

May 12th, 2024

Evergreen PCA

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Sermon Title: David's Lord is David's Son

Sermon Text: Matthew 22:41-46

Matt. 22:41 ¶ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question,

Matt. 22:42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David."

Matt. 22:43 He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

Matt. 22:44 "The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet"?"

Matt. 22:45 ¶ If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?"

Matt. 22:46 And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Main Point: Jesus is greater than his own Father, David.

Outline:

1. David's Son
2. David's Lord

Introduction

Growing up one of my best friends never knew his father. As much as he was ever told by his mother, the man left the family at an early age and left my friend's young mother to raise a little boy all on her own. When he was older he discovered his father was a gambling addict, a drunkard, a womanizer, and an abusive man. On every level his father was the sort of person you wouldn't want to follow in the footsteps of.

And so when it came to approaching adulthood he told me the truth: I don't want to be anything like my father.

Some fathers are easy to dismiss. They don't cast much of a shadow. To put it bluntly, some fathers are just disappointing.

But in this passage Jesus talks about himself and the father whose footsteps he does walk in. In this case that father is King David. And David leaves huge shoes to fill.

And Jesus talks about his father David by way of a question, without really talking about himself directly. It's an interesting discussion, in part, because it's basically an insightful question from Jesus that doesn't really get a direct answer in the text. Jesus is sparking thought among the people he's talking to.

So Jesus is the Messiah, and today we see two things about him as the Messiah: he is David's Son. That's point one. But point two is that Jesus is also David's Lord.

What we see in the text is that Jesus is greater than his own physical father, David.

1. David's Son

The first thing that Jesus affirms about the Messiah here is that the Messiah would be the David's Son. He really assumes it in the form of a question in verses 42 and 43,

“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?’ They said to him, ‘The son of David.’ He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord...?”

He certainly isn't teaching or arguing that the Messiah isn't David's son. The real question is if he is merely David's son. Is the Messiah supposed to be someone who isn't just a descendant of David?

Now, let's start here: why the belief that the Messiah would be a descendant of David at all? In 2 Samuel chapter 7, God makes a series of promises to David. Let me read starting in verse 12 of that passage:

“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.””(2 Samuel 7:12-16)

Now, if you read that prophecy carefully you may notice that in some ways this seems to be talking about an immediate son that David had: Solomon, right? It says, “He shall build a house for my name.” Solomon did that. He built the temple in Jerusalem. It predicts if he sins he will be disciplined. Jesus never sinned, but Solomon definitely did plenty of that. But then it promises other things that Solomon didn't do: it speaks of his kingdom being forever. That didn't happen with Solomon or any of the other kings.

God also promises that “your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” And you see echoes of this promise repeated in the Psalms and in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

In fact, when Paul is preaching in Acts 13, he makes this argument that the promise was never fulfilled in David or his immediate family. After mentioning that Jesus is the Son of David he says,

“David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up did not see corruption” (Acts 13:35-36).

When we look at these promises, we see them applying directly to Solomon, but then we see that they make us look beyond Solomon. Solomon was a sinner. This promise makes us yearn for one who is sinless. Solomon was mortal. It makes us yearn for a king and a kingdom that won't end.

David disappointed. He wasn't the real fulfillment. If you're looking for fulfillment of this eternal throne in David or Solomon or any other king from Israel's history, you come away sorely disappointed. Their kingdoms were fleeting because they always eventually died. For this reason, even in Jesus' day, the Scribes were saying, “Someone who is a descendant of David will come and make this promise come true.” They knew it hadn't happened yet.

Jesus is explicitly called “Son of David” 15 times between the three synoptic gospels. From the Biblical perspective we should have no doubt that Jesus is a physical descendant of David. Not only do the genealogies of the New Testament bear that out, but the Old Testament also predicted that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, which is the city of David. The connections between Jesus and David are robust and literal. Also don't forget that when Jesus was coming into Jerusalem the people were crying out “Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” They saw Jesus as ushering in that kingdom which was promised to David: that eternal kingdom that never ends.

Notice this: the Messiah they're waiting for has big shoes to fill, in their minds. Especially as far as their expectations go.

As far as kings go, king David did represent the high point of Israel. He was definitely Israel's most illustrious king. The man was a warrior poet and a wise ruler. He presided over the largest expansion of Israel's territory in its history, and also administrated some of the greatest public works projects that Israel ever had, though his son Solomon was a very close second.

And so if there was a golden age of Israel to be had, then the time of King David was definitely it.

We know that the Golden Age of Israel certainly never came after David's time. After David died, the kingdom went to his son, Solomon, but even though he was wise, his rule in Israel was tainted. He loved foreign wives, and he permitted false worship. The same goes for all the kings after *him*. After Solomon the kingdom divided into north and south, each kingdom seemingly competing to see who could drift further from God's standards the fastest.

And every time Israel fell further and further from God's law the hope became more prominent: David's descendant is coming. Keep waiting.

By the time Jesus was born, in the eyes of many he had seemingly impossible shoes to fill. Nobody had ever lived up to David's legacy. Which of course made David seem all the greater and his flaws, in their minds, became smaller and less significant.

And so in this moment, before he is fully understood, Jesus stands in the shadow cast by David, as his descendant... as a Son of David. But the truth is, as we'll see in the next point, it's David who stands in the shadow of Christ.

So the messiah is a son of David, but... as we're about to see, he's not a mere physical Son of David.

2. David's Lord

Jesus says something more about the Messiah here. The second point today is that the Messiah is David's Lord. In verses 43 and 44, Jesus introduces something David says. And notice that Jesus *affirms* that what David wrote in the Psalm is inspired by God's Spirit. According to Jesus, David said what he said "in the Spirit." His responses is, "Okay, the Messiah is a descendant of David. But he has to be more than that, because look at this":

“How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,
“The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet””?

To show that the Messiah is more than just a physical descendant of David, Jesus takes his skeptical enemies to Psalm 110, which is a genre of Psalm that is sometimes called a Messianic Psalm. Even in Jesus' day this was a Psalm that was quoted when people looked forward to the coming Savior.

Now, in Psalm 110, the word Lord gets used twice. If you don't look at the original language or pay attention to the capitalization, you're going to be so confused. In the English they translate the word as "LORD" both times. But it wasn't written that way – it's two totally different words.

I'm going to give you a more literal translation and then explain what each word means. So when Psalm 110:1 says "The LORD said," the first word translated LORD is the word "Yahweh." That's the Old Testament proper covenant name for God. It's the proper name that God gave to Israel to call him.

The second word "Lord" here in the passage is the Hebrew word "Adonai," which is kind of like calling someone sovereign king. It's also another title for God.

And David says in this passage, “Yahweh said to my Adonai.” Or to make it simpler, “Yahweh said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’”

To simplify it, the passage is puzzling for its readers because he is essentially saying, “God said to David’s ruler or Lord.” He can’t be talking about another king, because there’s only David. David has only One who is king over him. The God of Israel is talking to someone else who also carries a divine title that’s higher than King (since David is already the king and David calls *him* Lord).

From the perspective of New Testament theology, we can see that what is happening in Psalm 110 is an intertrinitarian exchange between the Father and Son. The Father is David’s God, and the Son is David’s Lord here. We know that later in Matthew Jesus will directly tell us that he himself will be seated at the right hand of the Father. So we can say undoubtedly that yes, Jesus tells us that Psalm 110 was David receiving an insightful glimpse of the relationship of Father and Son. And David saw that the Son would also be his very own descendant.

Jesus’ point here is, whoever the Messiah is, he also is greater than David, and David refers to him as Adonai – Lord. The greatest king in Israel’s history is still not as great as the Messiah, in other words.

Jesus takes his listeners to a Psalm where David writes a conversation in which God invites David’s Lord to sit in the seat of highest authority.

Jesus asks, “How can David say that one of his descendants is greater than himself?” For Jewish people this would be a crazy thought... totally countercultural.

The answer is, David will bow down before Jesus, even his own descendant. Jesus is David’s Adonai. He’s the King of king David.

Conclusion

Why does Jesus do this? Why this discussion about the Son of David and David's Lord and all this?

Let me suggest that you look just a few verses before our passage for part of the answer today. Jesus was just asked about the greatest commandment. And you remember that his answer was, "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself."

Do you see what Jesus has done? He's just kept the greatest commandment by way of this theological discussion.

- **He's loving God by driving his listeners to the Messiah.**
- And he's loving his neighbor by pointing them to himself.

Jesus has just been loving God by teaching these things to us. And he's encouraging us to love God in the same way.

I have a couple of applications I want to make off the back of this.

The **first** is, theological study and conversation can indeed be a way to love God. We don't often think of reading and discussing theology as something that is very productive, do we? There might be more of us in Reformed churches who tend that way, but I suspect not all of us think of theology in that way. We hear there's a theology night, or that we're going to read a theology book and we might think, "That's not for me. I want to do something *real*. Something *productive*."

Well in his biography of Winston Churchill, William Manchester points out that Churchill read voluminously because for Churchill, reading was a form of action. Study, for Churchill, contributed to his own personal formation. And because he had been shaped and changed by study, he knew that study was practical. It wasn't just abstract. It could form a person and shape them. That's true for all of us. What we study – what we give our hearts and minds to – matters and changes us.

If we aren't engaging our minds to love God, we're not really loving him with all our "mind" as the great commandment tells us.

So here; let me press a bit. **In what ways are you loving God with all of your mind?** Let me encourage you to follow Jesus' lead. Do deep study of the Scriptures. Become more conversant in theological study. It's not just for pastors or church officers, it's for all Christians, and is a part of our regular growth. It should be normal for us.

Let me try this: Imagine if I asked you if you love your spouse and you said yes. But then you also told me you didn't want to know more about your spouse or talk to other people about your spouse. I think that would really weird most of us out. I think we wouldn't really believe you when you claim to love this person.

What if I looked at Micah (he'll let me pick on him) and said, "Where did your wife, Bradian, grow up?"

"I don't know."

"Well you've been married twenty years. Do you love her?"

"Yes."

"But you never asked her where she grew up?"

"No."

"Well even now are you interested in finding out?"

"Not really. That's for the people at the DMV to study and know. I just love her."

We'd probably say, "So you love her, but you don't know anything basic about her. Huh."

Well if we say we love God, then we should remember: This is our *God* we're talking about. This is the creator. We should care about him. We should strive to know him. But that also means knowing about him. We should be curious. He is our Lord. We should want to know him. We should care.

I mentioned before that Jesus loved God and loved his neighbor by pointing his listeners to God. And so the **second** application I would make is that we should also love God and our neighbor by pointing them to God.

To put it simply, let's not be afraid to talk to people about Jesus. You may be surprised to know that complete strangers are often down to talk about Jesus. According to a recent survey, only 4 percent of Gen Z'ers have a biblical worldview. That might sound like a problem, and I suppose it is. But we should also see it as an opportunity, because listen to this: "Despite Gen Z's low biblical literacy, 44 percent say they're extremely curious about the Bible and/or Jesus." 44%. Not 10%, not 25%, but almost half. Who else is going to have those conversations if not us?

Jesus loves his neighbors by bringing up this theological discussion. I'm not saying that theological discussion and debate is always appropriate in every situation, but what I hope is that you won't write it off or count it out. That you won't think of it as unloving. Often times the last thing people think of when they think of theological debates is love. And to that I just want to say, "Look at Jesus here. He's all love, and he is down for some meaty theological discussion. Because in it he leads others to love God more, and to know himself better."

This discussion involves scriptural exegesis and logic. It requires his listeners to make an inference, which requires some mental work. He is **pushing them to love God with their mind** in this instance. We can and should love God by asking tricky questions and looking to the Scripture for the answers.

My **third** application is this: follow Jesus' lead and pay close attention to the Bible. Think of how Jesus handles this debate here.

Back in Jesus' day in rabbinic discourse, if you wanted to know what God said, what the rabbis would do is, they would quote another rabbi. And they had very elaborate mechanisms for citing authorities. Did you want to know what was true? Then just quote this or that other rabbi.

But for Jesus, the question of who the Messiah is can't be answered just by asking what another rabbi thinks, or just by looking at tradition. It can only be settled by turning to the inspired and inerrant Word of God. In that sense, he models for us how to do theology here, doesn't he?

God has not kept himself hidden. Instead, he's revealed himself, he's shown himself. It doesn't mean there is no mystery. It doesn't mean that he tells us everything comprehensively, but he does tell us what he wants us to know. He tells us what we need. That's why he's given us the Scriptures.

And his Scriptures are perfect and inerrant – which means that sometimes the answer to the trickiest theological answer is found in a simple word – in the instance of this passage it's the word "Lord." Notice how this passage is basically about Jesus paying attention to three Hebrew letters of this text in the Psalms.

When I first became a Christian one of the things I noticed was how closely the preachers and writers paid attention to the text. The way they looked so closely at one word modeled for me the truth that each word, each jot and tittle of the text is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, and correction.

My **final application** is simply this: believe in the Messiah, who is far greater than David.

David may have been great. He may have been a stupendous king. He may have presided over the growth of Israel from a scrappy upstart to a serious player on the world scene. David may have been a great poet and leader. But understand: he is nothing compared to Jesus. His descendant,

the Messiah, towers so far above him that there is almost no comparison to be had. David stands in the shadow of Jesus, his son.

Think of the greatest leader. Think of the greatest king that ever lived. Think of Alexander the Great. Alexander was extraordinary in expanding his rule over the world and changed the shape of nations and dynasties for centuries, but he was a puny dot next to Jesus Christ, whom the greatest rulers and kings on earth will one day kneel before and say, “my Lord and my God.”

Let's pray.