

How to Live from the Perspective of a Saint

Colossians 3:1-11

Scripture Reading

Colossians 3:1-11

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

Introduction: Our uniforms at work, let people know who we are and who we work for. They reveal our working identity

- Waitress
- Electrician
- Athlete
- Fast Food Worker
- Teacher
- Etc.
 - When we wear our uniform, we are expected to act in a certain way. If we work at Subway, you are to make sandwiches when the customer comes in the door
 - If we work at an assembly line like for John Deere, we are to do the assigned task over and over throughout the day
 - A waitress, cleans and waits on tables and the better she does, the more tips that she may get.
 - As believers in Christ, we are as Paul says here to “put off our old self with its behaviors, practices or habits and put on the new”.
 - Paul is moving now from explaining doctrine to putting into practice with his discussion of Christian ethics

Purpose: Every Christ follower must put into practice what they have learned from doctrine, living with heaven in mind and not earthly values.

Transition: This morning we will look at three perspectives that all human beings have. It is up to us to choose the right perspective to have.

The Heavenly Perspective – 3:1 – 4 – Alive in Christ

Illustration: Sir Christopher Wren and the building of St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Colossians 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

- **Seek the things that are above**
 - If or since you have been raised with Christ
 - Based on the facts of the previous two chapters, Paul says
 - You are co-resurrected with Christ
 - In 3:3, it says that we died with Christ
 - Unlike other religions, we maintain our individuality from birth through eternity. We are identified with Christ and He lives in us
 - “Seek” or keep seeking the things that are above.
 - In other words, we are to be preoccupied with the things of heaven. Heaven should govern our earthly responses and values.
 - We are raised above the earthly plane to a new level of living.
 - But, it is our responsibility to strive to have that mindset and to maintain it.
 - Money, Relationships, Retirement, Events of the World, our personal circumstances

Hebrews 12:2

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.

- **Many Christians fail to reach the full potential of what God intended for them to do because they fail to fully understand and follow who they are in Christ**
- **Set your minds on things above**

Colossians 3:2

2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth

- Seek is our striving, but set is making it our focus and concentration
- Think, have this inner disposition in you
- Don’t just seek heaven but have heavenly thoughts about it.

Illustration: Compass / WWJD bracelet – Payne Stewart – golfer

- If we merely focus on the things of this earth, we miss God's purpose in giving them to us and we tend to pervert God's purpose for them

- **See that you are hidden in Christ**

Colossians 3:3

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

- Since we have died – fact – Put to death our flesh – Romans 6 & 7
- Died means there is no more penalty for our sin!!
- We are still affected by sin's power and presence, but it cannot condemn us

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

- We walk in Christ with no guilt or shame!!
- Our life is hidden in Christ. What does that mean?
- It means that we are invisible, safe, secure and protected
- When people see us, they really are seeing the Christ that is in us.
 1. We have a common life with the Father and Son

I Corinthians 6:17

But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him

2. With our new life, we are concealed from the world

I Corinthians 2:14

14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned

3. Being hidden in Christ means that we are eternally secure and protected from all spiritual enemies

John 10:28

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand

Hebrews 7:25

Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them

- We are secure and will be with Christ at His second coming

Colossians 3:4

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

- Notice the words “your life”
 - Christ is not just the giver of life, He is the source of life
 - Can you feel Christ at times giving you life? What are ways and times that He has sustained you when you were tired or weak and provided strength?
- The verdict of eternity will reverse all the verdicts of all time
- He will right every wrong and correct every injustice

Revelation 19:11 – 16

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

1 John 3:2-3

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

- What should our overarching attitude be concerning these four verses?

Quote: “Just as the bride wants the world to know whom she loves, so the church wants all creation to know that she is in love with Jesus Christ her Savior.” -

McNaughton, I. S. (2006). Opening up Colossians and Philemon (p. 59). Leominster: Day One Publications.

Application: If you are in Christ, you will appear with Him in glory

Transition: We should live in confidence that we are already seated in the heavenlies with Christ. Let's look at a contrast to heaven's perspective

The Earthly Perspective – 3:5-6 – Put to death

Illustration: Oliver Wendall Holmes – three people

- **Some people watch things happen**
- **Some people make things happen**

- Other people say “what happened.”

Colossians 3:5

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

- The things done in the body
 - We are to separate ourselves from these earthly characteristics
 - Notice this list of sins that they move from actual acts or behaviors to motives
 1. Immorality – porneia – pornography / fornication – originally it meant to abstain from prostitution but in the NT it became a word describing any sexual activity outside of God’s design and that was to be inside the marriage covenant with one man and one woman for one lifetime

I Thessalonians 4:3

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality

- What do I say to people who are believers living together who want to get married? If you want God to bless your marriage and be at the center of it, then why do you start out your marriage by being out of the will of God before you get married?
- 2. Impurity – filthiness, unclean. Talking about your thought life

Matthew 5:28

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart

3. Passion – Sexual passion let loose in the body. No self-control
 4. Evil desire – sexual lust created in the mind
 5. Greed/ Covetousness – wanting something that someone else has unrighteously – Some say this sin is the root of the other sins mentioned in this list. Covetousness’ is comparing with others unwisely and is the polar opposite of contentment.
 - Contentment is being happy by trusting in God. It is a mature attitude because one has a knowledge of God and a knowledge of that His purposes are for each and every believer.
- All these lead to idolatry which is anything that we put as more prominent than our relationship with God.

- The things done with our speech

Colossians 3:8 – 9a

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

- Now, Paul starts with motives and moves to behavior in this list that we are to put away because they are earthly characteristics.
 1. Anger – a deep smoldering, resentment, full of bitterness, provocations that reveal our ugliness
 2. Wrath- sudden outbursts of anger. Like fire being ignited in straw. These are the deeds of the flesh and are not acceptable behavior with God.

Ephesians 4:31

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice

3. Malice – moral evil, seething hatred that comes out in words bent on doing harm to others. It begins in the mind and comes out in our words and behavior.
4. Slander – literally blasphemy, blaspheming God and speaking evil speech to attempt to destroy someone’s character.
5. Obscene talk – derogatory speech intended to harm someone – “foul mouth abuse”.
6. Lie to one another. Present falsehoods to someone else.

Ephesians 4:25

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

- The antidote to sin
 1. Starve it by the renewing of your mind
 2. Flee from temptation
 3. Look for the way of escape in temptation and take it
 4. Crowd it out with positive graces

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

- Lastly under this point, I want to point out the end of verse 6 in Colossians 3

Colossians 3:6b

6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming

John 3:36

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him

- Unbelievers are now experiencing in their lives the partial wrath of God. God is giving them a chance by His grace to be saved as they live a lifestyle and belief system contrary to God's desires
- But at the end of life, they will experience the full wrath of God if they do not acknowledge Christ as their Savior and Lord.
- That is a sad but true reality, Paul is reminding us of here.

Illustration/ Quote: "The wrath of God is not an uncontrollable outburst of passion. It is the reverse of a holy love, a flame which sears but purifies... always exercises with a certain tenderness, for even when He is angry with man's sin, God loves man and is concerned for his well-being in the fullest sense." – Leon Morris – New Testament scholar

Application: If you are a non-believer, the displeasure of God over your lifestyle will be ongoing and for the believer an accounting is coming.

Transition: We have seen how Paul wants us to live from the heavenly perspective, we have seen how we are not to live by putting off the earthly perspective but now he brings us to how we should live right now.

The Present Perspective – 3:5, 7-8a; 9b-10; 11 – Put on the new self

Illustration: You tell a lot from studying a man's possessions. – Uncle David's house

Proverbs 23:7a (KJV)

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he

- You behave and become what you think about. It all begins in the heart and the decisions we make.
- Paul challenges us as believers who have been changed to daily let go of these sins, we mentioned and other sins that dishonor God and hurt our relationship with Him.
 - Put to death these things

Colossians 3:5a

5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you

- We are to mortify, kill as some translations say by yielding to the Spirit and obeying God's Word and teachings when we don't feel like it.
- The question is are we governed by our feelings which are sometimes controlled by our sinful desires or governed fully by the Spirit and the Word's teaching?

- Put on the new way of life with God

Colossians 3:7-8a

In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away:

- Paul is saying that though you lived in that sin, you have been delivered from it. Now you can walk in victory.

Illustration: Elijah and Jezebel

- Put them away – the idea here is removing your dirty, filthy clothes of the old life

Galatians 5:16-17

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do

Colossians 3:9b - 10

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

- As I mentioned at the beginning of the sermon, people identify us by the uniform we wear at work
 - God wants us to wear the uniform of the new man
 - People should see the change in life, the joy that we have, that we radiate Christ. Even in the midst of difficult circumstances
- **Old self -two views.** We have been given a new nature and it competes for the control of our will. The one we feed the most is the one who wins.
- The other view is that God removes the old Adamic nature but our flesh is still tempted to sin with the world and Satan around us. I am still processing my view on this but regardless, we are dealing with the affects of sin in our lives continually and we are to choose new life.

Titus 3:4 - 7

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life

- We have been transformed, co-resurrected with Christ!!

Colossians 3:10

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

- We do not receive instant spiritual maturity when we come to Christ but we are being remade and repurposed each day to become what Christ intends for us to be.
- We have a new quality of life that was never there before
- Image of its creator
 - Adam was perfect, fell and God redeemed Him and daily was remaking him to go back to who he was before the fall
 - The same is said of us.
 - Christ death, burial and resurrection is repairing us and refocusing us to the purpose he has made each of us.
- Put on unity in the body

Colossians 3:11

Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all

- Paul ends this section of scripture with a beautiful picture of what living with a heavenly perspective should look like with the Body of Christ in unity. Local and universal.
- Paul is saying here with the spirit of God all barriers and division is abolished because of our oneness in Christ
 - False teachers bring divisiveness. Class envy, Identity division, separating the people into categories showing superiority one over another
 - The Spirit and the new man always bring cohesiveness
- Look at the examples Paul gives
 1. Racial barriers broken – Jews and Greeks or Gentiles
 - Before this, Jews would not eat a meal with a Gentile, eat no meat cooked or butchered by a Gentile
 - The Jews would shake the dust off of their clothes and sandals of a Gentile

- The apostles were reluctant at first to welcome Gentile believers into the church!!
 - 2. Religious barriers broken – circumcised with the uncircumcised
 - 3. Cultural barriers broken – Barbarians and Scythians
 - Barbarians were people the Jews deemed inarticulate and stammering in their speech
 - The Scythians had a very sordid history. They were hated and feared as nomads who were warlike and savage people
 - 4. Social barriers broken down – Slaves and free – class distinctions
 - Aristotle called slaves “living tools”.
 - Paul in several scriptures reminds us all are one in Christ
- Christ is all and in all

Quote: “Could Jesus have taken any more exalted words upon his lips? When Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am,” he took up all the majestic truth of the name of God, wrapped it in the humility of servanthood, offered himself to atone for all our rebellion, and made a way for us to see the glory of this infinite, absolute, all-sufficient God — without fear. In Jesus Christ we who are born of God have the unspeakable privilege of knowing Yahweh as our Father — I AM WHO I AM — the God.” – John Piper

Application: If Christ is all and in all, the barriers of division are gone!

Transition: Has Christ broken down the barriers of division in your life? Not just in the church but in your life outside of the church as well? Are you dealing with prejudice in your life?

Illustration: The unity of slave and freeman was demonstrated so dramatically in the arena at Carthage in 202 A.D. Perpetua, a young woman from a noble family and Felicitas, a slave girl, faced martyrdom for Christ. As they faced the wild beasts that would kill and eat them, they joined hands. Slave and freewoman died together for the love of the same Lord.

Key Thought: We live our lives by the lens through which we see our current circumstances

Questions to Ponder This Week

1. Do you start your day by seeing that you are seated with Christ in heaven?
2. Do you have confidence that one day, you will be with Christ in heaven?
3. Are the barriers that keep you from loving others as Christ wants being broken down in your life?