

*Sermon Title : **JESUS IS LORD***

*Sermon Text : Psalm 2 : 3, 4*

*Psalm 27 : 2*

*Romans 10 : 5-13*

*Philippians 2 : 1-11*

*Preached by : REV . CLARENCE STAM*

---

Lord's Day 13

33. Q. Why is He called God's only begotten Son,  
since we also are children of God?

A. Because Christ alone  
is the eternal, natural Son of God.  
We, however, are children of God by adoption,  
through grace, for Christ's sake.

34. Q. Why do you call Him our Lord?

A. Because He has ransomed us,  
body and soul,  
from all our sins,  
not with silver or gold  
but with His precious blood,  
and has freed us  
from all the power of the devil  
to make us His own possession.

**Introduction:** Beloved congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ

Last time, when speaking on Lord's Day 12 of the Heidelberg, I spoke about the wonderful confession that "Jesus is the Christ", the anointed one of God, Who lawfully fulfils His ministry in Israel as the great Messiah, the only Shepherd of the flock. We saw that not everyone in Israel confessed Jesus as the Christ, and that ultimately, He was rejected as Christ, and therefore condemned to the cross. The confession that Jesus is Christ was not widely received.

In Lord's Day 13, the Catechism continues with the names and titles of our Lord Jesus Christ, and now speaks about another basic Christian confession, namely that Jesus is Lord. Jesus is the Christ; He is also the Lord. This confession—that Jesus is Lord— has perhaps a more global thrust than the statement that Jesus is the Christ, for it is the confession par excellence which the Christian Church maintained in the Roman empire. Iesus Kurios, Jesus [is] Lord!

It is this confession which met with tremendous resistance in the Greco-Roman world and which prompted much persecution. For in that world, all people were to subscribe to the confession that the emperor was lord: Caesar kurios, Caesar is lord! The confession of the Church is therefore diametrically opposed to the confession of the world!

“Jesus is Lord”. Today, this is a widely recognized, but little understood confession. The World Council of Churches has made it into a motto or slogan to put on their ecumenical banner, but in fact this council and its members deny the deity of Christ. Whoever confesses that Jesus is Lord, must recognize Him also as the only-begotten Son of God. According to the Word of God, the title “Lord” implies divinity.

In the Roman empire the whole idea of a kurios was also associated with the gods, and the emperor was considered to be divine. This was a matter of sheer idolatry. But the Word of God tells us that our kurios, the Lord Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God. So these ideas of lordship and divinity are properly connected in Lord’s Day 13. I summarize it as follows:

### **The confession of the Christian Church that Jeꝑsus is Lord.**

- 1. this is His natural position**
- 2. this is His special honor.**

- 1.** The Catechism asks the question: “Why is He [Jesus] called God’s only-begotten Son, since we also are children of God?” Here the Church wishes to confess the correct relationships which exists between the Father, the Son, and ourselves, the children of God. How do we all fit together in the house of God?

The second question of this Lord’s Day also speaks about a specific relationship. It asks: “Why do you call Him our Lord?” If we are all of the same Father and live in the same house, how can one be favored above others and be called Lord of the house?

Then the response of this Lord’s Day is that we are all children of God, but Christ is the only-begotten Son; we are all members of one household, but Christ is Lord of all. So, although Christ and we are closely related (and He is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters), there is between us and Him a vast difference. For He is the only-begotten Son and our Lord!

Let us look closer at the expression, “the only-begotten Son of God”. “To beget” means “to bring forth”, and so “begotten” means “to have come forth from”. A child is begotten of his father, and bears the nature of his father. There is then a natural connection between a father who begets and a son who is begotten.

Now we must realize that our Lord Jesus Christ was not “begotten” in the same sense as we all are begotten. For then this word would imply that Christ at one time or another did not exist and that He came into existence on the day when He was “begotten”. The word begotten would then even imply some sexual union. But in this case “begotten” does not have any such implications. This is clear from the Catechism when it says that “Christ is the eternal . . . Son of God”. Christ always was, from eternity, and always will be, unto eternity, the Son of God. We understand this being “begotten” as a constant coming forth from the Father. Also as “Son of God” Christ is without beginning and without end; He is the eternal Son of God.

This is quite clear from Scripture. I think, for example, of Hebrews 1, where we read that the Son is the heir through whom God also created the world and upholds the world. Already before the creation of the world, Christ was with the Father as eternal Son.

So the expression “only-begotten” has the meaning of unique and only. It means “one of a kind”! There is no other Son like Him! He is the only Son who bears the same nature as the Father, and who is Himself divine! That is why the Catechism speaks in the same line of “the eternal, natural Son of God”. Christ is the only natural Son and Heir, who has the very same nature as the Father and who therefore has a unique relationship with the Father. If you really want to understand what it means that Jesus is Lord, you must begin by accepting that He is the eternal, natural Son of God!

Whenever you read the texts in the Bible that speak of “the only-begotten Son”, the meaning is always that here is the unique, special Son of God, who is Himself God, Who was eternally with God, through Whom God created the world, and Who reflects the glory of God in this world. He is the only one Who has this position. It is His position by nature. He is one with the Father. He lays at the bosom of the Father, comes from the Father, goes back to the Father—and all this is completely natural for Him, because He is Himself “God of God, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made”, as the Nicene Creed so excellently puts it. Begotten, not made. Not a creature, but the Creator. Not an angel, not a man, but God of God!

Who else would then be more suited to be Lord of all than this only-begotten Son? Into whose hands would the Father place all things, if not into the hands of His own, His natural Son? There are also texts in Scripture which speak clearly of this very same truth that God appointed Christ to rule as Lord over all. I think of Psalm 2, from which we sang, and where the LORD says, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”—and this is said in connection with a position of universal authority and global lordship. The New Testament indicates clearly that this Psalm speaks directly of Christ. He is the Son Who is appointed Lord of all!

It is fitting that the natural Son would rule over all things and be Lord of hosts and King of kings. In Philippians 2, we read the expression that Christ was “in the form of God”. This means that He appeared as God with divine glory and power, and so lived with the Father in heaven. But Philippians goes on to say that “He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped”. The meaning is that He did not cling to that glory or hang on to it relentlessly. Instead, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. The Lord be-came a servant, and relinquished His heavenly glory. He left His natural position and humbled Himself, even to the death of the cross.

“Jesus is Lord”, said the Church. The world scoffed, and said, “Your Lord is a crucified one, whose life was a failure, and who knew no glory.” But Paul writes: the Lord became a servant, obedient to the Father, even to the death of the cross!

Christ alone, says the Catechism, is the eternal, natural Son of God. Nobody shares this position, for no one else shares this nature. Indeed, it is true that we also have a “position” with the Father. We, too, are called children of God. But our position is of a

principally different nature. We are children of God by adoption, through grace, for Christ's sake.

We are created, made, begotten of the flesh. We never had nor will we ever have the position which Christ has with the Father. Human beings will never become divine; men will never be gods. But there is a very close, intimate and intense relationship between God and His earthly children. It is a relationship based on grace, on the sovereign and free will of God, a relationship which came about through the redeeming work of God's only-begotten Son.

In great compassion, for Christ's sake, God took us and made us His children. Adoption is here a word borrowed from Scripture. "Adoption" is used in Galatians 4:5, in the sense of being "elevated" to sons. Sonship is a great privilege, for we had fallen into deep slavery. Yet God, of His own free will, through Christ, redeemed us from this slavery and even elevated us to be His children!

"Adoption" is a beautiful word in this context because it teaches us that we now have certain "rights" in God's house. We really are God's children and have received rights as a gift. "Adoption" means that we are officially God's children through Christ. We may never doubt this and ask, "Am I really a child of God?" Instead we must strive to live as children of God! (That is what public profession of faith is all about. It is confessing that I am a child of God through Christ, and pledging to live as one!).

We are adopted children who know our position, adopted children who never compete with or strive against the only-begotten Son of God, but who honour Him fully as their rightful Lord and Master. We come to the second element.

2. For now we may further investigate what it means that we confess Jesus as our Lord. The Catechism asks, "Why do you call Him our Lord". The title "Lord" is a title which Christ rightfully bears and with which we must always honour Him in our lives.

There are many who lay claim to the title "lord". There are many who want to exercise complete rule and authority over others, over this world. The devil makes such claims. Some emperors, rulers and kings consider themselves divine and sovereign. They strive against God and claim to be greater than Him. They unlawfully take hold of the title "lord".

But it is the deep teaching of Holy Scripture that Christ lawfully bears the title "Lord". The Father has given Him this title, and Christ has merited it through His perfect obedience in His earthly ministry.

Is that not what we also read in Philippians 2? We read about the Son Who humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, and Who relinquished all the glory of His Lordship, but Who because of His obedience was elevated above anyone else. "Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him the Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11). The Son is the Lord. And that is the glory of the Father!

God "bestowed" upon Him the title Lord. Jesus did not take it unlawfully, but it is rightfully His. He showed Himself worthy of Lordship. He showed that as the obedient

Son He could indeed rule in the Father's Name and to the Father's glory. Therefore, the Father declared the Son Lord of all and Lord over all.

The Church understood this and therefore confessed, "Jesus is Lord". He is Lord of all. He alone receives the rightful honor which is due to the Lord of hosts and King of kings. The Christians would recognize all earthly authority as having been instituted by God, but they would not worship any earthly ruler, for Jesus alone is the divine Lord, the only-begotten Son Who is King of kings, and alone to be worshipped for ever and ever. They said NO to the idolatrous worship of the Roman emperor, even if it meant being considered revolutionaries and being condemned to death. They would not give the rightful honor of the Son of God to any creature!

And we read in the letter to the Romans that this confession is the only way to be saved. We read that, ". . . if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). Jesus is the Lord, the Risen Lord! This is the confession of the Church, a confession always made in the midst of this world! And this confession, this faith is necessary and sufficient for salvation!

It is the confession of the Church and it is a personal confession. To say that Jesus is Lord is not just a bland statement which does not really function in our lives, but this statement characterizes our lives as one of service to Christ!

Christ has rights to our life, to our love, to our undivided service. When we call Him "Lord", we at the same time confess that we are His servants or slaves, who must obey Him unconditionally and fully. That, too, is the relationship which we recognize in this Lord's Day. He is Master; we are slaves. This truth is part of our public confession of faith. In the Form for the Public Profession of Faith we read this question: "Do you commit your whole life to the Lord's service as a living member of His Church?" My whole life—not just a part of it—belongs to the Lord! That is our confession before God's people and that is our life in the world!

We are slaves or servants of the Lord. This is how the Bible speaks about us. We should not, however, understand the word "slaves" wrongly, for it is not meant in a worldly sense. We should not think here of "slaves" who are treated in a harsh manner and who are cruelly exploited unto death. For our Lord is not a cruel taskmaster who brings about our death, but one Who has secured our life and seeks that life continually!

Therefore, this confession of and commitment to Christ's Lordship is not unwillingly extracted from us by force, but is given joyfully in faith. Notice that the Catechism does not explain this Lordship of Christ impersonally or abstractly, but very concretely and in a deeply personal way, even with jubilation.

"Why do you call Him our Lord?" asks the Catechism. Together and personally, we call Him our Lord, Lord of His people, Head of His Church! Why? "Because He has ransomed us, body and soul from all our sins, not with gold and silver, but with His precious blood. . ." This line reminds us of I Timothy 2:6 which speaks of Christ Who "gave Himself as a ransom for all". A ransom is a price paid to free prisoners and those condemned. That is exactly what is meant here. We were condemned, finished, without hope. But Christ ransomed us, and paid the price for our freedom. He did not give the

price normally given—gold or silver— but instead yielded His precious blood, greater in value and power than any earthly riches!

“And has freed us from all the power of the devil”. The devil is the hard taskmaster who seeks our utter destruction. Oh, that those who are living in sin and hardening themselves in it would see that the devil, their evil lord, is driving them to utter ruin! But Christ has freed us from all the power of the devil. We are no more in his satanic grip. Instead, Christ has taken control of us, “to make us His own possession”. We now belong to Him, fully, completely, and eternally. This is the echo of Lord’s Day 1, which keeps returning in the Heidelberg Catechism. I am not my own, but being delivered from all the power of Satan, I belong to Christ.

He is our Lord. That is His rightful honor. We are His possession. That is our only place. He will care for us with great love. He will give us all things necessary for body and soul. Did He not give His own life for us?

And now there is only one thing to do in life and that is to serve Him as Lord. We must give Him the honor that is rightfully His—not just in words, by an oral confession, but also by a Christian lifestyle, by sinning no more.

There are young people who make public profession of faith and yet do not show in their life that Jesus is Lord. They still maintain a former style of living. For example, they think nothing of excessive drinking, free sex, foul language or swearing, late-night partying; they do not support the church or the schools. Where in their lives, then, is Jesus truly Lord? Such people, married or not, should not be permitted to partake of the table of the Lord, which He has instituted only for His believers. Through its preaching and discipline, the Church will have to demand that the Lordship of Christ is concretely recognized by all who have publicly professed His Name!

For we belong either to Jesus, our Lord, or, we belong to the devil. We are either redeemed by Christ, or bound by sin. There is no in-between phase. When we believe with our heart and confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, we will show it in our deeds. We will do those things which Christ asks of us, and do so joyfully and eagerly .

In this respect Jesus Himself issued a serious warning, which should be mentioned especially at this Lord’s Day. He said: “not everyone who says ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Instead, only those who hear Christ’s words and do them will enter. Not everyone who publicly professes Jesus as Lord will be recognized on the day of judgment by Christ. To some He will say: depart from me, I never knew you, you evildoers (Matthew 7:23). Did you take good notice of the term “evildoers”? Those who do evil—whose lives are filled with evil— will be cast out by Him, despite their one-time public profession or repeated words of allegiance. Faith is evident in works, or it is dead faith.

Whoever calls Jesus “our Lord” and confesses His Name, must then live as His servant, dedicating his whole life to Christ’s service. All falling and stumbling into sin will be indeed forgiven by this gracious Lord. But He will not accept living in sin.

Let us, then, who have confessed Jesus as our Lord, live as His servants, simply by doing what He has told us to do in every sphere of life. Then we give Christ His rightful honor and we will reap a harvest of peace. **AMEN**