

OUTLINE

Seek and Think About the Above Things - Colossians 3:1-4

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Colossians 3:1-4 ESV

3 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Introduction and Background

- in the course of a year there are many ideas that can get thrown at us
- I remember in the early 2000s hearing two opposing messages from church leaders in Canada

1) The first message was from a “Bottled Water _____”

- this man was a missionary who was trying to rouse up support for his ministry with a group of young people
- I do not even remember what this missionary said in the first 25 minutes of his sermon but I do remember the ending of his sermon
- his application from his sermon was “drink water” but not just any water
- we were exhorted to drink his bottled water
- this church leader was trying to raise support so he was going to be selling bottled water and he was encouraging everyone to buy his bottled water for missions

2) The second message was from the “Bottled Water _____”

- the second message was totally opposite from what I heard months earlier
- the church that I was preaching at, was updating me on what they their corporate leadership was instructing their churches to do
- these church leaders exhorted the churches that under no circumstances should they purchase bottle water

- here we have two groups of who are advocating for _____ rules
- we have one guy saying drink water and buy my bottled water and we have church denomination saying that it is wrong to buy bottled water and by buying bottled water you are supporting injustice in the world

- how can we sift through all the _____ of these ideas that are getting thrown at us all the time?

- only by carefully _____ the “above things” and carefully _____ of the “above things” (the Word of God)
- thus we have to think, seek and pursue the “above things”

- we are in a new section in the book of Colossians
- in Colossians 1:3-23, Paul started out with _____ God for His great work among the Colossians
- Paul thanks God for His _____ of reconciliation through Jesus Christ (1:12-14)
- Paul writes a great _____ in Colossians 1:15-20 exalting Jesus as _____ over creation, the church and salvation
- in Colossians 1:24-2:5, Paul explains his _____ suffering for the church and his ministry for the Colossian church
- in Colossians 2:6-15 Paul writes again about the _____ of Jesus Christ and His work of _____ among believers
- in Colossians 2:16-23 Paul addresses the false teachers who are _____ the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Colossian church
- the false teachers were preaching that the Colossian church must:
 - 1) drink the right _____
 - 2) _____ the right foods
 - 3) celebrate the right festivals
 - 4) celebrate the _____ moon festival
 - 5) _____ on the right day
- also we know that the _____ teachers were also practicing harsh treatment of the _____, the worship of angels and were prideful of their _____ that they claimed to see
- we have now entered this new section Colossians 3:1-4:1 which focuses on “how Jesus _____ your life”
- since “you have died” and been “raised with Christ”, the Lord calls you to _____ a new kind of life!
- Paul addresses what the believer in Jesus Christ is to _____ and what the believer in Jesus Christ is to _____ in this passage of Colossians 3:1-4

Brief Outline:

- 1) (3:1a) New Life in Christ**
- 2) (3:1b-2) New Thoughts in Christ**
- 3) (3:3-4) New Hope in Christ**

1) (3:1a) New Life in Christ

If then you have been raised with Christ,

- the “if then” can also be translated “if _____” so we need to ask what is the “therefore” there _____?
- the “then” or “therefore” reminds us that the false teacher’s teachings do not stop the _____ of the flesh (Colossians 2:23)
- these man-made commands, which are: “do not handle, _____ or touch”
- they do not change your _____ or cause you to “grow in holiness” with the Lord

- Paul reminds these believers that they have been “_____ with Christ”
- Paul reminds them of the _____ of Jesus Christ as it is applied to these Christians

- this same word phrase “raised with him (Christ)” was used earlier in Colossians _____, but let us read the whole section to get the context

Colossians 2:11-14 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who _____ him from the dead. ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of _____ that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

- Paul explains the gospel in a very simple way by saying that these Christians have been _____ with Christ
- our condition before Christ was not life but in fact _____
- Paul describes our “pre-Christ _____” as uncircumcision (Colossians 2:11)
- this means that _____ reigned or ruled in the lives of all people
- but Jesus Christ circumcises the Christian’s heart which means that Jesus _____ their hearts and lives
- in Colossians 2:12 Paul uses the imagery of _____
- the Christian has died to their old sinful _____ and the influence of demonic forces and God has _____ them up to new life
- Colossians 2:13 says all humans are _____ in sin and the uncircumcision of their flesh but God makes the Christian _____ with Christ
- God through Jesus Christ _____ all the sins of the Christian
- although the Christian does have a long list of sins recorded that condemned them, and they are sinful and _____ of the punishment of God, Jesus Christ _____ that record out by taking the punishment for their sin upon the Cross

- if you are a Christian, which means a follower of Christ, do you know this _____?
- do you realize that you were once _____ and because of Christ you have been made _____?

- _____ talked a lot about life in the gospel of John
- Jesus boldly made known that life was only _____ in Him

John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

- these man-made _____ that the false teachers were preaching did not bring life or change anyone’s sinful _____
- but through Christ, alone, life is given to unworthy sinners who are _____ by God’s graciousness

2) (3:1b-2) New Thoughts in Christ

(3:1b) seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

- since these Christians have experienced new life in Christ, the first command that Paul gives them is to seek the above things!

- the word “seek” means to “strive for, aim at, try to obtain, _____ or wish for”
- to seek the above things means that you desire or you _____ upon the “above things”
- the above things are the _____ of God, the gospel, the _____ of Jesus Christ and Biblical truth

- Jesus says something similar as he _____ people not to worry using the same word “seek”
Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be _____ to you.

- how do we avoid worry?
- by seeking the kingdom of God the righteousness of Christ which are the _____ things!
- but our lives are sometimes spent “not” _____ the “above things”
- it is kind of like how people view eating healthy
- we know we should eat healthy but we see those donuts and cupcakes and we give into the temptation
- we know we ought to be pondering the _____ of Christ
- we know we ought to be cherishing Jesus Christ but sometimes we get sucked in the _____ and its desires
- Lord help us
- notice what _____ says about the “above things”
- it is “where Christ is, seated at the right hand of _____”
- Jesus is at the right _____ of God which means that Jesus is at the highest place of _____ with the Father
- Jesus is reigning and _____ with the Father
- we have already seen numerous times, in Colossians, where Paul _____ the Lord Jesus Christ
- all _____ is made through Jesus Christ and all of creation was made _____ Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16)
- we see that Jesus is the sovereign Lord who _____ all of creation with the Father
- the New City Catechism helps us out here
- in Question 49, they ask, “_____ is Christ now?”
- the Answer: Christ rose bodily from the grave on the third day after his death and is _____ at the right hand of the Father, ruling his kingdom and interceding for us, until he returns to judge and _____ the whole world.

- Jesus is the exalted, holy and sovereign Lord who is with the Father at His right hand

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

- we are commanded to seek the above things in Colossians 3:1 and now, in Colossians 3:2 we are commanded to think about the above things

- we are commanded to pursue the above things with our minds, gaze at the above things, dig into the above things and understand the above things

- this is more than just an intellectual thinking, this includes our desires as well

- we are to ponder the glory of God and the glory of Christ

- we are commanded not to ponder the things of the earth!

- the things of the earth are not physical things like the pulpit or chairs

- the things of the earth are the sinful attitudes and actions that Paul later describes in Colossians 3:5 and 3:8

Colossians 3:5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Colossians 3:8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

- we are commanded to get sin out of our minds and thus focus and ponder truths that give glory to the Lord

- Paul sums up this command in the book of Philippians

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

3) (3:3-4) New Hope in Christ

(3:3) For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

- Paul reminds us again of the our death to sin, self and the demonic powers

- in Colossians 2:12 we were buried in baptism

- in Colossians 2:20 we died to the elementary spirits of the world

- again, Paul wants us to know that we have died and because of this death, sin will never be our master or ruler

- Paul then reminds us of the wonderful reality of knowing the Lord because “our life is hidden with Christ in God”

- this verse should encourage us in two ways

1) if we are hidden in Christ then our life is _____ up in Christ

- this means that we are in Christ and we _____ to Jesus Christ

- we are not our own but we belong both body and soul to the Lord

2) if we are hidden in Christ then we have _____ in Christ

- to be hidden in Christ means that Jesus Christ is your _____

- you hear so many times in the Psalms that the Lord is a _____ and the Lord is a refuge

- just like Psalm 27

Psalm 27:5 For he will _____ me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the _____ of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

- because of Christ we have _____ and security in our salvation, the Lord keeps us in His grace
- this also means that we have a new citizenship with Christ in _____
- although we all live in the Canada, if you are a Christian today Canada is not your homeland
- you are just a _____ resident of Canada
- if you belong to Christ you will spend eternity in your _____ home which is heaven

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

- Jesus Christ is our _____ and that is a huge theme in the book of Colossians
- we are _____ with Christ to new life

Colossians 2:12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the _____ working of God, who raised him from the dead.

- our _____ is not something that really brings us eternal pleasure?
- our sin brings _____
- But thanks be to God, because Jesus Christ brings _____ through His work upon the Cross!

- Paul closes this section with a _____ that when Jesus Christ comes again we will be joined with Christ in _____!

- I have talked to lots of people over the last two years and many people are tired and weary
- are you weary?
- let not your _____ be weary because in Christ we can look forward to this day when all the sorrow, sadness and frustrations will be left _____ and we will be _____ Christ

- Paul writes about the day of the Lord in 2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 1:10 when he comes on that _____ to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

- Jesus Christ has not only given us _____ when we truly deserve death, but Jesus has given us eternal life where we can have eternal and unhindered _____ forever with Him!

Application

1) No One Forgives Like Jesus!

- someone on the internet posted a great picture recently
- the picture had the question, "how to survive a nuclear bomb?"
- the answer was a picture of a guy reading a Bible with the caption "trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins"
- we know that people are concerned about the threat of a nuclear _____ right now
- but unfortunately this has not led many people to be concerned about their sin _____ a holy God
- humans, apart from Jesus Christ are _____ in sin and without _____

Ephesians 2:12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no _____ and without God in the world.

- this is a horrible condition to be in no matter the state of the world _____

- if you are outside Jesus Christ, _____ is the day to get serious about the Lord

- look the beauty of Jesus _____ and His work

- look at the wonderful graciousness of God through _____ Christ

- Jesus dies for people who are His _____

- Jesus shows _____ to people who do not appreciate His gracious work

- God _____ out, or erases, the sin of people who _____ in Christ once for all!

- in spite of all the crazy stuff that goes on we can _____ to this solid rock truth, Jesus dies for _____ !

- if you are in Christ _____ can be taken from you but no one can take Jesus Christ and His _____ from you

- hear again what _____ says about the work of Christ

Colossians 3:3 For you have died, and your life is _____ with Christ in God.

- because the Christian is hidden in Christ then their salvation is sure!

- if you are troubled by what is going on in the _____ right now, look to Jesus who is the sure _____

- _____ Christ and His work

- see His wonderful grace _____

- _____ in Him alone and what He has done for you by His work upon the Cross!

2) No One Offers Hope Like Jesus!

- the world, as we know it has gotten a lot more unstable in the last few weeks and do not think that these world issues do not have people on edge

- over the last few weeks I have heard a lot of coffee conversations go like this:

1) The world is going crazy right now

2) People are really worked up right now

- as a Christian we know that these things are going to _____

- do you remember what _____ said?

Mark 13:7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the _____ is not yet.

- Jesus told us that the world will be _____ and will have unsettling circumstances

- but let us look at these wonderful truths that we can anchor our _____ to!

1) Jesus is _____ at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1)

- Jesus is at the highest place of honor ruling with the Father

- Jesus is with the Father in heaven interceding for us and preparing a place for us!

John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

2) Your life is _____ with Christ in God (3:3)

- because our lives are hidden in Christ we have the assurance of the _____ of Jesus
- we have the assurance of the _____ and the refuge in Jesus Christ

Psalm 32:7 You are a _____ place for me; you preserve me from _____; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

3) When Christ who is your life appears, then you will also _____ with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4)

- because of Christ we have this wonderful _____ and joy
- at our death or the 2nd coming of Jesus we will experience the fullness of the presence of _____

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will _____ be with the Lord.

- we know that the world could get wilder but we have the sure _____ of Jesus Christ
- let us remind ourselves of these _____ instead of getting wrapped up in the media hype and propaganda

3) Change Your Mind!

- we have lots of information coming at us all the time and the internet has only elevated such information
- let us be a people and a _____ who think about the above things
- when we watch the news and see turmoil, let us look at things through the lens of the Lord _____ being at the right hand of God
- when we see the morality of society corroding around us, let us look to the Lord Jesus who reigns and _____
- when we hear of wars and rumors of wars, let us view these events through the lens of Jesus Christ and His _____!
- let us _____ to the Word of God and the work of Christ just like the Psalmist responds to the Word of God in Psalm 119

Psalm 119:72 The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Next Week:
Colossians 3:5-8