

Lord of our Following

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[0 : 00] My name is Jesse, one of the pastors here at One Harbor, and thanks for coming. Thanks for being here with us. This is why, I mean, it's great to like, those of you who are gonna be listening to this online later on during the week, it's great that you're keeping up digitally, but man, there's nothing like being in the crowds, seeing this in person, getting to participate.

It's just moments like we just had with praying for and charging our youth and those of us who are committing to discipling them as well. So we're continuing in our Colossians series. We only have a handful of weeks left. And so it's been an amazing book, looking at Jesus, all he is, all he's done, and what it looks like to follow him, which is kind of where we're really at. It's like where the rubber hits the road. If Jesus is who he says he is, he's both savior, creator of all things, fully God, fully man, but he's also king.

And so if he's king, then he's a king that he commands. And he gives us instructions to follow. And so his words aren't just like good advice. Man, they're authoritative words.

[1 : 02] And they're authoritative words where he is saying, come and follow me. And Jesus isn't a do as I say, but not as I do kind of leader. Actually, we don't sit back and money. We're like, man, what's it look like to follow Jesus?

His whole, he moved into the neighborhood. He stepped out of heaven and came into the neighborhood and walked among us. And his disciples that walked with him, they beheld what he did, how he spoke, how he lived.

And they wrote those things down. We actually have eyewitness accounts of Jesus and how he lived his life. And so a part of him coming to earth was to give us an example, to see how he calls us to live.

And so we have this wonderful example of his that we can look to. And so last week, we kind of looked at what it looks like to follow Jesus as leaders, as people that may be in positions of authority.

And many of us are. And if you're not yet, trust me, someday you will be. And so what does he say? How does he say, how is he Lord over our leading? And how does he speak into that?

[2 : 02] And today we're gonna look at how he speaks to us as followers. He is Lord of our following as well. And I just wanna say that before we get into it, it's really important that we started with looking how he's Lord of our leading because the kind of leadership that Jesus calls us to follow is radically different to the leadership around us.

See, leadership like Jesus serves sacrificially. We looked at that last week. It doesn't use people to build themselves up. Actually, it lays down its life to build up people.

If you look at the cross, this is what Jesus was doing. He laid down his life for our sake, to redeem us, to set us free from sin. And death. But Jesus, he didn't just come to show us how to lead.

He also shows us how to follow. And so when we look at the verses we're gonna look at in Colossians today, we're gonna use that as a jumping off point of how we can follow like Jesus followed.

So Colossians 3, verse 18, and then we're gonna look at verse 20 as well. It says, wives, submit to your husbands. So we see this word submission. It's an action word, something we're called to do. Submit to your husbands as it's fitting to the Lord.

[3 : 12] And then verse 20, it says, children, obey. So we see this obedience quotient as well. Obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. And so we see over all of this, Jesus is Lord of our following.

We see two pictures, two actions that actually describe what it means to be a follower. And the first picture we get is one of marriage and a wife submitting to her husband's leadership.

Now, this doesn't mean that women are devalued because of that. Actually, that is not true at all. Just because someone is a leader and you're a follower doesn't mean you are a lesser person of value to them at all.

In fact, the Bible doesn't give us any of that. We'll get into that in a little bit. The second thing we see, the second relationship is the child to parent relationship. The child obeying their parents. Okay, wives submitting, children obeying. Now, here's the thing. If you're like me, we look at those two pictures. The first obstacle that I wrestle with, that I say like, oh, this is gonna be easy.

[4 : 16] I'm gonna accept this and live this out is there's not, sometimes there's abusive parents. There's abusive people. There's abusive husbands, right? So what do we do?

What kind of God would come and say, it doesn't matter what your circumstance is. I demand submission and obedience in every single case. Now, let's be honest. The church has sometimes confused these matters as well by keying on select verses and ignoring the tensions found in the Bible, the whole of the Bible.

We have the words of Jesus and the apostle Paul that say, hey, a wife can't divorce her husband except in the case of marriage infidelity or adultery. And this has been used in conjunction with this passage to the church has used this in conjunction with this passage to force a wife to stay in abusive situations, which unfortunately just doesn't account for the whole of scripture.

And here's an example that I'm talking about. When you look at the life of David, we see him under an abusive authority. He's under the kingship of Saul and he's in Saul's presence.

He's doing life with Saul and Saul gets very abusive towards David to the point where his life is being threatened. He's chucking spears at David, right? And it's happening because of petty jealousy that Saul had for David.

[5 : 34] He's not only chucking spears at him, he's falsely accusing David of being an insurrector. And so we see this in their particular relationship dynamic, this abuse that's both physical, emotional, and verbal.

All these things kind of wrap into one. Now, here's what's interesting. David had this ethic not to take revenge on the Lord's anointed, say the Lord had comment and said, okay, Saul, I'm anointing him as king.

He's gonna be the head, the federal head, the leader over Israel for a period of time. And David was saying, hey, God has chosen that. I'm not gonna step in and take revenge.

I'm not gonna use my might and take vengeance and say, oh, Saul chuck spears at me. Well, I'm gonna pin him to the wall then, right? He doesn't respond in kind. And so we look at this and we kind of misunderstand this whole thing of not touching the Lord's anointed to again, kind of bolster this false idea of like, no matter what the situation may be, wives and children have to submit to even abusive people.

But man, you know what? The funny thing is, God doesn't force David to stay in that situation. In fact, David rightfully flees and creates space from Saul to keep himself safe.

[6 : 44] Now, he doesn't lay a hand on Saul, which means he doesn't seek revenge, but he also doesn't stay there. God, he, David realizes that man, to lay hands on Saul would be violating that principle of touching the Lord's anointed, which he wasn't meant to do.

But at the same token, David's saying like, hey, God also hasn't forced me to stay in this craziness. And so to put yourself in a place of safety, that is totally okay.

And I just wanna, I'm pointing this out because some of you need to hear that before you can hear anything else about following. And submission and obedience. And rightfully so. A lot of you have been in tough situations, abusive situations that are painful and hurtful.

And I just wanna say, I'm sorry for that. And man, I hope that you are able to get yourself into a safe place. Or that you have already gotten to yourself into a safe place.

And I'm thankful that that can be so. So now with that caveat, what does it look like? When we think of the whole context of the Bible of submission and love, what does it look like?

[7 : 50] Well, the Bible and the submission and love in the biblical context assumes a relationship of love. And that is what we get when we look at Jesus's submission to the Father. That's the thing we always wanna go back to.

That is the point. That is the point. And that the perfect example that we have. Submission and obedience exist because of love. So when we think about who God is, we talked about this last week.

It's a God is not one God existing all alone by himself. He is a community. He exists in community. He has always existed in community, right?

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And so it is a relationship, an unbroken relationship of love. Love has always existed. It is existing today and it will always ever exist, forever perfectly.

And so Jesus, what he did, he comes into earth and he puts flesh on this reality of what Trinitarian love, the love between him and the Father looks like.

[8 : 52] And one of the places that we see it most vividly is actually at Jesus's baptism. And there's a lot of accounts for this, but I wanna pick one up from Luke. Chapter three, verses 21.

It says, now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized. And while he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came out of heaven and it said this, you are my beloved son. In you, I am well pleased. So we see that actually Jesus's baptism is one of the parts of the story of Jesus that is included in all of the gospel accounts.

And I think for very good reason, none of them wanted to miss, have us miss this reality, right? They wanted us to see that man, when the Father looks down on his son, when God the Father looks down on Jesus the son, what he sees is delight.

What he sees is the person of his, the object of his joy, his delight and his love. And it wasn't a delight based on Jesus's performance. This happened before Jesus started his earthly ministry.

[10 : 04] What we see is God looking down and delighting in who Jesus is, not what Jesus did.

And I believe God's purpose was to show us what their relationship had always been from the very beginning.

The Trinity's love isn't response, it's always initiation. The Trinitarian love isn't responsive kind of love, it's actually an initiating kind of love. See, what we see before the Father says anything is that Jesus got baptized and explains why later on.

He got baptized because he loved the Father. Not to earn those words of love, but because he loved him. And he says, man, we have to do this to fulfill all righteousness. I'm doing this because this is part of God's plan and what he sent me to do.

And so I'm doing this because I love the Father and I do what the Father wants me to do. And then what we see is God speaking those words of love, but he doesn't say, you know what? This is my beloved son.

I delight in him because he got baptized. He just says, man, this is my beloved son. In him, I'm well pleased. So it's all based in this initiating love. This little baptism moment, it shows us this connection between love and submission.

[11 : 14] Love not only initiates, but it also believes the best. And that's what Jesus had. When you think of Jesus, he believed the best about his Father. He got baptized because he had trust and he believed the best about him.

Submission and obedience exist where there is trust. See, Jesus could initiate loving obedience. He could do that because he fully trusted in the Father's love. He had a whole eternity to rely on for that, right?

He had experience and enjoy the Father's perfect love, not because he was having to do anything to earn it, just because the Father loved him. And even before that public statement, Jesus knew that love.

The Father simply was affirming that publicly. And I think he did that more for our benefit than he did it for Jesus's benefit. See, this love and trust they were showing us, and it's always been there.

And that's what perfect love is. And that's how it exists. And which means that submission, the kind of submission Jesus had, submission wasn't introduced. It wasn't a result of sin.

[12 : 18] It wasn't like Adam and Eve sinned and ended the world. And God says, well, we have to introduce this new idea. You know, we gotta have like people submitting to other people. Actually, when we look at Jesus's relationship with the Father, we see actually, man, submission predates sin.

And that means that it's gonna continue on into eternity forever. Submission and obedience is one of those elements that is a forever reality. It's a thing that has always been and will always be.

But until then, while sin is around, we have to admit this. Submission and obedience is gonna be hard, right? Because sin makes submission and obedience hard because it violates love and trust.

Sin not only corrupts our leading, it really corrupts our following as well. Sin, what it does, it says, no thank you to God's perfect love.

It says, you know what? I'm gonna replace that perfect love with a counterfeit love. And see what happened at the very beginning when Ab and Eve, when they ate of that tree, when they ate the fruit of that tree, ultimately what they were saying was no to submitting to God.

[13:32] And they were saying yes to submitting to no one but themselves. Like the temptation that was there that Satan came in and whispered to them is like, you know you could be like God.

You know that you don't have to really be submitted to him anymore. You get to make the rules for yourself. You get to live autonomous. It's kind of funny when you think about that.

It's no small deception that one of the great secular doctrines of today is self-love. It's the counterfeit love found in the counterfeit trinity of me, myself, and I.

See, ultimately, what sin does and what sin is is it's loveless and it's trustless. It robs us of love horizontally.

It robs us of love vertically. It robs us of trust vertically and it also robs us of trust horizontally as well. That's what it does. I mean, you think about one of the more popular songs that people love to play at funerals.

[14:41] The soundtrack is I Did It My Way, right? Frank Sinatra's like anthem for this moment. It's the soundtrack of our culture. I Did It My Way.

We celebrate that. But what that is, it's actually, what that is is a celebration of an unsubmitted life. We sing that loud and proud, but guys, man, you know what?

The people who sing that loud and proud, what they don't realize is they're singing that loud and proud in an increased solitary confinement. Their world relationship is getting smaller and smaller.

So, what's our other option? If the soundtrack of our lives is in I Did It My Way, is it supposed to be I Did It Your Way? I mean, let's be honest, no one's buying that song, right?

That's never going to be on the top of the I-team charts at all. And it's for good reason. As we look at that and we think like, man, I Did It Your Way, well, you know what? We look around, there's not a lot of people worth submitting to.

[15:42] You know? I mean, you think about guys like Hitler or Lenin and the atrocities that they imposed on people. And those guys weren't worth submitting to.

Like, doing it their way, not a good choice. And we don't have to go that radical. Let's tailor it down. Let's kind of ground it into more of like our spheres, our realities.

You know? What if the person in authority over you, that could be a husband or a parent or a pastor or a boss, what if they're pushing you to violate your faith and your conscience?

What do you do? How do you work out submission and obedience in that moment? And here's what's helpful and I think the Bible speaks to this very clearly.

Submission and obedience must never contradict submission and obedience to Jesus. Colossians 3.18, it says, Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

[16:45] So not submit to your husband's blanket statement no matter what, as is fitting to the Lord. That's a qualifying statement. Which means if Paul had to say this, he realized that there, not all submission is fitting to the Lord.

but then how do we determine what is fitting? Again, it goes back to it shouldn't contradict submission and obedience to Jesus.

And again, Jesus gives us the perfect example of what this looks like. John 5, verse 19. So Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord but only what he sees the Father doing.

for whatever the Father does that the Son does likewise. See, Jesus, he gives us this amazing, perfect example of what submission is.

It's not, I did it my way, nor is it, I did it your way, as in human leaders, those around us, but it is, man, I did it or we did it God's way.

[17:50] That is where the Bible's telling us that's where we need to go. When we look at Jesus' life, that is the anthem of his life is I did it the Father's way.

I didn't step out and go rogue on my own. I didn't get off the reservation. I wasn't doing it without looking to him, seeing what he was doing and wanting me to say and then following suit.

Jesus was this example of perfect submission to the Father. He wasn't perfectly submitted to all the voices around him that were saying, you can't do this, you can't do that.

He responds to that by saying, hey, I'm doing this because this is what I see the Father doing. I have no other choice. He submitted to the Father and guess what?

It wasn't a blind submission, right? It wasn't like, oh, I'm kind of guessing what I'm supposed to be doing here. He could see what the Father was doing and he followed it and likewise, guys, your submission, my submission shouldn't be a blind one.

[18:49] we should be able to look at our leaders and see through them and through their actions that actually what they are doing is they're following Jesus. So when you look at submission and to people in authority over you, you should be able to look through them and see a direct line to them following Jesus.

It's not an uninformed opinion. And as we grow in the word and the spirit and them speaking to us and informing us our vision and our clarity for what a godly leader looks like, man, it makes that even easier to see and then to be joyfully submitted.

That's what happens. And here's what this brings up. I mean, if you think about this, the essence of being a disciple is following an example.

I mean, Jesus called his disciples. He didn't say, hey, come and take my course over at the university over here and learn about all the things I taught.

He said, come and follow me. And he still says that today. Discipleship is following an example set by other people, which is why you can't follow Jesus on your own.

[20:05] You can't be a disciple in isolation. You are gonna be a truncated disciple. Your ceiling of growth and maturity is gonna be very low. It has to be done in community.

The Christian dynamic of leading following is what Paul says, follow me as I follow Christ. That's what following is.

Follow me as I follow Christ, which means this. Every leader is a submitted follower and every submitted follower is a leader.

I mean, think about that. That is what Christian discipleship has always been throughout all the generations. People living in that reality and living out of that reality.

Young people in the room, you were just up here. Don't wait until you graduate high school or start driving or some other big moment you think in your life, well, I can't really be a follower.

[21:02] I can't really be a leader until this happens. No, no, no. There's no age requirement for when this starts. When you commit to following Jesus and submit to him, you not only become a follower, you also become a leader.

As you follow Jesus, you look to others, you're following someone, you're following Jesus, you look to others and you're saying, oh my gosh, I'm following them, but you're also looking behind and saying, you know what, follow me as I follow Christ.

Now, this takes intentionality. It takes intentionality on our part. That's not easy to do. We have to set aside time in our lives for this to happen.

Community doesn't happen without intentionality. Two hours on a Sunday morning isn't enough. We have, that's why we talked about community.

That's why community groups are so important. That's why we push people to get into them because it's one more moment where we get around each other, where we're encouraging one another, where we're getting into each other's lives, where we have a chance to say, you know what, let me set an example so that people can follow me as I follow Christ.

[22:12] We get around others so that we can look to others for an example. We can see through them and see, ooh, that person's following Christ. I'm gonna tuck in behind them and follow their example so that through my following them, I'm ultimately following Christ as well.

And that's not easy to do. It requires sacrifice. It actually, it takes time. So it means giving up some really good things for the best things. But just because it's hard doesn't mean we shouldn't do it, right?

It's like exercise. It's like working out. Do we love to do it? Some of you weirdos love to exercise. I'm not talking to you. I'm talking to the majority in the room that are just like, do we like to exercise?

Well, no, not really. Is it good for us?

Absolutely. And sometimes we have to get to a place where we realize like, you know what, following Jesus and doing this means like, is it gonna be convenient? Am I gonna be in the mood to do this? Not always.

Maybe even very rarely. But it doesn't mean it's what's best for you. So Jesus calls us to follow him in that matter, in the context of community.

[23 : 16] Now, I also wanna say, man, in our context here in Hablock, it's even a little bit harder, man. For you guys that are in the Marines or the Navy or you Coasties here, man, there's severe time limitations on this, you know, because basically the Marines or the Navy or the Coasties, I mean, they basically own your butt.

They can tell you you need to be here when we want you to be here and you have to be there when they say that. So I realize, man, this is a hard thing to do. And the other reality is most of you are gonna just be here for three years and then you're gonna move on.

But I want you to think about this. Jesus only did ministry for three years. Now, let's be fair. Those three years were like really devoted just to ministry. I realize like they didn't have a master sergeant breathing down their neck saying, you need to show up, you need to be over here.

But you get my point. The principle here is that, man, we have to be intentional, especially if our time is abbreviated. Look how intentional Jesus was in those three years.

It's tempting to come and just kind of remain uncommitted knowing that things are gonna change and it's gonna be not too far away. But I wanna challenge you and I wanna challenge all of us in the room.

[24 : 31] Man, we only got so much time in this life. What are we gonna devote it to? Man, we can live for things that are ultimately gonna pass away or we can live for eternity.

We can leverage our life. We can leverage the time that we have for something greater than ourselves, something that's gonna outlive our lives, something that will continue on long after you and I are gone and nobody remembers who we ever were.

Jesus' church, his kingdom, his redemptive story that's being played out, he's calling us into that.

We get to be a part of it. That thing has a 2,000 year legacy in counting and it's full, you look to the past and it's full of disciples devoted to that cause.

Follow me as I follow Christ. We today get to step into that reality and continue that legacy today. It is a huge privilege.

And when we pass away, that is gonna continue on. We'll have given our lives to something that is a forever something that is never gonna end. It's only gonna increase and grow and grow until the coming day of Jesus and his return.

[25 : 50] The church today stands on the foundation of Christ and on the generations of saints who have come before us and passed on this example of what it looks like to follow Jesus.

It's a huge privilege. If you're here and you're not a Christian, I wanna call you today into this privilege. Jesus is calling you to follow him. And you know what?

That means giving up. Giving up your autonomy, giving up your right to say, I wanna do it my way and saying, you know what? I'm laying that down and Jesus, I'm gonna do it your way.

It's recognizing that because of sin, you have no right to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Jesus has paid for your admission into Jesus University to become a disciple.

You can't pay your way into that. It doesn't matter how good your grades are. It doesn't matter how many rules you followed. You can't make an endowment to get in.

[26 : 51] It doesn't work that way. Jesus paid it all. He paid for your sin and all of us who are following Jesus, we remember and recognize that, man, Jesus paid for our sin and Jesus is calling you today to lay down your life, to lay down your right, to say, I'm gonna continue doing it my way and say, man, Jesus, I am going to surrender to you.

I need you to pay for my sin and I'm gonna follow you as Lord and Savior and I wanna invite you to do that. You don't have to earn your way in. It's not do better, try harder. It's all grace. It's all because of what he has done and he's beckoning you today to come to him.

If I could have the band come up. I wanna speak to those of us in the room who are following Jesus already. Just thinking about what we talked about, how is Jesus calling you into more surrender today?

What is he calling you to give up? What is he calling you into? Who are you following? Who is your example? And who is following you?

What example are you setting for others to follow? I'm gonna ask you this question too. What is keeping you from following others? What is keeping you from that?

[28 : 12] And if you were to stand before God today, if you were having that conversation, would he say, oh, I get it. That's okay. Or would he say like, hmm, actually, my command as king of the universe was follow me.

Some of us, we need to make adjustments. That's what repentance looks like. Some of us, some of those adjustments are gonna be easy. Some of those adjustments aren't gonna be so easy. But man, you know what?

I just wanna say, God's not gonna love you less if you struggle through that or not. But man, he's calling you because he loves you and he knows best, he knows what's best for you and me. trust your savior. Submit to him. Obey him. Follow him. As a disciple of Jesus Christ.

And as we come to take communion today, and we don't come with a heavy heart, we actually come reminded that like, whew, what we do isn't this heavy demand that robs us of joy.

[29 : 13] What we do is because Jesus paid it all for us. we get, we are a part of Jesus' university. We get to be disciples that follow him and help each other follow him because he paid the ultimate price.

The body, his body that was broken represented in the bread. The blood that was shed represented in the cup. And we get to take part of those things and remind ourselves that this isn't a duty of drudgery.

It is a delight because of what he did for us, man. And it's a communion that brings us together, united in Christ, for that end. Let me pray.

Thank you, Jesus, for the privilege that we get to tuck in behind you as a leader. Thank you for the privilege that we have to follow you.

Lord, man, it can be tough at times because of sin, because of people that should be discipling well that don't, that we don't get to see you through them.

[30 : 18] But Lord, help us, Lord God. Help us to be examples that are worth following. And Lord, bring us to people that are examples worth following. I pray, Lord Jesus, as we head into this new term of community groups that's starting September 8th, that we would realize this is what we need.

This isn't an optional extra, man. This is a great rhythm. It's a means of grace that we get to get around each other, that we get to be disciples following you and setting an example for others to follow.

Do that, Lord God, and I pray that we would experience such joy in this. It's not always going to be easy, but man, there is no better way to live life than doing it this way.

So we thank you for that privilege. Amen.