus must be both our Savior... and our Lord. We can't have one without the other.

So now my question for all of us here today who say we believe is this: Is Jesus our Lord? In other words, have we yielded the reigns of every area of our life over to Him, or are there some we are still hanging onto? Is Jesus in driver's seat of every aspect of our lives, or are there some we are still behind the wheel of? Is Jesus our Lord?

- Is He the Lord of our finances? (expound)
- Is He the Lord of our relationships? (expound)
- Is He the Lord of the way we spend our time? (expound)
- Is He the Lord of our thought life? (expound)

Is Jesus our Lord? If we truly believe in Him, then He MUST (not should) be. If He's not, then John says the wrath of God remains upon us, not because we're not good enough, but because we DON'T TRULY BELIEVE. We haven't truly been born again. If we had been, then Jesus would be the Lord of our lives like He should be.

For those of you who struggle with Jesus Lordship (all of us!) let me close this sermon and this series with two encouraging thoughts.

- 1) It's a marathon not a sprint.
 - a. Repentance is a process that starts in the mind and then moves to the heart and actions. (ex. a broken relationship)

2) Obedience is the key to joy.

a. **John 15:9-11 (NIV)**

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

A good intro into our next series *true joy – the wisdom of Philippians* which begins next Sunday.