

## **LORD AND SAVIOR**

**JOHN 14:8-15, 25-27**

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When believers are baptized, when young people are confirmed, when adults profess their faith, when elders and deacons are ordained, Presbyterians ask this question:

“Who is your Lord and Savior?”

It is the only question that may be asked of someone who says they wish to join a Presbyterian church. For us it is the most important question in discipleship.

The term LORD refers to authority. Long ago people called certain persons lords because they owned vast amounts of land or livestock and therefore had great financial or political authority.

Jesus did not have any land or livestock, but people called him Lord because in him they sensed the moral or spiritual or holy authority of God and wanted to give him their allegiance.

Everybody chooses a lord. Everybody chooses some thing or some one to have authority over their life. Money. Power. Sex. Popularity. Career. Family.

You may choose something bad or something good, but everybody chooses something to govern them...to be the thing or person that has final authority over the way they live.

When you say, “Jesus is my Lord,” you are saying that Jesus is the one you are inviting to be the authority in your life. You are saying that you will try to relate to people the way you think he might relate; do the kinds of things you think he might do; to think about things the way you think he would think about them.

The word SAVIOR refers to power. When you choose Jesus as your Lord, he becomes your Savior. He rescues you from confusion. You have someone to turn to who will help you sort out wise and foolish, right and wrong, good and bad. He lifts you out of loneliness. Friends come and go, but he stays.

He saves you from letting the worst parts of yourself gain control over you. They don't get control, because you've given him authority. He saves you from being defeated by anything because there is nothing that his love can't improve.

He saves you from being discouraged by yourself because he never stops loving you no matter what. You begin to feel empowered, bold, joyful.

Everybody chooses a lord, but not every lord can save you. Money, sex, popularity, career cannot. But Christians are people who say that Jesus is the lord who can save you.

He won't stop you from being you, but he'll bail you out, turn you around, help you begin again when things are not going well.

When we say Jesus is our Lord and Savior we are saying that we have the answer to life, we are saying Jesus is the answer to life.

Now shift with me to this morning's story. Philip says to Jesus in the Gospel of John, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

Remember the situation. Jesus was saying goodbye to his disciples. He was leaving them. They knew something bad was about to happen. The forces of the good and evil were lining up. A great conflict was to unfold.

So before Jesus turns to face the powers of this world he takes time to say goodbye to his disciples. To comfort and reassure them. It is safe to say that Philip is worried when he asks his question, Lord, if you are leaving us then show us God and then everything will be just fine.

Unless I miss my guess that is our question too. On any given Sunday there are enough of us here in Philip's shoes, asking his question, to make several small support groups.

Yes, we are here to be confirmed, to unite with this congregation, to sing the hymns, to see friends, to listen to a great choir.

But the bottom line is we are here today and every Sunday, each and every one of us, because the powers of good and evil are lining up in our world, because we are feeling a little bit alone, because we too want to see the Father, thank you very much.

The good news today is that we have already seen God in the person of Jesus – our Lord and Savior. The one who has ultimate authority, the one who when we pledge our allegiance to him saves us from the powers of darkness.

We gather here each Sunday, as I have said before, in this great yellow-brick Italianate church like chicks under the wings of Jesus.

But we must go back into the world. And when we do we go out not as frightened chicks but as bold and hopeful disciples because we have seen God in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. Because we have said to one another Jesus is my Lord and Savior.

We make the old statement of faith here on important occasions like today so that we can say it out there in the mundane routine of everyday.

We say it here in the light so that we can say it out there in the darkness.

We say it with one another so that we can say it when we are alone.

We say it when things are going well so that we can say it when things are going horribly.

This side of seeing God face to face "Jesus is my Lord and Savior" is all we need.

Knowing and trusting the one in whom is ultimate authority of God, the one in whom is the power that created the cosmos.

In just a moment we will ask our confirmands and new members to respond to that ancient question of our faith...who is your Lord and Savior?

And they will say Jesus is my Lord and Savior.

I invite all of us now to lead the way for our confirmation class and new members. I invite us to repeat again the essence of what we believe for them, for ourselves, for the world. "Who is your Lord and Savior?..."