*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

September 18 - 23

“Jesus is Lord and Christ”

**Monday, September 18 Acts 2:24-36**

*“God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ”*

The resurrection is an act of God, affirming the person and work of Jesus. Because of who he is, he *cannot* remain dead. One author put it this way: “The abyss can no more hold the Redeemer than a pregnant woman can hold the child in her body.” Peter next states that Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of the Father and connects the event of Pentecost with this exaltation. Jesus received the Holy Spirit from the Father and has poured out what they have just seen and heard.

This leads to Peter’s statement that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. With the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, the disciples now fully understand the implication of who he is. Jesus, like God, is “Lord”; the term is used by Peter both of God and the exalted Jesus. As Lord, Jesus has taken on divine functions such as pouring out the Spirit and being the object of faith. The title “Christ” (i.e., Messiah, Anointed One) points to deliverance from sin and its effects. As Lord he reigns; as Christ he saves.

*By faith I have received you, Jesus, as my Savior and as my Lord. Amen.*

**Tuesday, September 19 Romans 10:9-13**

*“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”*

With the mouth one confesses “Jesus is Lord.” The confession that Jesus is Lord is one of the most basic distinguishing marks of being a Christian. With the heart one believes that God raised Jesus from the dead. The fulfillment of these two conditions brings salvation. Verse 10 elaborates further, only now in reverse order, with the heart coming first and then the mouth. Heart belief leads to being made right with God, and confession with the mouth of what the heart believes leads to salvation.

Paul goes on to stress that the faith that leads to salvation is open to everyone on the same basis. All are saved in the same way – there is not one means of salvation for, say, the Jew, and a different means of salvation for the Gentile. The confession “Jesus is Lord” unites both in the same faith and the same hope, for Jesus is “Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.” Paul underscores the universality of God’s offer in the gospel by quoting from the Old Testament prophet Joel (see today’s title).

*I confess you, Lord, with my mouth and believe in you with all my heart. Amen.*

**Wednesday, September 20 1 Corinthians 15:3-14**

*“If Christ was not raised, your trust in God is useless”*

When the gospel is reduced to its essence, it is an event in history. It was not something which was enacted in another place, like the activities of the Greek godson Mount Olympus, but a happening that can be given date and place and person on earth. Paul summarizes God’s activity in three statements: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and he rose again. This leads Paul to the main point of this part of his letter to the believers in Corinth: the resurrection of Jesus Christ was an event that took place and whose implications are enormous.

Evidently there were some in Corinth who doubted the resurrection of the dead. Paul addresses their doubt by pointing out the conclusions that would follow if there were no resurrection of the dead. First, Christ would not have risen – he would still be dead in the grave. Second, the message of the gospel would be useless and faith would be useless, for the gospel is only “good news” if Christ is alive and we are forever alive in him. Belief in Christ’s resurrection is central to our faith!

*I believe in your resurrection, Lord, and that one day I too will be raised. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

September 18 - 23

“Jesus is Lord and Christ”

**Thursday, September 21 Acts 7:54-60**

*“I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God”*

The Holy Spirit gives Stephen a vision of God’s glory and of the exalted Christ in his role as advocate in heaven. Note that Jesus is *standing* and not seated, as other Scriptures declare. In Luke Jesus is standing as an advocate in Stephen’s defense. Jesus had said, “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8). In keeping with that promise, as Stephen is rejected by earthly courts, he finds Jesus acting as his advocate. Acceptance by Jesus more than compensates for the pain of being rejected by his own people.

Luke describes how the angry audience acts in anger to put Stephen to death. Covering their ears to shut out Stephen’s words lest God come and consume them for listening to such blasphemy, the drag him out of the city for stoning. Stephen’s last words are almost identical to two of the last words of Jesus just before he died. He asks God to receive his spirit and not to hold this sin against his killers.

*You are my heavenly defender, Lord, and no power can separate us. Amen.*

**Friday, September 22 1 Corinthians 12:1-6**

*“No one is able to say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Spirit”*

The idea of the gift of the Spirit goes back to Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost when he closed with the fervent appeal to those who heard to repent and be baptized and promised that they would receive “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). In this twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul discusses how the Spirit operates in the life of the individual Christian in such a way that he or she discovers understandings and abilities not previously recognized. Paul calls them “gifts of the Spirit.”

However, there were some in the church who had not made a radical enough break from their pagan backgrounds, which employed counterparts to many of the controversial gifts of the Spirit. Some of them had doubtless spoken seemingly inspired utterances during various Greco-Roman religious rituals. But in those settings, participants who had heard of Christ’s claim might well have cursed him, so Paul notes that no one can sincerely declare Jesus to be cursed who is a true believer. Conversely, only Christians – those filled by the Spirit – can acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

*By the Holy Spirit who is in me I confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen.*

**Saturday, September 23 Matthew 16:13-18**

*“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”*

Caesarea Philippi is about twenty-five miles north of Galilee. It was a border town where the people of Israel met the people of the Gentile world, and a site of the worship of the idol Pan, the so-called universal god. In this unique setting, Jesus asked the question of his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” Their answer associated Jesus with three great voices of salvation history: John the Baptist, the herald of a new age; Jeremiah, the prophet of reform and hope; and Elijah, the prophet of power and miracles.

Jesus then asked the disciples point-blank, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter answered for himself and for all of his fellow disciples, an answer rooted in his experience of God’s revelation as it had unfolded throughout their relationship with the One they had come to know as the Son of the living God. Jesus affirmed Peter’s response, recognizing that his insight was not of human origin but by a disclosure from God, His Father. That Jesus is the Christ is not given people to believe through human wisdom; it is only believed when disclosed from above.

*I praise you, Father, for revealing your Son to me. Amen.*