

Colossians 3: 1-17

In the previous chapter, the apostle Paul had showed what a true Christian ought not to follow after. He had warned the Colossians against the dangers of false philosophy, and the doctrines of erroneous teachers. He also warns us against legalism. Paul told us what not to do.

In this chapter, he teaches them what they ought to pursue and to seek instead.

Col 3: 1 **If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.**

That is why Paul starts with if then or therefore. Since you have died to the elemental spirits of the world and you have been raised with Christ. This is not just figuratively, but real. You have been given a seat in heaven with your name on, waiting for you. This is not any seat but you will be seated at the right hand of God with Jesus.

Ephes 2: 4 *But^c God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5* *even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6* *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7* *so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus*

What an amazing promise and reality! He called us and loved us in order to shower us with His grace and kindness beyond what we can dream.

Jesus penetrated the created order as from the divine order at birth and then penetrated the divine order in heaven from created order.

Jesus entered heaven with His resurrected body, where He now rules and reigns. Jesus is seated at the right hand of God . This is a place of authority. He rules the universe and intercedes for us before God the Father. In this way He has also opened the door to heaven for us.

Being seated with Christ is not enough. We are instructed to seek the things above. The Greek work for seek is Zeteo which means to “covet earnestly, strive after, to inquire, desire, even require.”

This seeking the things that are above should be our all-consuming desire!

As we go through the rest of the passage, hopefully you will get a glimpse of what that means.

Col 3:3 **For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.**

We have in God’s eyes died and was raised again to life. We are on earth to work for His kingdom until He calls us home or He comes to get us. The next death is just a change of location going on to our real home.

You have died to the created and have been raised to divine as you have identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. This is symbolized by baptism

Your life is hidden in God

-it does not only mean that it is protected but that it is hidden from us to fully comprehend. We are seated at the right hand of Jesus –at the center of the power of the universe. We are citizens of heaven.

Who we really are is hidden because it has not been manifested, but will be when Jesus returns and takes us home

Col 3: 2Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

If our status is that we are in Christ and He is our main affection. Our focus and passion needs to change from what is temporary to what is eternal.

Randy Alcorn in his wonderful book Heaven says: “In a metaphysical sense, we’ve already entered Heaven’s community. By seeing ourselves as part of the heavenly society, we can learn to rejoice *now* in what Heaven’s residents rejoice in. They rejoice in God, His glory, His grace, and His beauty. They rejoice in repentant sinners, the saints’ faithfulness and Christlikeness, and the beauty of God’s creation. They rejoice in the ultimate triumph of God’s Kingdom and the coming judgment of sin.

Heaven, then, isn’t only our future home. It’s our home already, waiting over the next hill. If we really grasp this truth, it will have a profound effect on our holiness. A man who sees himself seated with Christ in Heaven, in the very presence of a God to whom the angels cry out, “Holy, holy, holy,” won’t spend his evenings viewing Internet pornography.

No wonder the devil is so intent on keeping us from grasping our standing in Christ—for if we see ourselves in Heaven with Christ, we’ll be drawn to worship and serve Him here and now, creating ripples in Heaven’s waters that will extend outward for all eternity.”

The hiddenness of God is the situation that the presence of God is very obvious in what He created and how intervenes in our lives every day. Unfortunately until God opens your eyes you are unable to perceive that.

Our hiddenness in Christ is also well established. God also has to open our eyes to that reality for us to realize and experience that. Our real home is in heaven, but while we are still on our bodies, we need to live like we are ambassadors for our heavenly kingdom.

*Col 1: 26*the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. *27*To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

WE need to live in the reality that God has called us before the creation of the world to be His children, given us a place in heaven and charged us with the duty to proclaim the riches of His glory to the world around us.

*Col 1: 28*Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. *29*For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

This needs to our focus. To live for Christ and have the unction to engage in the battle of proclaiming Christ and teaching everyone in order to grow their relationship in Christ. When we engage in this in His name He will powerfully work through us to accomplish that. Before that we need to know God in all wisdom. This means we need to have a hunger to know God and His Word.

Col 3: 4When Christ who is your^a life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

When our king comes to finally take us to glory in our resurrected bodies, then we will experience the fullness of who we are in Christ.

So what does it look like to set your mind on the things that are above? Just as we are in love with someone, our thoughts are with them and we want to know them better and please them. To know them better is our obsession in order to better love and understand them.

*Heb 12: 1*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, *2*looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

We with those that have passed out of this life are this cloud of witnesses. We are not only to observe but to run and help others run the race of life. We need to focus on Jesus and help others to focus on Jesus. We need to get rid of the sin that will slow us down and tire us out.

Pulpit Commentary Homiletics

1. We should realize that **Christ is our Life**. The heavenly world depends consciously upon Jesus for its glorious existence. He is the Life of each and of all. As the source of life, he is there beyond the reach of change, an exhaustless Fountain.
2. We should realize that **Christ is the Object of supreme affection**. The celestial world not only traces all its life to Jesus, but centres all its love in him. To love him with all the soul, heart, mind, and strength is deemed, not the duty merely, but the constant privilege of all. He is the Beloved One who is loved beyond all conception.
3. We should realize that **Christ's kingdom and reign are the supreme concern of the whole heavenly world**. Angels and redeemed ones alike bend in rapturous interest over the progress of Christ's kingdom

and inquire doubtless in what ways they can promote it. The heavenly life is thus a life of hope for the triumph of that sacred cause which centres in the Son of God..

4. We should realize that **Christ's second advent in glory is to be the date of our glorification with him.**"

Dear friends this is where we need to live and our reward will be great.

When our focus is on Jesus in this way then we can put to death the things that hinder this relationship.

Col 3: 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:^b sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **6** On account of these the wrath of God is coming.^c **7** In these you too once walked, when you were living in them

All these sins are sins we commit directly against Christ and God. When we have any desire that comes before our desire for God these things happen. The desires in our earthly body have been corrupted because we are focused on ourselves instead of on Jesus. That is what happens when we do not honour God with our bodies, with our life style, with our passion for work or play, when evil is allowed whether it is for material gain or fame or when we covet or are jealous of others because of blessings God gave them and not us – it is all idolatry. God is a jealous God and He does not share His glory with anyone.

Brothers and sisters we need to fear God and supreme reverence for Him.

We are warned that the consequence of idolatry is the wrath of God. Dear friends you do not want to be ignorant of these consequences!

Heb 10: 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Heb 12: 28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, **29** for our God is a consuming fire.

Col 3: 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self^d with its practices

When our focus is not on Jesus our focus would be on ourselves. That causes jealousy and rivalry with other people. This disrupts the harmony with others that God expects from us.

Jam 3: 13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. **14** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. **15** This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. **16** For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

God has given us away out when we are tempted, but we need to be focused on pleasing God instead of ourselves.

*Jam 1: **14**But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. **15**Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*

We have been set free from the bondage of sin through the blood of Christ.

*Rom 6: **6**We know that our old self^a was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin*

We can still choose to sin, but we do not have to. We are able to sin, but not slaves to it.

*Rom 1: **1**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.^a **2**For the law of the Spirit of life has set you^b free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. **3**For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,^c he condemned sin in the flesh, **4**in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. **5**For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. **6**For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. **7**For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. **8**Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

***9**You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. **10**But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **11**If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus^d from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you*

That is why our text calls us to remove the old self like the taking off of a soiled garment and putting on the new beautiful uniform of the new self. To maintain the radiance of this identification in Christ we need to daily be renewed by getting to know God in Jesus better, being transformed to be like Him.

*2 Cor 3: **17**Now the Lord^d is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18**And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,^e are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.^f For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

Col 3: **10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator**

*Col 1:**9**And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10**so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the*

knowledge of God; **11**being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; **12**giving thanks^d to the Father, who has qualified you^e to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

This newness of life we are called to depends on our relationship with Jesus. When we fall in love with someone we have a great desire to know them better and to know what pleases them. So much more should we have a desire to know God. Fortunately He gave us the Holy Spirit to teach us and transform us into Christ's image. Being in love with Jesus we need to earnestly seek His presence and to know Him better.

*Ephes 4: **22**to put off your old self,^f which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, **23**and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, **24**and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3. 11Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave,^e free; but Christ is all, and in all.

When we are in Jesus and we are identified as brothers and sisters in Christ with our minds focused on Jesus and His kingdom, the identifications of what you are on earth fall away. It does not matter whether you are white or black, African or American, president or handicapped, we are in Christ.

Col 3: 12Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience

This is what the new life with the fruit of the Holy Spirit looks like. It is so beautiful and desirable. How are we able to do that?

*Jam 3: **17**But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.*

This is all up to the working of the Holy Spirit in us as we know Him and surrender to Him.

Col 3: 13bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive

Paul highlights the issue of forgiveness. This is essential in the harmony of believers. This has so much impact on our lives. If we do not forgive others we stay in bondage. This leads to resentment and anger and broken relationships between us and with God. We are forgiven and we need to forgive.

Col 3: 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Love is beautiful and causes peace and harmony.

1 Cor 13: 4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant *5* or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;^b *6* it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. *7* Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends.

Dear brothers and sisters how would our lives look if we can love like this always!

Col 3: 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful

When your life is hidden in Christ, He has your best interest at heart and He is sovereign, you can have peace in your heart. Peace is even increased when you consider what privileged position you have in Christ and you are appropriately thankful. Anxiety and fear drives out peace. The love of God instills peace and trust.

Four times in the last two verses we are instructed to be thankful. We have so much to be thankful. We need to express it in praising God in word and in song. We do not only owe it to God for His sake, but also for our sake and the sake of those around us.

Col 3: 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

How are we able to know all these promises of God so that we can enjoy them?

It is when we earnestly seek God in His word so that becomes part of who we are. That will help us to pray constantly and be always in touch with Jesus as we walk and live for Him.

We need to know Jesus and His will for us in order to experience His power and blessing. We are also called to share this knowledge in order for others to be able to share in this blessing.

Col 1: 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. *29* For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Like Paul, we should have this passion to share Christ and have a strong desire to help others experience the fullness of Christ. We should do this sacrificially and when we do it for Jesus, His energy will powerfully work in us.

This is not a selfish thing. We need to be so pumped about Jesus that we will want everyone to experience Him as much as possible –teaching others and even admonishing others if needed

Col 3: 17 **And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

What a glorious ending. Brothers and sisters, just consider this. What a powerful impact will we have in the world if everything we do or say, would be speaking or doing as Christ's representatives, living in a state of perpetual gratitude, giving thanks for all He has done for us, what He is doing right now and what is still going to do.

Dear brothers, sisters and friends. I hope you have realized who you really are. Your life is in Christ the hope of glory. I pray that your identity is in Christ. I pray you have a strong overwhelming desire to know Him better and seek the things that are above where Jesus is.

I will leave you with the words of Paul:

1 Thes 5: 16 **Rejoice always, 17** *pray without ceasing, 18* **give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you**