

“Keeping Our Heavenly Focus”

Dr. Jim Cecy

Introduction:

Colossians 1-2 = The Theological (Who is Christ?) • Colossians 3-4 = The Practical (So What?)

Overview of Colossians 3 – 4: Putting Jesus first...in my life...in my home...in my job...in my worship...in my conduct toward unbelievers...in my speech

Colossians 3:1-4 “If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”

Earthly Realities - Heavenly Reminders (cf. Philippians 4:13; Hebrews 12:1-2)

I. The Reminder (Colossians 3:1) Col. 3:1 "If then (i.e. since) you have been raised up with Christ..."

Who I Really Am As a Christian

As a born-again believer who has been saved by grace through faith in Christ alone...

I am a child of God (Jn 1:12)
I am a joint heir with Christ (1 Pet. 3:7; Rom. 8:17)
I am a sinner now saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9)
I am a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)
I am the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13)
I am the light of the world (Matt. 5:14)
I am Christ's friend (Jn. 15:15)
I am an ambassador of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20)
I am a temple of God's Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19)
I am a member of Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30)
I am reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18-19)
I am a saint (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2; etc.)
I am God's handiwork (Eph. 2:10)
I am a fellow citizen of heaven (Eph. 2:19; Phil. 3:20-21)
I am righteous and holy in Christ (Eph. 4:24)
I am a son of light (1 Thess. 5:5)
I am a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19)
I am a member of a chosen race of believers (1 Pet. 2:9-10)
I am a member of a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9-10)
I am God's own possession (1 Pet. 2:9-10)
I am an alien and a stranger to this world (1 Pet. 2:11)
I am an enemy of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8)
I am an adopted son of God (Eph. 1:5)
I have been justified and completely forgiven (Rom 5:1; Col. 1:14)
I have died with Christ and to the power of sin's rule over my life (Rom 6:1-6)
I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8:1)
I have been given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16)
I belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
I have been sealed by God in Christ (2 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13-14)
I have been made righteous (1 Cor. 5:21)
I have died (Col. 3:3)
I have been crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20)
I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3)
I was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4)
I have been chosen by God (Col. 3:12)
I have been made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13)
I have been raised up and seated with Christ in heaven (Eph. 2:6)
I am a partaker of God's divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4)
I have been made complete (Col. 2:10)
I am firmly rooted and now being built up in Christ (Col. 2:7)
I have been delivered from the domain of darkness (Col. 1:13)
I have been transferred to the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col. 1:13)
I have Christ in me, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27)
I have a hope laid up for me in heaven (Col. 1:5)

Note: Some parts of this list have been adapted from two books by Neil T. Anderson: Victory Over the Darkness (Regal Books, 1990) and The Bondage Breaker (Harvest House, 1990)

II. The Responsibility (Colossians 3:1b-2)

Response #1 Keep seeking the things above

Col. 3:1b "...keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."
keep seeking = Greek: sunegeiro = keep setting our hearts on heavenly realities

"We must not only SEEK heaven, we must THINK heaven." (Lightfoot)

Seeking things above means being constantly focused on Christ's plans and purposes for our daily lives.

Response #2: Keep setting our minds on the things above

Col. 3:2 "Set your mind on the things above...not on the things that are on earth."

set your mind = Greek: phroneo = keep focusing

Earthly Responsibilities ("things on earth") vs. Heavenly Perspectives ("things above")

- As regarding seeking food, clothing and shelter... (cf. Matthew 6:33)
- As regarding spending money... (cf. Matthew 6:20)
- As regarding doing our jobs... (cf. Colossians 3:23-24)
- As regarding worrying about the future... (cf. Matthew 6:34)
- As regarding studying... (cf. Ecclesiastes 12:11-12)
- Regarding trials and suffering... (cf. Romans 8:28; 8:18; 1 Peter 1:7)
- Regarding my death... (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:54 ff; 2 Corinthians 5:8)

III. The Reasons (Colossians 3:3-4)

Reason # 1 We have died Col. 3:3 "For you have died..."

Two kinds of People in the World

#1. Unbelievers who are alive to the world but dead to things of God.

#2. Believers who are dead to the world but alive to things of God.

"To the unbeliever who has nothing to look forward to, this earth is as close to heaven as he'll ever get. To the believer who has everything to look forward to, this earth is as close to hell as he'll ever get." (Pastor Larry Deskins, Gilbert, AZ).

- Dead people don't worry about earthly things.
- Dead people don't respond to outside pressure.
- Dead people are free from enslavement
- We died to the penalty of sin in our lives
- We died to the need to live by the world's values

Reason #2 Our lives are hidden with Christ Col. 3:3 "...your life is hidden with Christ in God."

We are members of an invisible spiritual kingdom.

Reason #3 We will be revealed with Christ

Col. 3:4 "When Christ...is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

revealed = Greek: phaneroo = fully displayed cf. Revelation 19:11-16

• Phil. 3:20-21 "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."

• 1 Pet. 4:13 "...to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation." (1 Peter 4:13)

• 2 Tim. 4:8 "...in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

Reason #4 Christ is our life Col. 3:4 "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed..."

Gal. 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."

Christ is my life...

- He is the Creator of my BIOLOGICAL LIFE
- He is the source of my CHANGED LIFE
- He is the guarantee of my FUTURE LIFE
- He is the giver of my ETERNAL LIFE
- He is the hope of my ABUNDANT LIFE

"Christ...is my life...Christ is all and in all." (Colossians 3:4, 11)

Conclusion:

- We have been raised with Christ...
- Turn your eyes upon Jesus....
- Beware of the dangers...

"It is impossible to have a real hope of heaven and be deeply engrossed in the pleasures of earth."

Rom. 12:2 "...do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Phil. 4:8 Let your mind dwell on " whatever is true...honorable...right...pure...lovely...of good repute...worthy of praise..."

Prayer Requests:



Growth Group Homework

For the week of September 30, 2012

SERMON SERIES: COLOSSIANS

Message Title: "Keeping Our Heavenly Focus"

Dr. Jim Cecy

September 30, 2012

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. In the message this week, Pastor Jim gave a list of forty-five statements describing our position in Christ. Look back over the list in your sermon outline.
 - Which one stands out to you the most and why?
 - Are there any you have a hard time believing are true of yourself?
2. Was there anything you strongly agreed with or disagreed with in this week's sermon, or anything you found confusing?

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DIGGING DEEPER

3. In Colossians 3:1-4, Paul urged the saints to “keep seeking the things above.” What promises does the Bible offer to those who persistently seek the Lord?

- Psalm 34:8-10
- 2 Chronicles 7:13-14
- Matthew 7:7-8
- Hebrews 11:6

4. Look at Colossians 3:1. What is the meaning of the phrase “you have been raised up with Christ?” (For help, see Ephesians 2:1-7 and Romans 6:4-6.)

5. Colossians 3:2 challenges us to keep a heavenly perspective in life, no matter what we are facing. How does the following quotation from John Piper remind us to keep a heavenly perspective on sin?

“Sin is what you do when your heart is not satisfied with God. No one sins out of duty. We sin because it holds out some promise of happiness. That promise enslaves us until we believe that God is more to be desired than life itself (Psalm 63:3). Which means that the power of sin’s promise is broken by the power of God’s.”
(Future Grace)

6. What words of encouragement would you give to someone in the following situations to help them keep a heavenly perspective? (Think of some verses of Scripture you could share.)

- Your friend just lost his/her job.
- Someone just found out he/she has cancer.

TAKING IT HOME

7. What main lesson are you going to take away from the sermon? How can you apply it to your life?

8. Here are a few inspiring thoughts to meditate on this week:

- As we think like resurrected people, we will live like resurrected people.
- It is impossible to have a real hope of heaven and be deeply engrossed in the pleasures of earth.
- Dead people don’t worry about earthly things.
- Colossians 3:1-4 serves as an “attitude adjuster.”