

“WE BELIEVE IN ONE LORD, JESUS CHRIST”
Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 9:2-8, Colossians 1:15-23
August 12 & 13, 2023

I want to start today with an illustration from science. It is well known that “brains don’t walk. Brains don’t talk. Brains don’t move. Brains are the control center of thought - the mind. The job of the body is to pull off the actions, movements, and operations that come from the brain’s direction.

“In medical science, there is the disease called myasthenia gravis and it is a disease of the nervous system. As nerves intersect with muscles, on the end of those nerves is what’s called a motor-in plate. This motor-in plate receives the signal that has been sent by the brain to the muscle and it is relayed to the muscle via the motor-in plate of the nerve. If a person thinks to himself or herself, ‘Move your arm,’ the arm would cooperate because the brain sends a message through the nerves to inform the muscle what the brain wants done.

“But in myasthenia gravis, there is a relay switch that’s not working. Even though the brain is sending the message, the muscle doesn’t get it because the relay switch, the motor-in plate, doesn’t transmit it. This results in the neurological disease, myasthenia gravis. Now, in order to fix that problem, you’ve got to fix the motor-in plate so that brain transmissions can be passed along.

“Now, here is the problem Jesus has. The church’s motor-in plate isn’t working. Jesus is sending us signals and we don’t hear. It’s evident the church doesn’t hear because we don’t move. If a person tells his or her arm to move and it doesn’t, something is wrong with either the brain or the arm. If the church isn’t moving, something must be wrong with either the church or the Head of the Body of Christ. Jesus is the perfect Head of the church. His thinking is sound and He only gives correct instructions. Nothing is wrong with Jesus as our Head. The problem is with God’s children.”¹ We’re not hearing His messages, and it comes down to who we make as our control center and who we listen to. We must change our motor-in plates to be receptive to hearing and obeying Jesus’ commands.

Here’s the deal. If we make the world our control center, then the world will control our

¹ (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Publications, 2009) pg. 170-171)

thinking, our actions, our attitudes and our emotions. If our spiritual bodies are taking orders from the worldly brain, then our motor-in plates will respond only to that which the world says and demands, because it is our control center. And we will do whatever the world tells us to do, we will respond to all that the world says, and we will follow the orders of the world to organize and live our lives according to its will and its ways. When the world is our control center, our whole life will be centered around doing exactly what the world tells us to do, and think, and say, and believe. And as long as we are connected to the world's control center, we belong to that world, and it is all we think about, all we care about, and all that we desire to please.

But then, along comes Jesus, God's spiritual myasthenia gravis, that begins breaking the connections with the world. As we begin to put our trust and faith in Jesus, the worldly motor-in plates begin to fail when the world tells us to do something. With Jesus, we no longer get the messages of the world, because the motor-in plate no longer responds to the commands of the world. So we get further and further away from the world's ways because we're trusting in Jesus Christ to become our control center, and our motor-in plates begin to respond only to His commands and His control.

The more we get involved in the life of the church, the more we read the Bible, the more we memorize Scripture, the more we implement Jesus into our lives and live for Him, the motor-in plates that once listened to the messages of the world, no longer respond to the things of the world - they begin listening and responding to the things of Jesus. The myasthenia gravis of God helps us to let go of the world and begin to grow strong in Jesus. And as we grow strong in Jesus, we begin to transfer the control of our lives over to Him.

It is only then that we can make this second great statement of the Nicene Creed: "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from True God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through Him all things were made." Now, that's a mouth full, but it's an important part of demonstrating that we are no longer listening to the things of this world, but we are now focused on listening and following Jesus.

But let's look at this statement really closely. It's important for us to fully understand what we mean so that if we say it, we really know what we are committing our lives to as followers of Jesus. Anyone can merely say the words, but it is vital that we know what it means so that we can mean what we say.

This portion of the Creed begins with the words, "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ..." Now, a Lord is "a person possessing supreme power and authority." That person has complete say about what goes on in the lives of those he rules over. He makes the rules. He established the standards of that group of people he rules over. And he is the end of all things. He has all authority and dictates according to His desire and according to His will.

When we profess that Jesus Christ is THE ONE LORD, that means that we give up our own authority, our own guidelines, our own standards, to follow His authority, His guidelines and His standards for us. When Jesus Christ is the Lord of our lives, nothing or no one else is above Him and nothing or no one else has say over what guidelines we have. That means no government is greater than Jesus. That means that no king or president has greater authority than Jesus. It means that no ideology or theology is greater than Jesus. When we profess Jesus as THE ONE LORD, He is the only one who has control over who we are and what we say and what we do.

And that flies in the face of all those who are lesser than Jesus. They want that lordship over the people in their control. They want the last say of what can or cannot happen. They want to be the great authority over the people, and when the people don't follow that leader, but profess Jesus Christ as their Lord, there is great anger that develops due to the jealousy of Jesus being our One Lord. And we can see that happening all over the world today, where leaders are trying to get rid of Christianity so that they can have complete authority over their people. If they can successfully remove Jesus from the lives of the people, their only leader becomes the human leader who is trying to dominate over them.

Jesus has commanded us to follow the teachings of the Bible. He has demanded that if we say we are His followers, we must put Him as the #1 person in our lives. We cannot say that Jesus is Lord if

we bow down to lesser authorities and do what they say rather than following Jesus' commands. We cannot say that Jesus is Lord unless we are willing and ready to truly follow His commands, to the exclusion of all others. Jesus must be FIRST in our life if He is truly Lord.

So we're in a bind as we live in our world today. Do we listen to the world's ways, letting the lesser lords become the complete authorities in our life? Or do we toughen up and boldly proclaim and live with Jesus being our Lord who has complete authority over our life? Anybody can say that they have Jesus as Lord, but it is by their actions and words that they demonstrate whether He really is Lord in them. And anyone can come along and demand us to tell them why Jesus merits the right to be the LORD of our lives. That gives us the chance to share with them what the Lordship of Jesus Christ can do for them, too.

That's where the next phrase of this second section of the Nicene Creed comes in. It goes on. Not only do "we believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ," but we also believe that He is "the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father..." Now where does that come from?

The two readings of the Gospels today highlight the authority Jesus was given, not only at the very beginning of His ministry when He was baptized by John in the River Jordan, but also toward the end of His ministry when He was on the mountain top with Peter, James and John and was transfigured before them. Almost the exact words are proclaimed from Heaven, "*This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased*" (Matt. 3:17), "*...Listen to Him*" (Mark 9:7). God proclaims that Jesus is His only begotten Son, the One with all authority, whom we are to make our Lord by listening to Him.

The Apostle Paul then comes along and shares the very same thing to the people of Colossae. Listen to how Paul speaks of the Son of God. This is Colossians 1:15-23. (READ Colossians 1:15-23)

Jesus is the very personification of God to us here on the earth. He is the "*radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word*" (Hebrews 1:3). The first Christian martyr, Stephen, attested to Jesus' place with God just before his death. "*Look,*" he said, "*I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God*" (Acts 7:56).

After his dramatic, knock-you-off-your-horse conversion experience on the road to Damascus, Saul (renamed Paul) recognized Jesus' authority and place with God. Acts 9:19-20 tells us that *“Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.”* He spent the rest of his life preaching and teaching that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah.

The other writers of the New Testament, the author of Hebrews, Peter and John, all testify that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ who came to save us from the wages of sin, which is eternal death.

2 Peter 1:16-18 tell us plainly, *“For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.’ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the sacred mountain.”* Peter was there and heard for himself God's approval of Jesus being His Son.

And John puts it into very strong words at the beginning of his Epistle. He says, *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete”* (I John 1:1-4). He's not using cleverly crafted language to trick people into believing that Jesus is the Son of God. John witnessed it first hand and shared that experience with others so that they, too, could believe that Jesus is the Son of God

He even goes so far as to boldly state, *“I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. No one*

who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also” (I John 2:21-23). These were men who went to their death knowing and boldly proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, our Messiah.

So our Nicene Creed gives us the opportunity to put our faith in Jesus, too, as we confess that Jesus is “...God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father...” Jesus Is God, come down to earth to give us the chance to know God deeper and more intimately. We are creatures that have to see it to believe it, so Jesus, God’s one and only Son, came down to earth to show us the Father.

When the Disciple “*Phillip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us,’ Jesus answered [him]: ‘Don’t you know Me, Phillip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing His work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me...’*” (John 14:8-11).

Everything about Jesus is of the Father. And everything of the Father is of Jesus. Jesus is God in the flesh, here in this world so that we could fully understand God and draw near to Him and follow Him. The only difference is that Jesus took on flesh and blood to live here with us. It is God’s great way of living among His people.

God confined all His glory into the man we know as Jesus, so that people could look upon Him and not die; so that they could speak to Him and not be overwhelmed; so that they could love Him and fear Him, yet not be turned away from Him. That is why Peter, James, and John saw Jesus radiate with such brilliance that “*His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light*” (Matthew 17:2). That’s why Jesus’ teachings were given with such authority that it baffled even the greatest minds of the Scribes and Pharisees. That is why, even when crucified, He could rise again. That is why He could suddenly appear in a locked room to speak with His disciples. That is why He could heal the

sick, give sight to the blind, and even raise the dead. Jesus is the fullness of God (Colossians 1:19), here with us for a short time, so that we could know God.

Therefore, “being one with the Father,” Jesus was with God at the very beginning of creation, and “through Him all things were made” (Nicene Creed). The Gospel writer John introduces Jesus in this way: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*” (John 1:1-5, 14). When God spoke all things into existence, it was by His Word that all things were made. It was by Jesus, the Word, that all things were made!

I am always intrigued by the language used in Genesis 1 that we looked at last week. After speaking everything into existence, by His Word, God then makes a great statement in verse 26, “*Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...*” This is God in the plural; the Father speaking to the Son and to the Holy Spirit about making humans in His image. Could it be that God the Father looked at Jesus, the Son, and said that humans should look like Jesus, the God-man? “*Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness...*” So not only are we in the image of God by our spirits, but possibly in His likeness, bodily, too. Makes you think, doesn't it?

All of these things gives reason for us to make Jesus Lord of our lives. He is the “only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father, through Him all things were made.” No one else who has ever lived on this planet has anywhere near these accreditations given to them. Only one man, only one God-man, fits this category, and that is Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

But once again we can ask the great question, “What does all this have to do with me? Why do I need to know this?” It is because we are professing Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord. If we

profess Him to the world that He is our Lord, we need to begin to live it in our daily lives and begin to honor Him above all other authorities, above all other things that this world puts forth as important. And as we begin to do that, great things begin to happen for us and to us.

Tony Evans describes it like this. “There was a sister in the church who was battling with her weight. She had tried every diet known to man but her weight kept fluctuating up and down.

“A few months passed without me seeing her at church. One Sunday, I happened to see her after service and I was shocked. She had virtually lost all of the weight she had fought for so long to shed. Her solution? She met a man and fell in love!

“She explained to me that she knew the man she had been dating was the man she was going to marry and she wanted to look good in her wedding dress. The solution to her problem wasn’t a rule-based approach to eating less. She was able to conquer in a short amount of time what had plagued her for years because she had developed a relationship and was seeking *his* pleasure. There’s power in intimacy. There’s power in relationship.”²

When we have Jesus Christ as our Lord, when we have a relationship with Him and we begin to live for Him and He begins to live in and through us, it makes all the difference in the world. We are given the ability to do so much more than we could ever hope to do on our own. But we must believe in Him, trust in Him and then live for Him if He is our Lord. Let’s pray.

Father, thank You for being an awesome God! Thank You for giving Jesus to us as Your Son, our Lord, so that we can believe in Him and trust in Him and live for Him. Thank You that He is all that You are so that we may know You. Give us the courage to let Jesus be our Lord and Savior. May it not be just with our words, but in our hearts, in our minds, and in our spirits so that it might be lived in our everyday life. Help us to boldly live so that everyone can see Jesus through us, thereby enabling them to come to know You, too. Guide and direct us so that we might accomplish great things for You. This we pray in Jesus’ powerful, precious and holy Name. AMEN.

² (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations & Quotes*, [Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009] pg. 168, #505)