

Sermon: Jesus as Lord
Philippians 2:9-11, Mark 2:23-28

Rev. Daren Hofmann
Baptism of Lord/Ord/Inst of Officer 1/8/17

Philippians 2:9-11

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Mark 2:23-28

One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions where hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

Sermon

Today is a convergence of many different things. Last Friday was Epiphany and so this Sunday we celebrate the light that comes into the world in the birth and life of Jesus. This light is extra symbolic for those of us that live in the Northern Hemisphere, the light shines just when the days seem to have more darkness than light. Today is also the Sunday we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, that moment when Jesus walked into the water of the Jordan with John and the heavens were opened, the Spirit descended like a dove, and God spoke, "This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased."

We also celebrate the ordination and installation of new officers who begin serving their term today, and we celebrate the sacrament of Communion, which calls us to come to the table and then, after being nourished, calls us out into the world. Today is a big day with lots to celebrate. Where do we even begin?

I decided we should begin in the beginning. Not in Genesis, but in the beginning of faith, at Baptism. At Baptism, either one who is old enough to speak for themselves, or the family of an infant or young child, is asked to affirm some key questions of Christian faith. For me, the most important question is this, "Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love?" This question gets to the heart of the Christian faith, and is a part of the earliest confessions. Before there was a Nicene or Apostles' Creed, the earliest church had a simple confession, "Jesus is Lord". According to Paul's letter, this was the primary creed of the earliest churches, to proclaim Jesus as Lord was a statement of faith.

But how does that work for one who cannot speak for themselves. Presbyterians have always been open to baptism at any age, but we also recognize that an infant cannot make a confession of faith for themselves. And so it is the parents that are asked to reaffirm their own baptismal faith, confessing Jesus is Lord. In doing so, they state that Jesus is Lord of their family, and will be center in their raising of their children.

For the early church, confessing Jesus' Lordship had a deep and rich meaning. At one level, this was a confession of Jesus' divinity. That he was the Son of God, Emmanuel, God with us, Lord of all creation. But the confession went further, it included then that Jesus was Lord of the Church. Paul's letters go into great detail on the matter of the church being the Body of Christ and Christ was the head of the body. Confession that Jesus was Lord of the church reminded them that it was not Paul or Peter or any present or past or future leader of the church that was Lord. Only Christ, and the calling of other leaders then was to point to Christ to help the church grow in faith and love.

But this confession went at least one level deeper, Lord of creation, Lord of the church, and my Lord. One of the places I see this personal confession come into play is in marriage. When a couple chooses to get married either in a church or with a pastor, they are making a claim that they would like to have Jesus in the midst of their marriage. Even when it is a couple of diverse faith backgrounds, if only one is Christian, that one is still making a claim for Christ in their relationship. Another place that I

already mention is in the raising of children, Baptism, in part, reminds us to put Christ in the center of our parenting and in the center of our family. But that is not all. If Christ is my Lord, then he is Lord of my pocket book and wallet, my work and my play, my busy times and my down times.

And if you are like me, though I confess that Jesus is Lord, I too often find that Jesus can get pushed to the side. This especially happens when I am anxious or frustrated, tired or sick, or lost. The truth is, we are imperfect people and even when we confess Jesus is Lord, we are unable to live into that confession fully. But when we do return to Christ, when we do stop and realize that we have left our faith on the sideline and need to lift our lives up in prayer. Well, we don't find a magical genie who will fix our problems in a moments notice. But I do find that things a weight is lifted, and the hard things in my life are just a little more manageable.

Truly when we are able to confess Jesus is Lord, then we find ourselves trusting in his grace and love so much more. Thanks be to God for the gift of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen