

# *Program Transcripts*

For March 2017



IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY<sup>®</sup>



# SEARCH PROGRAMS

March 2017

*Topics subject to change without notice*

## **MARCH 5 – WHAT HAPPENED TO SIN?**

Many think sin is an outdated word or an obsolete concept. Some think there is no such thing as sin today. People tend to downplay sin when they are the ones who sinned, but those sinned against realize just how serious it is.

## **MARCH 12 – CHRIST IS OUR HOPE**

When life fills with doubts and darkness, we look to Christ for our hope. Just as clouds can darken but not remove the sun, so life's troubles can darken our lives but not remove the source of all blessings! Let's hope in Christ, our Lord and our Savior!

## **MARCH 19 – OBEYING GOD**

While many emphasize feelings and attitudes, the Scriptures are clear that God expects more. God expects those who love Him to hear His word and to obey. Obedience distinguishes the true disciple from the one who claims to follow the Lord.

## **MARCH 26 – WHO IS YOUR LORD?**

Jesus once asked His disciples, "Who do *you* say I am?" Faith in Christ is an individual matter. Each must decide for himself whether he will follow the Lord and His teaching. Jesus is Lord, and we must set Him apart as Lord in our lives.

## What Happened to Sin?

Some people don't want to hear a certain word any longer. What is that word? Sin! We'll talk about what happened. We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will because the Word of God has the answer to the problem of sin. You won't find that answer anywhere else! Trust the Word of God and study it every day. It will bless you.

According to an Ellison Research Study, thirteen percent of Americans say that there is no such thing as sin. Even many preachers won't discuss the topic of "sin." One clergyman says evangelists must never say that someone is a sinner. He believes it's a crude thing and keeps people from following Jesus. He said Jesus never called anyone a sinner.

There's no doubt that Jesus demonstrated amazing patience with sinful people and He loved everyone, but to suggest that He never spoke of sin ignores Scripture. Luke 5:30-32 says, "The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'It's not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I've not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'"

The Lord Jesus came to earth to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). The fact that Jesus loved and received sinners doesn't mean that He condoned sin. Jesus knew sin is an enemy that separates people from God and His blessing. Sin poses a genuine threat to our lives and to our souls. Rather than ignore or deny sin, Jesus lovingly died on the cross so people could leave their sins and lead a new and better life. If sin weren't real, Jesus wouldn't have sacrificed Himself to free people from it.

Our reading today comes from the First Letter of John 3:7-10. "Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practice righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: that anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother."

From the beginning, people have downplayed sin. They blame others for their sins. You remember Adam and Eve sinned against God by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Genesis 3:8-13 says: "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' Adam said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.' God asked, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate.' Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'"

People tend to rationalize away their sins. They want to make sin normal and okay. You've probably heard people give excuses to justify themselves. Maybe you've done that. I've heard people say, "Everyone does it"; but appealing to a large number of people doesn't determine right and wrong. It is the Word of God that determines right and wrong.

During the days of Noah, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the

earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart” (Genesis 6:5-6). Noah, however, found favor in the eyes of the Lord; and everyone on earth except Noah and his family perished in that flood. God will punish everyone who remains in sin, even if that includes the whole world. Sin is still sin. Sin offends our righteous and holy God.

Romans chapter 2:6-11 says God “will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.”

I've heard people say, “Well, God made me this way.” They're suggesting God that made them where they cannot help but sin. Sin, however, isn't a characteristic; sin is a behavior. James 1:13-15 explains: “Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”

Someone says about a sin they're committing, “Well, I can't see any harm in it.” But right and wrong are not determined by what we think is or is not harmful. God sees things that we cannot see and He knows things that we don't know. We must trust in His judgment and realize that He makes the moral rules. Sin may warp our thinking; we may be fooled by what we want to do. God says, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

We might easily be swayed by what is popular, but those people won't judge us on the last day. Some claim, “well millions of people can't be wrong!”; but millions of people can be wrong. Their desire can mislead them. First John 2:15-17 warns, “Do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

Some say, “Well, we're not supposed to judge anybody.” It's impossible not to make judgments; we all make judgments. The Lord Jesus said, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment” (John 7:24). Jesus realized that people make unfair judgments based on human standards; and the Lord opposes that kind of judging. But this doesn't mean people must never make any moral judgment. That would be terribly foolish. If we cannot make moral judgments, we'd have complete chaos and ruin. Everything would be permissible.

Hebrews 5:12-14 speaks of those who haven't grown spiritually as they should. The Bible says, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you've come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

Spiritual maturity includes using God's Word, the Bible, to distinguish what is right from wrong. Many people think being an "adult" means one can read literature or view movies filled with sexually explicit behavior or foul-mouthed words. They don't realize that such things have little self-control and can enslave them to sin. Watching "adult" movies shows a person is immature and hasn't grown spiritually enough to discern good from evil. Proverbs 22:3 says, "The prudent sees the evil and he hides himself, But the naive go on, and are punished for it." True adults don't run to evil; they avoid it.

Others excuse their sins by saying, "Well, God wants me to be happy and to feel good." This is a very popular saying, and especially of people who cheat on their spouses and want to find somebody new. They reason that their old spouse doesn't make them happy anymore, and since God wants them to be happy, they feel justified in divorcing the old and finding somebody new that is more to their liking. But the Lord Jesus said, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery" (Mark 10:11-12). God wants us to live in righteousness, not sin.

People may find pleasure in sin, but it won't last. Pleasure and happiness are not the same as joy that comes from God. Joy is the product of righteousness. First Corinthians 1:36 says love "does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth." God wants us to live righteously with joy, not be happy with sin.

We must understand that sin leads to spiritual death. The Bible says, "Behold, all souls are Mine (God is speaking here); the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. And the soul who sins will die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Again, Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Regardless of what the world thinks, God will hold people responsible for their sins.

First Corinthians 6:9-10 says, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Again, Revelation 21:8 says, "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Sin takes place when someone transgresses God's law (1 John 3:4). You sin when you lawlessly fail to hear what God says and then you do what you want; that's offensive to God. Sin also takes place when people fail to do what is right. James 4:17 says, "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." When we fail to take God's teaching seriously, when we fail to follow Jesus, and when we fail to be obedient to His will, we sin against God. Sin isn't simply an attitude or a behavior; it's an offensive thing toward God. We can't say no to God and think that we have a right relationship with Him.

Sin is serious business. God didn't send Jesus to the earth to die on a cross for trivial reasons, but to die for our sins. No matter how we feel about sin, God takes sin seriously. The death of Jesus that was so painful and shameful was not for some "inappropriate action" or "mistake," but for evil and the iniquity of sin. The Bible says that Jesus "gave Himself for our sins, (why?) that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:4).

Jesus took our sins personally. The Bible says, "He himself (that is, Jesus himself) bore

our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24). The last part of this verse, “By his wounds you have been healed,” quotes Isaiah 53:5. Isaiah says, “But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; and we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (verses 5-6). Because of His love for each of us, He was willing to take the punishment that you and I deserved. We were the sinners, and He was innocent. He died in our stead, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

God doesn't simply want to forgive you of sin. He wants you to change your life. He wants sin out of your life and righteousness in your life. Remember what we read from God's Word in 1 John 3:7-9, “Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.”

God wants a loving, peaceful relationship with you. Sin creates a barrier between people and God that ruins that relationship. The Lord cannot approve of sin. If you have unresolved sin in your life, you can't draw close to Him in that condition. He will not accept you, but the blood of Jesus can cleanse you from that sin and it can open the way to God. So, my friend, get right with God today! Don't let another day pass and remain in sin. The devil wants us to think sin is a harmless plaything and doesn't hurt anyone. Many believe him. They'd rather think that nothing is wrong, that everything is okay. Meanwhile sin works inside our soul like a cancer. We must take sin seriously!

If we would be right with God, we must first admit that we've sinned. Romans 3:23 says, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” It's absurd to speak of forgiveness or salvation until we come to grips with our own sin. Second, if we would be right with God, we must hear what God says, and take it to heart, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Third, out of faith and love, we ought to repent of our sins. Acts 17:30-31 says, “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” Repentance is turning from sin and turning to Christ. Romans 12:9 says we are to abhor what is evil; and to cling to what is good. Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of life.

Fourth, we must be baptized. Acts 22:16, says “Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.” God washes away all our sins with the blood of Christ at the time of baptism. Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ so that our sins will be forgiven (Acts 2:38). Be baptized into Christ today and begin your Christian life. Then stay faithful to the Lord all the days of your life.

## Christ is our Hope

When you belong to Christ, you have the greatest hope in the world. With Christ in your life, no one can steal your hope. Through His Word, the Father in heaven opens our eyes to the truth. The Scriptures provide us a perspective to see more than the struggles and troubles in life. They give us hope and promise of God's care. They teach us God's love and His desire to save us. They give us hope in every aspect of life. Give me the Bible, nothing else will do.

Several years ago, I took my first commercial airplane flight. I boarded an old plane of a small company on a snowy, cloudy, December day. They had to de-ice the plane twice before we took off. Oh, I was cold; I was alone, and more than a little nervous. I listened closely to the safety speech about seat belts. I admit it was tense! The plane slowly got off the ground. Up we climbed into the clouds, and I was not prepared for what happened next. I should have realized the obvious. We passed above the clouds into the brightness of the day. The sun still shines above the clouds.

Clouds move in and out with their rain and shadows. They can temporarily mask the sun, but they cannot stop it from shining. So it is with the Lord! When you're tempted to think all is lost, it's helpful to remember: the Father is still on the throne. Remember the blood of Jesus still cleanses from sin. The Bible stands as Jesus said, "It is written." The Lord Jesus is still coming again for His people. The gospel still has power to save, and prayer still reaches the ear of the Heavenly Father.

Our reading today is from Romans 5:1-5. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Let's pray together. O, Father, we're thankful for hope, and even in the toughest of times we know that You love us and that You watch over us and bless us with good things. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus' name, Amen!

I love Edward Mote's hymn, because I know it's true. I grew up singing it. He wrote, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand." Someone has said, "Hope is as necessary to the spirit as oxygen is to the body." As Christians, we have hope even in the hardest times. Hope in Jesus Christ is our confident expectation that God will meet all our needs in this life and bless us with life in heaven. In Christ, we have a wonderful living hope!

The inspired apostle Paul promised the church in Philippi, "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). When we become Christians through our faith, repentance, and baptism, all out of love, we can count on our Father in heaven washing away our sins with the blood of Christ. By His grace we can count on being added to His church, His family, becoming His children, and enjoying His favor. Christ is our hope and our rock. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life;

no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6). The whole world may change under our noses, but nothing changes the fact that Jesus is Lord and the way to heaven.

The early church went through some terrible times at the hands of the Roman Emperors. Early Christians faced gladiators, wild beasts, prison, and crucifixion from the hands of people who did not understand them, but all their troubles did not remove the love of God. The Bible says, “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather He who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, ‘For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:31-39).

The Holy Spirit wrote, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4). The Scriptures do indeed give us hope; they help us see the problems of life are not new. Others have suffered through the same struggles that you and I face and have succeeded with God’s help. If God could help them, He can help us. If God could forgive them, He can forgive us. If God has kept His promises to them, we know He will keep His promises to us.

The Scriptures teach us of God’s mighty arm bringing Israel out of Egypt, of the crossing of the Red Sea; it teaches us of the manna in the wilderness, and of the falling of the walls of Jericho. In his last days, Joshua could proclaim to all Israel, “And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all the good things that the LORD your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; and not one of them has failed” (Joshua 23:14). The Scriptures teach us how God liberated Israel through the judges, and how David won over Goliath through the help of God. When the people followed God, God was with them and blessed them. Hope is our confident expectation, an expectation that God will provide what He promises.

Because God has all power, because God loves us with a great love, and because God keeps His promises, we can have true hope. Jesus is our hope (1 Timothy 1:1)! He is our hope in every aspect of our lives. When people draw near to the Lord, they find peace and meaning in life. They have the ability to endure, even in the harshest times.

When life tumbles in, Christians find solace and comfort in the Lord. God’s prophet Jeremiah watched his world tremble and stumble when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. He wrote, “This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. The LORD’S loving-kindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I have hope in Him’” (Lamentations 3:21-24).

Oh, every day God gives us life and the things that we need to sustain life. We breathe



God's air, eat God's food, and drink God's water. God is so good to us. Even when ugly and hurtful things happen to us, God knows how to use those hurtful things for good. The Bible says, "And we know (not we think or we feel, but we know) that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). God can use our defeats and disappointments to shape and mold us, so that we become better people.

Even when God says no to our prayers, He does so for our best interest. The Bible records when God said no to an apostle. Paul speaks, "So to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I pleaded to the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He (God) said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I'm content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

God sees our needs even before we do. He knows what is best for our character and what will help us spiritually. He gives us great hope by forgiving our sins. You might think there is no way God would ever forgive you of all your sins; but if you think that, you'd be mistaken. Before Paul was an apostle of Christ, he was the persecutor, Saul of Tarsus. By inspiration he wrote, "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life" (1 Timothy 1:15-16). If the blood of Christ could wash away the sins of the worst sinner of all, it'll also wash away your sins.

You can go to heaven, no matter how many sins you've committed, because of the grace of our God and how it is greater than our sins; and the Lord gives us the opportunity and the ability to change. This change is repentance, and repentance is an opportunity full of hope. You don't have to be stuck in your old life. The Lord can help you turn your life around. This ability to change comes from our faith in the Lord and His teaching through the Word, the Bible. The more we read and understand about the Lord, the more we'll love Him. This love for God in our hearts gives us strength to make lasting changes.

God can break us free from enslavement to sin. The Lord Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). Enslavement to sin kills hope and has filled our prisons and our cemeteries, but the Scripture says more. The Lord also says, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." God can set us free from the enslaving hold that sin has on our lives. Hope means I do not have to be entrapped by my past sin. God can turn my life around and strengthen me to become the person that He desires.

Hope also means that this life is not all there is; that there is life beyond the grave far better than our lives here. The Lord Jesus promised, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am there you may be also" (John 14:1-3). We not only can live eternally, we can live in heaven with Jesus. In heaven, we can have His blessing and comfort forever.

The Scripture says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5). Wouldn’t you like to be in a place that is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away? Wouldn’t you like to be in a place without disease, death, weeping, or sin? Wouldn’t you like to live forever in the presence of God and Christ who love you?

Some people think it’s impossible to be a Christian and live a holy life, but the Lord Jesus said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). Friend, you can go to heaven; you can bear the easy yoke of Christ and bear His light burden. Christianity is a livable faith. But you must take up that yoke and follow Christ with faith and love.

Why does all this matter? It matters, because our hope is not dead. It’s alive and well! We have hope in Christ because of the cross, and we have hope in Christ because of the resurrection. We don’t have to die in sin; we can live eternally. Christ paid the price for our sins. We don’t serve a dead Lord but a risen one who lives forever! Because He lives, we have the hope of living with Him in heaven forever and ever. There is a big difference between those who belong to Christ and those who do not. Don’t you want to belong to Jesus? Let’s pray together. O, Father, help each of us to place our hope firmly in You, and in Your Son Jesus, who died for our sins, and whom You raised from the dead. Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus’ name, Amen!

Can you imagine how empty and sad life is without hope? Some scoff at God, and others deny He exists. Those who belong to Christ greatly differ from those who don’t. Paul reminded the Ephesian pagans of their past before they became Christians. Paul said, “remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). Oh, I tell you, God is no crutch, as some think. God is your only real hope. He is your Creator; He sustains your life; and His Son is your only Savior. Without Him, you have no hope! But with Christ, “you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God’s household (or family)” (Ephesians 2:19).

As I have said, those who belong to Christ greatly differ from those who don’t. That’s why it matters whether you are right with the Lord and whether your sins are forgiven. Is your life right with God? Have you been washed in the blood of Christ? You’re washed in the blood when you put your faith in Christ, lovingly repent of your sins, confess the name of the Lord, and are baptized into Christ. In the act of baptism, God washes away your sins and adds you to His family, the church. When you have the hope of God in your life, because He’s washed away your sins and added your name to the book of life, you can have confidence to face every trouble and trial life hands you. In Christ, the Father will hear your prayers. With God’s book, the Bible, you have the Divine truth. Wouldn’t you like to have your sins forgiven today? Why not place your hope in Christ today by being baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins?

## Obeying God

In a world devoted to the individual, we lose sight of anything bigger than ourselves. Today, we're going to explore the need to obey God. We're not afraid of what God teaches because God wants what's best for us. We trust the Lord to guide us to love, to be kind, and to forgive. When people follow the Lord, they find joy and goodness. They grow better and stronger. They bless everyone around them. We need the Lord's way in our homes and our community.

Whether we listen and obey the Lord matters to our souls and to our eternity. First Peter 1:22-23 says, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." God's message is perfect and without flaw; and obeying the truth found in Scripture causes us to be born again. Loving, faithful, obedient people go to the pure word found in the New Testament. They want it straight from God; they don't want a revised message. When you change the seed message, you corrupt it and then you produce something God never intended. You end up with a false gospel.

To obey means to hear God's Word and act accordingly. The most common word translated "obey" in the New Testament comes from the word "to hear"; and the idea is that one has heard God's will and is willing to obey it. A second family of words translated "obey" comes from the concept of being persuaded or convinced. The idea is that a person persuaded to obey a command will obey it. Have you heard? Are you persuaded? Will you obey?

Our reading today comes from Paul's Epistle to the Romans 6:15-19. "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I'm speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification."

Let's spend some time considering how the Lord Jesus obeyed the Father in heaven. Jesus is our example, and we should follow His steps. So we ask, how did Jesus obey the Father? Jesus was totally committed to being obedient to His Father. Doing the will of the Father was so important to Jesus that He could say, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34). Jesus could also say, "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him," speaking of the Father (John 8:29). Whether in things small or large, Jesus was committed to pleasing His Father. I wish every Christian had that same attitude.

When Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed as one totally committed to the will of the Father. Matthew describes that night this way: "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.' And He went a little farther beyond them, and He fell on His face and He prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will'" (Matthew

26:37-39). Jesus knew what scourging and crucifixion was! He knew that it was a horribly painful and shameful death. Jesus also knew the hearts of His enemies, how they would lie and unfairly condemn Him. He knew how cruel people could be.

The book of Hebrews describes the scene: "In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:7-9). Jesus was deeply troubled and weeping loudly over the things that He must suffer, but His ultimate prayer was one of obedience. He prayed to the Father, "Your will be done" (Matthew 21:21); and the Father heard that prayer!

Jesus learned obedience by the things that He suffered. He learned obedience by actually going through with what He knew would be His worst experience, the worst experience of His whole life. He faced it knowing that this was His Father's will. He obeyed exactly what the Father commanded Him to do.

Jesus actually predicted His suffering and death. Matthew 16:21-23 says, "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it! This shall never happen to You.' But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You're a stumbling block to Me; for you're not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.'" Though His friend and disciple, Peter, could not imagine death happening to Jesus, the Lord Jesus rebuked Him. Peter was setting His mind on man's interests, not God's interests. Jesus set His heart and His mind on serving the Father.

Judas led the crowd to Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. They came with swords and clubs. John 18:10-11 says, "Simon Peter then, having a sword, he drew it and he struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus." Luke 22:51 tells us that Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." He touched his ear and healed him. Then He said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?" (Matthew 26:52-54).

Jesus could have stopped the arrest anytime he wanted to. He could have stopped the trial, the scourging, or the crucifixion. He could have called twelve legions of angels. A Roman legion numbered up to 6,000 soldiers. Jesus could have wiped out Jerusalem with 72,000 angels. Angels don't lose to men. The Lord Jesus, however, didn't put a stop to His suffering. He knew that it must happen this way. Jesus necessarily suffered for you and for me, so that we might have forgiveness and be reconciled to God.

The Lord offered His body as a sacrifice! He could say, "I have come to do Thy will, O God." Hebrews 10:8-10 explains, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have not desired, nor have you taken pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will.' He takes away the first (that is, the first covenant) in order to establish the second. By this will, (that is, the second covenant) we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."



If Jesus had not sacrificed Himself, we couldn't enter into this second, new covenant with God. We couldn't be sanctified, that is, made holy in God's eyes. The Lord Jesus sanctified us by His own blood. Nothing else would do. He did it "once for all." That's why those who live in this twenty-first century can have the promise of forgiveness and eternal life! Oh, I'm thankful Jesus obeyed His Father and came to do His will!

Oh, to obey as He obeyed! To serve as He served, to love as He loved! Jesus did not go to the right or to the left; He didn't add or take away from the instructions of His Father. He simply and totally gave Himself to the will of the Father just as His Father had commanded Him. The Lord Jesus said, "but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me" (John 14:31). This includes even what Jesus said and how He said it. The Lord Jesus said, "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; and therefore the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me" (John 12:49-50). Oh, I'm thankful Jesus took such care to speak the truth that the Father revealed to Him. Since those commandments are eternal life, I want them to be correct!

Jesus didn't argue with the Father over what should be done; He simply obeyed what the Father told Him to do. He didn't think of Himself as an exception to the Father's rules. Being the beloved Son of God didn't exclude Him from obeying the Father's instructions. No, being the Son of God meant Jesus took doing the will of God all the more seriously! Philippians 2:5-8 says, "Have this attitude (that is, this mind, this mindset) in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." That is the heart of the Lord Jesus and how He obeyed His Father.

We're often tempted to listen to the crowds surrounding us rather than listen to God. We want to please people, but in doing so we may displease God. Since God is our Creator and the authority who will one day judge us, we ought to obey God rather than men. God once told King Saul to "go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey" (1 Samuel 15:3). But Saul failed to obey God and he listened to the people. First Samuel 15:9 says, "Saul and the people spared Agag (that is, the King) and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed." Sadly, Saul still imagined that he had obeyed the Lord, when in reality he did what he wanted to do.

The prophet Samuel heard the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen and then confronted King Saul. He said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king" (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

People will pay a price for their disobedience to God. Some think God won't notice; others think God doesn't really care what we do. They forget Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good." God's attitude toward sin is not like

our world today; God can never approve of sin. Habakkuk 1:13 says, "Your eyes (that is, God's eyes) are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor." Again, "God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). We humans may easily give in to sin, but God has no desire to sin. He is righteous altogether.

Obeying God is how we love Him. Love obeys! The Lord Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Jesus promised, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23). Then in verse 24 the Lord said, "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me." God sees love and obedience as inseparable! Obedience demonstrates our love to the Father.

When God makes a promise and He adds a condition, God always requires us to meet the condition before He blesses us. Hebrews 5:9 reminds us that Jesus is the source of eternal salvation to those who obey Him. In John chapter 9, Jesus healed a young man who was born blind. John 9:6-7 says Jesus "spat on the ground, He made clay of the spittle, and He applied the clay to his eyes, and said to him, 'You go and wash in the pool of Siloam' (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and he washed, and came back seeing." When the blind man obeyed by washing, the Lord blessed him with sight.

The young man didn't earn his precious sight by mere washing, and we don't earn our salvation by merely obeying. We are saved by grace, but God's grace is no less a gift simply because it has a condition. Both the young man's sight and our salvation are gifts; but God does not give us precious gifts until we meet His conditions. If we are listening and are persuaded, we won't argue with God about His gifts or His conditions. We'll thank God gladly and gratefully for the opportunity to love and serve Him. Like the man born blind, we'll go and wash!

We shouldn't separate faith and obedience as some have done. Just like love and obedience, faith and obedience are inseparable for those who would please God. John 12:42-43 speaks of people who believed but would not act on their faith. It says, "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." These folks were not saved by faith alone, because they didn't confess Christ or put the love of God first.

If you believe, your faith will lead you to obey the gospel. John 3:36 says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Yes, it's that simple. Those who wish to become children of God will do more than merely believe. Galatians 3:26-27 says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Faith alone doesn't make a Christian. The New Testament never contemplates a saved believer who has not also obeyed the gospel in baptism. Jesus said, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Without baptism, you cannot enter God's kingdom. The Lord Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Baptism is an immersion in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). We obey the Lord in baptism, because God offers the promise to those who obey Him.

## Who Is Your Lord?

The most important question you'll ever answer is this, "Who is your Lord?" Today, we're going to explore what it means to call Jesus, "Lord." The New Testament is the true measure of Christianity. The true disciples of Jesus Christ abide in His Words. They seek to please the Lord, not the world. They take their faith seriously.

Matthew 16:13-17 says: "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'"

What you decide about Jesus is crucial to your spiritual well-being. Ultimately, you have to decide for yourself what you believe. You cannot ignore the Lord Jesus because one day you will come face to face with Him. Each one will face judgment. Can you confess Jesus and say what Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"? To say Jesus is the Christ is to recognize Him as the promised Messiah, the One who fulfilled prophecy and set up His kingdom in the first century that would last forever. To say Jesus is the Son of God is to recognize His Divine nature. Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Are you willing to make Him Lord of your life?

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11).

The apostle Peter told the household of Cornelius, "*You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He ordered us to preach the gospel to the people, and to solemnly testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins*" (Acts 10:38-43).

God anointed Jesus as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He will judge us all on the last day. The Lord Jesus said, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day" (John 12:48). We will not be judged by what people think, by what councils vote, or by opinion polls. We will be judged by the Words Jesus spoke, Words that are found in the New Testament.

Since he is our King and our Judge, we must recognize our accountability before Him. The

apostle Paul told the Athenians in Acts 17 verses 30 to 31, “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” You can be sure that one day you will stand before the Lord Jesus in judgment. God will hold you and me accountable for our lives.

We’re accountable for our attitude toward other people. The Lord Jesus said, “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ But I say to you’ Jesus is talking’ ‘that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ [that is, Raca, “empty-headed”] shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ [that is, you moron] shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell” (Matthew 5:21-22). God knows all that happens in our hearts.

We’re accountable even for our thoughts. The Lord Jesus said “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell” (Matthew 5:27-29). When people think immoral thoughts, they sin against their spouses and they sin against God.

We’re also accountable for our words. The Lord Jesus said, “For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man brings out of *his* good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of *his* evil treasure what is evil. But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:34-37).

We are accountable for our actions. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” God’s Word further says that “He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality” (Romans 2:6-11).

More than that, we’re accountable to Jesus whether we know it or not, whether we acknowledge it or not, or whether we agree with it or not. Jesus, our Creator, who died to save us from sin, is also our Lord. Not only do we confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, we also confess Him as our Lord. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit proclaimed through Peter and the apostles to all the Jews that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified (Acts 2:36). God has made Jesus to be your Lord and mine.

The word “Lord” indicates two crucial concepts. First, to call Jesus “Lord” means He is divine, that is, He is deity; He is God. The word “Lord” is often spelled with all capital letters in the Old Testament. “Lord” is the English word that is used to translate the Hebrew word “Yahweh.” This is the word the Lord God used to identify Himself to Moses at the burning bush.

In Exodus chapter three, God called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and



into the Promised Land. Moses was reluctant and he offered several excuses to God as to why he shouldn't lead them. At one point Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:13-14). The word in Hebrew "I am who I am" translates into Greek as "kurios" and into English as "LORD."

When the Holy Spirit, through Peter, proclaimed Jesus as Lord on Pentecost, he was speaking clearly of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:6, which we read earlier, says Jesus also existed in the form of God. Let's hear Philippians 2:5-11 again. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Jesus has always existed in the form of God, but He emptied himself and took the form of a servant, being fashioned as a man. In humility, He obeyed His father by dying on a cruel cross. Because Jesus suffered and died for us, God exalted Him, gave Him a name above all names, and demands that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord! This type of worship is not for men, but for deity, for God.

Second, to call Jesus "Lord" means you have decided that you will obey Him. He is your master, and you are his servant. The word "Lord" in the Bible often refers to the one who owns slaves. When we became Christians, we became the slaves of Jesus Christ. A master owns his slaves and has the right to make decisions governing the lives of his slaves, decisions the slaves cannot stop or change. You may not always understand His decisions, but you can always trust that He will act for your best interests.

We are all servants to someone or something. Romans 6:16 says, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, *that* you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" Some folks serve sin. They think sin will bring them happiness; and instead, it brings them a lot of misery; it fills their lives with all kinds of ruin and problems; and it makes them a slave. Sin fills them with guilt and it ruins their hearts and their lives. Hebrews 3:12-13 warns Christians, "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

What we choose in this life will affect our eternal destiny. Romans 8:12-13 says, "So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Following sin and the flesh will lead only to many problems in this life and separation from God in the life to come. Galatians 6:7-8 says, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

That is why repentance is so vital, so important! If we put to death the deeds of the body, we can live spiritually with God; but if we continue in sin, we can lose our souls. Isn't it better to be the servant of One who loves and cares for us? Some enslave themselves to their lusts and pleasures, which only last for a time and later destroy them. Some become the servants of the devil, who uses them with cruel, false promises. The devil is never your friend; no matter what he may offer you. If you choose to follow him, he will lead you where you never want to go. When you take Jesus as Lord, you give yourself to the only One who will always love and take care of you. Jesus is the only one who can save you.

The question is not whether the Lord Jesus will be a good and kind master; oh, He will! The question is whether you will be a good and obedient servant. Obedience is not always natural to us; we have to learn it. The Bible says of Jesus, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:8-9). If we are to please our Lord, we must learn to be obedient to His will. Obedience is how we show Him our faith and our love. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, but you must decide whether you will bow before Him now in this life or whether you will bow before Him when He comes again. But be sure of this, one day every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God our Father.

Someone has well said, "If Jesus isn't Lord in every aspect of our lives, He isn't our Lord at all. If Jesus isn't Lord every day, He isn't Lord any day." Jesus doesn't want half-hearted followers, fair-weather friends, or convenient Christians. He expects us to deny ourselves, to take up our crosses daily, and to follow Him. He wants us to present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God. God wants us to live by faith in the One who loves us and gave Himself for us. God wants you to love Him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.

Sadly, many have become Christians in name only. They say they believe but you couldn't tell it from the words they use or the lives they lead. First John 2:3-6 says, "And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked." Are you walking like Christ or like someone who simply claims to know Him?

We must hear His Words, revealed in the New Testament. We must believe Jesus Christ is the Lord, the Son of the living God. We trust what the Lord says, because we trust Him. In trust and love, we turn from rebellion and sin and turn to the Lord. So, whatever he asks, we're ready to do because we love Him—that's repentance. Then upon the confession of our faith, we're baptized. That's when He will wash away every sin. That's when He'll add us to His family, the church. That's when He will save us and we'll become a child of God. Oh, won't you obey the Lord today?