

Refer to this viewer guide as you watch video session 3.

A person is saved for eternity by faith alone in Christ alone.

When the Bible talks about discipleship, it talks about a cost.

You're saved by faith apart from works (Rom. 4), but you become a disciple by a faith that does work (Jas. 2).

Faith without work will keep your faith dormant. Your Christianity won't work for you.

The word *saved*, when you're not saved, means to be delivered from eternal separation from God. When you are saved, it means God delivering you in history.

Discipleship requires a commitment.

The Commitment to Be a Disciple

1. Come to Him. 2. Carry your cross.

Your cross, as a kingdom disciple, is the price tag that comes with your public identification with Him.

To be a kingdom disciple means that you wisely, lovingly, and appropriately make it clear that you are a Christian.

It is your willingness to be connected with Jesus that makes you a disciple.

Three Tenses of Salvation

1. Salvation past from the penalty of sin—being born again

2. Salvation future from the presence of sin—glorification

3. Salvation from the power of sin—sanctification

Confession is related to your deliverance in history, not your deliverance in eternity.

You are not only a Christian going to heaven. You're a kingdom disciple who has heaven joining you on earth.

Discuss the video with your group, using these questions.

Dr. Evans began by talking about the difference between taking a class for credit and auditing a class because you're interested in the subject matter. What's the difference between being a disciple and someone who merely audits the Christian life?

Compare Romans 4:3-5 and James 2:14-17. How do these passages complement each other? What essential aspects of the Christian faith does each one teach?

Salvation is free, but discipleship requires a commitment. What has it cost you to follow Jesus?

Read Luke 14:26-27. What two specific costs of discipleship can be identified from these verses? What did Jesus mean when He said a disciple must "hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters" (v. 26)?

Dr. Evans pointed out that Jesus' public display of carrying the cross shifted sentiment about Him. As we begin to follow Jesus, what might change about the way our culture views us?

What's your cross to carry?

We live in a society that's growing more pluralistic by the day. Many are tempted to hide their belief in Jesus. Why is speaking about Jesus necessary for a Christian (see Acts 4:18-20)?

Read Romans 10:9-10. Based on Dr. Evans's teaching, how should we understand confession in the context of these verses?

Why must Christians be both visible and verbal followers of Jesus?

Read week 3 and complete the activities before the next group session.

Personal Experience

Kingdom Confession

If you were accused of being a Christian on your job or in your community, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Or would you be found innocent?

Jesus made a clear connection between His followers' public acknowledgment and confession of Him before people and His confession of us before the Father. Jesus didn't say if you confess His Father before people, He would confess you before Him. Confessing that you believe in God wasn't His goal. After all, it's easy to say you believe in God. People pour so many variant definitions into the word *God* that just saying the name doesn't always convey a degree of commitment.

However, when you publicly confess Jesus Christ, everyone knows whom you're talking about. The name Jesus can't be confused or watered down.

Publicly confessing Jesus can be compared to a married person who wears a wedding ring. That wedding ring is on the ring finger to make a public declaration of a legal, binding relationship with someone else. You can be married and choose not to wear your ring so that no one will know you're married, but I doubt that your spouse will condone that choice.

A lot of Christians today who've married into the family of God as the bride of Jesus Christ don't want to wear His ring. They don't want other people to know they're bound to Jesus in a covenant relationship. When it's not convenient to be associated with Jesus, they simply say, like Peter, "I don't know the man." Jesus made it clear that because of this choice, when they call on Him and He's acting as the mediator between them and God the Father, He will deny that He knows them.

This week we're going to look at the ways your private commitment to Jesus and your public confession of Him affect the level of His power and authority that you experience in your life. Few people realize the connection between committing to and confessing Jesus and overcoming life's challenges. But when you make that connection and live it out, you're on your way to fully realizing all you were created to be and do as a kingdom disciple.

Day 1

Foxes Have Holes

Foxes are interesting creatures. Their small frames and bushy tails offer a deceptive appearance of gentleness. Yet foxes are anything but gentle. With a stealth like hunting ability, they often pounce on their prey from seemingly nowhere, thus obliterating any chances it has for survival in just a manner of seconds.

Foxes don't discriminate when it comes to what to have for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Any small mammal will do. In addition to taking the lives of these mammals, foxes sometimes take their dens. Foxes have been known to overtake the living quarters of rabbits, badgers, and other mammals in their efforts to find a warm, safe environment for sleeping.

Foxes set the scene as we consider a kingdom disciple's commitment to Jesus Christ. After all, it was Jesus who made the comparison between foxes and Himself when He said:

The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

Matthew 8:20

When a man asked Jesus if he could follow Him, Jesus expressed a spiritual principle by using a physical, tangible illustration. That principle is the unpredictable, uncertain, and often physically limiting realities that can surround a disciple. While foxes may have dens they've swiped from a rabbit or a badger to sleep in, Jesus made it clear that if we want to follow Him, we aren't guaranteed even that much comfort.

Based on your knowledge of Scripture and the life of Christ, list three other common provisions or predictable patterns in life that Jesus lacked while on earth.

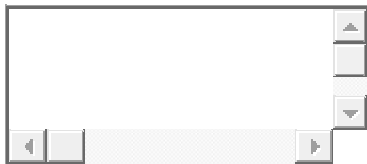


- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

A disciple is to imitate the master. What comforts or certainties in life would you be willing to forfeit if Jesus asked you to do so? Why or why not? What would be the challenges you would face in doing so?



What's a positive outcome of sacrificing physical needs or wants for a greater calling?

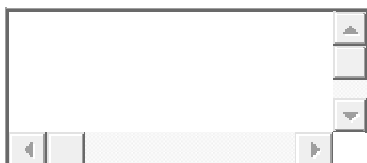


Jesus explained to His audience that if they weren't willing to endure physical privation in order to follow Him or if they were going to prioritize their family, security, or way of life over Him (see Matt. 8:21-22; Luke 9:61-62), they weren't fit for His kingdom.

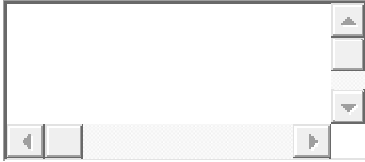
Simply put, looking back to what you know, feel comfortable with, or rely on after starting out on the path of discipleship doesn't cut it. Why is that? Just as a farmer can't plow a straight line while looking over his shoulder, you can't move forward in your faith accurately and authoritatively with your eyes set on anything but Jesus Himself.

Jesus was saying that if you try to plow looking back, you can't carry out His kingdom agenda. Do you remember Lot's wife? She had left Sodom, but Sodom hadn't left her. Although she had been put under a mandatory evacuation plan by God Himself, she didn't want to leave her comfort zone, history, or possessions. As she started to leave town, she began to regret leaving. She looked back despite the angel's warning (see Gen. 19:17), and God stopped her right there (see v. 26). Unable to evacuate or return, she lost everything—even her life.

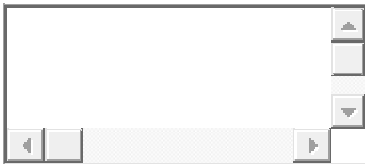
Read Genesis 22:1-12. How did Abraham's obedience to God differ from that of Lot's wife? Was Lot's wife's partial obedience true obedience? Explain.



Have you ever shrunk from obeying God in an area in which you knew He was asking you for full commitment? How was God’s work in your life affected?



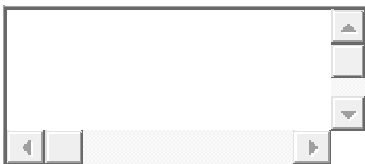
Read Matthew 22:37. What word appears repeatedly? Define it.



When you choose to live as a kingdom disciple, Jesus doesn’t guarantee a roof over your head, a promotion at work, or social popularity. Being a kingdom disciple isn’t a sure way to success as the world defines it. Every disciple other than John died for his faith.

Read that sentence again. Every disciple other than John died for his faith. Underline it. Meditate on it. Don’t skip over it, considering it buried in the dusty annals of church history. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb. 13:8). His call to discipleship is no easier now than it was when He walked on earth. His first fully committed kingdom disciples didn’t die a peaceful death, at a ripe old age, surrounded by family and friends. Most of them died brutal deaths. Some were even crucified upside down.

Read the following verses and record similarities in what they say about the cost of discipleship: Mark 8:34; Luke 14:27; John 15:18; Philippians 1:21; 2:5-8.



Before we go further in this study, are you sure you want to be a committed kingdom disciple? This isn't a fast-track ticket to the top. If you commit to truly being a kingdom disciple, there will be a cost. That's guaranteed.

Few people are willing to pay those costs today. That's why we have so few kingdom disciples. And that's also why believers are experiencing so little power, authority, and victory in our own lives and are having so little impact on the lives of others.

People embrace comfort today. Kingdom disciples are often called to forgo comfort for the cause of Christ. How is a willingness to set aside your comfort a confession that you're willing to live for Jesus?

What are some comforts you enjoy that God may be calling you to let go of to pursue Christ more fully?

How does being supported by a community of kingdom disciples help you persevere in your confession, even when it becomes costly and difficult?

Prayer

Loving Lord, being Your kingdom disciple isn't a stroll down easy street. It comes with a high cost of committing to You, Your plan, Your way, and Your will. I admit that can be scary to think about. Give me the courage I need to live as Your disciple so that I can fully experience Your presence in my life. In Christ's name, amen.

Nails, Wood, Doors and Roofing

Have you ever built a new home, or have you ever hired a builder to construct one for you? If you have, then you know that before the grader ever hits the ground to clear the way for the foundation, the finances must be discussed. No new-home builder sets out to construct a house without verifying the buyer's financial viability and credibility. He also calculates an estimate of expected costs so that by the time the house is built, there's little doubt that the buyer can afford it.

We've been doing a major renovation job on a quaint, large home built in the 1930s. When it's done, the refurbished facility will serve as our Tony Evans Training Center's media hub for recording Bible studies and creating online courses. Before we set out to start the project, we sat down with the builder to look at anticipated costs. Yet, as you may know if you've built or refurbished a home yourself, some changes came later on that we hadn't known about at the start. For example, we needed a bit more soundproofing so that vehicle and airplane noise wouldn't hinder the filming that would take place. The new expenses required a change order that tacked on the new cost, thus keeping a documented financial trail for the entire project.

If these change orders hadn't been discussed or if we had proceeded with the initial financial assumptions, it's possible that when the building was done, we wouldn't have had the needed funds to pay the contractors.

Counting the cost is what Jesus was referring to when He compared the commitment of discipleship to building a new home:

Which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish."

Luke 14:28-30

Describe a time when you started something you weren't prepared to finish due to inadequate preparation. What feelings did you experience?

What did you learn from that experience?

How important is it to consider the cost before you begin something? Why?

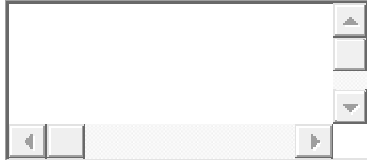
Recall faithful Christians you've learned from over the years. What did it cost these brothers and sisters to follow Jesus?

In His illustration Jesus was saying that being His disciple involves planning and calculations on our part. We must plan to follow Jesus. We must plan for things to cost additionally along the way as well—unexpected expenses and costs of being a kingdom disciple that we may not know about at first. In asking for full commitment to Him as His disciple, Jesus is asking us to be fully prepared for the costs we know about now and those that may come later. The cost for discipleship is always a cross. For Jesus, many of the disciples, and many of faithful Christians since, the cost of discipleship was their lives. Your cross may be different, but following Jesus will cost you something, whether it's friends, family relationships, reputation, success, or even your life. Or it may just be your convenience, time, and finances. We must all bear a cross. Christians can't get a crown with a cross.

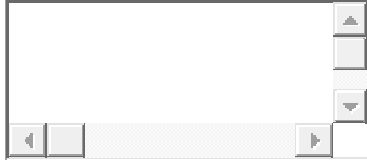
Jesus is saying to each of us, "Pull out your spiritual calculator. Add up the cost. Include a budget for costs to come. Make sure you understand what you're doing. Make sure you have the spiritual capital and are willing to invest what it takes to finish. Evaluate whether anything in your life is hindering you from being My disciple. Then, when you've done that, pick up your cross and follow Me."

Read Luke 10:3. Would does this verse reveal about Jesus' expectations of His disciples?

How does the expectation of being a lamb among wolves change the way you live as a follower of Jesus?



How does the authority that Jesus have given us make it possible for us to live this way?

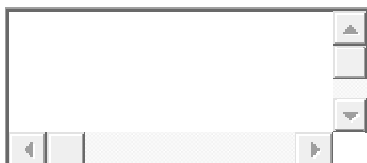


A hallmark verse on the commitment of discipleship is Luke 9:23:

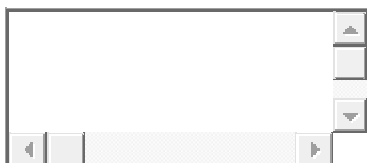
If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.
Luke 9:23

In this verse Jesus wasn't talking about physical death, because we can't die physically every day. He was talking about a day-by-day orientation to life. He meant that following Him means setting aside our preferences and desires when those desires are in conflict with His. Bearing a cross daily means making the determination every day to choose Jesus above all else. He was calling us to discipleship, not just eternal salvation. He went on to emphasize the fullness, usefulness, satisfaction, and victory that result from the decision to follow Him, saying that those who follow Him will save their souls (see Matt. 16:24-26; Luke 9:24-26).

What about carrying your cross daily makes you uncomfortable? Why is following Jesus worth the discomfort?



In what ways can you be more committed to carrying your cross daily as a kingdom disciple?



Carrying your cross involves denying your personal plans. It means saying no to your desires when they conflict with God's will. It means placing every area of your life under God's kingdom rule. It involves funneling all of your decisions through His purposes. It includes every moment of your life. There's absolutely no division between the sacred and the secular for a kingdom disciple. Everything is sacred because God bought your life at a price (see 1 Cor. 6:20).

Now you know why there are so many Christians but so few committed kingdom disciples. It's not a club you sign up for or a small group you attend. It's a full-on, no-holds-barred dedication of everything to Christ that makes you who you are.

What areas of your life have you made off limits to Jesus? Why are you unwilling to relinquish these areas to Jesus?

Consider your time, your talent, and your treasure. What would it look like to carry your cross in each of these areas?

Prayer

Heavenly King, thank You for clearly outlining for me what commitment looks like as Your disciple. You've made it clear what it means to follow You. I want to follow You with all of my life. You're my King, and I'm grateful to You for all You've done to give me the opportunity to live as an heir in Your kingdom.

Day 3

Publicly Confessing Christ

As we saw in the past two days' lessons, being a kingdom disciple is no small matter. It requires dedication, commitment, sacrifice, and planning. But Christ makes one other requirement of His disciples, and we'll look at that element in the remaining three days this week. That requirement is confession. As His disciples, we must publicly confess His name and who He is throughout all areas of our lives.

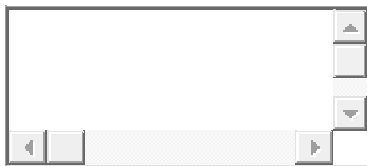
The word *confess* means to openly and publicly affirm and declare where a person stands on an issue. It means to say the same thing that person would say. Living as a disciple of Jesus Christ involves a willingness to publicly declare and demonstrate a commitment to and an association with Him. In other words, our commitment isn't just to be known and witnessed by ourselves and God. It's to be something that people around us can't help but see as well.

So what does such a confession look like?

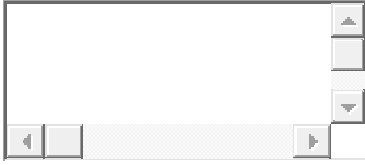
- Does it mean posting verses about Jesus on your social-media channels?
- Does it mean telling the people where you work about Jesus?
- Does it mean publicly praying in a restaurant?
- Does it mean handing out gospel tracts?
- Does it mean telling the moms in your mom group or the men in your workout or gaming tribe about Jesus?

All of those actions seem obvious ways to publicly confess Jesus to others, but publicly confessing Jesus goes beyond simply telling about Him. It involves our choices in our everyday lives. Though it would be nice to have a list we could cross off and say we had confessed Christ, the complexities of confession run deeper into the grooves of our daily grind. For example, women can publicly confess Jesus by what they wear. Do your clothing choices reflect alignment under His headship and His desire for modesty (see 1 Tim. 2:9)? Men can publicly confess Jesus in what they say about others. Do your conversations or comments with friends reflect thoughts that honor women (see Matt. 5:28)?

Read 1 Peter 3:15. How is honoring Christ as Lord a means of confessing Him as King?



What happens when Christians publicly speak about Jesus but without the gentleness and respect Peter called for?



Why do you think it's critical to publicly confess Jesus in a way that's gentle and shows respect?



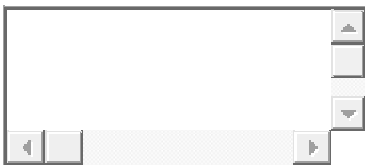
Jesus declares that your willingness to confess Him becomes the marker of your seriousness about Him as His disciple. Being a disciple is much more than simply believing in God. Even Satan believes in God.

Alignment under the lordship of Christ—putting Him in first place—involves publicly declaring and demonstrating an association with Him in both words and actions and submitting to His rule over every area of your life. But for your confession of Christ to be aligned with His holiness and character, it needs to be clothed in humility, gentleness, and respect.

Read Colossians 3:12. What are some of Christ's attributes that we should reflect as His image bearers and disciples?



In what way can living out these attributes enable you to be more effective in publicly confessing Jesus Christ through your words, actions, and interactions with others?



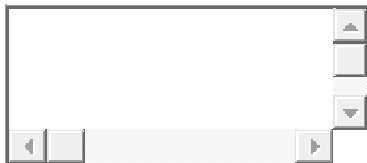
When you publicly confess Jesus Christ in a manner that reflects and honors His character and attributes, you're living as a disciple aligned under His lordship. Another term for this relationship is *abiding* (see John 15). Abiding in Christ allows you to access the authority He died to secure for you so that you can live effectively in a world contaminated by sin and Satan.

Have you ever been watching cable television only to have the channel go out and the words "Searching for signal" appear your screen? That's what has happened to many believers who don't live in an abiding relationship with their Lord. They're cut off from accessing His authority. They have the ability to access His authority, but the signal has been interrupted. They've allowed the enemy to interfere with their communication and alignment with Jesus Christ.

How important is reflecting the character of Christ in publicly confessing Christ?



Have you ever had someone say something to you, but their actions, nonverbal communication, or character didn't reflect what they said? Did that cause you to believe them or to disbelieve them?



Confessing Jesus goes a lot further than a simple word here or there, passing out a tract, or posting an inspirational saying on social media. Truly confessing Him as His kingdom disciple is a lifestyle. It involves your thoughts, character, presence, motivations, words, and actions. You may have heard the statement "Preach always, and when necessary, use words." Confessing Jesus Christ should flow freely through all you do so that everyone you come into contact with knows that He's not only your God but also your Lord.

Prayer

God, I want to confess You through the way I live, what I say, and the choices I make. I want my life to reflect You in all I do. Help me abide in Christ so closely that He's a natural part of my everyday life. Teach me what it means to be still in Your presence. In Christ's name, amen.

Day 4

Jesus as Lord

The Book of Romans is a great theological document that Paul wrote to the Christian church. In chapter 10 he included two verses that have confused a lot of people over the years. They read:

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Romans 10:9-10

These two verses identify two steps we must take to be saved: confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts. The problem is that every New Testament teaching on how to be saved says we have to do only one thing: believe (see John 3:16; 5:24; Acts 16:31; Rom. 4:4-5). Yet the Book of Romans says we must also confess. So either the Bible is contradicting itself, or this passage in Romans must mean something else.

The answer to that dilemma lies in the context of the passage. Here Paul wasn't instructing sinners on how to become saints. All that's required for salvation is belief (repentance and faith). You must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to go to heaven, but you must confess the Lord Jesus Christ with the content of your life to follow Him as a disciple. Confessing Jesus means you're living in a way that brings ultimate glory and honor to Him alone.

Describe the difference between eternal salvation and earthly discipleship in your own words.



In what ways can failure or refusal to publicly confess Jesus Christ hinder your personal victory and spiritual growth?



When people accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior by believing on Him, His righteousness is immediately imputed to them as their righteousness. They're saved, in the eternal sense of the word. But when they make a public confession of Jesus Christ as their Lord, they receive His deliverance in the here and now, in history. Confessing Jesus and receiving His ongoing deliverance are the means of accessing God's ability and intention to intervene in situations in which you need divine assistance, such as external challenges or internal struggles.

The word *saved* means "to be rescued or delivered." The reason a lot of people who are going to heaven aren't seeing heaven join them in history is that they've believed, but they haven't confessed. In other words, they've declared within themselves whom they're trusting for their salvation, and they've placed their faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. But they haven't made an ongoing public confession, or declaration, of Him as their Lord through word and deed.

In what areas of your life do you feel you can improve in publicly confessing Jesus Christ as your Lord?

What steps will you take to step out in faith and begin to confess Jesus Christ more publicly in your everyday life?

Read 1 John 4:15. What's one result of confessing Jesus Christ as Lord?

In biblical days Christians were brought before the Roman magistrates for declaring Jesus as Lord in their speech and actions. The term *Lord* means “supreme ruler or authority.” The Roman authorities attempted to persuade the Christians to declare Caesar as Lord and to deny Jesus as supreme ruler and authority. Believing in Jesus didn’t get the Christians hanged or tossed to the lions for sport. Believing in Jesus as the rightful Ruler and Lord did. There’s a difference.

The reason we may not be seeing more of God’s rescue and deliverance in individual lives, homes, churches, and communities is that we’ve positioned Jesus as our Savior but not as our Lord.

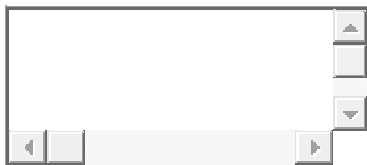
Describe the difference between believing in Jesus (believing that He exists or is God) and believing in Him as the rightful Ruler and Lord?



Would you say you believe in Jesus as the rightful Ruler and Lord of your life? How do you demonstrate that belief in your words, actions, and thoughts?



Read 2 Corinthians 4:5. What does it mean to have a servant-master relationship with Jesus? Why is this relationship good for us?



Frequently throughout the New Testament, the disciples and the apostles regularly referred to themselves as bond servants or slaves of Jesus. The Book of Romans opens with these words: “Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus ...” (Rom. 1:1). *Bond servant*, translated from the Greek word *doulos*, literally means “slave.” A slave is someone who has a master or a lord. Declaring Jesus as your Savior takes you to heaven, but declaring Jesus as your Master or Lord brings heaven to you. It’s in acknowledging your rightful place under Jesus as His *doulos*, or slave, that you receive His delivering power on earth.

We, the collective body of Christ, are His slaves. We’re His kingdom disciples. The job of a slave is do whatever the Master says to do. It’s as straightforward as that.

Unfortunately, Jesus has to compete with many other masters in most of our lives today. Remember that Jesus isn’t willing to be one among many. He isn’t willing to be part of an association or a club of many different masters. Neither is He willing to be relegated to our personal assistant. Jesus as Lord means Jesus is to be *the* supreme ruler and master. He calls the shots, and He’s to be acknowledged as Lord in every aspect of our lives.

The problem is that too many people want a Savior but don’t want a Lord. Therefore, a lot of Christians today are experiencing the result of publicly denying Christ. They’re likewise being denied by Christ before God the Father. Tomorrow we’ll look at what that denial means, and we’ll identify some ways it reveals itself in our lives.

Before tomorrow take some time to think about the condition of your heart. If you’re reluctant to confess Jesus as Lord, what’s the problem?

Whom do you know who models what it means to follow Jesus and confess Him as Lord daily? What qualities of his or her life could you implement in your own life?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I want to live with You as the Lord of my life. Forgive me for ways I haven’t done so in the past and give me wisdom to change my thinking in this area. I want Your will to be done, and I want to experience Your pleasure. In Christ’s name, amen.

Day 5

Confessing the New Covenant

Jesus publicly denies us when we publicly deny Him by failing to confess His name. Several passages in both the Old and New Testaments give us insight into the way this denial occurs. You'll clearly see from the context in which these verses appear that the people being addressed are already saved from an eternal standpoint. Their eternal security has already been decided, so they're saints on their way to heaven.

Thus, the word *deliverance* in these passages doesn't refer to salvation in view of eternity. In the framework of these passages, deliverance is God's helping hand in history. Calling on the name of the Lord invokes heaven to join us down here on earth.

Read the following verses and describe the type of salvation or deliverance referred to.

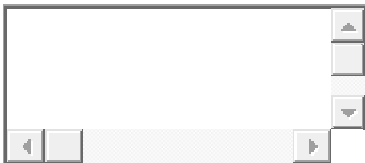


Joel 2:32

Romans 10:13

1 Corinthians 1:1-2

Read 2 Timothy 1:8. What does Paul urge us to do? How did he back up that urging with his own life choices?



You've probably heard someone say, "I plead the blood." They're talking about the blood of the covenant. However, the way to plead the blood of the covenant isn't simply by saying some magical words. You plead the blood of the covenant by being under the terms of the covenant—by making Jesus Christ the Lord of your life and the Ruler of your world, an action that's at the heart of kingdom discipleship.

In Old Testament times the Israelites couldn't just say, "I plead the blood." They had to put the blood on the doorposts in order to plead it (see Ex. 12:21-23). It involved more than merely saying the words. They had to place themselves inside the protective confines of the walls that were connected to the blood-stained doors.

Likewise, covenantal alignment under the lordship and rulership of Jesus Christ is required in order to experience His kingdom power, authority, provision, and covering. We read about this new covenant:

He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

Hebrews 8:6

He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 9:15

... to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

Hebrews 12:24

There is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

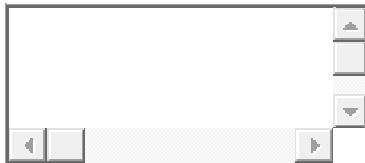
1 Timothy 2:5

As the mediator of the new covenant, Jesus is our Master.

If you hold a job, you know what it means to report to a boss. What are some things you can't or shouldn't do or say to your boss?



How do you show Jesus the respect, obedience, attention, and verbal honor that are due Him as Lord?



Most of us know what it's like to have a boss and why we treat him or her differently from most other people. For example, if you're talking with someone and your boss calls, you say, "I need to pick this up; it's my boss." Everything changes when the boss is involved. With how much more reverence should we hold our relationship with Jesus Christ. And yet He's often the last person we refer to, look to, or include.

Our choices have a cause-and-effect element that most of us aren't aware of, just like the choices we make with our boss. Jesus says He must be first place in our lives, and when He's not, the effect will be a lack of His involvement and deliverance when we need it. He said:

Everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 10:32-33

If for no other practical reason than accessing the power of deliverance on earth, you must establish and declare Jesus Christ as Lord in your life and over your world as His kingdom disciple. You must publicly open your mouth and let others know by what you say and by what you do that He's your Lord and Master and that you aren't ashamed to be associated with Him and aligned under His authority.

Jesus is seated at the right hand of God in heaven, and you're there with Him through His redemption on the cross (see Rom. 8:34). Access His power and authority by publicly declaring His lordship in your life. His blood has established the new covenant under which you're to align your life and your world in order to receive His full covenant covering and protection (see Heb. 9:15).

Rewrite Matthew 10:32 in your own words and state its application.

In John 20 Thomas had been doubting that Jesus had risen from the dead when Jesus invited him to touch His wounds and be certain that it was He. Thomas responded by calling Him “my Lord and my God” (v. 28). Differentiate between the two terms Thomas used and explain how publicly confessing Christ can apply to both.

I have a master key to the church where I'm the pastor. My key can work in any lock because it's a master key. Because I have a master key, I can go anywhere in the church. Church-staff members may have keys to their own offices, but those keys are limited only to specific doors.

A lot of us aren't able to go everywhere we need to go because we don't have the Master key. We've got keys for certain rooms. We come to church, hear a sermon, and receive a truth that provides a key for a certain room in our Christian life. We must understand, however, that the key to the Christian life for kingdom disciples is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master. The ability to live victoriously and advance God's kingdom agenda on earth comes through this unique Master key called total surrender to the lordship of Christ. Only when the lordship of Jesus Christ is reflected and represented through His people individually and corporately as kingdom disciples will the world experience God's rule and authority as the Creator intended it to be.

How do you need to live in God's authority and power this week?



Prayer

Dear Lord, honoring You in my thoughts, words, and actions comes naturally when I view You as my Lord and my God. You're to be the deciding factor in every activity I choose. You're to be the focal point of my conversations—Your will, Your ways, and Your wisdom. In Christ's name, amen.