

Equipping Pastors International
Jack L. Arnold
Winter Springs, Florida

Dr.

Less

on #1

DISCIPLESHIP
Is Christ Your Lord?

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Why is the Church so weak, puny and godless? Much of the problem is because it has been drinking of the deadly poison of cheap grace. Cheap grace is grace without price, grace without cost. Professing Christians have been deluded into thinking that since man is saved by grace, he does not have to change in his experience. Men can actually remain as they were before professing Christ as long as they give an hour or two to God a week. They wrongly reason that since salvation is by free grace, then Christians can be free to do as they please.
- B. Christians have been lulled to sleep by cheap grace teaching. They have been taught, justification of sin without justification of the sinner, who departs from sin and from whom sin departs. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, the teaching of justification without sanctification, the declaring of positional salvation without experiencing discipleship.
- C. While the Bible teaches that grace is free to all who accept Christ, it also teaches that grace is costly, for those who are genuinely saved take up the call to discipleship. Grace sets a man free from the bondage of sin and enslaves him to Christ, Costly grace is as much of the true gospel as free grace. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says,

The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace is the man who has left all to follow Christ. Such a man knows that the call of discipleship is a gift of grace, and that the call is inseparable from the grace. But those who try to use grace as a dispensation from following Christ are simply deceiving themselves (The Cost of Discipleship).

What does this mean? You may not know all that is involved in salvation when you first trust: Christ, but as you grow you will not reject the teaching of Scripture. NOTE: A gospel of works has deceived multitudes of unbelievers, but a gospel of cheap grace has deceived multitudes of professing Christians.

- D. At the heart of the false teaching of cheap grace is a misunderstanding of the lordship of Christ in the lives of professing Christians. Cheap grace says that Christ can be one's Savior without being his Lord. That is, a person can be saved from hell because of acceptance of Christ as Savior, and still not accept Him as Lord, resulting in no

real desire to be saved from the power of present sin or to crown Christ as Master.

II. JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL

- A. His Position: He is both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) and holds this position whether men recognize it or not (Acts 10:36). If Christ is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all. NOTE: There is a day coming when all men will recognize that Jesus is Lord, even those who are in hell (Phil. 2:10-11).
- B. His Title: His full title is Lord Jesus Christ. Lord is His title for deity. NOTE: Since Jesus is God, we must submit our wills to His will and fall down and worship Him.
- C. His Activity: Because He is Lord, Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of this universe; thus He is one in essence with God the Father (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb 1:1-3).
- D. Conclusion: Jesus Christ, by His position. His title and His activity, is Lord of all whether men acknowledge that lordship or not. In an objective sense He is Lord.

III. CAN JESUS CHRIST BE A PERSON'S SAVIOR WITHOUT BEING HIS LORD?

- A. The Controversy: One group of Christians believes that Scripture only requires belief in the person of Christ for salvation and that lordship should logically follow with growth, but that sometimes it does not. This group often is accused of teaching easy believism. Another group of Christians believes that Christ must be acknowledged first as Lord and then as Savior from sin if conversion is truly to take place, resulting in a turning from the old life to a new life in Christ. Sometimes those who stress lordship actually teach that a person must give up sin before he can be saved. NOTE: Often the difference between the mainstream in these two groups is one of semantics (terminology).
- B. The Meaning of Believe: There is much loose preaching today which states that all a sinner has to do to escape hell and make sure of heaven is believe on Christ as his personal Savior. Biblically this is true, but the real issue is actually the meaning of believe. Often the word is used in terms of intellectual assent to facts and thus Christ becomes an escape hatch from hell with the "believer" having no desire to serve Him daily and no desire to have a changed life. NOTE: Often the teaching of "just believe" is very confusing to the new convert. While the Bible teaches that salvation is received by faith alone and apart from works (John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 1:16), it is also true that genuine saving faith must produce spiritual works (Eph. 2:10; James 2:17-26). NOTE: In the Gospel of John the word "believe" is used 98 times and is sometimes translated believe, trust, obey, and commit. Tenny observes,

Never does it (believe) mean assent to a proposition. It usually means acknowledgment of some personal claim, or even complete personal commitment to some idea or person (The Gospel of John).

NOTE: To believe means to commit, trust, lean upon and seems to have a close connection with obedience (Heb. 11:8). Faith and obedience are not the same but they are very closely related. When a person believes on Christ and His perfect sacrifice for sin, he is making a commitment that involves his whole being--will, intellect and emotions. The thought of lordship is inherent in the concept of believe.

- C. Examples in the New Testament: It seems as though the Bible teaches that if Jesus Christ is not the Christian's Lord then He certainly is not His Savior. In the titles given to Christ the order always seems to be "Lord and Savior" (Luke 1:46-47; Acts 5:31; II Pet. 1:11; 2:20; 3:18). When the Philippian jailor asked what he had to do to be saved, Paul answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31). The Apostle Thomas acknowledged Jesus as "my Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Immediately following Paul's conversion he said, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6)
- D. Key Verse: The key verse in this discussion is Romans 10:9-10, where it says that before a person can be saved he must confess that Jesus is Lord. The word "Lord" is a term for Christ's deity and the thought is that Jesus must be acknowledged to be God before one can be saved. He must become the Divine Savior for all those who are to be saved.
- E. The Issue: The issue before the unbeliever is the sin problem, and to be saved he must accept Jesus Christ as Savior, but he must also acknowledge Him to be Lord in the sense that He is God. Jesus Christ is the Divine Savior who alone can deliver a person from his sins. NOTE: To recognize Christ as God is to establish a relationship to Him in an objective sense. As God, Christ has a right to rule in the life.
- F. The Meaning of Repentance: Repentance means "to change the mind about something." Repentance is towards God (Acts 20:21) and towards sin (Acts 26:20).

This same truth is taught in I Thes. 1:9 which says, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living God." These Gentiles not only turned to God but they also turned from idols and their old way of life. Pink observes,

An "idol" is any object to which we give what is due alone unto God--the supreme place in our affections, the moulding influence of our hearts, the dominating power

of our lives. Conversion is a right-about face, the heart and will repudiating sin, self, and the world.

IV. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ADKNOWLEDGE CHRIST AS LORD?

- A. By lordship, we mean whether or not Christ occupies the throne of our hearts, whether He rules in our lives. Is He sovereign King in our hearts? To make Christ Lord is to give Him the right to rule in every area of our lives. Christ is Lord in an objective sense and must be acknowledged as such at salvation. NOTE: This does not mean salvation by works or perfection; it means granting Christ the right to rule as the Sovereign One.
- B. After initial salvation, when sin overtakes a Christian, Christ must be put back on the throne of one's heart and self must be dethroned. In our Christian experience, Christ is constantly being made our Lord in a subjective sense. This is a lifetime process, but it begins with an initial act of commitment to Christ at salvation. NOTE: No Christian has ever had Christ as absolute Lord of his life in a subjective sense, but every Christian must give Christ the right to reign as King in every area of life.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. Cheap grace is caused initially by telling sinners that they need only trust Christ as Savior and not as Lord. But the Scriptures teach that free grace in saving sinners is costly, for it results in a life dedicated to the person of Jesus Christ.
- B. Bonhoeffer saw the dangers of preaching a cheap grace and said,

But do we also realize that this cheap grace has turned back upon us like a boomerang? The price we are having to pay today in the shape of the collapse of the organized church is only the inevitable consequence of our policy of making grace available to all at too low a cost . . . With us it has been abundantly proved that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. Cheap grace has turned out to be utterly merciless to our Evangelical Church.

Let me quote from a popular poem,

"Ye call me Master, and obey me not;
Ye call me Light, and see me not;
Ye call me Way, and walk me not;
Ye call me Life, and want me not.
Ye call me Wise, and follow me not;
Ye call me Fair, and love me not;
Ye call me Rich, and ask me not;
Ye call me Gracious, and trust me not;
Ye call me Eternal, and seek me not;
Ye call me Noble, and serve me not;

Ye call me Mighty, and honor me not;
Ye call me Just, and fear me not;
Ye call me Lord, and praise me not;
If I condemn you, blame me not!"