**Set Your Mind on Things Above**

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**Colossians 3:1-8**

**Wednesday Evening**

**May 12, 2021**

**Colossians 3:1-11**

1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

**1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.**

Saints, the Greek words in the phrase, since you have been raised, express certainty. Once dead in their sins, these believers had been raised from death, just as Christ had been raised from the dead by God’s power.

They had received new life from God through the power of the Holy Spirit. They did not need to struggle and work to attain that life, as the false teachers were trying to tell them; they already had new life! What remained was to work out its implications in daily life. Because they had been raised, they had a clear responsibility to Christ, who had raised them.

**John 3:3-7**

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

First, they must set their sights on the realities of heaven. The Greek word for “set” means to seek something out with a desire to possess it. The other religious teachers stressed “heavenly things” also, but Paul was appealing to the highest reality of all, the exalted Christ.

The believers must take their focus off the world and turn it to Christ, who sits at God’s right hand in the place of honor and power.

Christ’s seat at God’s right hand reveals his power, authority, and position as both judge and advocate. The Colossian believers already had experienced this exaltation; they needed to set their sights there so that they would live out their lives on earth as citizens of heaven.

**2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**

Saints, letting heaven fill their thoughts meant concentrating on the eternal rather than the temporal, letting their thoughts dwell in the realm of Christ. They were to focus on the Lord Jesus. Thoughts can influence actions, so if the believers would place their thoughts above and not only here on earth, their actions would please God.

Saints, the things on earth refers to the legalistic rituals, the false methods used to achieve holiness, and even to the basic principles of the world described in chapter 2. But how were they to fill their thoughts with heaven? Paul had explained this in another letter: “Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right . . . pure and lovely and admirable . . . excellent and worthy of praise”

**Philippians 4:8-9**

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

**Colossians 3:12-13**

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Saints, they were not to live as ascetics in some mystical, visionary realm; rather, Paul was saying that, by setting their thoughts above, their lives on this earth would be pleasing to God and would help accomplish Christ’s work.

**3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**

Saints, the Greek aorist tense in the phrase, for you died connotes that we died when Christ died. It happened at a point in history. In Christ’s death, all believers died. Then, like a seed buried in the earth, a believer’s real life is hidden from the world, just as Christ’s glory is hidden, only to be revealed when he returns.

**1 John 3:2-3**

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Saints, the spiritual lives of believers are hidden inner lives that are in union with Christ who has brought them to be with him in God. One day, when Christ is revealed in his glory, believers will also share in all his glory.

The divine life of Christ will be revealed fully and will glorify us (reveal our true potential as children of God). Christians look forward to the new heaven and new earth that God has promised, and they wait for God’s new order that will free the world of sin, sickness, and evil.

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**Revelation 21:1-8**

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

**5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.**

Saints, while Paul opposed the false teachers’ asceticism and regulations, he still forbade certain activities that had no part in believers’ lives. If the Colossian believers were to live as examples of Christ, they had to put to death certain aspects of the sinful earthly things lurking within them—the sinful nature, the old self.

Again, Paul was describing the “already” and “not yet” of believers’ lives. Although they had died with Christ and had been raised with him, they were still susceptible to temptation and the evils of the sinful nature.

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Two sets of sins are listed. The first five refer to sexual sin; the second five to sins of speech. These first five were related to the cultural background of the Colossians and were particularly deadly to the life of the church:

**1. Sexual Sin**

Any form of illicit sexual relationship. The term serves to spotlight forbidden sexual behavior between people or indirect participa- tion as an audience. We derive our term “pornography” from this Greek word. In contrast to the loose morals of the ancient Greek world, believers ought to show self-discipline and obedience to God in this area.

**2. Impurity**

Moral uncleanness. Perhaps no sexual act has taken place, but the person exhibits a crudeness or insensitivity in sexual matters.

**3. Lust**

Evil sexual passion that leads to excessive sexual immorality and perversion. (See Romans 1:26; 1 Thessalonians 4:5.)

**Romans 1:26-27**

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

**4. Shameful Desires**

Wanting something that is sinister and vile in order to satisfy one’s desires (see also Galatians 5:16).

**Galatians 5:16**

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh”

**5. Greed for the good things of this life, for that is Idolatry**

Relentless urge to get more for oneself. In this context, Paul may have been focusing on greed for satisfying evil desires and for sexual immorality. The greed is described as idolatry because its focus is on filling desires rather than on God.

**6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,**

Saints, God’s terrible anger refers to God’s judgment on these kinds of behavior. God does not reveal his wrath arbitrarily; his perfect moral nature will not permit sin and wickedness to go unpunished.

While wrath occurs at present in the natural consequences of sinful behavior, the final culmination of God’s will comes with future and final punishment of evil. People may try to get around it, but there is punishment for evil for those who have not believed in Christ as Savior.

**7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.**

Saints, The Colossian believers used to do the actions described above. They had been dead in their sins (2:13), but that all changed when they came to know Christ. Because of their new life in Christ, the believers were to get rid of those things listed above and others listed below.

“Get rid of” means to put off or disrobe. The old, filthy clothes must be taken off before the new clothes can be put on. The believer “removes” the old life of sin and “puts on” the new life of Christ. The Colossian believers had experienced this; Paul asked that they act it out in their lives. Not only did they need to deal with sexual immorality in all its variations, they also needed to deal with misused anger that often spilled over into evil speech.

**1. Anger**

A continuous attitude of hatred that remains bottled up within. This could refer to what is under the surface, while “rage” (below) refers to what bursts out. Anger would destroy the harmony and unity Paul called for among the believers.

**2. Rage**

Outbursts of anger or quick temper for selfish reasons. This could mean continual and uncontrolled behavior.

**3. Malicious Behavior**

Doing evil despite the good that has been received. This word is a general term referring to an evil force that destroys relationships. It can mean anything from trouble to wickedness. It is a deliberate attempt to harm another person.

**4. Slander**

Destroying another person’s good reputation by lies, gossip, spreading rumors, etc. Malice often manifests itself through slander.

**5. Dirty Language**

Crude talk, abrasive language, expletives. Paul admonished the believers that such language must be caught and stopped before it escapes their mouths.

These behaviors have no place in any Christian or in any church. These are part of the “old life” before knowing Christ. Christians must resolutely “put off” these repulsive sins of anger and speech so that they can “put on” Christ’s attitudes and actions.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**