

MASTER & LORD



by
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Please open your Bibles to Mark chapter eight and verse thirty-four. I would like to preach a message entitled "Master and Lord."

In Mark 8:34, the Bible says, "And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

If I were to preach the gospel today, many of you could say, "Preacher, I have already embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ." That is why I want to preach a message on the lordship of Christ. There is a message that needs to be preached to those who are saved, who are born again, who have already embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ. What is that message? It is a message that Jesus Christ must be Master and Lord of your life.

The unsaved need to hear the gospel; the good news; the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and respond to it. But the child of God needs to hear the message about the lordship of Christ and respond to it. He needs to hear the message that Jesus Christ must be Master and Lord of his life.

The passage before us is not an evangelistic passage. Jesus is not telling folks how to get saved in this passage of Scripture. You see, folks, no one can get saved by self-denial. In Ephesians 2:8-9, the Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Jesus seemed to gather from the crowds those who professed faith in Him; and He said unto them, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." What was Jesus saying? He was simply saying this: If you are going to live for God, you need to follow this method. Just as man cannot be saved any way he chooses, the child of God cannot live for God any way he chooses. And that is exactly where many of you miss it. You receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Friend, and then you go about doing your own thing. You think about God every once in a while, and you have the idea that that will satisfy the Lord. How foolish that is! The Lord Jesus Christ ought not be treated that way. He did not save you merely to get you out of hell. He did not save you merely to forgive you of your sins. He did not save you merely to take you to heaven. He did not do that. He saved you so that you could live for Christ and serve Him. He saved you so that you could live for Christ in such a way that He is the Master of your life.

What was Jesus saying? He was simply saying this. Once you have believed on Me; once you have accepted what I have done for your salvation; once you have embraced the gospel; then you must embrace Me as Master and Lord of your life. But what does it mean to make Christ Master and Lord of your life?

In Mark 8:34, Jesus said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The word "will" here means to determine to choose. It is the "aorist" of the Greek language, which means it is a decision that you make only once. The word "come" is an infinitive. It means "to come." It is literally saying "to come and follow." What is the Bible saying? It is simply saying this. The child of God who wants to make Christ Master and Lord of his life wills to come. He makes that conscience decision to come after Christ and follow Him.

If I asked you today, "Have you made that decision to receive Christ?" Many of you could say yes. You could give me a time. You could give me a place where you recognized the fact that you were a sinner and in need of a Saviour, and that you could not save yourself. Therefore, you received Jesus Christ as your own Personal Saviour and Friend.

But I wonder, if I asked you today, "Have you made that once and for all and forever decision to live for Jesus Christ," what would you say? You ought to live for Christ as your Master and Lord. You ought to because it is His right. In John 13:13, Jesus said, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." When you received Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Friend, it became His right, by virtue of His redemption, to be your Master and Lord. Listen, folks! It is sin to embrace Jesus Christ and not go on and make Him Master and Lord of your life. It is sin because it is His right to be your Master and Lord!

Now I have decided to follow Jesus Christ. I sin. I make mistakes. I stumble. I fall. I get up and I rededicate my life to Christ, but I have made the decision to follow Jesus Christ. It has affected the way I dress. It has affected the way I talk. It has affected the way I think. It has affected everything about me. Now that explains a lot of things about my life. A lot of things about my life can be explained by the fact of a decision I made back in 1987, at the age of 30, to follow Christ. If you're going to make that once and for all and forever decision to live for the Lord, it involves some things.

We're going to look at three things in Mark 8:34 that Jesus says following Him involves. Number one, it involves self-denial. Number two, it involves cross-bearing, and Number three, it involves walking beside God.

Please notice, number one, if you're going to follow Christ, it involves self-denial. In Mark 8:34, Jesus said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself." That word "deny" means to disown or abstain. In the context, it means to forget one's self or to lose sight of one's own interests.

Brethren, I have made up my mind that I am going to follow Christ. I am going to live for God. Therefore I have made up my mind that I am going to deny myself. What was Jesus saying? He was simply saying this. If the child of God wills to come after Me, let him surrender every thing to God -- his dreams, his plans, his ambitions, his goals. If the child of God wills to come after Me, let him surrender his will to God. It is that simple.

Brethren, you are not a disciple of Christ if you are holding on to certain things and saying, "Lord, you can have every thing but this." You are not a disciple of Jesus Christ. In Luke 14:22, Jesus said, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Forsaking all is self-denial. You must surrender your rights to the rights of your Master and Lord. But what does that mean? It simply means that Jesus Christ must be put first in all things. He must be ahead of your family. He must be ahead of your friends. He must be ahead of your loved ones. He must be ahead of your finances. He must be ahead of your work. He must be ahead of your dreams. He must be ahead of your plans. He must be ahead of your ambitions. He must be ahead of your goals. In Colossians 1:18, the Bible says, "That in all things he might have the preeminence." In John 3:30, the Bible says, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Jesus was simply saying. Whosoever wills to come after Me; whosoever decides to come after Me; whosoever wants to come after Me, let him deny himself. Period!

We have noticed, number one, if you're going to follow Christ, it involves self-denial. But notice, number two, it involves cross bearing.

Jesus said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross." The word "take up" is a permanent attitude and practice. The cross was an instrument of death. That reference to one taking up his cross meant a lot more to the people in Jesus day than it does to us today. When a prisoner was crucified by Rome, it was his job to pick up his cross, place it on his shoulders, and carry it out to the place of execution.

Brethren, when a prisoner took up his cross he was as good as dead. All that stood before him was death. He would do absolutely nothing else after he took up his cross. It was his final act.

When Jesus said unto them, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross," He was making a profound statement. Jesus is simply saying, "Deny self and die to self." When you make that decision to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, you have made the final decision of your life. You need to come to that place in your life today and say, "Lord Jesus, I have decided once and for all and forever that I am going to take up my cross and from this point forward consider myself dead. I have no rights of my own. I have no dreams of my own. I have no plans of my own. I have no ambitions of my own. I have no goals of my own. I am a dead man."

In Romans 12:1, the Apostle Paul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." That's what Jesus had in mind. In John 12:24, the Bible says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Question! Do you want to bring forth much fruit? Do you want to influence this community for Christ? Do you want to do something for God because He has done so much for you? The only way you're going to accomplish all of that is to deny yourself. There is no other way. Jesus said, "If you die, you will bring forth much fruit." Think with me. If you die to your dreams; if you die to your plans; if you die to your ambitions; if you die to your goals; if you die to the life you have made for yourself, Jesus said you will bring forth much fruit.

Now the cross is not some burden that you bear. It is not some hardship. It is not some handicap. It is not some difficulty that you bear. It is total surrender of self to God. In Romans 6:13, the Bible says, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

You are to die to self. You say, "Preacher! Am I to deny all those things that make me happy? Am I to deny all those things that give me joy?" I say yes and no. In all likelihood, all those decent and honorable desires that you have are going to have a logical place in the Christian life.

In Psalms 37:4-5, the Bible says, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." As you yield your bodies a living sacrifice, totally dedicated to God, so that God is well pleased with you, those decent and honorable desires that you have are usually permitted by Christ. However, you must be prepared to lay down all of your dreams at the feet of Jesus Christ.

I am an evangelist. I gave my life to the ministry. But I have to lay the ministry down at the feet of Jesus Christ and say, "Master and Lord, if you want me out of the ministry, that is your decision."

When Norman Stevens decided to follow Jesus Christ, he gave up all of his rights. I have the right to all kinds of things; but, you see, when I decided to make Christ Master and Lord of my life, I laid all of those things down at the feet of Christ. I did not go through them and say, "Well, I am going to keep this one and give that one up." I did not do that. You don't do that. You simply put it all at the feet of Jesus and say, "Master and Lord, I forsake all. I forsake all of my dreams. I forsake all of my plans. I forsake all of my ambitions. I forsake all of my goals. I forsake it all and I take up my cross and consider myself a dead man."

In Luke 9:23, the Bible says, "Let him take up his cross daily." When you get out of bed in the morning you ought to say, "Lord, I am a dead man. I am dead to self. I am yours today. I have no rights of my own. If nothing good happens to me today, I deserve nothing but judgment. I recognize the fact that I am a dead man and the only reason to inhale and exhale is that I might live for you." But many of you are not prepared to face the reality of that. Why is that? I will tell you. You have too many things that you cherish. You want what you want. You want to do what you want to do. You don't want to do what you don't want to do. Therefore, you are not a disciple of Christ.

You say, "Preacher! I am saved. I am born again. I have been cleansed by the shed blood of Jesus Christ." That's right. You may be saved. You may be born again. You may have been cleansed by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. But you are not a disciple of Christ, for a disciple of Jesus Christ is one who has forsaken all. In Luke 14:33, Jesus said, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Don't you see that the message of the lordship of Christ is as narrow as the gospel itself?

Brethren, if you are going to make that decision to live for Christ; if you are going to make that decision to follow the Lord, it involves self-denial; it involves cross bearing. But notice, number three, it involves walking beside God.

In Mark 8:34, Jesus said unto them, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The word "follow," here, in our text, literally means come and walk with me. The emphasis on the word is not behind or trailing. The emphasis is, come up alongside Me and fellowship with Me. Let's walk together today. Whosoever wills to come after Me; whosoever wills to walk with Me, by My side, as My friend, as My companion, let him deny himself. Let him take up his cross. Let him come alongside of Me, and let us walk together. Let us talk together. Let us fellowship together.

Do you want to know the joy of the Christian life? Then deny yourself. Take up your cross and walk beside Christ. And as you walk with God, and as you talk with God, and as you fellowship with the Lord, you will say, "Did not my heart burn within me today as I walked and talked with the Son of God?"

A vast majority of God's people don't even know what it is like to walk, talk, and fellowship with Jesus Christ every day.

Brethren, I am not trying to take something away from you. I am simply trying to lead you to something that is wonderful. Deciding to live for Christ and walk with Him is a path [that] is wonderful, and it requires obedience. In John 15:10, Jesus said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." As you walk with God, as you talk with God, and as God talks back to you through His Word and through the Holy Spirit of God, you are to obey Him. You are to do what He says.

You are to say what He says. You are to go where He wants you to go. You are to bring your life in total submission to Him; and then, and only then, will you ever discover what the Christian life is all about.

But not every child of God lives this kind of life. Why is that? With the time remaining we are going to look at four reasons why.

First, do you know why some of you are not willing to follow Christ? You are afraid. In Mark 8:35, Jesus said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Some of you are afraid to live for the Lord. You are afraid that He is going to mess up your life. How foolish you are; and how you must anger the God of heaven when you do not allow Him to have complete control, rule, and reign over your life today as a child of God!

Listen! God knows how to run your life. He has been running lives a long time before you got here, and He will be running lives a long time after you are gone. He has always done a good job. He has never made one mistake. God never fails. Why then don't you trust Him? Why then don't you trust Him with your life?

"Lord, if I give my life to you. I am afraid. I am afraid that you are going to mess up my life. I am afraid that I am going to lose out. I have some things that I want to do." What did Jesus say? Jesus simply said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

Listen folks! If you try to save your life by your own dreams, by your own plans, by your own ambitions, by your own goals, you are going to lose it for sure. But Jesus goes on to say, "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Second, do you know why some of you are not willing to follow Christ? You are rebels. In Mark 8:36, Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul."

The rebel says, "I have some things that I want to accomplish. I don't want God's way." So let me ask you something. What is the profit for a man who lives for himself? What is the profit a hundred years from today if he builds an empire for himself, if he builds riches for himself, if he builds a name for himself? What is the profit a hundred years from today if he does it outside of the will of God? What is the profit if, in the process of getting all that profit, you lose peace? If you lose contentment? If you lose spiritual blessings and power with God? What is the profit? You are not in the profit column; you are in the loss column.

Third, do you know why some of you are not willing to follow Christ? You are selfish. In Mark 8:37, Jesus said, "Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This is the child of God who says, "What's in it for me." I am not saying, "Follow Christ because it will turn out good for you." I am not saying that. I believe

it will turn out good for you. I believe that, if you will make that once and for all and forever decision to live for Christ, you will find a quality of life that you never dreamed possible. But you ought not give your life to Christ because there is something good in it for you. You ought to give your life to Christ because He deserves it. If nothing good ever happened to you, if no joy ever came your way, you ought to live for Jesus Christ because He deserves it.

The selfish person says, "What's in it for me? What can I get in exchange for my soul?" Jesus said you are a fool. You have exchanged what God has already planned for you. You have forsaken God's will. You have forsaken God's plan. You have forsaken God's direction to pursue your own dreams, your own plans, your own ambitions, your own goals. You are a fool to exchange what God has already planned for you.

Fourth, do you know why some of you are not willing to follow Christ? You are ashamed. In Mark 8:37, Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words..." This is the child of God who is embarrassed at the prospect of being identified with Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

"Preacher! If I do what Jesus says, I have some family and friends who will laugh at me and call me a fool." And that is the reason why some of you tonight are not prepared to make Christ Master and Lord of your lives. You are ashamed to identify with Christ, or you are ashamed to identify with His words. That is, you are ashamed to live under the authority of God, under the rule of God, as it is expressed in the Word of God. You like to say, "I have a mind of my own and I can think for myself." You don't like the idea of saying, "If the Bible says it, that is exactly what I am going to do."

"If the Bible says, 'tithes,' I am going to do it." In Malachi 3:8, the Bible says, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

"If the Bible says, 'go to church,' I am going to do it." In Hebrews 10:24-25, the Bible says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

"If the Bible says, 'study,' I am going to do it." In II Timothy 2:15, the Bible says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

"If the Bible says, 'pray,' I am going to do it." In Luke 18:1, the Bible says, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

"If the Bible says, 'witness,' I am going to do it." In Mark 16:15, the Bible says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

"Preacher! I am embarrassed. I don't want to say to my family and friends, 'the Bible says do and so I do, and the Bible says don't do so I don't do.' I don't want to do that. That would embarrass me."

What was Jesus saying? He was simply saying this. The reason the child of God won't come after Me, the reason the child of God won't follow Me, is that he is embarrassed of Me and of My words.

Why is it today you are not prepared to give your life to Christ? Why is it today you are holding back from making that decision? What decision? That once and for all and forever decision that Christ is Master and Lord of your life. He will decide everything about you. He will decide what you will do with your life. He will decide what you will do with your marriage. He will decide what you will do with your home. He will decide what you will do with your children. He will decide your vocation. He will decide your standards. He will decide everything about you, and you will bring your life under Him. What keeps you from making that decision? Is it fear? Is it rebellion? Is it selfishness? Is it shame?

You need to see Jesus Christ as He wrestled there in the garden, coming to the decision, "Even if it means separation from My Father, I will drink this cup." You need to see Christ taking up His cross. You need to see Christ hanging on the cross for you. You need to see Christ tasting death for you. You need to see Christ taking upon Himself your sins and dying in your place. You need to see Christ and you need to stop fooling around. You need to decide once and for all and forever, tonight, that Jesus Christ is not only your Saviour and Friend but that He is also your Master and Lord. "If that means full time Christian service for the Lord, fine! If that means full time Christian service for the Lord on some foreign mission field, fine! If that means forsaking this pet sin, fine! If that means breaking off this relationship, fine! I have decided once and for all and forever that I am not my own. I belong to another. I belong to Jesus Christ."

In Galatians 2:20, the Apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." What was Paul saying? He was simply saying this, "Not my rights. Not my life. Not my dreams. Not my plans. Not my ambitions. Not my goals. From this day forward and forever Jesus Christ is not only my Saviour and Friend, but He is the Master and Lord of my life."

What keeps you from making that decision? Is it fear? Is it rebellion? Is it selfishness? Is it shame?

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil – Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead – John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith – Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

Please visit our website for a complete list of sermons that are available.

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