

(AWAY) IN A MANGER

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Welcome

Intro

Next week on Christmas Eve, Pastor Fred will be talking about one of the most personal and heartfelt Christmas messages that I ever have in all of the years of teaching. I hope that you'll share the message with everyone you know because it really will be an encouraging and heartfelt message that I believe will reach a lot of people.

Now, since we are going to do an encouraging and heartfelt one next week, I thought I'd do what I call a 'hardhat message' this week! So, if you're okay with that just say, stick it to me! Okay, you asked for it, so it's going to happen!

(AWAY) IN A MANGER

This song was first published in a Lutheran Sunday School curriculum in 1885. Now, there's a lot of controversy around who wrote the lyrics to this song. A lot of people think that it was Martin Luther, the father of the Great Reformation; but after more study, most people say that isn't actually who wrote it. And so, there's mystery as to who wrote the lyrics of this amazing song. But, there is no mystery that this song has touched hearts for decades and decades.

(Read Lyrics)

Away in a manger, No crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus, Laid down His sweet head

The stars in the bright sky, Looked down where He lay, The little Lord Jesus Asleep on the hay

There's a phrase that's used over and over again in that song that I want to focus on. 'The little Lord Jesus'. The little Lord Jesus, and I love that

phrase! Unfortunately, in some ways, focusing on just the Baby Jesus may be a little disservice to us. Jesus isn't just the dear six pound, eight ounce Baby Jesus, there's so much more to what God intended. And so, rather than focusing on the size of the Baby, what I want to do is focus on the Lordship of Christ. So the key thought of this message, if you want to write it down is that:

Jesus is Lord (PERIOD).

In fact, 740 times in the New Testament, Jesus is referred to as Lord, 740 times. In fact, I want to look at one of the classic Christmas verses, one of the most quoted verses from Luke's Gospel dealing with the birth of Christ and show you the very first mention of the Savior's birth, we see Him called Lord. Luke, Chapter Two, the context: The shepherds were watching the flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared and said:

Luke 2:10-11

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”

The big question that I want to deal with today is, what does that mean to us? If Jesus is Lord, what does that mean in everyday life? (examples)

kurios (koo'-ree-os); supreme in authority, controller, Lord.

Now I can already imagine, for some of you the word controller is going to be a challenge because if Jesus is the Controller, He's got some competition in you, because you want to be in control. Thankfully, I don't have that problem at all, I'm not a control freak whatsoever, not a bit, as long as everything goes my way and everybody does what I say, I don't have a problem with control at all! Okay, so I've got a problem with it, okay? I want to be in control of everything, whether it's driving the car, I can't

even, I honestly can barely sit in the passenger seat because nobody drives right. TV remote, don't even think about touching it if you are ever at my house! Put down the remote and everybody will be fine! I'm player 1!

If He's not Lord of all... He's not Lord at all

If I can be technical for just a moment, and I don't want to make anybody feel bad for using this phrase, but technically we don't make Jesus Lord, do you realize that? We surrender to His Lordship. I want to talk about two different levels of surrender.

THE (PARTIALLY) SURRENDERED LIFE.

The partially surrendered life. And I'm very afraid that this is where the majority of American Christians would live. Many of you in other parts of the world, I believe there's much more devotion in many parts of the world where the persecution is more intense.

Luke 6:46-49 (NIV)

46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. 48 They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Why are you giving me this lip service? 'This isn't a game', Jesus is saying, well, let's get it right.

(RIP BIBLE ILLUSTRATION)

Prov. 3:5-6 (Partially Surrendered Version PSV) Trust in the Lord with some of your heart, lean on your own understanding, in some of your ways, acknowledge him, and you can make your own paths straight.

When you come to Him, He asked you to give your whole life. He says:

- You want to follow me? Take up your cross and follow me.
- If you want to find your life, you lose it.
- You give it away, you surrender it. You come under the Lordship of Christ. He is the supreme in authority. He is the One who says what's right and He is the One who says what's wrong.
- Hey I like this thing, keep me out of hell, but I'm going to do whatever I want!

I want you to take a moment and be very open to what God might show you and ask this question very prayerfully;

WHAT HAVE I NOT SURRENDERED TO THE LORD?

- Children, Health, Temper, Relationships, Finances, Future
- Luke warm, half hearted, partially surrendered life.
- Jesus is no part time Lord—he doesn't want part time followers.

What is it? What is it that you've not surrendered to the Lordship of Christ?

(Story) And in that area I was halfhearted, lukewarm, distant to God's promises, and a part-time follower. I was not doing exactly as He said. Jesus is no part-time Lord and He doesn't want part-time followers.

I want you to be just as honest as I was and say, What is it? What area am I not fully surrendering to God? What am I not fully surrendering to the Lordship of Christ? Because almost all of us, in one way or another, we're living a partially surrendered life. Let's talk about another level of surrender and that's what Jesus wants for us and I'd call it:

THE (FULLY) SURRENDERED LIFE

Fully surrendered, all in, a full-on, holding nothing back, my life does not belong to me but belongs to Him commitment.

In fact, I love the way Paul phrased this:

Rom 14:7-8 NLT

7 For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. 8 If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

We belong to Him. Our life is not our own. We surrender to His Lordship, we belong to Him. It's a little bit like I never take off my ring(tattoo).

(Story about rings

- Rings didnt cost, receiving the rings, "I do", cost us our lives!
- We belong to each other, we belong together song
- Salvation cost you nothing, it cost Jesus everything. But when you say yes to it, you no longer own the rights to your life. Does that make sense? You belong to Him. You surrender to His Lordship. Your life is no longer your own. Your life is no longer your own, you are no longer the controller or the Lord of your life, He is.

No, no, no, no! Jesus isn't just the little Lord Jesus Baby in a manger, He's not just the Lord Jesus Baby in a manger, He's not just the Lord Jesus on a cross dying for our sins. What you need to understand is He's the soon returning, conquering, reigning, ruling, supreme in authority coming back with a sword, with a name written on it that He is the King of kings and He is the Lord of lords. And He means business. Don't just say, Lord, Lord, and then do whatever you want. He is supreme, ruling, reigning King of the universe. Our lives, if you're a Christian, it doesn't belong to us, it belongs to Him.

Proverbs 3:5-6

**5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
6 in all your ways acknowledge to him,
and he will make your paths straight.**

The word “acknowledge”, I'm not a big fan of the way that's translated. In the Hebrew language, the word that's translated “acknowledge” is the word “yada”. This same word is also translated to know. It's the same word that describes the intimate relationship with Adam knowing Eve. I prefer:

...in all your ways know Him and He will make your paths straight.

Psalm 91:14

Because he is lovingly devoted to Me, I will deliver him; I will protect him because he knows My name.

Here's the bottom line, the reason so many of us do not surrender some area of our life to the Lordship of Christ is because we don't know Him in that area of our lives. And that's the bottom line. To know Him is to love Him, to know Him is to trust Him. To know Him is to surrender to Him because when you know Him you know He is Ever-Present, He is All-Knowing, He is All-Powerful, He is Good in every way. He is Holy, set apart from us. He is so Holy, mortal man cannot look upon Him in His purest essence and live. To know Him is to surrender to Him because He is the Reigning, Ruling King of the universe. And not only is He some far away powerful God, but He is a relational God who came to us in the name of Emmanuel to be God with us because He wanted to reveal Himself to us. That's why He sent Jesus, so we can see Him, so we can know Him, so we can relate to Him, so we could have a love-relationship with Him. It's all about relationship. When someone asked Jesus, 'What's the most important command?' Jesus basically said, 'It's a relational command.' The most important command is to love the whom? If you know it say it, it's to love the Lord your God with all your what? With all your heart, with all your mind and with all your soul and with all your strength. It's a whole fully-committed life. It's not a partially feel good, I like this and don't like this, but

it's out of the love-relationship, it's because I know Him, because I love Him. Tash doesn't stay with me just because of some empty promise, but it's because of this intimate, ongoing love relationship. It's because we know each other, because we've given our lives to each other. It's not just a 15-year ago promise, it's an everyday, living, thriving relationship. It's all about relationship.

The gift of eternal life may not cost you anything, but your only reasonable response is to give your whole life, and if you're not giving your whole life, at some point we have to ask ourselves the question, do we really know Him? Do we really know Him? Do we really know Him, because Jesus said some of the most haunting words in all of Scripture,

APPROACH/PLAY KEYS

Matthew 7:21-23, 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

We're not in a relationship. You gave me lip service, but we didn't know each other, there's no intimacy. You called me Lord, but you didn't do what I said.

You see, there's a really big difference between calling Jesus Lord and surrendering to His Lordship. He is Lord. It's not a game, it's not a, Oh shoot, I tried! No, He's Lord, and we surrender to the Lordship of Christ. He's not a part-time Lord and He doesn't want part-time followers. He gave us the free gift of eternal life and He wants the only reasonable response is, Hey, here's my life back, whatever you want. Not my will, but your will be done. Therefore, I will take whatever I'm trying to control and get to know Him and surrender it to His Lordship and trust Him with all my heart and

lean not on my own understanding, but in all of my ways I will know Him
and He will make my paths straight.

Let's Pray