Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

There once was a king who was so famous for his wisdom that people would travel from far away to hear him talk. He was even considered one of the world’s leading experts on agriculture and the animal world, and he published many wisdom poems and songs. And eventually, a queen from way down South visited him to see if what she had heard about him was true. And when she arrived, she asked him a whole bunch of tricky questions and he answered every one. And she was amazed at his wisdom! Do you boys and girls know which king I am talking about? King Solomon.

Well, around 1000 years later, someone even more wise than Solomon lived in the same country. And He went around teaching. But the religious experts of the day were not impressed; they did not like Him, or His wisdom, one little bit. And one day, they asked Him for a sign that He spoke with authority. And He said, “*The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here*.” Who was this man to claim a greater wisdom than Solomon? What gave Him the right to speak to the religious leaders like this? Who did He think He was? Do you know who I am talking about now, boys and girls? Jesus. And He was claiming what we call ‘lordship.’ He was saying, I am the Son of God, the Lord of lords and King of kings. You must worship me and obey me. And that’s a pretty bold claim, isn’t it. And the religious leaders of His day did not like it, and they hated Him even more, and eventually they had Him put to death.

But those are the aspects of the person and work of Jesus Christ that we will consider today: Jesus as the Son of God and our Lord. And it is good that we do this, congregation, because meditating on the person and work of the Lord Jesus is the best fuel for our worship and devotion, and it is the best tonic for all our troubles and woes. But we also heard this morning that there will be false teachers in every era of the church. And the Apostle John called false teachers **antichrists** because false teachers always deny something about the person and/or work of the Lord Jesus. And the best remedy against false teaching is a steady diet of sound doctrine. So, this is a further reason for us to see again that Jesus is the Son of God and our Lord.

And they will be the two halves of today’s sermon: Jesus as **the only begotten Son of God** and then Jesus as **our Lord**. And our aim is to exalt the Lord Jesus, as we see again who He is and what He has done for us, and then, in light of this, to consider how we ought to respond to these aspects of His person and work.

1. So, let’s begin with Jesus as “**His Only begotten Son**.” And our text here is **Galatians 4:4-6** (p. 974). Please turn there with me and let’s read that passage. We actually looked at this text when we looked at Lord’s Day 9 and God as our Father. So, we can summarize what we learned then as we focus today on Jesus as the only begotten Son of God. But let’s first read vv4-6.
   1. Well, when we last looked at this passage, we noted that it describes God sending His Son, which tells us that God is Father. And we noted from elsewhere in Scripture that God did not become the Father of the Son at some point but is the ***eternal*** Father of the Son. We saw that the Son lived in heaven with the Father *before* He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary. We saw that the Son was with the Father in heaven *before* the creation of the world. So, there was never a time when they were not together as Father and Son. And that is why our Lord’s Day answer speaks of Jesus as the “eternal … Son of God.”
   2. But it also uses the word “**natural**” to explain why Jesus is called the “only begotten Son.” And the words “**only begotten**” are interesting to think about. We have them in our Creed because they are the words used in relation to Jesus in older English Bible versions. Begotten means born of or coming from. In older English Bible versions, you find mention of begetting and beget and begat and begotten in reference to human fathers and procreation. So, “begotten” was used to emphasize the Father-Son relationship, and “only” to emphasize the uniqueness of their relationship.
      1. But the word begotten has been **misused** **and** **twisted** by heretics throughout the history of the church to teach false doctrine in relation to Christ. In fact, you could make a good case to say that we have the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds because of the word “begotten.” You see, heretics have seized on it to teach that there must have been a time when the Father procreated or created or made the Son, just as human fathers procreate their sons. It was part of the Arian controversy around AD 300, which led to the writing of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and it is part of the teaching of the Mormons and JWs today, which strips Jesus of His eternality and full divinity. But as we read earlier in the Athanasian Creed, Jesus is “eternal” and “uncreate,” or without beginning, and He is “not made, nor created, but begotten.” So, when we use begotten in relation to Jesus, it is not in any way to suggest that He came into being at some time. Jesus is the *eternally* begotten Son of God. That is the teaching of the Bible.
      2. Now, just because something is misused does not mean that it is wrong. But this constant misuse, and other grammatical matters which I won’t bore you with today, are why modern English versions like the NIV and the ESV do not use the word “begotten.” They just use “only” or “one and only.” And that is John’s major point in the places where the King James Bible uses “begotten”; the **uniqueness** of Jesus as the Son of God.
      3. You see, every believer is called, in Scripture, a son of God. You and me, we are all sons of God. We see it in verses 5 and 6 of our text and many other places besides. But we are not sons of God in the same way that Jesus is the Son of God. And that is what our Lord’s Day brings out by using the word “natural.” For while Jesus is the eternal, natural Son of God, we are not eternal – we came into being at a certain moment – and as the end of verse 5 states, we are made sons of God by way of adoption.
      4. And while being an adopted son or daughter of God is truly wonderful, and well worth meditating on, which we have done in the past and will do in the future, God willing, our focus today is Jesus as the eternal, natural Son of God. John 1:1 declares Jesus to be God. In John 14:9, Jesus said, “*Whoever has seen me has seen the Father*.” Romans 9:5 says that Jesus is “*the Christ who is God over all*.” Philippians 2:6 explains that before He came to earth, Jesus existed “*in the form of God*.” Colossians 1:19 says, “*For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell*.” Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus “*is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature*.” And speaking about Jesus as the Son of God, 1 John 5:20 says, “*He is the true God and eternal life*.”
   3. And all this leaves us with **two very clear but very different responses**:
      1. One response is to deny and reject Jesus as the eternal, natural Son of God. What I am about to read to you comes from a commentary. The author said,

*How far, then, has the church drifted from its moorings when a Baptist minister in New York writes, "Jesus was divine, but not God;" when a Presbyterian clergyman states, "Man is the apex of a long biological development, and Jesus of Nazareth is the best man that has ever been produced;" when a Methodist professor says, "Christ is essentially no more divine than we are, or nature is. The meanest creature of the universe is, considered from this viewpoint, divine in the same sense," when a Congregationalist Seminary president asserts, "The moment we begin chanting 'very God of very God' Christ eludes us and is gone; and yet the moment we say, 'He is only man,' Christ comes to us in some new beauty and compelling power."*

And sadly, you will find ministers and seminary professors teaching this in churches and Bible Colleges in Auckland and many other places still today. And it is heresy – false doctrine It is a denial of Jesus as truly and fully God. And if this is the Jesus you know, then you do not know the Jesus of the Bible.

* + 1. The other response is the response of **Thomas**. For having seen the risen Jesus and been invited to touch His hands and His side, and to believe, Thomas said to Jesus, “*My Lord and my God*.” Is this your response to Jesus? Do you believe that He is the eternal and natural Son of God? That He is truly and fully God? That He is your God and your Redeemer? I pray that you do!

1. But let’s continue on to the next aspect of the person and work of the Lord Jesus that we confess in the Creed, which is that He is “***Our Lord***.” And the passage we will consider in this connection is **Colossians 1:9-20**. (p. 983) And notice, from verse 3, that Jesus is referred to as “*our Lord Jesus Christ*,” and in verse 10, we are urged to “*walk in a manner worthy of the Lord*.” So, the lordship of Jesus is a key theme of this passage. But let’s read verses 9-20 so that we have the passage in its context.
   1. Now, **verses 12-14** are really just another way of expressing what we read in our Galatians passage. We see mention of “*the Father*” and “*His beloved Son*.” And the “*we*” in those verses is us as His adopted sons and daughters, who have been “*delivered from the kingdom of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son*.” And this beloved Son is the One “*in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*.” And this is the gospel – redemption and adoption through Jesus Christ.

* 1. But then Paul pauses to speak about the person and work of Jesus Christ in what is one of the most magnificent passages in all of Scripture – **verses 15-20**. And his central theme is the pre-eminence of Jesus. And pre-eminence means most magnificent and superior and glorious, and worthy of our worship and obedience. Another word we could use is **lordship**. The word Lord means master, owner, ruler. And Paul is declaring Jesus as the Lord, the one who to whom we belong; the one who owns us; the one who claims dominion over every aspect of our lives; the one who deserves our worship and obedience. And Paul provides five reasons in this passage why Jesus can claim Lordship over us: They are by right of His **divinity**, by right of **creation**, by right of **preservation**, by right of **authority**, and by right of **the price He paid to redeem us**. Let’s briefly consider each one:
     1. From verse 15, Jesus is Lord by right of His **divinity**: “*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation*.” And here is what we talked about in the first point of the sermon. Jesus is the eternal natural Son of God, who is truly and fully God.
        1. And I should point out here that the second part of verse 15 is the other verse of the Bible that heretics have used to teach that Jesus was created. And you can see why. At first read, it sounds like Jesus was the first thing that God created. But what is the first rule of Bible interpretation? Look at the context. And the next verses says that all things were created *by* and *through* Jesus, and *for* Jesus, and that He is *before all things*. And the next rule of Bible interpretation is let the plain interpret the less plain. And we have already seen the many Bible passages that teach that Jesus is eternal God. So, what Paul is declaring here is not that Jesus was the first created thing, but that the whole universe was created by and through, and for Him as the eternal Son of God and Lord of lords.
        2. So, He is Lord by right of His divinity or god-ness.
     2. And secondly, from verse 16, as we have just seen, Jesus is Lord also by right of **creation**. And this point is very simple – Jesus made us! And if you make something, it is yours! So, He is Lord by right of divinity and creation.
     3. And thirdly, from verse 17, He is Lord by right of **preservation**. We read that “*He is before all things and in Him all things hold together*.” So, not only did he make us, He also gives us life and breath and sunshine and rain. In Romans 8:28, we believers confess that “*we know that for those who love God all things work together for good*.” Why? Because Jesus sovereignly controls all things. So, He is Lord by right of preservation.
     4. And fourthly, from verses 18-20a, Jesus is Lord by right of **authority**. We read, “*And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven*.”
        1. A parallel passage to this one is found in 1 Corinthians 15:24-27. There we read that the end of time, Jesus will deliver “*the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet*.”
           1. When the ancient kings conquered another nation in war, the defeated king would lie on the ground and the victorious king would use him as a footstool, as a symbol of victory. So, one day, Satan and the evil angels and all those who have opposed Jesus Christ throughout history will be His footstool.
        2. So, He is Lord by right of His authority.
     5. And fifthly, from verse 20b, Jesus is Lord by right of **the price He paid to secure our redemption**. We read, “*Making peace by the blood of His cross*.”
        1. We know from Luke’s Gospel that before he was crucified, Jesus was in such deep distress that “*His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground*.” And at His trial, He was given the crown of thorns, which would have torn up His scalp. And then He was whipped with leather straps with shards of bone and tiny balls of iron in then, which tear up the flesh and produce severe blood loss. And with all these wounds, He had least had to carry His own cross for a time, until Simon from Cyrene took over. And then, He had long, iron nails driven through His hands and feet. And once the cross was erected, to take each breath, He would have had to pull himself up, which further aggravated the wounded hands and feet and back. And after He had had died, we read that when a soldier pierced His side, there came out blood and water. What utter agony!
        2. But this blood is a very real symbol of His greatest suffering, which was the punishment He endured from His Father to pay for our sins. As **Isaiah 53:5** says, “*He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed*.” And all this is why Paul speaks of the church in Acts 20:28 as the church that Jesus “*obtained [or bought or purchased] with His own blood*.”
        3. So, He is Lord also by right of the price He paid to secure our redemption.
  2. And so, in view of His lordship, which is His by right of divinity, creation, preservation, authority, and the price he paid to secure our redemption, He owns us; He claims dominion over every aspect of our lives; He deserves our worship and obedience. And that is the point of **verses 9-11** in our passage.
     1. Paul prays that we might be “*filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding*.” So, we love His Word. We want to be filled with His word. We want to study it, carefully, because it tells us the Lord’s will – what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false. And we have talked about this, quite often, in recent weeks. It is why the preaching of the Word in your congregation and church Bible studies are so important, together with your own personal Bible devotions. It is these most ordinary things that the Lord uses to increase our spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we need this for every decision and situation of life, especially in a post-Christian and increasingly anti-Christian world.
        1. For example, if your boss requires you and all the staff to wear rainbow colours in support of pride month, are you ready to refuse and risk losing your job because you cannot endorse and affirm and promote what God calls an abomination? You will be if you know that that is the Lord’s will.
     2. But Paul continues in **verse 10** with the desired result of preaching and Bible study, which is “*so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God*.” Jesus demands the fruit of obedience. And He demands that we grow in fruitfulness and knowledge. We are not to be just hearers of the word but doers also.
     3. And will there be challenges and hardships along the way? Yes, there will. And maybe you are in a season of challenge or hardship today. If so, another benefit of preaching and Bible study is that by it, from **verse 11**, we are “*strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy*.” Submitting to the lordship of Jesus is not easy. The devil does not want us to do it. Our sinful nature fights against us, every day. And we will be persecuted. But the Lord Jesus strengthens His people and causes them to endure. That is His promise!

I recently watched the beginning of an episode of a new series on Netflix called Snowflake Mountain. I didn’t get far because the language is bad, but I got far enough to see what the show is about. ‘Snowflakes’ is a modern term that describes selfish, lazy, easily offended, self-entitled, self-absorbed, narcissistic, self-entitled, and pampered young adults. And in this reality TV show, nine ‘snowflakes,’ who thought they were going to some 5 star spa resort, end up out in the wilderness and having to camp and hunt and survive. And my guess is that it will not go well :-) but some of them will learn some good life lessons along the way… It’s classic reality TV. But the reason I mention this is because no one likes a person with an entitlement complex; someone who just thinks that everyone should worship them or serve them or do whatever they want. For example, if I came to you and ordered you to give me your money and make me dinner and buy me a car and to give me a foot massage, you would, quite rightly, tell me to go jump in the lake. You would think, Who do you think you are?

Well, through His Word, Jesus is telling you today that as the Son of God, He is your Lord. He owns you. You belong to Him. He claims dominion over area of your life. You owe Him worship and devotion and obedience. And I hope and pray that your response is Yes Lord, I am yours. I love you and I gladly worship you and serve you and obey you.

And to those of you who are putting off bowing your knee before the Lord Jesus, you will either do it now, willingly and gladly, and receive eternal life, or you will do it on Judgment Day, when it will be too late, and you will be condemned to hell for all eternity.

I once read about a woman who told her pastor that her daughter was refusing to recognize Christ as her Saviour and Lord. So, the pastor arranged to visit the girl and he said to her, “How about I tell your mother to not bring this matter up for a year. Would that be OK?” And the girl thought about this for a moment and said, “Um, maybe a year is too long, because what if I die before then?” That’s a good point,” replied the pastor. So, he suggested six months. But she still thought that too risky. So, he said, “Well, how about three months?” But after thinking some more, the girl said, “I would be silly to put this off for three months or even for one day.” So, they kneeled together, and she received Jesus Christ as her Saviour and Lord that very day. And what this account illustrates is that none of us know how much longer we have to live. So don’t put off submitting to the Lordship of Jesus. Do it today! Amen.

And may we all be adopted sons and daughters of our Father in heaven, through Christ our Lord. Amen.