

**“Jesus is Lord!”**

Romans 10: 8b-13

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**Keep it simple.** One can quickly over-complicate their life. One can easily forget what is essential in one’s life because of all the voices and distractions out there. In the pursuit of wanting the ‘Good Life’ many in our society chase after stuff and experiences to get it all. We want to give our children and grandchildren all the experiences in life so that they lack nothing, but in this complicated busyness, we can lose the simple point of reference that ‘Jesus is Lord’! Do you and your family know that they are loved by God’s grace and that the Holy Spirit lives in them? The knowledge that ‘Jesus is Lord’ will give you a straight forward point of reference on how to live life from day to day. From that point of view, the value of all those other things in terms of the good life they offer will become clearer in your sights. The apostle Paul states in Romans 10: 8-10:

**“The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); <sup>9</sup> because <sup>[a]</sup> if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.**

**The Roman context:** During this time that Paul was writing to the church in Rome, the Christians were experiencing intense persecution. Rome was a highly religious city, and thus there was great toleration of diverse religions as long as they were polytheistic. That was the problem for Jews and Christians. The Christians and the Jews maintained the unpopular doctrine that there is only one God. Since there was only one God they refused to worship the emperor as a deity. Roman emperor Claudius hated Jews and drove the Jews from the city in 49 AD. This lasted for 5 years until Claudius died. Christians began to experience more persecution under Emperor Nero who had an intense dislike for them. He treated them with brutality. Close to the end of Nero’s reign he would capture Christians and set them on fire to provide light for his gardens at night.

The apostle Paul wrote Romans during the early reign of Nero when the persecution to Christians was just beginning again. For the Christians to state that ‘Jesus is Lord’ was a dangerous move for them and their families. Despite this persecution the church thrived and the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ spread. The Roman society was segregated and brutality was a way of life. The Christian faith on the other hand provided the way of grace through Jesus Christ and hope for all people!

**Karl Barth.** Noted as the most-influential theologian of the 20 Century, Karl Barth spoke and wrote against the tyranny of the Nazis’ attempt to create a German church. Barth was founder

of the 'Confessing Church' which reacted vigorously against Nazi ideology. The 1934 Barmen Declaration, which was largely written by Barth, was a document about the revelation of Jesus Christ against the "truth" of Hitler and his form of national socialism. Barth emphasized that 'Jesus is Lord' over all - not the Fuhrer! On one of his visits to the United States in 1962, Barth was asked how he would summarize the root essence of the millions of words he wrote and published. He replied, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

**<sup>11</sup> The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."**

**Living with the focus that 'Jesus is Lord' is simple but we need help.** It is not complicated, but also not easy. At the time before and during World War II many Christians were swayed by the spirit of nationalism. Barth spoke out against this and brought them back to reality that Jesus is Lord - not the state, not the Fuhrer and not you!

We can so quickly be tempted in our society. The story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness by Satan is similar to temptations we face today. Jesus was hot, tired, hungry and therefore vulnerable. The devil tried to tempt him with possessions, privilege and power at his weak moment. Jesus stood strong and resisted. These things will lead us to death if they become 'lords' of one's life. After these temptations Jesus said this - as recorded in Matthew 4: 10, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."

Examine yourself by asking the simple question: Is Jesus Lord in my life? In other words, is Jesus your point of reference everyday as you meet people, make decisions and go about your regular activities? Confessing Jesus as Lord, as you pray daily and as you worship, opens the door for the Holy Spirit to not only save you for eternal life, but for today as well. In remembering that Jesus is Lord, our eyes are opened to see others with the perspective of grace as Jesus sees them. The vision that Jesus is Lord is not complicated, but certainly not easy to carry out when all these other 'lords' are clamouring for our attention. We need help from God and from one another to stay strong. Remember: Jesus is Lord!

Prayer: Dear God, Please work your Spirit in our hearts to help us claim that "Jesus is Lord!" - in our words and actions. Help us be aware of the other 'lords' of possessions, privilege and power which are tempting us often in the most subtle way. Give us the courage to say no! - even when it is very unpopular to do so. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.