

Heavenly Minded

Col. 3:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

During the past few weeks, we have been considering the supremacy and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells the Colossians and us that Christ is **all we need**. We are to stay away from practices that are in addition to God's Word, such as, worldly philosophy, angel worship, reacting to visions that have been seen and legalism.

Paul is now going to shift from what Christianity is NOT to telling us what Christianity truly is and what our lives should be like as a Christian.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Colossians 3:1-4 (NASB)

³ Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Prayer

ILLUSTRATION

When you meet a new person one of the first things you learn from them, consciously or not, is where they live. We seek to know this because when we know where a person lives, we will already know a lot about them. By knowing their location, you can safely assume things about them without even asking. For instance, if you meet someone that says they live inside Boston, you can pretty safely conclude that they do not have a 1,000 acre farm with crops and livestock. You could also assume that if they were interested in major league baseball, they were likely to be a Red Sox fan. Thus, you would probably NOT have a discussion on the greatness of the New York Yankees because they are rival enemies.

Sometimes we do not have to ask where a person lives because when we visit with them for a short time we start getting hints as to their origins. One of the hints might be DIALECT. You would not have to talk to someone from England, Sweden, or Australia very long to determine that they were not life long residents of the United States. Or if you meet someone with a deep southern accent, you would know they did not grow up in Missouri. So the accents that someone has, or the language they speak or the clothes they wear, or how they act, or what they drive, can all point us to where they live.

All of this is true because where you live has a big impact on you as a person. **Your location shapes your identity.** It shapes your way of speaking, your way of thinking, your hobbies, where you shop, where you work, what you drive, what you eat.

If you have lived in different places during your life, you can no doubt look back at how your life was different in each location. But, even if you haven't lived anywhere except here, you can imagine how much different your life would be if you lived in Alaska, or Hawaii, or maybe China, or Australia. You as a person would be very much different than you are living here.

In our lives, where we live is closely related to our identity. This combination of where we live and who we are determines how we live our lives every day.

That is what the passage that we are looking at today is all about. It is about who we are and where we live and how that should shape our lives.

Looks now look at logic of the first four verses and try to understand what the Holy Spirit is saying.

BODY:

I. Heavenly Minded.

Colossians 3:1-4 (NASB)

3 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

I hope you can see the main point of these four verses and the two commands. In verse 1 the command is "**keep seeking the things above**". In verse 2 the command is "**Set your mind on the things above**". The main point is that God wants you to **Seek or Set your mind on the things above, not on things that are on the earth.**

For God does not only give us commands here, He also gives us **REASONS why we should obey them.**

Notice again verse 1. The reason you should "**keep seeking the things above**" is **BECAUSE "you have been raised up with Christ"**. In other words **your experience of having been raised up with Christ is the foundation for your obedience** to this command.

Similar logic is also found in verse 2. The reason you should "**set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth**" is **BECAUSE "you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God"**.

So to the question, "Why should I put my mind on things above? **The Spirit answers** because "**you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God**".

Bringing all of this together, the logic of these verses is this: God give us reasons WHY we should obey Him and the reasons He mentions are that we have been raised with Christ;

that we have died; and our life is hidden with Christ in God. Then verse 4 continues
4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Now you may now be wondering, "What exactly is Paul talking about?"

We know Jesus died and rose again and ascended into Heaven and that He is going to appear again someday when He returns.

What is this talk of ME having died? And of ME having been raised?

It looks like all of us here are alive this morning. We are sitting upright and listening. We are not dead! So, why is Paul saying I have died? It doesn't seem to make sense. Well, what is going on here is that Paul is not talking about **physical death** or being **physically raised** anywhere. Instead he is talking of **death to sin** and a **resurrection** of our spirit to be united with Christ who is seated at the right side of God in Heaven. This is our union with Christ! Notice the key words in verse 3 "**with Christ**". In verse 1, it says we are raised "**with Christ in God**".

From Colossians and from Paul's other letters, we learn that the first thing that happens when we are buried with Him in baptism is that we **die with Him**. We get a hint at what we died to in Col. 2:20.

Colossians 2:20 (NASB)

20 If (or more literally, Since) you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,

Paul is saying that our death with Christ put an end to our obligation to submit to regulations of not being able to handle, taste or touch. Regulations associated with the law of Moses and the Jewish religion.

In verse 22, he calls these things the "**teachings of men**". Paul describes the end to our obligation to these rules and regulations as our DEATH in regard to the "**elementary principles of the world**". This same thought is also mentioned in verse 8 of chapter 2. It tells us that this worldly thinking is teachings that are **contrary to the Word of God**.

Colossians 2:8 (NASB)

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Notice the contrast is between the traditions of men and the thinking of the world in contrast to the Word of God. We conclude that the principles of the world include any philosophical or religious system that is **man-made** and not according to Christ.

It is worldly, not Godly! Sinful, not sanctified.

The Word of God says that Christians are DEAD to such man-made rules and philosophies.

II. Heavenly Located.

Going back to verse 20, we see that Christians are not be living as though they were still living in the world.

So, there is a very real sense that Christians are not living in this world. That is according to its sinful priorities, beliefs, and basic principles.

ILLUSTRATION

This is the kind of thing you think about when a person is sleeping very soundly and we say "He is dead to the world". We say that because at that time they do not know what is going on and they do not have a care. They are sleeping.

In a certain sense, that is how we are to be as Christians. We are supposed to be dead to the world. The things that our unbelieving neighbors care about are not a concern to us. That is because we are dead to the world and alive to God. We don't live according to the world's values any longer and it has no power over us.

Closely related to this, back in Col. 3:9-10, Paul talks about the old self that we have put off and the new self that we have put on. The old man is dead in trespasses and sins.

The non-believer is very much dead to God and alive to the world. He lives to worldly priorities and philosophies. When the old man trusts in Jesus, that old man is crucified with Christ. Then the new man that emerges becomes dead to the world and alive to God. Paul mentions this back in Chapter 2:12-13.

Colossians 2:12-13 (NASB)

¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together **with Him** (notice these two key words), having forgiven us all our transgressions,

This theme from chapter 2 about us being raised and made alive with Christ is picked up at the very beginning of chapter 3. This is where Paul grounds all of his commands in the believers being raised with Christ.

What Paul has in mind here is nothing less than a spiritual resurrection. It is a miracle that the Spirit works within someone who trusts in Jesus. Someone who is as dead as a doornail, someone who is dead in sin is crucified and raised with Christ so that he can now live to God. Previously, he could do nothing to please God. **He could never live in God's presence because the penalty of sin is death.** But now those sins have been forgiven and in their place, God sees Christ in them and finds them righteous. When this happens the Holy Spirit dwells within him freeing him from sin's domination. This allows you to enter God's presence and live a life pleasing to Him.

III. Heavenly Hidden

This leads us back to

Colossians 3:3 (NASB)

³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Paul tells us that when we died to this world, our life is now hidden with Christ in God.

This requires the eyes of faith! We cannot see this with our physical eyes. According to MY physical eyes, it looks like MY life is still located on planet earth, in the United States, at 401 Johnston Court in Raymore, MO. I live in a house with walls, doors, windows, floors, and tables.

According to the Word of God, that is not really where my life is located. God says my life is located with Christ in God's presence in Heaven.

Ephesians 2:6 (NASB)

⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

So, even though it may look like on any given day that my life is firmly situated here on earth and I am standing in my shop building glass polishing equipment, the Word of God says that I am actually sitting in a seat in Heaven. That is where I am sitting with Christ, who is at the right hand of God. This is what I see when I use the eyes of faith.

This world is not my home. We are living in a foreign land. Our citizenship is in Heaven.

IV. Heavenly Revealed

When we look with our eyes of faith, we also see into the future to that final event in our union with Christ. That event is when Christ comes again, and my life, which is now hidden in Heaven will appear. Both physically and visibly with Him glory. That is what it says in verse 4.

Colossians 3:4 (NASB)

⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

This is the believer's final glorification. The resurrection of our bodies when Christ returns. Then these weak mortal bodies that we have will be transformed to be like the glorious, powerful, and immortal body of Jesus. It is at that time, that if we are alive to God and dead to sin, that we will no longer be hidden, but will be fully disclosed for all to see.

This is what Paul is getting at when he talks about our life being hidden with Christ in God. This is similar to what he says back in Col. 1:26 about the mystery of the Gospel.

Colossians 1:26 (NASB)

²⁶ *that is*, the mystery which has been **hidden** from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,

The lesson is, that what has been hidden, regardless if it is the mystery of the Gospel back in chapter 1 or now our life in heaven in chapter 3, **all that has been hidden IS REAL!** It is true, but it just has not been revealed yet.

ILLUSTRATION

It is sort of like a Christmas or Birthday present that is hidden away until they are revealed on the appropriate day. When someone gets a present, someone goes out and purchases a present and they keep it hidden until Christmas day or your birthday. Even before the gift is revealed, they are secure. It has been purchased. In one sense it already belongs to you. But, it has not been revealed yet. It has not physically been given to you so you can enjoy the gift.

That is how it is with our life in Christ. He has already purchased our life with His precious blood on the cross. But, for the time being, He is keeping it hidden away until He reveals it for our full enjoyment in the last day.

That is why it takes the eyes of faith to see these things now. They are hidden from our physical eyes. In fact, if we just look at ourselves with our physical eye, we would come precisely to the opposite conclusion of what Paul describes here. It appears to us that we are still living in this world. But, God says that we have been raised up to live in God's presence.

It appears that we are still among the sin and the diseases of this fallen world. But, God says that we have died to sin in a world filled with sorrows and fears. He says our life is already perfectly secure. It is hidden with Christ in God.

The Holy Spirit wants you to see your life as it really is. That is His intent for these verses. He wants us to see that our life is really kept in Heaven with Christ. He doesn't want us to be fooled by our physical eyes by thinking that our life is actually in this physical world.

The great encouragement for us is that there is no greater possibility that our life can be removed from that presence of God, then there is a possibility that Christ can be removed from the presence of God.

CONCLUSION:

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

So we offer His invitation, realizing that there may be someone here who has never accepted Christ as their Savior. We plead with you. We appeal to you not to let this moment escape nor to let this window of opportunity pass you by.

If you do not know Christ as your personal Savior, then come now, confess that you believe in Him, be faithful to Him in Christian baptism, arise to walk in the newness of life. God's invitation is offered to you. Will you come as we stand and as we sing?

He Is Lord!

He is Lord, He is Lord. He has risen from the dead and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, That Jesus Christ is Lord.