

Jesus is the Lead Shepherd and Pastor of His Church

Delivered: March 24, 2024

Scriptures: [Colossians 2.3](#)

I woke up to this verse this morning:

“In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” [Colossians 2.3](#)

Jesus is Lord of all. Jesus is King.

He is the King who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey...His ways are so contrary to our ways.

[Acts 8.35-37](#) - “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.”

[Acts 9.20](#) - Immediately after receiving back his sight Paul preached Christ in all the synagogues.

[Acts 5.42](#) - Daily the disciples did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus in the temple and house to house.

[Acts 28.23](#) - Paul preaches Jesus to those who come to his home - “So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.”

[Luke 24.27](#) - Jesus preaches Himself to the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

[1 Corinthians 1.23](#) - Paul preached Christ and Him crucified.

[1 Corinthians 2.2](#) - Paul determined to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Jesus is Lord of all. Jesus is King.

If...then

If He is Lord of all, then He is Lord of the local church. In fact, because He is Lord of all, nowhere should He be seen more as Lord on the earth than in the church...the assembling together of His body.

Jesus is the single, solitary lead shepherd and pastor of the church (big C, global church and little c local church - Jesus is the lead shepherd), physically present by His Spirit when we gather to

 speak to us,
 guide us,
 comfort us,
 give us direction, and to
 pastor us as His family.

Jesus is the King who walks among His lampstand, the church ([Revelation 2](#) and [3](#)).

Jesus says,

 "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you" ([John 14.18](#)).

This is what Jesus is saying in [John 14-16](#) - that when the Holy Spirit comes He will take of Mine and give it to you, He will glorify Me, He will guide you into all truth about Me.

He is the Good Shepherd

As Lord of all, He is the Shepherd of every local congregation. This is [John 10.11](#),

 "I am the good shepherd."

That's a reference to [Ezekiel 34](#) where God judges the shepherds of Israel who have acted selfishly, made themselves fat while trampling on God's sheep. God says in [Ezekiel 34.11](#),

 "Indeed, I Myself will search out My sheep and seek them out."

And then in [v15-16](#),

 "I will feed My flock, and I will lead them to rest...I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away; I will bind up the broken and strengthen the sick."

David writes in [Psalm 23.1-6](#),

 "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green

pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Just because we are under a new covenant, with 5-fold gifting and the Holy Spirit poured out, does not mean that His role as our Shepherd has changed. The present reality of Jesus shepherding His people becomes magnified even more in the new covenant.

When we gather, we gather under His Shepherding.

“Where 2 or more are gathered in my name, I am there” (Matthew 18.20).

He’s not gathering with us to be a spectator to what we are doing, He is gathering with us as Lord and King and Chief Shepherd of His sheep.

This is why:

- when we worship we sing *about* Him and *to* Him...our worship is vertical, not horizontal
- when we study the Scriptures we don’t experience a man’s gifting, we study the Scriptures to learn about Jesus
- when we fellowship, we are fellowshiping as members of His body
- when we gather at the table, it's not just a meal...it's the LORD'S supper.

The heavenly design for church, that Jesus recognizes and longs to see fill the earth, is that everything we do as the church is from Him, through Him, and unto Him. To put it another way, we don't have the right to gather the way that we want to gather. We are His body.

Practically...

So practically how does this translate when we gather together? As the body, when we gather, the body expresses the Head. Gathering according to His design means that collectively we experience and demonstrate a more full manifestation of Jesus. This is Paul's whole point in [1 Corinthians 12](#).

What is Necessary?

For us as the Body to demonstrate Jesus as the Head when we gather, a few things become necessary.

First

First, church is not a spectator event. It's not something that we attend, it's who we are collectively when we come together...to express, experience, and worship Jesus as our Lord.

So when church is no longer an event that you attend, but a family that you are a member of, it becomes essential that you are growing in your walk with Jesus as an individual - because the body needs what you carry. We must *all* grow up and mature into who Jesus says we are as individuals so that the collective body can fully express the Head. Paul puts it this way in [Ephesians 4.15-16](#),

“grow up in all things into Christ, who is the head, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

For the sake of the body and the glory of Jesus in our community, it is essential that grow up in all things in Christ.

that you grow in the Spirit
mature in your understanding of Scripture and the kingdom,
grow in your gifting; practice prophecy and hospitality and generosity and
praying for the sick and teaching and encouraging and serving.

For the sake of the expression of His fullness when we gather

go deeper in your own prayer life,
put away the deeds of the flesh and walk in holiness...
commit to, and prioritize, the gathering of the saints,

because when you aren't here there is something of Christ that is missing in our midst.

Your contribution is essential to Jesus revealing Himself in our midst.

Overcome Sin

It is also essential for the health of the body that you overcome sin, because a little leaven spreads through the whole lump. When someone has an infection in their body, it is addressed because of the seriousness of that infection spreading to other parts of the body. Paul was very serious about cutting out the cancer of unrepentant sin, not because someone was breaking the rules, but because sin is a cancer that spreads through the body.

We lie to ourselves when we think our sin can be self-contained. Why did Eve's sin spread to Adam? Because they had become one. The Bible is very clear; as the body of Christ, we are one. When one member of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. Sin is an injury against the body.

So, because church is not an event that we attend but a body that functions collectively under the headship of Christ, it is essential that we as individuals grow up in all things into Christ.

Second

Second, the body gathering under the headship of Jesus means that the moment an individual inserts himself into the head position, Jesus is cut off from doing what He wants to do through His body. The way that we gather opens the door to His leadership or shuts the door. He's not going to impose Himself. He's always looking for a place to lay His head, but He won't take control until He is allowed to be Himself through His body. To the degree that we, as His body, look to Him as Lord, He will lead.

He leads by His Spirit

How will He lead? By His Spirit in each member of the body. He won't lead exclusively through me. I will contribute, but the full expression of the Head will not come through one member of the body. This is the tension I have to deal with as a leader. I have to understand my assignment. There are seasons when I will have permission to say,

“Follow me as I follow Christ...imitate me as I imitate Christ.”

But I also have to know when to sit down. I have to understand when Jesus is wanting to speak through someone else, express a part of Himself that I am unaware of...when His Spirit has given a revelation to another member of the body.

Admittedly, this takes practice for all of us, and this takes time...especially when we have been so conditioned to gather in a way that is not the Jesus way. The goal is not to get it right every time we gather. The goal is to yield to the leadership of Jesus in our midst.

He knows our frame. He knows we are just dumb sheep. But if we are pure in the motives of our hearts when we gather, then we will see Him lead us well. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Colossians 1.13-3.17