



Unit 1: Withholding Nothing
Sermon Series Title: The Lordship of Christ
Sermon 3: Who's In Charge?
Bible Passage: 1 Peter 3:15a

Background/Context

If asked the question, "Who is in charge of your life?" most Christians will answer, "Jesus is." But when each of us considers the evidence of our lives, daily choices, attitudes, priorities, and values, we may be confronted with the truth that we have called Jesus, "Lord," but have not truly put Him in charge of our lives. Jesus warned us that calling Him "Lord" in an empty, thoughtless way is a symptom of spiritual confusion because those who truly know Him will seek to make Him Lord in all things (see Matt. 7:21-23).

Someone or something is in charge of your life. You may be controlling your own life. Your family may be in charge. An addiction can control the direction of your life. Even among Christians, church leaders are sometimes given the place that Christ alone deserves (see Col. 1:18). The lifestyle of a believer who truly honors Jesus as Lord will give evidence of seeking and doing Christ's will in the key areas of life. A believer will, in the words of our text, "in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as Holy." Look for that evidence in your life as you answer these questions:

A. Who Sets My Schedule? **(1 Pet. 3:15a)**

All of us deal with the crisis of a calendar crowded with competing commitments. What gets written on your calendar in ink? What moments of your day and hours of your week hold the high ground against all other claims to your time? If Jesus is the Lord of your life, then amidst this tug of war for your time and attention, He will guide you in setting your schedule. And if you follow His guidance, you will take time for worship. You will set aside private time with Him. Service to others in Christ's name will be on your schedule. You will answer Christ's call to restore balance to your life by coming away from the busyness of life to rest. You will live in the spirit of the Psalmist as he says to God, "Hour by hour, I place my days in Your hand" (Ps. 31:15, Msg).

Application Point: Take some time this week to study your schedule. At the end of each day, write down how you spent each hour of the day. When you get to the end of the week, analyze how you spent your time. How many hours of your week are guided by the lordship of Jesus?

B. Who Tells Me How to Spend My Money? **(1 Pet. 3:15a)**

Many of us can remember being sent to the store to buy something with our parents' money. While walking through the store, you might have seen many other things you would have been tempted to buy, but you had to remember whose money you held. You followed your parents' wishes, not your own, in what you spent (and what you didn't).

When Jesus is the Lord of your life, you realize that you are always spending your Heavenly Father's money. Everything you have is a gift from Him, so you spend it according to His wishes.

When Jesus is Lord, supporting His work through your tithes and offerings will be a financial priority. But Christians can't even stop there. When Jesus is truly the Lord of your life, you must honor Him in how you invest every penny He entrusts to you.

Application Point: Read your checkbook ledger or your bank statement. What does each entry say about your values and priorities? How much money is wasted and how much invested in spiritual things? Does the way you spend your money give evidence that Jesus is truly the Lord of your financial life?

C. Who Decides What is Right and What is Wrong? (1 Pet. 3:15a)

The Bible describes a time when Israel had no clear sense of what was right and what was wrong. Because they had no king, "everyone did whatever seemed right to him" (Judg. 17:6). In a spiritual sense, we are in that same confusing and conflicted situation today. Many people believe that each person can decide what is right or wrong for himself, with no thought of any higher moral authority. When Jesus is the Lord of a believer's life, He decides what's right and what's wrong. The Bible, prayerfully studied and lovingly applied, gives us the teachings and the example of Jesus. We are commanded to put His teachings into practice (see Matt. 7:24-27). We are called to walk in His footsteps (see 1 Pet. 2:21). He is the Christian's moral authority and guide.

Application Point: Think of a question of right and wrong with which you are struggling right now. Use a concordance or topical index to help you discover every Bible passage that offers Jesus' teaching or example on that issue. Then, prayerfully ask, "Jesus, how can I follow you in this situation?"

D. Who Tells Me who to Love? (1 Pet. 3:15a)

I grew up in a racially segregated community. Neighborhoods, schools, and churches were clearly divided by color. That shameful circumstance came from the fact that those in leadership allowed their culture, their tradition, and their prejudice to tell them who to love and who not to love. The clear voice of Jesus wasn't heard or heeded.

Every one of us has blind spots when we look upon the world Christ has called us to love. He comes to us with words that convict and challenge. Give someone who's failed you another chance. Minister to those the world looks upon as "the least of these" (Matt. 25:40). Hold your tongue when you've heard a juicy bit of gossip. Don't tear down a person just to win an argument. Be a blessing to those who've worked hard to be a curse upon your life. Overcome evil with good. Love your enemies. If Jesus is Lord, we offer love to any person He loves—which is everybody.

Application Point: Think of three people in your life who are difficult to love. Picture each of those persons in your mind and say, "This is a person created in the image of God for whom Christ died." Repeat that truth every time you think of that person and let those words lead you to a more Christlike love.