

Third Sunday after Resurrection

Lectionary Title 21: **Affirming Christ's Lordship**

Old Testament: Psalm 24:1-2 (NRSV)

Entrance into the Temple Of David. A Psalm.

¹ The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; ² for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.

New Testament: 1 Corinthians 10:14 (NRSV, 1989)

¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends,² flee from the worship of idols.

General Concept: The earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods shaped and created by people.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

N/K/YE: **Jesus is our Lord.**

ME/OE: **Jesus is the Lord of all creation.**

Y: **The earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods created by people.**

A: **The earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods shaped and created by people.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Psalm 24 is a poetry attributed to King David. It takes the form of a song sung during worship or celebration in ancient Israel. The psalmist here is praising God's lordship over all realms, affirming God as the creator of all things and that everything belongs to God. By strong implication, the psalmist affirms that God owns all things and humbles and mocks anyone who claims lordship over creation other than God. It is a praise that also warns those who may attempt to attribute creation to other gods apart from the creator God. There is no power and being in this world to whom the origins, the existence, meaning, sustenance and redemption of all creation from the forces of chaos may be attributed. There is only one creator, redeemer, sustainer God who reigns sovereign over all creation, and no creature, no matter how gifted he or she may be, can ever make such a claim. The creature can never take the place of the creator. The mortal can never assume the powers of an eternal, immortal being. This relationship can never be reversed. The creature should always be reminded of his/her proper place in the scheme of creation.

Paul wrote the letter to the church in Corinth to address serious issues reported to him. Since Corinth is a commercial city that caters to both land and sea trade, it is normally crowded with different peoples with different religions and practices. Christians in Corinth are a minority group so members strive to compete and worship in the midst of a pagan-dominated environment. Thus, it may not be easy for Christians to remain firm and loyal to their faith in the midst of such a highly cosmopolitan context.

From what may be discerned from the text and its immediate background, it would seem that the church in Corinth has successfully converted practitioners of other religions to Christianity. However, these new converts may not have totally forgotten nor gotten rid of their old practices. Thus, idolatry became one of the issues that Paul has to address in his letter to the Corinthian Christians warning them of the different forms idolatry may take. Since Paul included idolatry in his letter, this may have become a serious problem in the

church that could be affecting their unity. Paul's warning for Christians to flee from idolatry is part of his long list of warnings not to succumb to the same sins committed by their forebears. Paul encouraged the Christians not to partake and participate in any idol worship as this is not in accordance to the teachings they inherited from Jesus.

Idolatry today is no longer just the worship of little gods nor of certain images popularly recognized as objects of religious veneration. Idolatry could be any practice, habit, belief or values that distract our attention and focus from what essentially should be the work and mission of the church. It could be any system that diverts our time and priorities away from affirming that everything belongs to the risen Lord and that God is sovereign Lord over all things and all creatures of the earth. It becomes real when the work and mission of the church as embodied and exemplified by Jesus begins to take lesser priority in our daily life activities, when we begin acquiring values and perspectives that are contrary to the values of the kingdom of God as preached by Jesus, when we become more enamored with acquiring possessions and working only for our own advancement rather than aiming to be possessed by the spirit of the Lord which leads us towards a more selfless life of obedience, service and witnessing. Avoiding idolatry is not only a matter of being in church every Sunday though it will certainly help in the nurturing and equipping of the believers for mission work. To avoid idolatry is to reject any attachment to anything that ruins our relationship with God and with others. It is avoiding all efforts that advance selfish interest at the expense of other people's welfare and happiness. It is finding one's own peace and security solely in God as one simply puts all his/her trust and faith in God's ability to sustain, protect, and redeem the faithful even in the most difficult of times.

Though we live in a Christian-dominated country, we live in a culture and religious context dominated by foreign values and foreign perspectives imposed upon us by our former colonizers that do not reflect the authentic life of faith exemplified by Jesus. Most of us may have become alienated already from the indigenous values bequeathed to us by our indigenous ancestors: the basic love and care for nature and the rest of creation, the value of caring for each other and of being part of a community of kindred faith, the value of loving and accepting even the stranger, those different from us. These are all values reflective of the Gospel message exemplified and taught by Jesus. Thus, this is a situation similar to the struggles of Christians in Corinth against idolatry. We can still see people putting so much time appreciating material possessions yet giving less time to help the needy. But we have the church and faithful servants who are the Pauls of modern times who continue to remind us to flee from idolatry. God through the church and its members continue to remind us not to commit the same mistakes of our history but learn from these mistakes. We must be vigilant in guarding the interest of the mission of the church in our community. We must be conscious always in everything we do and aspire for in life, and of the time and effort we spend on such things that can become our own idols. We must not blindly accept and embrace concepts that represent idolatrous values and perspectives, and which prevent us from being possessed by that spirit of selfless service and witness to the love and righteousness of our God in and through Jesus. Just like the Psalmist we need to passionately affirm the lordship of God in all creation, in all spheres of life, possessed by that same spirit and exhibiting the same zeal when affirming the lordship of Christ in our own daily work and activities.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

At the very outset it must be made clear that Christ's lordship over all the earth is not a chauvinistic claim against other communities of faith. It is addressed to Christians who lack the will to submit all of life under Christ's lordship. They would rather reserve some compartments of their lives for loyalties other than Jesus Christ upon whom God has granted all authorities in heaven and on earth. These objects of loyalties are called idols because they are formed and chosen by their worshippers. A favorite idol, for example is Profit. It's an idol that rivals Jesus Christ because its domains are strictly off limits to the gospel's demands. Another idol that rivals Christ's lordship is called Political Expediency. When politics is played without ethical considerations it becomes an alien domain that shuts out the gospel. And there are many lesser idols that compromise Christ's sovereignty.

The worship of idols is not confined to the occasion of personal, family or public worship. It takes place most hours of the day on a daily basis. In fact, worshipping the Lord Jesus may be confined only to an hour or two on Sundays at the church. For all intents and purposes, idols may be worshipped more regularly and religiously than the one true God. The UCCP declaration that Jesus is the living Lord of all of life and of all creation cannot be compromised. Rather, it must be affirmed again and again every time believers of Christ are faced with situations that challenge the gospel. It is a primary task of the church to remind the members of Peter's declaration – "I would rather obey God than man" – especially during its community gathering in worship.

The challenge of the environment is posed most urgently to all of humankind. Scientists have found out that the current environmental crisis that is leading to an ecological catastrophe is human-made. People that are supposed to have a Christian conscience cannot escape from the Lord's judgment because they form part of a cabal of economic and financial managers who make decisions in obedience to the commands of idols. It is a test of the church's loyalty to the risen Jesus to announce God's judgment on a world for its failure to stop the continuing despoliation of creation.

Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session and with the consistent example shown by parents and other significant adults, the children will be able to:

1. begin to identify that Jesus is the Lord of creation;
2. begin to acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of His people, and
3. express one's thanks for Jesus being our Lord.

II. Concept: Jesus is our Lord.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), offering plate, song and memory verse chart, real (leaves, flowers, stones, fruits, beans, other objects that are available in your locality), pictures of sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, birds, fish, etc.), paste, glue, water color, aprons for each child

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the children warmly as they arrive.
2. Opening prayer: Lord, true enough it is a great thing to serve you and walk in your light. Thanks again for another Sunday of learning with fun. Guide all of us in our learning together under your care. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.
3. Opening song: "It's a Great Thing"
 It's a great thing to praise the Lord (3x)
 Walking in the light of God.
 Walk (4x) in the light
 Walk (4x) in the light
 Walk (4x) in the light
 Walking in the light of God.

Note: Replace the word *walk* with love and serve and the word *walking* with loving and serving.

B. Getting Ready

Take the children for a nature walk. Make sure that the place is safe. Remind the children about observing carefully. If the place is safe for smelling and hearing, ask the children to use only their eyes and nose, but to avoid touching things.

C. Learning Time

1. Upon returning to the classroom, let the children do a quieting activity (finger play, stretching).
2. Display the materials that you have prepared.
3. Distribute activity sheets where the children can draw, paste real objects or pictures, or finger paint the things that they have seen, smelled, and heard.

Things I saw	Things I smelled	Things I heard

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. After the activity, ask the children to say something about their work. Express appreciation for each presentation.
2. Process the answers and ask: "Who gave us colors? Who gave us air to breathe? Who gave us light? Who gave us the things we saw, heard, and smelled in our nature walk?"
3. Tell the children to stand and look at themselves. Ask these questions.
 - a. What does our body have that makes us see (hear, smell, touch, taste, feel, speak, walk, run)?
 - b. Who do you think gave us wonderful bodies?
 - c. Who do you think is the most special creation of God?
4. Present on a half-size manila paper a drawing of Mother Earth and below the written verses: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers." (Psalm 24:1-2)
5. Have the children copy in their activity sheet the following:
For N/K: "The earth is the Lord's." (Psalm 24:1a)
For YE: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers." (Psalm 24:1-2)
6. Say: "Our lesson focuses on the lordship of Jesus. There is no other Lord than Jesus. He is our Lord and Savior."

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Who is the Lord of creation?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Simulate a day care center in the classroom. Let the children pretend taking care of babies or young children. Let them wrap dolls in a blanket. Let them play with the young children. In the process have them realize that they can be thankful to God by serving others.

G. Closing Worship

1. Present again the memory verse (Psalm 24:1-2) written in manila paper. Tell the children to read it in unison.
2. Offering: Encourage the children to offer themselves after giving their money offering.
3. Closing song: "He's the Lord of the Sunshine" (PALMAR, NCCP VCS 2009 Song Book)
He's the Lord of the sunshine, the Lord of the rain
He's the Lord of the good times, the Lord of the pain
He's the Lord of the mountains, the Lord of the seas
He's the Lord of the music, the Lord of the children
The Lord of you and me.
4. Closing prayer: "Dear God, thank you for giving us Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Thank you for being with us because we know how much you care for us and the rest of your creation. Help us to continue to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus by taking care of each other and the whole of creation. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen."

Middle and Older Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. begin to identify that Jesus is the Lord of creation;
2. begin to acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of His people, and
3. express one's thanks to Jesus being our Lord.

II. Concept: Jesus is the Lord of all creation.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), activity sheet, crayons, song and memory verse chart, soft ball (made of straw, used stockings, or any available soft material), pictures of celebrities, politicians and nature

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: Lord, true enough you have risen from the dead and you are the only Lord. Thanks again for another Sunday of learning with fun. Guide all of us in our learning together under your care. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.
3. Opening song: "It's a Great Thing"
It's a great thing to praise the Lord (3x)
Walking in the light of God.
Walk (4x) in the light
Walk (4x) in the light
Walk (4x) in the light
Walking in the light of God.

Note: Replace the word *walk* with love and serve and the word *walking* with loving and serving.

B. Getting Ready

Prepare the class to play a tossing game. Tell the class to stand in a big circle. Toss a soft ball to a child and say a letter of the alphabet. That child should give a truth about God starting with that letter. (R: Jesus resurrected from the dead; C: God created the world and everything in it; O: Obey God and his righteousness and everything shall be added unto you; A: All knees shall bow down to Jesus. G: God loves us/God is love; B: Behold the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world; J: Jesus is our Lord and Savior; D: David wrote psalms to praise God; etc.). The child who answers correctly will toss the soft ball to another child in the circle. After playing for a few minutes, ask the class how they felt knowing or not knowing truths about God.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read Psalm 24:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 10:14 in unison.
2. Distribute pieces of paper and markers. Ask the class to write about any of the following:
 - a. A verse that they want to remember
 - b. A reason to praise God after reading the psalm
 - c. An idol that distracts us from worshipping God
 - d. A commitment to respond to God's goodness
 - e. Something you received that you are thankful to God

- f. Part of creation that has a special effect on you

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Call on the children and let them share their work.
2. Record the answers of the children. Use this table.

Verses to remember	Idols that distract us from worshipping God
Reasons to praise God	Commitment to respond to God's goodness
Things received from God	Creation that has a special effect on them

3. Discuss the answers. Assist the children in saying the following insights:
 - a. Jesus is the Lord of creation
 - b. The love of money can distract us from being loyal and obedient to Jesus.
 - c. Creation is important to people. We should not destroy nature.
 - d. We have to be thankful for everything we receive from God.
 - e. We need to respond to God's goodness.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "How can church people show that they acknowledge Jesus as the Lord of creation?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. For ME: Tell the class to think of ways by which they can take care of creation as a manifestation of gratitude to the Creator affirmed by the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Putting of garbage in the trash can
 - b. As members of the church, write an appeal letter to the local government authorities to ensure proper waste disposal or stop companies from operating in the vicinity when its activities are detrimental to people and the environment's health.
2. For OE: Have the class list ways by which they can avoid idols that will prevent them from being loyal and obedient to God. Use this short paragraph as their reference.

"It's all God's. There is nothing that we can call "mine". We minimize spending time struggling to possess material things or stuff. It's better to pursue and honor God rather than pursue things that will never be ours."

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "He's the Lord of the Sunshine" (PALMAR, NCCP VCS 2009 Song Book)
3. Closing prayer: Gather the children around in a circle and let each one say a prayer of thanks to God for having Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior.
4. Response: Threefold Amen.

Youth Level

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. begin to identify that Jesus is the Lord of creation;
2. begin to acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of His people,
3. explain what Jesus' Lordship over creation and His people mean; and
4. express one's thanks for Jesus being our Lord.

II. Concept: The earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods created by people.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet

II. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: We come today prepared to learn from you, O God, who nurtures us in Jesus Christ. Be with us again through the inspiring and enabling power of the Holy Spirit that we may fully affirm with conviction that the earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods created by people. This is our prayer. Amen.
3. Opening song: "The Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" (HFJ # 1)

B. Getting Ready

Tell the students to share their enjoyable experiences in any of these activities: visiting beaches, mountain resorts, diving areas, forest parks, bird sanctuaries, caves, nature's land and water formations, farms, etc. Ask them to share not only information but how they felt physically and spiritually.

C. Learning Time

1. Divide the class in two groups. Tell each group to list down words/ideas/phrases that come to mind when they hear/read the given words: Group 1 - earth, lord; Group 2 - worship, idols.
2. Tell the class to read Psalm 24:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 10:14 in unison. Let them work as a group.
 - a. Group 1: *Psalm 24:1-2*. Our exegesis reads: "There is only one creator, redeemer, sustainer God who reigns sovereign over all creation, and no creature, no matter how gifted he or she may be, can ever make such a claim. The creature can never take the place of the creator."
 - b. Group 2: *1 Corinthians 10:14*. "To avoid idolatry is to reject any attachment to anything that ruins our relationship with God and with others. It is avoiding all efforts that advance selfish interest at the expense of other people's welfare and happiness. It is finding one's own peace and security solely in God as one simply puts all his/her trust and faith in God's ability to sustain, protect, and redeem the faithful even in the most difficult of times." According to Mahatma Gandhi, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."
3. Let each group share their ideas and discuss their presentations.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Discuss the insights shared by the class by asking the following questions:
 - a. Who owns the earth, and those who live in it based on Psalm 24:1-2? (The Lord owns the earth and therefore deserves the worship of all His people and the rest of creation.)

- b. How can you relate this truth to the experiences that you have shared at the beginning of this lesson?
- c. Why is this significant? “Anything that replaces people's loyalty and obedience to God becomes an idol; something that becomes more valuable than kingdom values of peace, justice, caring, sharing, service is an idol. Worship is not just confined to church services; worship is the feeling of adoration and the importance/value that a person places on something. It is possible for Christians to worship idols! When money becomes more important than sharing, money can be considered an idol. When personal gain is valued more than justice, it becomes an idol. and their likes.” (Expect varied answers.)
- d. In Psalm 24, David asks, “Who can stand in God’s presence?” (Apart from Christ, none of us can stand in the presence of God.)
- e. What other idols that people may have been worshipping today? (Have the students look through the magazines and newspapers and cut out pictures of things (powerful position, profession, gadgets, beauty tools) that they see young people like them give high value. Let students stick these on meta-cards and write their captions and stick on the board or wall.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: “How can young people in the church show that they acknowledge Jesus as the Lord of all creation? In what areas does Jesus’ Lordship need to be more evident?”

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Ask the class to affirm this truth: “Jesus is the Lord of Creation. He alones deserves all worship.”
2. Ask the class to identify ways to acknowledge Jesus as Lord by taking care of the environment by giving up bad habits, by valuing kingdom values of peace, justice, caring, sharing, service.
3. Instruct the students to put themselves in Paul's role writing an appeal letter to young people to acknowledge Jesus as the Lord of his people and the whole earth. This can be their template:
Dear Beloved in the Lord,
 May this letter find you in good health!
 I write to beseech you to acknowledge Jesus as the Lord of his people with your actions.
Your brother/sister in Christ,
(Name)
4. Allow for few minutes of writing and letter reading.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: “The Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer” (HFJ # 1)
3. Closing prayer: Gather the children around in a circle and let each one say a prayer of thanks to God for having Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior.
4. Response: Threefold Amen.

Adult Level

I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. begin to identify that Jesus is the Lord of creation;
2. begin to acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of His people,
3. explain what Jesus' Lordship over creation and His people mean; and
4. express one's thanks for Jesus being our Lord.

II. Concept: The earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods shaped created by people.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal, activity sheet

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "We come today prepared to learn from you, O God, who nurtures in Jesus Christ. Be with us again through the inspiring and enabling power of the Holy Spirit that we may fully affirm with conviction the earth belongs to the Risen Lord and not to idols and gods created by people. This is our prayer. Amen."
3. Opening song: "The Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" (HFJ # 1)

B. Getting Ready

Let the adults talk about the stewardship of self, talents, and treasures in their local church. Encourage them to share their insights on how this stewardship consciousness among the members remains vibrant and alive in the church. Emphasize giving regularly, sacrificially, cheerfully, generously, and mindful of God's priorities.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read silently Psalm 24:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 10:14.
2. Encourage the class to explain the meaning of the bible readings in relation to their daily life.
3. Ask them to read excerpts from the Exegesis for the Biblical References and Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users using this outline.
 - a. The declaration of David of the Lord and glorious King of the Kingdom that belongs totally to the King of kings (paragraphs 1, 3, and 6).
 - b. Paul instructs us to flee from idolatry (paragraphs 2, 4, and 5).

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Ask these questions:
 - a. How would you define idolatry?
 - b. What do you believe are the idols of people today?
 - c. Have you had an experience of having an idol in your life?
2. Point out: Anything that replaces people's loyalty and obedience to God becomes an idol; something that becomes more valuable than kingdom values of peace, justice, caring, sharing, service and their likes. Capitalists destroy the environment in the name of the so-called "development", but the reality is greed for profit ultimately

becomes an idol. Deforestation, destructive and massive mining activities proliferate at the expense of ecological balance and people's lives.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "How can church people show they have no other Lord than Jesus and that they acknowledge that Jesus is the Lord of creation?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Remind the adults to be aware of the landscape of the church that feast on something other than the gospel. Find out how members celebrate the gifts received rather than celebrating the Giver instead.
2. Ask the adults one by one to share practical ways of showing that they have no other Lord than Jesus.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "The Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" (HFJ # 1)
3. Closing prayer: Have each learner say a prayer of thanks to God for having Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior.
4. Response: Threefold Amen.