

Mark 9:14-29

Title: Jesus is Lord

Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ,

[9/11 remembrance]

[continue with sermon]

What does it mean to say “Jesus is my Lord?” “Jesus is my Lord” On a personal level it means that “I have willingly given control over my life to Jesus.” This is good. However, the statement, “Jesus is Lord” is far greater than that. To be Lord is to have power and authority over “something” The words “Jesus is Lord” is actually a confession. It is a recognition that Jesus has authority and power not only over just me but over all creation. So, in fact, Jesus “is” Lord, regardless of whether you give him control of your life. “Jesus is Lord” is an admission, a formal recognition, of His authority and power. “Jesus is Lord” can also be a comfort. If I may quote the words of a sermon of Martin Luther,

My Lord Jesus Christ is Lord over death, Satan, sin, righteousness, body, life, foes and friends. What shall I fear? For [though] my enemies stand before my very door and plan to slay me, my faith reasons thus: Christ is ascended into heaven [to] become Lord over all creatures, hence my enemies, too, must be subject to him and thus it is not in their power to do me harm. I challenge them to raise a finger against me or to injure a hair of my head against the will of my Lord Jesus Christ.... [and] If my Lord so wills, that they, mine enemies, slay me, [then] blessed am I: I gladly depart.

The complete works of Martin Luther Vol 3, Sermons 42-67, Chapter II, Christ's ascension into Heaven

Faith instructs us that nothing happens to us apart from the will of God. Though our enemies cause us suffering, though our own sinful choices cause us ill, nothing happens apart from the will of God, and if God allows it, I shall trust him for he is my Lord. For whatever I suffer here on Earth, God's promise of eternal joy is greater. Whatever sin may stain me, God's grace is greater still. Amen

When a person can say “Jesus is MY Lord” because they have faith, they live with a great comfort. It tells us the good news that the creator of the universe, “God almighty” loves us and is FOR us, and has plans of good for us. and because of this, there is nothing on Earth or even the spiritual world which we need fear. What a comfort that is in these uncertain days, when so much is out of our control.

when the forces of evil, sometimes seem to be assailing us. Moreover, we can say Jesus is the Lord “of Earth and Heaven.” What does that mean? Martin Luther puts it this way. Jesus is Lord.... Lord over death, Lord over Satan, Lord over sin, Lord over righteousness, body, life, foes and friends. Jesus’ power and authority.... and more importantly, His protection... spans both the physical and spiritual world. ----- For this reason, Mark records today’s gospel lesson about a man possessed by a demon.

The Bible takes spiritual possession very seriously. There are some people today who find it hard to accept the idea of demon possession. They say that possessed people are merely mentally unstable. They are not actually controlled by anything other than their own twisted mind. They say that the term “demon possession” was just a way to describe a psychological problem to the “unscientific” people of that day. Now this is a problem. It is a problem because they are saying that “Jesus a liar.” Jesus specifically deals with possessed as if they are indeed under the control of a demon. To deny the existence of “demon possession” is to deny Christ. In fact, people who try to say that “demon possession” is nothing more than a psychological problem” are doing the work of Satan. By denying “demon possession” they are doing the work of Satan, perhaps unknowingly, yet still doing the work of Satan nonetheless. C.S Lewis wrote in his book “Screwtape letters” about the way Satan uses people’s “lack of understanding of possession,” to do his work. He writes

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about demons (devils). One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They [the demons] themselves are equally pleased with both errors ... with the same delight.” [C.S. Lewis. **The Screwtape Letters. (New York: MacMillan. 1971) p. 3** ]

When we have an excessive unhealthy interest in demons, we ascribe too much power to them. We allow more power to them than they really have. and we can develop an “unhealthy fear of demons”. on the other hand when we disbelieve in their existence, we ignore their work on Earth, and they are free to cause whatever trouble they want. The latter seems to be the problem of this modern world.

The problem is that our world plays with spiritual forces rather than taking them seriously. There is, in fact, a very real spiritual battle being waged between the God and Satan, a battle over the lives and souls of men and women. To defend ourselves, the book of Hebrews encourages us to put on the armor of God.

*<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

This spiritual battle against Satan and his demons was going on during the ministry of Jesus. It was seen in the early days of the church. And it will continue in every generation until the Lord comes again when Satan and all of his demons will be forever cast into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:10). The power of the Devil is real. The hate of the Devil is real.

But there is good news!!! There is good news. God's Power Is Greater God's Power Is Greater Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord! In the second verse of our famous Lutheran hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," Martin Luther writes.

*And though this world with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us. The prince of darkness grim, We tremble not for him – His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure: One little word shall fell him."*

Martin Luther believed in the spiritual battle. Yet, he also knew that God's power was greater. When Christ and Satan meet head to head (pause) it is not a clash of Titans. It is not a humongous battle where the outcome is uncertain. In reality, Satan and his demons do not stand a chance. In the battle between Jesus and Satan for the lordship over Mankind, Satan does not stand a chance. When Satan and his demons come into contact with the full force of God's power, they do not stand a chance. Because "Jesus is Lord" Jesus is Lord.

The sad part is that the people of today are unaware of this battle. There are many people who do not, believe in demons, because they are blind to this battle. They do not believe in Hell. They say things like "I don't believe in Hell. A loving God wouldn't send me there." I saw on a bumper sticker "Heaven won't have me and Hell is afraid I will take over." Ha ha very funny. But the real problem is as C.S. Lewis said that these people are not taking Hell very seriously, that these people are not taking demons very seriously. The truth is that demons are neither funny nor phony.... Hell is neither funny nor phony. And those who do not take Hell very seriously one day will be in a world of hurt. Demons are not psychological problems. Demons are real. Hell is real. And there is a spiritual battle going on right now.

But there is good news. The good news is that God has not left us at the mercy of Satan. Jesus is greater than any demon. Even demons acknowledge that. Jesus is greater than Satan. Jesus is Lord. This is a comfort to God's people. In fact, it is more than that. It is a comfort to those who have failed. There is a word of hope here for anyone who has descended so far into sin, that they have given up on ever being made whole. When Jesus comes there is New Life. The possessed man's encounter with Christ changed him completely. His encounter with Christ, brought him new life. His encounter with Christ, changed him. This is the comfort to anyone who has failed God. Anyone who has an encounter with Christ, returns a changed being. As it says in 2Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new.”

That promise is for you. As a Christian, you are a changed person. Christ died on the cross, so that you might become a new creation. At our baptism God came down and adopted us as His children. We have new life. We need not fear Satan and his demons, because there is a power who is for us, There is a power who is far more powerful than Satan. Jesus is our Lord. I wish to end again with the hymn “A mighty fortress.”

*And though this world with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him – his rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure: one little word shall fell him.”*

We will not fear, for one little word shall fell him. And that word is “Jesus.” There is a whole world out there who does not know that one little word, who do not have a living relationship with that one little word. As a result, they fear Satan overly much, or they don't believe he exists. In either case, they are all at Satan's mercy. They need to know “the one little word.” They need to know “Jesus is Lord.” Tell them.