



SCRIPTURE:

Colossians 3:1-10

RECAP:

We just returned from camp! But a not-so-fun aspect of camp is dealing with 100+ teenagers' hygiene. I made a clear rule that showering daily was non negotiable because there ain't a stank like camp stank. Camp stank will have you questioning the capacity and the audacity of the human body. What the human body is capable of smelling like is beyond what you could ever imagine.

So I make them shower and change their clothes, and it's not just for my sake, but for their sake. Being in worship in your stankin' clothes is uncomfortable, nobody can focus, it's a mess. And we can laugh and make fun, but I believe for most Christians, we do the same thing spiritually. We know as we read Scripture that we were once dead in our trespasses and sins, and Christ made us alive together with Him, but I think at times we still walk around with those grave clothes on.

Remember in John 11 when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead and tells him to come forth, he comes out kind of mummified, wrapped in linen, and Jesus says, "Unbind him, and let him go." I think some of us, from a spiritual standpoint, need to hear that today. Perhaps we need to do some unbinding. If we have been raised with Christ, the clothing that were for dead people, should no longer be occupying our bodies.

Chapters 1 & 2 - Paul is setting the stage by correcting against plausible false teachings and traditions that are threatening to take the church captive. He clarifies the deity and superiority of Christ, His teachings and our eternal union with Him. In today's passage we'll see that if we belong to Christ, there must be practical evidence and duties that must be shown in the everyday Christian's life.

EXEGESIS - Colossians 3:1-10

VS 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.*

Paul is resurfacing his claims in Colossians 2:12 about being buried with Christ in baptism in which we were also raised with Him through faith. Baptism is the visual depiction that regeneration has truly occurred in the lives of those getting baptized.

Growing up, Easter Sunday was a big deal, as it typically is in the Bible belt. After years of being in church, our pastor said “Happy Resurrection Day”. All the kids lined up in front of the church and yelled it out after the count of 3 “Happy Resurrection Day!” Okay, I didn’t know Easter had a nickname. And I had absolutely no idea what that meant. Later on I realized that we were talking about the resurrection of Christ, but it would still take me years to learn what the significance of that was and the last thing I would have thought was that it had any implications for me personally. I thought at most, it was just a Jesus thing that he had to do. But church is much more than that. In fact, the resurrection of Christ is so crucial to our faith. It’s why...

Paul said things like:

1 Corinthians 15:17 - *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.*

1 Corinthians 15:32 - *If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”*

If Christ has not been raised from the dead, the Christian faith crumbles because we are still in our sins and there is no new life for the believer. The resurrection of Christ is the seal of our redemption. If He is not raised, Paul says live it up. Fill your bellies with steak potatoes and the finest wine, for tomorrow you’re going to Hell. Tomorrow, you perish. No resurrection, the Christian faith is a joke and waste of time.

And Peter said things like:

1 Peter 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

Our regeneration (The work of the Holy Spirit bringing spiritual life to a person, enabling them to respond in faith) actually hangs on Christ being raised from the dead. The great kindness and compassion of God causes us to be born again THROUGH the resurrection of Christ Jesus. No regeneration, no newness of life if Christ is still in the tomb. The resurrection is a real victory over sin that we have in Christ.

And Jesus promised things like:

John 6:39-40 - *39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”*

John 14:2-3 - *2 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.*

Christ receives all that the Father has given Him and because He has them and has sealed their salvation, He will raise them up on the last day and bring them to Himself that they may be with Christ for eternity.

So, church, there is real significance to the resurrection of Christ, right? It is everything for us! It means real things for us. So for the rest of our time, I want us to see that it is not just this future reality that we set our hope on, but there is real life transformation that takes place RIGHT NOW because we have been raised with Christ.

Paul says, if we are truly united in the resurrection of Christ two things should take place:

1) Seek - Seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

This means that we will seek Christ where He is, which is in the place of honor and our ultimate authority and is actively interceding for us to the Father. We are to seek the things that are above where Christ is. When we do this, we are showing that our passions, desires, and ambitions, and aspirations are fully reserved for heavenly things. You shouldn't be able to think about anything without remembering that Christ is ruling your life. But how does this happen? When we...

2) Set - Set our minds on things that are above.

To set our minds on things above is to fixate and occupy our every thought and affection on the glory and promises of God. I think about Paul's words in 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."*

Since we are raised with Christ, our entire beings should be fixated on pleasing and honoring Him. We are to think, meditate, and set our minds on all things that are of God. We will seek the things our minds are set on.

"Love heavenly things; study them; let your hearts be entirely engrossed by them. Now that you are converted to God, act in reference to heavenly things as ye did formerly in reference to those of earth."

-Adam Clarke

Ephesians 2 tells us that when we were dead in sin we walked accordingly. "Now that you are converted to God..." since we have been raised and made alive, we should walk accordingly.

Paul then brings further clarity to this by saying we are to set our minds on things above and NOT on things that are on the earth. He isn't saying that all things on this earth are bad. We know that all good things come from the Lord and He blesses us with physical things to enjoy and we can even glorify Him in those things.

What Paul is saying is that when we set our minds on things of this earth, the things of this earth become ultimate things. They become primary and we treat them as if they are God. We are to set our minds on heavenly things. We bring all things under the rule of Christ.

VS 2-3: *2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For if you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

For you have died

You are new creations! The old has passed away, behold the new has come. Your old life, your former misconstrued appetite for sin, the old man that stood condemned, has been crucified and buried with Christ and you have been raised with Him.

Life is hidden with Christ

In Christ, you are covered in His righteousness and will be judged eternally, not based on what you have accomplished nor on what you have failed at, but in what Christ has accomplished and imputed to you, you are covered up, immersed, hidden in His righteousness.

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

When Christ who IS YOUR LIFE appears, you will appear with Him in glory.

Christ, the very essence of life itself, the One who has given us new and eternal life and promised to return to complete what He began, will return and when He does we will appear with Him in glory, holy, spotless as an heir and Christ's treasured possession. We're not the old memory box in the basement of Heaven. Christ isn't going to walk past us and say, "Oh, yeah, I forget about you. How are you?" We are united with Christ, so when Christ appears, He'll be accompanied with His bride. He CAN'T and WON'T return to Heaven without us. When He appears, YOU appear with Him!

Church, these are truths that have serious and immediate implications.

- If you have been raised with Christ in new life, we seek Him as the Lord who reigns and intercedes at the right hand of God.
- We set our minds on those things, the eternal God and His promises as opposed to earthly things that will fade.
- We have been crucified with Christ, His death is sufficient and efficient for His bride.
- Because we have died and been raised with Christ, when Christ returns, we will appear with Him in glory.

We are new creations! We are brand new! There should be evidence in one's life that they have been truly raised with Christ. If then we too have been raised with Him, it is true that we have been crucified with Him meaning that the penalty of our sins are paid for and satisfied. It also means that we have been freed from the power of sin, meaning that sin has no dominion over us.

The rest of this message is about practical Christian living. It is pointing to our sanctification, this continual and gradual growth in Christlikeness. I want you to notice what Paul is doing. Before He is quick to tell us to kill our sins, He points us to the ONLY sufficient way that that is even possible - us being raised with the One who did!

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

Because of your status in Christ, you have a duty to put sin to death. Christians who have died to sin, died with Christ and have been raised with Christ, who now seek Him and set their minds on Him. NOT earthly things. We must now put to death those earthly things. You may be asking, well, if we have died to sin why do we need to put sin to death? If sin has no dominion over us since we have been raised with Christ, why do we have to keep putting it to death. That's a great question! Paul asked a similar question in Romans 6:1-2, that I think will lead us to the answer.

Paul says, *“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”*

I think that is a literal question. How can we who died to sin, still live in it? How can we who have been set free, rescued from the domain of darkness, continue to walk in sin? We must understand that though we have been rescued from the penalty and power, we are not yet freed from its presence. It is still crouching at our door. It still lures and entices us. It is still seeking to devour us and turn our lives into shambles and Paul says not only must we not set our minds on earthly things, we must put all of those things to death! This term “put to death” in the greek is *nekrosate* which is referring to a complete obliteration, leaving no survivors and no captives type of putting to death. This image is serious. Paul wants his readers and us to know that sin must be dealt with properly.

Paul lists specific sins: sexual immorality (pornea, any sexual activity outside of God's design for sex between one man and one woman in covenant marriage) that includes, impurity, passion, evil desire, (most likely referring to the misalignment and abuse of proper sexual intercourse. He mentions covetousness (the desire to have something or someone that does not belong to you). This is idolatry because anything that we raise up, not just above, but even on the same level as God, is an idol. God has no equals and He is not lesser and the best way to say that is by obeying His objective design in all things, especially sexuality.

We must wage war on sin daily. Christ does not allow the Christian to live comfortably in sin, therefore, true Christians can't and they won't. If you know you struggle with lust, what is your battle plan? Avoid temptations. If you know you struggle with gossip, what is

your battle plan? If you know you struggle with coveting, what is your battle plan? What are you putting in place to wage war on sin?

When you find yourselves pondering on the unpromising pleasure of sin, pray that God will help you set your mind on Christ, your authority, your righteousness who is seated at the right hand of the Father. Ask Him again to wet your taste buds with the sweetness of His grace that we may see that sin is bitter and not for our flourishing.

On account of these, the wrath of God is coming

Paul says something different than what we are seeing celebrated in our culture. He says the wrath of God is coming on account of these things. The wrath of God is the execution of God's righteous and holy justice on unrepentant sinners. God does not wink at sin. He hates it and will not go unpunished. His wrath will either be satisfied on the head of Christ or on the head of the unrepentant sinner (John 3:36)

Don't mistake God's delayed wrath as passivity

Psalm 73 - Story of Asaph and how his feet nearly slipped as he almost coveted the lives of the unregenerate until he discerned their end. A nation that is drowning in sin just may be a nation that God has given over to their sin. And be reminded, as Asaph was, they are not prospering, AMERICA MAY BE THE LAND OF THE FREE BUT DON'T MISTAKE THAT FOR FREE IN CHRIST. But indeed storing up wrath onto themselves. 100 years of gain is no gain at all if the souls perish for eternity.

On account of sin, God's wrath is coming.

This is a warning for the so-called believer to examine their lives of unrepentant, unremorseful sin, because it may be true that you have not truly died to sin, but that you are still dead in your sins.

For the believer, this should produce both conviction and gratitude. You should be grateful that you are no longer under God's wrath, as Christ has already paid the due penalty for these things that you are no longer walking in. But it should continue to convict you that sin is ugly. The reminder that God's wrath has already been poured out on Christ for the believer, and will pour out on the unrepentant sinner on account of these sins should remind us of the severity of those sins and produce repentance and fleeing from those things. When we remember that Christ hanged on the cross paying for the very sins we commit, there should be gratitude, but also great humility to turn from those things because that should be us, but it is no longer. For we have been freed.

VS 7-10: *7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 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 with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

IN these you too once walked, when you were living in them

We once had fellowship with darkness. We were once held captive in the domain of darkness, unwilling and unable to escape, but God being rich in mercy and His great kindness and amazing grace, not because of anything we have earned or deserved, but because of His great love for us, freed us to walk with Him. In Christ we've gone from alienation to reconciliation. We no longer live in sin but have been raised to walk in the newness of life.

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

BUT NOW. Now, that you are raised with Christ and no longer walking in darkness, you **MUST** continue to put sin away. Unrighteous anger, vengeance, and malice (intentional desire or the will to do evil), slander (lying to ruin someone's reputation), obscene talk (any filthy, degrading, meaningless and evil talks toward someone with no true agenda for that person to be admonished or encouraged) lying (being dishonest with one another) Barclay "It is easy to distort the truth; an alteration in the tone of voice or an eloquent look will do it; and there are silences which can be as false and misleading as any words."

seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

When the old self died and passed away, so did its practices. We have been raised! We are now to walk in the newness of life now that we have fellowship with the light. We are renewed in knowledge, our intellect and thoughts are renewed. We no longer think about sin the same. We no longer regard Christ by the flesh, but we can see Him accurately now because we have been born again and made new creations. When we see Christ for who He really is we can see sin in its rightful place.

(VS 1-4) Being raised with Christ, we seek Him and set our minds on Him. Our new life in Christ has practical, RIGHT NOW implications. Christ doesn't allow us to be comfortable in sin.

(VS 5-10) Our former ways of living and our former selves and its practices, in every way, should be put away and put to death, no survivors, no captives, WE MUST KILL IT. Pre-Christian habits cannot be Christian habits. That life died when you were raised with Christ. Since we are raised with Christ we now put on our new self that is being renewed in Christ.

“It is our duty to mortify our members which incline to the things of the world. Mortify them, kill them, suppress them, as weeds or vermin which spread and destroy all about them. Continual opposition must be made to all corrupt workings, and no provision made for carnal indulgences. Occasions of sin must be avoided: the lusts of the flesh, and the love of the world; and covetousness, which is idolatry; love of present good, and of outward enjoyments. It is necessary to mortify sins, because if we do not kill them, they will kill us. The gospel changes the higher as well as the lower powers of the soul, and supports the rule of right reason and conscience, over appetite and passion. There is now no difference from country, or conditions and circumstances of life. It is the duty of every one to be holy, because Christ is a Christian's All, his only Lord and Saviour, and all his hope and happiness.”

Matthew Henry

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What grave clothes do you still put on every day?
- 2) What does it mean to be raised with Christ? Galatians 2:20, Luke 9:23, Galatians 5:24, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 6:11, Luke 24:36-37, 1 John 2:15-17
- 3) What are two things that should take place if we are raised with Christ? Matthew 6:33; Roman 14:17-18; Philippians 3:20, 4:8; Psalm 119:15; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Timothy 2:22
- 4) How does verse 4 connect back to the previous 3 verses? 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9, 1 John 2:1-3
- 5) What does Paul mean by “earthly” things? Ephesians 4:22-24, Romans 6:6, Galatians 5:18-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9. What does it look like to put them to death? Romans 6:1-14, 1 Peter 5:8, Genesis 4:7B, 1 Peter 2:11
- 6) Which of the sins in verse 8 are the most difficult for you to put to death?

7) What is happening to the new self? 2 Corinthians 4:16, 5:17; Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 4:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:24; Galatians 5:16; 2 Timothy 2:21