



As we continue our series on Christology, the lordship of Jesus comes into purview, especially as we acknowledge the value of His death. In Today's *Conversation*, the Director of Communications (Dr. T) explores His *Lordship* with Rev. Oboya Ochalla:

Dr. T: What does it mean to say "Jesus is Lord" today?

Rev. Ochalla: This has become a source of much confusion and heresy in the modern Church. Even the way the question is asked seems to suggest that the expression could or even should be interpreted differently 'today' than it has been in the New Testament.

Some of the background for some of the more modern interpretations is this: since the time of the Reformation in the 1500s, groups have interpreted and re-interpreted the Bible to find their own ideas within them. One stream of thinking - in trying to argue against the Pope's claim that he is somehow the visible head of the Church on earth - was to borrow this phrase from St. Paul (1 Corinthians 12:3) in order to mean that "Lord" means the same as "Head" in his baptismal description of the Church. This offers a parallel meaning to a political 'lord' who rules over a given territory. While related to Paul's description of Jesus as the head of the Church into which we are baptized and joined as members of that Body, the Jewish background of St. Paul's words - which is true for all of the New Testament writers as well - is completely ignored.

This has developed, as a result, into a kind of 'Lordship' theology which has been bent around obedience themes - so that being Christian and becoming Christian is moved away from baptism as a gift in which the Holy Spirit washes, forgives, joins us Christ, and the like, to an emphasis on whether you are 'obeying' Jesus in everything you do as if He were a kingly Lord over you. The Good News Gospel of Jesus gets pushed away and turned into a reward for your obedience and it misses the deeper message that St. Paul (and all of the New Testament writers) are presenting here.

Rev. Oboya Ochalla was ordained in 2019 and serves as the Associate Pastor at St. James Lutheran Church.

Rev. Ochalla has more to say on this topic. Join us in the next *Conversation*, as we explore this deeper meaning of *Lord* that St. Paul talks about in the New Testament, on our journey back to basics.