

“WHERE IS YOUR MIND?”

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

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INTRODUCTION

Paul has just finished refuting both the doctrinal and practical errors of the false teachers and indicated that Christ is the **Object of their faith** (chapters 1-2); now he gives some practical and ethical guidance concerning the Christian life and shows that Christ is the **Source of their life** (chapters 3-4). Believers have a deep and abiding experience in Christ, but they must give outward and practical evidence of such. Even as Paul notes that our life is hidden with Christ in God (v. 3), this life must be lived out on earth.

Ascetic practices are no real help against the sinful passions of the flesh (2:23); but, the union with Christ in His death to sin and victorious resurrection over sin is more than adequate as a check against the appetites and attitudes of the lower nature. Such union with Christ is the root principle of the whole Christian life. It is the point of departure and the source of power for all that he does. Paul teaches several important principles in vv. 1-4:

- 1) Due to our experience with Christ, we must “seek the things above” (1).
- 2) We must “set our minds on the things above, not on things on the earth” (2).
- 3) We must remember that our lives in Christ “are hidden” securely with Him in God (3). Therefore, our sphere of being, action, and enjoyment is totally different from our former lives outside of Christ.
- 4) Such “hiddenness” of believers in Christ will not always be the situation; one day when He comes we will be “revealed with Him in glory” (v. 4).

YOU MUST SEEK AND SET YOUR MIND ON THE THINGS ABOVE; GET YOUR MIND OFF EARTHLY THINGS.

I. WHAT YOU HAVE IN CHRIST

A. You have died with Him (3)

1. Christ has truly died—for you.
2. When you were converted and baptized you participated in His death and testified to it.
3. You are done with the former life outside Christ.

B. You have risen with Him (1)

- The conditional clause expresses certainty.

1. Christ has truly risen.
2. When you were saved you rose with Him and testified to it in your baptism.
3. You are divorced from purely earthly and secular concerns.

C. Your life is hidden with Him in God (3)

1. Involves secrecy—hiddenness; not visible to others nor even openly manifest clearly to us.
2. Involves security--“No hellish burglar can break that combination” Ps. 27:5—“For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; in the secret place of His tent He will hide me”; Ps. 31:20—“You dost hide them in the secret place of your presence...thou dost keep them secretly in a shelter...; Is. 49:2—“he has concealed me...He has hidden me in His quiver”.
3. Involves identity—I am in Him; He is in God; I am In God in Him

D. Christ is your life (4a).

- He is the source of eternal life given the believer in salvation (I Jn. 5:11-12)
- Of the victorious and blessed life experienced during the believer’s current life on earth (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21).
- Of the hope and assurance of eternal life in heaven and in the Millennium and New Heaven and New Earth.
- Of the life of the glorified body made in Christ’s likeness (I Jn. 3:2).

E. You will be revealed with Him in glory 94b).

1. The glory that belongs to Christ he shares with His people (cf. II Cor. 3:18—“from glory into glory”).

2. No longer will the true life of the believer be hidden; now it is made clear to the believer himself and to others—all will be able to see and glorify God. See Rom. 8:29—predestined to His image.
 - Final freedom from the sins and sorrows of earth.
 - Perfect holiness beyond the possibility of loss, with unmingled felicity beyond the reach of forfeit.
 - An endless abode in heaven, and in the brightest province of it.
 - The rapturous adoration of God, and unbroken fellowship with Christ.
 - The exalted companionship of angels and genial spirits of human kindred.
 - The successful pursuit of Divine knowledge in a realm where no shadow ever falls, but where is chanted the high halleluiah. (Eadie, p. 215).

II. WHAT YOUR RESPONSE MUST BE

But, it is important to notice that here Paul does not exhort the believer merely to discover these realities, nor merely to seek to possess those things that are above; the believer already does possess them in Christ.

A. Keep seeking the things above (1).

1. Christ is there.
2. Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
3. Christ and God the Father are one (3)
4. Christ is coming back in glory—He will be revealed (4).

It is all about Christ!

Why should we preoccupy ourselves with the things of earth—this life?

Christ's resurrection, ascension, and session at the Father's right-hand "guarantees their pardon and provides for their purity" (H. 139). As Lightfoot notes, the believer's resurrection with Christ "is nothing less than a removal into a new sphere of being. He is translated from earth to heaven" (p. 209). The links by which the sinner was held to "the old world order" outside of Christ have been broken by death to this world (v. 3); now, having been raised with Christ, new links have been formed that bind the believer to "the new heavenly order" in Christ in which Christ is absolute sovereign

B. Keep setting your mind—your thoughts, affections, your will—on the things above.

You must not only seek Heaven; you must also think heaven.

1. What are the things above?
 - The things of God"—God's interests
 - Heaven itself, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, God's Word, His Will, His way.
2. Don't set your mind on the things on Earth (2b).
 - Does not means we are not to care for normal human responsibilities.
 - Can include a reference to the ideas and teachings of the false teachers.
 - Primarily focus: What can wealth achieve for him who has treasure laid up in heaven? Or honor for him who is already enthroned in the heavenly places? Or pleasure for him who revels in 'newness of life'? Or power for him who is endowed with a moral omnipotence? Or fame for him who enjoys the approval of God?" (p. 210).
 - Moreover, the "earthly things", although they include the idea of sensuality and immorality as seen in 3:5, do not primarily speak of such in this context.

CONCLUSION

Past, present and future tenses all apply to the believer:

- 1) In the **past** he has died with and been raised with Christ (v. 1)
- 2) In the **present** the believer has an identity with Christ that is real and secure, though hidden (vv. 2-3).
- 3) In the **future** this hidden reality will become openly manifested when Christ returns (v. 4).

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