

# Living Under Jesus' Lordship - Part 1

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, good morning, everybody. Let me just join everyone else in welcoming again our rising middle schoolers.

! You get to be with us this entire summer. And again, it's just part of the transition in life, right? So yeah, all those benefits, Pierce said, but also you get to listen to Boring Preacher for the next 30 minutes. So all in all, plus minus, right?

A couple of quick announcements, things coming up in the life of the church, just to remind you, coming up on June the 12th at Creekside Park, we've got our youth volleyball and nine square hangout, absolutely.

All the details of that are on the app, just like everything else. And then June 13th to next Saturday, we've got our partnership class. Last chance to sign up for that. That's if you've been coming to City Grace for a while and you really think this is just a place that God has placed you and you want to know just a little bit more about who the church is, what partnering with us looks like, sign up for that.

And then on the 14th, High School Youth Preview Night for rising ninth graders. Check that out as well. A lot of things going on in the life of the church as we head into summer.

[ 1 : 06 ] If you have your Bibles, you can go ahead and turn to Colossians chapter 3. If not, no worries. The Scripture is going to be on the screen. We're going to be continuing today in our Colossians series.

And over the next two weeks, we're really going to be moving into a passage of Scripture that just, quite frankly, inevitably will raise some eyebrows in the room. Okay?

So this is just one of those passages that frankly has the potential to make you squirm a little bit. To make you anxious for maybe a couple of reasons.

Maybe it's because when I read parts of this, you'll go, wow, like I wonder what he's going to say about that. Or maybe a little more anxious, like I don't know what that's going to mean for my life or my faith.

And so you're definitely going to feel a little bit of that this morning. But no worries if you're feeling a little anxious this morning. Next week is worse. Like so, so much worse. Okay? So before we read it, I do think when we come to a passage like this in the Bible, it's always helpful to give a few prefacing notes, right?

[ 2 : 12 ] To kind of help us settle in here. And the first is simply this. Look, you don't have to be afraid or embarrassed by your Bible. Okay?

This is not a passage where like the pastors looked at it as we were studying for this series and we're like, oh, that's going to be a man. Like we had to draw straws and like I got the short straw. I mean, to be sure there are passages of Scripture that are harder to enter into than others. But at the end of the day, look, I trust Jesus and who I know Him to be and I trust what He says about God's Word.

So you can move into any segment of Scripture and be confident that you're reading something God wants you to. That being said, when you do come to something in the Bible that's difficult or just challenges a preconceived notion you have or makes you uncomfortable, you are allowed to wrestle with it.

Like you are allowed to ask questions and to work through it and to seek out what it actually means. I mean, it should be obvious enough that there's simply no way I can cover everything there is to say about a difficult or a debated piece of Scripture in one sitting.

[ 3 : 27 ] So while we're always going to strive to kind of give you a studied and prayerful presentation about what we believe God is saying, one sermon is never the last word on it. It's just

a way to engage it and you're allowed to wrestle through it.

But I would give you one admonition in that, which is this. If you're going to be offended by Scripture, make sure you're being offended by what it's actually saying, not what you mistakenly think it's saying.

I mean, if you're going to wrestle with it, wrestle with what the text actually says, not just what alarm bells go off in your head. Because there's plenty in Scripture that rightly understood is going to offend your sensibilities.

Maybe because it challenges your priorities. It tells you that the thing you think is most important in life is actually not that important. Maybe because it calls out your sin.

There is something in your life that you don't want to stop doing and Jesus says you've got to stop doing and you don't want to hear that. Maybe because it tears down some idol, something that you think is worthy of worship.

[ 4 : 36 ] Or maybe just simply because all of Scripture assaults your ability to be your own God. To say that I am the center of the world.

Those are things that Scripture is rightly going to make you mad about. But it's also possible to be mad about something that the Bible is not actually saying.

So let's strive not to do that today. Also for this morning, a bit of a special consideration for this segment. Because the verses we're going to be looking at are really going to be speaking into some of the most intimate personal relationships in our lives.

And that's a really important place to look into. But when we approach it, we have a problem when we read it, which is sin makes everything harder.

What I mean by that is in this passage, Paul is talking to a community of believers who've chosen to follow the Lord about what following Jesus is going to mean in their lives.

[ 5 : 42 ] And so the presumption that he has is that these instructions are for people who are filled with the Spirit and actively following Jesus.

But relationships, unfortunately, don't always look like Jesus. Kind of a sneak preview. We're going to read today that children, you should obey your parents.

Middle schoolers, I swear we didn't plan that. I just swear it fell. And as a very general statement, I would say many, if not most of us, would say, yeah, that's a good and right admonition.

But because sin mars everything, we come to that and we immediately start to have some whatabouts in our mind. What about when a parent's abusive?

Or cruel? Or what about when maybe just a parent is leading a child into unrighteous or worldly things and not towards Jesus? The Bible tells us that marriage is intended to be this till death do us part relationship between a man and a woman.

[ 6 : 56 ] That is the intent. That is what God wants. What about when there's violence? Or infidelity? Sin makes everything harder.

And if you have those kind of questions, those are the things when you approach them in life that really require wisdom and kind of the full counsel of Scripture for a particular circumstance in this broken world.

So as we read today, I'd encourage you not to throw away any of those what about questions, but again to just recognize what this letter is intending to do is to draw our gaze not to all the complicated and difficult ways in which sin has messed up the world, but to draw our eyes towards Jesus and what that picture of who He is might mean in our daily relationships.

So with that, let's get to it. And we're actually going to back up to one verse from last week, verse 17, because I think it's the framing and the bridge into this passage. So in Colossians chapter 3, verse 17, Paul says, And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

And then against that backdrop, Paul then says, Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

[ 8 : 33 ] Children, obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged.

This is God's word to us. So as we saw last week where Paul gives kind of these broad and general instructions to all the believers in the church, he's now going to turn his attention to what doing everything in the name of Jesus specifically means in some of our most personal relationships.

And whereas last week we probably could have put that whole segment under the broad banner of Paul telling the Colossian believers to be who they are and live how they are in Jesus. You know, as Kirk said last week, he's really telling them take off the stank of those old clothes, those old clothes don't make sense on you anymore and put that aside. What Paul really wants to make clear in these verses is that all of our relationships should be lived in relation to who Jesus is. So we're going to step through each of these individually but kind of circling back to what I said at the beginning, we kind of have to wrestle with the fact that these verses don't approach relationships from the angle we would like because what we like is commentary.

[10:01] We want a passage like this to be a comprehensive, marital, familial, societal commentary. And it is certainly not inappropriate to try to apply biblical principles to all places in our life and our family and society but that is simply not what these verses are trying to do.

The purpose here is to show you a picture of how everything in kingdom life is mediated through your relationship to Jesus. By extension, I would kind of put out there that I think anytime we run into themes of like authority and submission in modern life, our minds immediately go to what are my rights?

What are the limitations? What are the bounding principles? Like our fears are around things about how do I maintain the control I want in this scenario?

What is this going to mean to my worth or my safety? And again, as we're going to see here, those simply aren't the questions this segment of Scripture is answering.

So let's look at them for what they are. First Paul takes a look at the covenantal relationship between a husband and wife and he opens by saying, wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

[11:28] Now because there's no limit to the opinions in our day of what that means and what it should look like and I would say ranging from very broad ideas that don't give any clarity to like very, very specific instructions on who's allowed to do what in the house, I think this is just one of those verses for us where contextually it's actually more helpful to approach it.

What does wives submit to husbands mean? I think it's actually easier to come at this from what does it not mean? And the text actually gives us some help here.

Okay? So first, the verse does not say all women submit to all men. It is not a statement of generic all representative women.

Every woman is supposed to submit to every man. Whatever it is saying, it is saying specifically to wives and husbands. Now second, it is true here that there are different words given to the wives and the husbands.

It says, to the wives submit and to the husbands love. And there is intentionality in that. It's not something that's simple as, well, they're both kind of the same word. They have overlap, but there is intentionality in saying love and submit.

[12:44] And so we want to explore that. But it's also true that a different word shows up when we get to children, which is obey. Which means, at the very least here, the wife is encouraged to submit, not to obey.

Which means, a wife is not a child. The picture, so if your picture of wives submit is, hey, that means I'm in charge, so I say and you do, then you've lost the plot.

Third, and this is really critical, the verse does not instruct husbands to make their wives submit. Whatever the admonition is, it's to the wife.

And I'll just tell you in point of fact, from a lot of years of walking in life and doing ministry, there is absolutely no fruit in trying to force someone to submit who has no interest in submitting.

In a lot of ways, wives submit is a verse for the wife to memorize, not the husband to enforce. But it does mean something.

[13:56] So what does it mean? Well, in a minute, like I said, we're going to look at this word, obey, obey, which carries more of the connotation of external compliance with given instructions whether you agree with it or not.

But the word rendered submit here has the connotation of a posture of the heart that voluntarily yields oneself to another.

I think immediately we kind of have a problem with it because submit is a dirty word to us. And possibly because we just have a bad vision of what submit means.

I would put forth a lot of times when submit comes up, what I found people's view of that is it looks like get on your knees. Like it's a picture of somebody like with their boot on the heel of someone's neck.

You know, it's like submission to us is like UFC, right? Like you got somebody at an arm bar and you're trying to tap them out, right? Like make them submit. That is not submission, that is subjugation.

[ 15 : 06 ] And that's a different thing. Different picture. The picture of submission in scripture I would argue looks more like a dance. Where one partner extends their hand and leads.

And the other responds. And it is true enough if both are trying to lead at the same time it can be a mess. But in a good dance the leading is not forceful.

It's intentional and collaborative. And no one who looks at two good dancers immediately thinks, you know, the one who's leading is more important than the other one.

And I think that's really the key because what we want to do and indeed I think what you often see when this kind of verse is preached is again we immediately want to fill in all the details of what this love submit dynamic would mean for every area of marital life.

I mean some of you are probably thinking right now, listen, does it mean I have to do the dishes or not? like who has to change the diapers? That is the thing I want to know.

[ 16 : 21 ] But remember the heading here is as is fitting in the Lord. Do everything in the name of Jesus.

In Ephesians chapter 5 Paul fleshes this out a little bit and he says the wife should submit as the church submits to Christ and the husband should love as Jesus loves the church.

So rather than trying to lay in all the details like a like a rules or policy guide or or delve into some kind of self-help session where I tell you about the differences and how men and women are made and how that's not what Paul wants to do here.

He wants you to think about it in frame of Jesus and so I think what this verse would if you were going to start somewhere again instead of thinking about all the details I think it would be helpful if you're a wife to just ask yourself this one question how do I see the church submitting to Jesus in scripture and what would it look like for me to be like that in submitting to my husband?

the verse isn't meant to spell out every detail and tell you what you have to do and not do or paint some kind of one size fits all picture it's really meant to be as you in your interaction with Jesus and the Holy Spirit are reading scripture and you are seeing the ways in which the church submits to Jesus to let the spirit illuminate to you what would be a blessing and then if you want to be brave and take the next step this is a verse that's meant to call you to go to your spouse and to ask your husband what would me submitting to you as Christ submits to the church look like to you?

[ 18 : 16 ] what would be a blessing? Paul has something to say to husbands as well he says husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them husbands same question how do I see Jesus loving the church and scripture and what would it mean for me to be like that in loving my wife and this is a side note here he says love your wives meaning what would it look like to love your wife not some generic archetype of wife your wife which means the wife that you know and you want to know and you want to ask so then you too should go a step further and ask your wife what would me loving you as Christ does the church look like to you?

what would be a blessing? and then listen to what each other says I do think at a minimum it would mean you as a husband are to be considerate and tender because Paul says here into a culture that by the way would have presumed the husband has a right to basically do what he wants but Paul says do not be harsh with them do not make submission to you a bitter task back to the dance imagery the one who is leading isn't forcefully jerking their partner all around the stage they're not berating them when they're not getting it like they want it they're not saying I don't want to hear anything you have to say because I'm leading it's a leading that feels more like an invitation than a demand and then as you go farther as a husband it's not hard to start to think about how Jesus literally gives himself up he dies to save his bride the church and you can start to imagine what it might mean to do that certainly your mind might go to like well I would die to save my wife and children

I would hope so like that's that's a call that you would want but it's not just some ultimate thing day by day what does it mean to die to yourself for your wife for her flourishing to love the way Jesus loves his church maybe another important side note here these verses are encouraging you to love and submit like or in the same manner but nowhere in here does it say your spouse replaces Jesus

which means I'm not going to submit to my husband in exactly the same way I do Jesus because he's not Jesus which means you're going to try to love your wife like Jesus but you're never going to be Jesus to her and I think that actually helps a little bit again with like framing in your mind what this might look like because it means husbands you aren't Christ to your wife she doesn't submit to you in exactly the same way as she does

Jesus you are not her Lord and Savior but you are to love sacrifice like him what if she's not respecting or submitting to me you are not called to make her submit your charge is not make her submit your charge is love her like Jesus does wife your husband isn't Christ his love will not ever be perfect like Jesus but what would honoring and submitting in the way you do to Christ look like and again I would say if you're still struggling here particularly if you just feel like man you don't know my husband I'm just more capable I'm more intelligent I'm more sophisticated okay like you're just kind of choking on the word submit again I think it would be helpful to kind of ask yourself the question are you comfortable submitting to anything like a boss at work a pastor a mentor the police like if they pull you over and if the answer is no which I would hope for most it isn't then I would humbly submit that that's just not a position followers of

Jesus get to take healthy authority and submission is both presumed and commanded in scripture and the position of I submit to no one and nothing is not a position any Christian gets to take and if the answer is yes like I understand that submission is part of kingdom life but I just have a real problem with this in marriage I don't I can't envision myself deferring or respecting or letting my husband lead me into anything then I think it is worth asking why you're comfortable submitting to those other things but not to your husband whom God has commanded to love you Jesus doesn't feel in any way inferior or unequal to the father father and yet in the mission to redeem his church he very willingly submits to the father's will for

[ 24 : 00 ] Jesus a lack of submission was not a requirement for an equal partnership and I think the real beauty here is a husband and wife get a ton of liberty on how to work this out in their marriage should wife stay at home or not wisdom issue what should we do with wisdom issue there's a lot of liberty to what that looks like what you don't get to say though is I don't care what it says in the Bible and I'm not even going to consider it because it's offensive to me the verse is there to make you think on how does Jesus love his church how does the church love Jesus Paul continues with this theme for children and parents he says children obey your parents and everything for this pleases the Lord same dynamic as a child you reveal and honor

God in this world by obeying your parents as God's people obey him children you know those of you who are still in your parents house again you don't need me to tell you this but your parents are not perfect and they aren't the ultimate source of authority in this world Jesus is but what would obeying them like God's people obey look like frankly obey is a stronger word than submit it means unless it is sinful or destructive you are going to comply even if you don't understand or agree with it even if you don't think they know what they're talking about even if it thwarts your plans and what you want to do in the moment and not because of who your parents are because of who Jesus is God is asking you to trust that honoring and obeying your parents is part of how you as their child reveal God to the world and at a minimum

I think that would be a posture that could at least say I respect the fact that God gave me you as a parent goes on to speak to parents it says fathers do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged you know I know it may not look like it at first glance but throughout scripture God's requirements for those who hold authority are typically much weightier from those who are asked to submit he says here fathers but I think we can easily enough infer from this father as a representative of parental authority so mothers as well it's effectively saying parents don't provoke your children which means don't use your authority and their call to obey you to enrich yourself or make your life better to take advantage of them don't use your authority to apply pressure or shame or pain to get the obedience you want don't try to use your authority to use them to atone for some failure in your life it actually says don't parent in a way that they would become discouraged courage do you know what the word courage means this is actually one of those ones where I actually think there's there's some value in just reading the dictionary definition courage is the ability to do something difficult to face danger or to endure pain even when you feel afraid it's from the Latin root which means heart which means like courage comes from here isn't that what you would want for your children to be able to move with that full heart into a world of darkness the verse says parents don't discourage your children don't lead them in a way that steals their heart

and makes them shrink from the world authority in scripture is always moderated in relation to Jesus you can only wield authority to the good and love and flourishing of others and that really brings us back to I think the central idea of all these passages we are called to commit to Jesus lordship over our relationships you know honestly though I know it probably isn't in our modern day that should probably be the most offensive thing in the verse that

Jesus is lord and not you and I think the reason is because we tend to make earthly relationships the most important the most central thing like it seems silly to say really your marriage is about a picture of Jesus and the church like that doesn't feel exciting to us we don't want it to be that to consider that your relationships your spouse your children isn't about personal fulfillment or goals or an image you have in yourself of what your life is going to play out the purpose of them is to glorify God that's just not something we naturally gravitate towards but living under Jesus lordship means you adopt a non idealistic idealistic view of relationships not idealistic but like idol like my little idol my precious human associations and hierarchies all of them evolve and end but the kingdom never does marriage is meant to be full of beauty and blessing and depth maybe like no other relationship and life but marriage is not eternal

[ 30 : 28 ] I know that might actually be hard for some of you to hear that your marriage isn't eternal but for better or for worse sickness and health till death do us part for a husband and wife for one of you the last act of covenant is going to be to lay your spouse in the arms of Jesus children leave the home they grow up and you may say well yeah they're still my child yeah they will still be your child but they will not always be children I mean it's cliché but it is true right if you've raised children I'm sure you remember well that man the days are long but the years are short and that command to obey doesn't persist throughout their lives one day you're gonna wake up and you no longer have children you have a grown up child and it doesn't work the same way anymore maybe if you find your significance at work that's probably the worst place to do it but

I'm sure all of you can imagine like go back and look at the org chart at your place of business five years ago like those names come and go who's in the top block don't care five years from now nobody cares you weren't there these relationships are meant to be good things wonderful things but they are not ultimate things and that's why Jesus can speak into them in this manner because he's not concerned about the fulfillment or the rights or those kind of things and it is the easiest thing in the world to live our lives like Jesus is just one other bucket right like so over here I've got my marriage bucket and here I've got my parent and family bucket and over here is my work bucket and here's my recreation bucket my hobby bucket and then over here is my Jesus and church bucket and you know like yeah I have to balance that out right like sometimes you know I gotta fill this bucket more maybe I'm neglecting the Jesus the church bucket and I gotta fill a little bit more but Jesus refuses to be a category he is not one more area of your life that you can choose to just give a little more time to Jesus isn't a bucket he's actually a lot more like the water like the only reason the buckets have a purpose is to be filled with the water and that's why the call today and in this verse in Colossians isn't just to be a better or a specific type of husband and wife or child or parent to paint a picture of this is the only way that Christian marriage can work this is the only way you can relate to each other the call is to recognize that Jesus is the reason it's to commit to this verse we read at the very beginning and whatever you do in word or deed do everything in the name of the

Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him that is a lot harder may God give us the grace to do that amen as the band comes up today if you're here today and you're not a follower of Jesus look there are there are a lot of things what a Sunday to walk in on I guess but man there are a lot of things that people get offended about in the Bible and if it bothers you again that's okay like I said you're allowed to work through it you're allowed to come to different conclusions than me I'm not the oracle there are a lot of things in the Bible that Christians wrestle through but look by far the most offensive thing that's not up for debate that God says to us is you don't get to be your own God not because he's insecure or because you know he needs worship it's just because it's not how we're meant to live like I bet some of you might actually feel the weight of that of being the center of the universe thinking you're the center of the universe the weight of trying to be the center of your own story the weight of your own choices the wrongs that have been done to you and the wrongs you've done to others and the invitation today isn't come and be judged it isn't God with a paddle and I told you so it is God is the good father who does not discourage his children he wants to forgive you he wants to lead you into what your heart longs for he wants to do

that and Jesus has made that way if you want to do that today if any part of you feels that there is a better way to live there will be a prayer on the screen that's a way maybe you can express it or if you'd rather just come and talk to somebody we'll have some people down front but it is a heavy load to be the center of everything to believe it's all up to you to feel like you've got to be enough and knowing you're not enough if you are a follower of Jesus the question in all of our relationships is always going to be do it in Jesus name and that is going to mean interfacing with other people it's going to mean you know they are like we said there are some different dynamics here but whether you're hearing wives submit or husbands love everybody is called to die to themselves nobody comes at this from the advantage of the privilege

[ 36 : 33 ] I get it's how do we glorify Jesus the challenge to us is am I willing to do that even if it challenges my sensibilities or maybe even am I willing to explore it I didn't tell you one thing today I didn't tell you who has to do the diapers because it's not in there that's not what we're moving into what we're moving into is are you willing to engage when your relationships in a way that says how do I honor Jesus father we give this time to you you are our purpose you are the water that fills all the buckets you are the purpose you are the end you are the beginning Jesus I pray through your spirit your beautiful gift of holy imagination you will give us the grace to envision what you intend for our lives for our specific marriages for our specific parents and children relationships

God I pray you will do that in a way that doesn't scare us that just invites us in God I pray where we need to be challenged you will challenge us I will pray that where we have gone too far where we have ingested something that's not your word you'll take it away God we trust you we trust you to lead us into life into marriage into parenting into our workplaces God give us a give us an image of what it is I ask for that gift holy spirit Jesus we give you this time of communion as well we'll come to the table and take the elements Jesus I'm glad that you submitted I'm glad that you love I'm glad that we get to be in relationship with you

I'm glad that you don't forcefully make us submit to invite us thy kingdom come thy will be done in Jesus name name Thank you.