



Introduction to Colossians 3:1-4

Sunday, May 14, 2017
Pastor Ben Cuthbert

It is helpful to think of the Christian life as a transition. A healthy transition is one in which you prepare for what the future holds while not neglecting your present situation and responsibilities. Too often, however, we err on one side or the other. Either we are hesitant to transition and we are not properly prepared for what lies ahead, or we are too eager to transition and waste the time that we have been given to finish our current task.

As we think of the Christian life as a transition, it is helpful to realize both our present and future situations. There is a sense in which our proximity to Jesus is yet far off. He has been raised from the dead with a resurrection body and we are still here on earth. But in another, truer sense, we are also raised with Him and seated with Him. This can be difficult to wrap our minds around because, like many other things in the Christian life, the most important realities are unseen. That is why Paul elsewhere says we focus not on what is seen, but on what is unseen (2 Cor. 4:18).

So, as we consider what it looks like to live the Christian life in transition—to be faithful in the meantime while we look forward to what is ahead—let us look to Christ who is our sufficiency and who has gone before us to secure our hope.

Context

Colossians 3:1-4 immediately follows a discussion of various false teachings that had crept into the church at Colosse (2:16-23). The idea was that there were certain earthly rituals that had to be adhered to in order to maintain favor with God. It was essentially designed to add religious activity to the finished work of Christ. This, for Paul is a dramatically dangerous thing. Anything added to the gospel makes the gospel null and void, so if we are to maintain adherence to the biblical gospel, we must fix our hearts and minds on Christ as He is—seated at the right hand of God in Heaven.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

“Resurrection Realities and Imperatives”

Read Colossians 3:1-4

Realities

1. Christ is raised and seated.
2. Christians are raised and hidden.
3. Christians will appear with Christ in glory!

Imperatives

1. Set your heart on things above
2. Set your mind on things above

Discuss

- 1) Is it easy or difficult for you to think of Christ seated at the right hand of God the Father on a day-to-day basis? Why or why not?
- 2) Pastor Ben mentioned that one aspect of being “hidden” with Christ is that our identity as Christians is veiled. In other words, there is no way to distinguish a Christian from a non-Christian simply by looking at them. How, then, do we discern a Christian from a non-Christian?
- 3) Paul instructs the Colossians to seek the things that are above, not the earthly things that distract us from Christ. What are some earthly things that we tend to set our hearts and minds on (see verse 5 and following)?
- 4) How does our security in Christ motivate and enable us to obey His word?
- 5) When Paul says, “*if* you have been raised with Christ,” he is implying that there are those who have not been raised with Christ through repentance and faith. Who are some people in your life that are not Christians—who do not have the kind of assurance that he talks about here? And how can you be God’s messenger to them—to tell them about Jesus?