

Kingdom versus Democracy

“Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and pledge your allegiance to his Kingdom?”

What does “Lord” mean to you? What did “Lord” mean to you when you made that membership commitment, when you said “YES”?

In the NT church, the meaning was clear. “Lord” meant the one who had absolute authority.

For us as Americans we have difficulty with the concept of obedience to this degree because we are used to a democracy.

But Jesus did not come proclaiming a democracy. He came proclaiming a KINGDOM!

The biggest difference between a democracy and a kingdom lies in the concept of “choice.”

For many of us in the church, we like to think of ourselves as “volunteers,” who get to pick and choose what we will do for God and God’s church.

Churches that are growing and impacting their world for Jesus Christ though realize that it costs everything to follow Jesus.

So, what about us today?

Are we called to be a “volunteer or a servant?”

“Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? ⁸ Would he not rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? ⁹ Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’” Luke 17:7-10.

❖ Like Zacchaeus the tax collector who cheated people on their taxes, I realize that I have great responsibility to others if I enter a relationship with Jesus. (Luke 19:1-9)

❖ Like the woman caught in adultery, I hear Jesus’ words about a full pardon and the command to go and sin no more. (John 8:1-11)

Following Jesus involves everything. He is not just one part of life – he is life!

For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. Romans 14:7-9

We only have one thing to lift up to the world!

**“When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.”
John 12:32**

When Jesus becomes the focus of the life of the local church, new life comes to dry bones, and people begin to stand up and become a vital army for Jesus once again.

Membership question:

“Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and pledge your allegiance to his Kingdom?”

- You did not pledge to be a “volunteer” in a social club.
- You pledged to be a “servant” building the Kingdom of God.

Your pledged said “I will give everything” because Jesus Christ has given everything for me.

To truly be **“Rooted in Christ”** means we are not “volunteers” we are “servants” who realize that it costs everything to follow Jesus.

The word Jesus used for “servant” is bonds slave.

A bonds slave, or servant, did not work for wages, but lived under the authority and ownership of a master.

The servant’s ear was pierced, and an earring with the emblem of the owner was placed in the ear. The earring meant that the slave was bound to that household for life.

- Slaves had no rights or privileges.
- Individual identity was exchanged for the identity of the masters.
- The initials on the earrings became their own!
- There was no distinction between work time and personal time for slaves.
- Every moment of their life belonged to the master.

The key point that Jesus is making in this parable is that:

- “Volunteer is the language of the club.”
- “Slave is the language of the kingdom of God.”

As the people of Jesus Christ, we need to reach the place where we understand that the call of God always comes in the form of a command.

- ❖ No-where in scripture do we hear God asking whether anyone would like to “help out in building his kingdom.”

The reason why is because Jesus tells us:

“You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.” John 15:16

Jesus is the absolute authority – the owner – the one who calls us and sends us. And our only response can be one of obedience.

- ❖ Excuses for not following Jesus: Luke 9:57-62.

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.”⁵⁸ Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

What Jesus is telling this man is that he has an itinerant lifestyle and if you are going to follow me – you also have to be willing to go anywhere I ask you to go.

⁵⁹ (Jesus) He said to another man, “Follow me.”

**But the man replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”
⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”**

Jesus commanded this man to follow him but he confuses Jesus command and takes it as a suggestion and then comes up with what seems like a really good excuse: **“Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”**

Jesus is quick, almost coldly cruel in lifting up this man’s understanding of what it means to follow Jesus.

Jesus is saying “I am the absolute authority and there is no excuse for anything other than absolute obedience.

⁶¹ Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.”

This man says he will follow Jesus but it comes with a condition that he be able to go back and say good-bye to his family.

We cannot follow Jesus with any conditional clause attached.

⁶² Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

Our membership vow is powerful:

“Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and do you pledge your allegiance to his kingdom?”

The reason this vow is powerful is because the conviction that Jesus is Lord has been and still is the key theological factor of every awakening, ever renewal movement, every church returning to its first love.

Why? Because after I meet Jesus, he does not allow me to create a god in my own image who serves me and all my particular prejudices.

Instead, as I face Jesus and I understand his authority in my life, I must deal with my own self-centeredness.