

**Text:** Luke 2:8-20, Acts 2:14-41(29-36), HC Lord's Day 13

**Theme:** The Only Begotten Son is LORD over every part of our lives.

What impact does your confession that Jesus Christ is your "Lord" have on your life?

5 We regularly confess together in the Apostolic Creed *that Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, is our 'Lord'*.

It's easy to confess. But how does this confession affect your life?

Is there comfort in that confession?

Is there obligation and responsibility in that confession?

10 The Holy Scriptures teach us that making such a confession cannot be mere empty words.

Confessing that Jesus is Lord gives enormous comfort in life's struggles and also has far-reaching obligations and responsibilities for the one who confesses so.

That's what we're going to unpack today.

15 In order to do this, we must first understand the wonderful meaning of the term 'Lord'.

### **1. The profound content of this confession.**

Scripture calls Jesus Christ the "only begotten Son" of God.

20 Consider, for example, Jesus' own words in John 3: "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life*" (v. 16).

The fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God means that He Himself is true God.

So whatever qualities apply to God are also true of Jesus Christ.

25 Athanasian creed: "... the Deity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit are all one, glory equal, majesty equal. As the Father is, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Spirit."

Therefore, what the church professes in article 1 of the Belgian Confession:

30 that God is "eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, unchangeable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the most abundant fountain of all good things";

applies not only to God the Father but also to God the Son.

As God's "only-begotten Son," Jesus is true God in all respects as is the Father, and therefore that list of attributes is also true of Him.

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The Only Begotten Son of God came to earth in Bethlehem to dwell among mankind.

While He lived on earth, so many of these divine attributes were hidden;

the eye of men saw but a human man.

40 But He was always God, and He remained "the eternal, natural Son of God,"

yes, true God, and therefore eternal, incomprehensible, unchangeable, almighty, just, good, perfectly wise,

one with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

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45 This confession has a direct influence on Jesus' title 'Lord'.

The term "Lord" is used countless times by our Savior in Scripture, with a variety of meanings.

At the simplest level, the term is the equivalent of "Sir," and simply reflects respect,

50 in the same way that a scholar calls his teacher "Sir".

Consider, for example, how the Samaritan woman at the well addressed Jesus;

*"<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me some of that water' (John 4:15).*

55 More often, the term 'Lord' involves the idea of authority, similar to the term 'king' (Mt 6:24; 21:40).

Here our minds can go to the custom of centuries ago, when European society had kings and barons and lords and knights, and the common people looked up to these kings and lords, and were submissive and obedient to them.

60 With this understanding of the word 'Lord' we come closer to understanding the material of our catechism Lord's Day section,

where we confess that Jesus Christ redeemed us so that we are 'His property'.

He is our Master, He is our Owner – Our Lord.

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Valuable as this comparison with history may be, brothers and sisters, it does not do full justice to what God has revealed about the term "Lord" in the Bible.

To understand correctly, we need to get a little technical about the Hebrew and Greek languages for a moment.

70 You are aware that the term "Lord" appears in our translations of the Old Testament in two forms.

You find it printed in small print in your Bibles, it translates the Hebrew word *Adonai* and then the term captures the idea of master

As a servant addresses the king with the term 'My Lord'.

75 The same phrase is also used in relation to God, and the point is that someone addresses God as his Master, his Owner.

The Old Testament also has thousands of instances where the term "LORD" appears in capital letters.

80 Where the term 'LORD' appears in capital letters in our translations, for the Hebrew it is the word '*Yahweh*', God's covenant name.

We understand that this name 'LORD', *Yahweh*, is used by God Almighty alone.

85 The Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek in the inter-testament period (between the Old and New Testaments).

The translators chose to use one Greek word to translate both of those Hebrew words.

Both the Hebrew word '*Adonai*' and the Hebrew Name '*Yahweh*' occur in Greek as '*kurios*'.

90 The term is consistently translated in the New Testament with the word 'Lord'.

What does it mean?

95 On the night of Jesus' birth, an angel appeared to the shepherds in the field, with the good news that "*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*" (Luke 2:11).

What did that news mean for the shepherds?

The angel says that the baby is the '*kurios*', 'the Lord'.

100 Do these shepherds hear that term with their Old Testament ears, and hear that a master is born, the equivalent of a king?

Or do they hear in the term '*KURIOS*' the Name of their Covenant God, and conclude that the LORD *Yahweh* was born?

105 A few verses later, we read that the shepherds reported their experiences to others, and these others were "amazed" (vs. 18), they were amazed.

Now if it was just another normal Lord or Master that was born, that would not be very surprising to shepherds – they had many Lords and Masters.

110 Given the Old Testament background of the Greek word 'kurios', their surprise is not at all a surprise to us;

that the *KURIOS* are born is to say that *Yahweh* is born - how amazing!!

I also draw your attention to Elizabeth's word when Mary came to visit her.

115 Luke 1:43: Elizabeth welcomes Mary with this question: "<sup>43</sup>And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? "

Does Elizabeth here mean by the term "Kurios" simply that the child in Mary's womb is her Master, is a King?

120 Since the Greek term "kurios" translates the Old Testament term "Yahweh," there is certainly more to Elizabeth's greeting than an acknowledgment that the coming baby is a form of royalty.

Here is an awareness that the LORD himself comes in the flesh!

The only begotten Son of God, true God with the Father and the Holy Spirit, becomes a man;

125 *Emmanuel*, God with us.

*Yahweh* on earth!!

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This understanding of the term "Lord," brothers and sisters, gives a profound understanding of what God's covenant with sinners is really about.

130 Almighty God made a covenant of love with people in the Garden of Eden,  
committed Himself to people as their God, made these people His children.

At the Fall, the human race rejected God, broke that covenant, and joined the  
devil.

God is the LORD, YAHWEH, the I AM WHO I AM.

135 He does what He says He will do and is true to His promises.

He bound Himself to mankind with a covenant of love, and so He  
remained faithful to that covenant right after the Fall—with His promises  
and His obligations.

140 The promise was that if man would eat of the forbidden fruit, man  
would die – forever.

However, God wanted to be God for people and wanted people to be  
His children.

145 Therefore the LORD promised that the Seed of the Woman  
would take upon Himself the punishment that humans  
deserve, so that God's children could go free.

Who would be that Seed of the Woman?

Indeed, it would be God Himself, in the Person of His  
Son.

150 The LORD, God of the covenant, sent his Son to earth to redeem from Satan's power  
those whom God had chosen for everlasting life.

This Son of God when He came to earth remained true God, and therefore the  
title 'the LORD' also belonged to Him, which is why the angel called Him  
'KURIOS', 'the LORD'.

155 By maintaining His covenant with sinners, God has gone so far as to  
demonstrate His faithfulness to His covenant promises! This is His steadfast  
love!

The '*Kurios*' lived on earth as a true man for about 33 years.

160 True, the human eye did not see that He was true God, *Yahweh* in the flesh;  
The human eye saw only a human being, whether it was one who could raise the  
dead and calm the storms on the sea.

But '*Yahweh*' was He, the God of the covenant came in the flesh.

165 That is why He was able to fight and triumph against sin and the  
devil on the cross of Calvary;  
therefore, on the cross of Calvary, He could pay for sin with the price  
of His blood, thus redeeming God's children from the power of the  
devil.

Here the radical faithfulness of God to the promises He made in the beginning is  
revealed;

170 He is *Yahweh*, thoroughly faithful!

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After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the disciples met Him and Thomas said with  
his declaration of faith; "*my Lord and my God*".

175 He uses the word 'Lord', '*Kurios*', and juxtaposes the term with the term 'God',  
and so there is no ambiguity as to what Thomas meant when he called Jesus his  
'*Kurios*';

He deliberately attached the Old Testament personal Name of God,  
"*Yahweh*" to Jesus.

180 That Jesus suffered on the cross and died to pay for sin, thus  
redeeming Thomas from Satan's power;

point to the glorious heights of what it means that the LORD  
God is *Yahweh*, God of the covenant!

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Precisely because this God of the covenant is faithful,  
salvation is certain for Thomas — and for all who  
believe!

A few weeks after Thomas's confession about Jesus' identity, God the Father took the triumphant Christ into heaven and gave Him a seat at His right hand.

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On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter described to his hearers the significance of this ascension. Peter said:

*“<sup>36</sup> Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” (Acts 2:36).*

Here, too, you have the word 'Kurios'.

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This time, however, it appears in the context of Peter's quote from Psalm 110, about the LORD God saying, *"Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies Your footstool."*

Here the picture is precisely that of authority, of being a Master over another.

These are exactly Jesus' words before His ascension, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"* (Matthew 28:18).

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That is why John could see in his vision how Jesus wrote a Name on His garment and on His thigh, *"King of kings and Lord of lords"* (Rev. 19:16).

That passage from Acts 2, brothers and sisters, tells much, much more than simply the idea that God gives authority to Jesus of Nazareth.

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For the One who receives this total authority over every creature of heaven and earth — that is, over angels and demons and men and winds! — is none other than the Son of God, Yahweh!

In fact, it is precisely because He is Son of God, Yahweh, that this total authority is given to Him!



KURIOUS. He is, Master and Owner, for He is *Kurios, Yahweh*.

210 That identity, in turn, determines how He performs His function as KING of kings and LORD of lords; He rules today as God of the covenant.

What He does in the management of world history,  
what He does to control the weather,  
what He does to control the ups and downs of the stock market,

215 everything is determined by His identity as Kurios, as Yahweh, as God of the covenant.

Together with the church of all ages, we confess that Jesus Christ is "our Lord."

We understand this now:

220 Here is a very profound confession.

Of course, that confession must have consequences. That's our second point:

## 2. The powerful effects of this confession.

225 There are two consequences of this confession of ours that we are going to unpack today.

The first is related to safety, the second to service.

230 Jesus Christ is our Lord, our Master; we are – as we confess in Lord's Day 13 – "His property"

Over the course of the history of the world, there have been numerous lords and kings, many with a lot of property.

Stories abound of how the children of these lords was kidnapped and held for ransom.

235 The point I want to make is: that there was a certain danger that came  
with belonging to a lord or king.

We belong to the Lord.

240 Are there any risks in that? Do you stand a chance of being kidnapped, being  
snatched away from the power and safety of your Lord?

The answer, of course, is clear, No.

The Lord God has made His covenant of grace with you and me and  
thus claimed us as His property.

245 So deep is His love for His people, and so deep is His commitment  
to His covenant, that God sent His only begotten Son to pay for our  
sins.

This Son of God — true God, Yahweh — laid down His life to  
deliver you and me from the bondage of the devil.

250 Do you realize how important you are in the eyes of God? How special, how valuable  
you are to Him?

Will He allow us to somehow end up outside of His periphery, leaving us  
vulnerable to an enemy who snatches us out of His care?

We know the answer: we are His possession and therefore so special to  
Him that He will never leave us out of His care.

255 In fact, our Lord, this 'Kurios', has received such power that He Himself  
guarantees that not a hair can fall from our heads without the will of our  
God.

260 Moreover, precisely because Jesus Christ is the *Kurios, Yahweh*, He  
binds us to Himself and Himself to us with all the love and grace  
that characterizes God's covenant.

It is this reality, this comforting realization, brothers and sisters, that produces the glorious confession of Lord's Day 13.

265 The church says here: Christ "redeemed us, body and soul, from all our sins... with his precious blood and freed us from all the power of the devil to make us his personal property."

Do you hear the similarities with Lord's Day 1 of the catechism.

270 Our only comfort in life and death is "That I belong with body and soul in life and in death (a) not to myself (b), but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ (c). He paid in full for all my sins with His precious blood (d) and delivered me from all dominion of the devil (e)."

"Own," said Lord's Day 13.

"Belongs," said Lord's Day 1.

Both mean: I am the property of the Lord Jesus Christ.

275 Who is this Lord Jesus Christ?

The church confesses in Lord's Day 13 that this Jesus Christ is none other than *the LORD God Yahweh in His Son!*

The One who has all authority in heaven and on earth today is the same One who established His covenant of grace with me.

280 I am so completely safe with Him because I am so precious to Him, so precious that he laid down his life to redeem me from Satan's power.

This almighty God of the covenant will use His infinite power to save me from any attack from the devil.

285 Therefore, I am always safe, completely and perfectly safe in His hands.

Brothers and sisters, this is the faith that the Holy Spirit has wrought in your hearts and mine,

290 therefore we join the church of all ages in confessing Lord's Day after Lord's Day that the only begotten Son of God is also our Lord.

Precisely because the Holy Spirit has wrought this faith in our hearts, it follows that it is a gospel with which we must work concretely as we experience the ups and downs of life.

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You know how it goes. Time and time again, it's our sins that we face, because we simply can't get over our urge to raid the fridge or to let our explosive temper fly or to waste time on the internet.

It bothers us, bothers us to the point that we feel useless, worthless; we don't like ourselves and we convince ourselves God doesn't like us either..., and prayer becomes so difficult, God feels so far away for us.

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Beloved, the Lord is coming to us today to remind us of who He is and therefore of what we are.

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He is LORD, our Master, and yet not a small master, not a little king, but the Almighty to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given.

He is our LORD, our Master, and yet not a cruel, heartless despot, but Yahweh, the Son of God who keeps the covenant;

He even laid down His life to pay for our sins, to redeem us.

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We are precious, very precious.

Will I then let myself falter in my feelings of worthlessness, uselessness?

No, definitely not!

I am so valuable to God that the Son gave His life for me!!

Now I am the property of the Lord of lords, I can't be richer, can I?!

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Pray the Spirit to reassure you and encourage you in the faith,

to impress on you how rich we are, how precious to Him.

to assure us also how perfectly secure we are in His sovereign and almighty hands;

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no one in all creation can touch us without His consent.

That glorious security is the one consequence that flows from His identity as "LORD."

The second revolves around the idea of service.

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The thought is: if he is our Lord, if we are his possession, it follows that we must obey, that we must serve.

The concept of obedience, of service, is quite wrong with our sinful flesh; We want to do things our way.

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That is why I emphasize again who this Lord is.

The lords of history were sinful people, and could certainly enforce harsh, even cruel laws on their subjects, laws that were very painful to obey.

That is not the case with the instructions our Lord in heaven has given us!

This Lord is Yahweh, the God of the covenant, the One who loves us with perfect love

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— just look how He emptied Himself to deliver us from the power of the devil!

Now, if this KURIOS gives us particular instructions, will these instructions be harmful to us?!

Or will these instructions be inherently good for us?

We know very well what the answer is; His identity as Lord guarantees the positive value of His commands.

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Therefore, because of faith in this Lord, we want to delight in God's laws, we want to do it.

Yet we experience it time and time again: our sinful hearts keep going against His instructions, our hearts declaring these instructions are bad for us.

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Here, brothers and sisters, we must work again with the faith that the Lord God has placed in our hearts.

If we confess Lord's Day by Lord's Day that Jesus Christ is Kurios, the God of the covenant, then we must also draw the inevitable consequence and admit that Yes, his instructions are good, obeying them is healthy.

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Abraham Kuyper said very correctly, that there is not a square inch of life that Christ does not say over: **Mine!**

What happens in the church falls under Christ's command, because He is the Kurios of the church – and therefore everything that is done here must conform to His revealed will.

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This is equally true in the barn on the farm, or in the kitchen at home, equally true on Saturday night or Wednesday morning;

everything that happens in life falls under Christ's command, for He is Lord of all –

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therefore, everything that is done all the time must everywhere conform to His revealed will.

The unbeliever – he has his head in the sand and will not admit that reality and will pay the price.

But woe be to him who confesses Lord's Day after Lord's Day that Jesus Christ is Lord, and then goes ahead on Monday and does his own thing!

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It is hypocrisy, and it will not go unpunished — simply because Jesus is the Kurios!

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Of what value is your confession that Jesus Christ is Lord?

370 The content of Lord's Day 13 is profound and far-reaching.

Tomorrow we will return to our work, as servants of this Kurios.

Because we are bound to Him in His covenant of grace,

our boldness to obey Him has convinced us

that He takes care of us perfectly.

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AMEN.