

Christ Our Life
April 1, 2012
Colossians 3:1-4

Introduction

The Bible calls us to leave this world in order for us to reach the world for Christ. This is a paradox that the world cannot comprehend. And we have a hard time of it as well because we are sometimes too preoccupied with the earthly things. We need to refocus on our Savior who is not of this world.

John 8:23 *And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."*

John 18:36 *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*

Jesus is saying that His kingdom does not even operate in the same sphere as this world. His kingdom is not won by swords but by changed lives. He has delivered us from this present evil age (Gal 1:4). When we are raised with Christ, we have died to the world. We have been taken out of this world. What this means is that our inside lives in heaven while our outside lives here in the physical world. Jesus had left us here so that we can share the gospel with others, but we cannot do this unless we leave behind this world.

2 Corinthians 6:17 *Therefore "come out from among them and be separate,*

Titus 2:11-12 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live selfcontrolled, upright and godly lives in this present age.*

Paul calls leaving this world as being seated with Him in the heavenlies (which we will talk about in a minute). How can we look to Christ if our mind is on earth? How can we know the glory of the Lord if we are not thinking about Christ. This is the key. We need to have our minds changed:

Romans 12:2 *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.*

In other words, Paul is saying that our preoccupation of heaven will govern our earthly responses.

Colossians 3:1-4 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

Note: “with Christ”, “where Christ”, “with Christ”, “When Christ”, “With Him” How many times Paul mentions that we are in Christ...complete in Christ in this letter? He wants the church and Christians to know that our life is in Christ and that we fix our gaze on Him alone.

I. Our Position in Christ (1)

- Since, then, you have been raised with Christ
 - When we were saved, we died
 - Wages of sin = death; we died once—dying in Christ (**Rom 6:6, 8**)

- Crucified with Christ

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; 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 gave Himself for me.*

- Where Christ is seated at the right hand of God

Note: This is a picture of authority given to Christ by God the Father (**Phil 2:9-10; Matt 28:18**) in His glorified human state. (This is another theological discussion that is best for another time. This has to do with Jesus' dual nature...God-man and His high-priestly role.) Suffice for today—we have access to God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son!

- Raised with Christ in the heavenlies

Ephesians 2:6 *and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

Note: This is a stunning statement by Paul when he describes our present spiritual position in Christ. We are seated with Him in the heavenlies. We sit with Christ Jesus in the right hand of God, thus we have access to God the Father. Your inside lives in heaven and your outside lives here on earth.

Note: This is the spiritual reality for every Christian. We are complete in Him, we have access to Him, and we live in Him.

Transition: If we want to reach the world for Christ, then we must ascend to the heavenlies into the presence of God.

II. Our Practice in Christ (1-2)

- Set your hearts on things above
 - “set”—“seek” or “continually seeking”
 - Complete focus on heavenly things

Matthew 6:33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

1 Chronicles 22:19 *Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God. Therefore arise and build the sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy articles of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the Lord.*

Note: David is telling the leaders of Israel about helping Solomon build the temple of God.

- Complete focus on Jesus who reigns in heaven
- Christ seated at the right hand of God

Note: We are to be totally preoccupied with heavenly thoughts about our Lord Jesus. What thoughts are they? Seven fruits of the Spirit which was also found in Christ in its

fullness: love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness, patience, and self-control. We are to seek such things in our lives.

Transition: We are not only to seek heaven, but to think heaven.

- Set your mind on things above
 - Keep on thinking the things above
 - How do we seek for things above? By thinking the things above

Philippians 4:8-9 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

Note: Think about such things and put into practice.

Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Note: Renew your mind and you will prove what is good and acceptable and know the perfect will of God. Why? Because you seek and think about such things about Christ—about His character and how we are to imitate Him. You have to program your mind to think on heavenly things in order to seek it.

Example: Compass—think about where to go...now what? Go in the direction that the compass points to.

- Not on earthly things

Philippians 3:18-19 *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.*

1 John 2:15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

III. Our Present Reality in Christ (3)

- For you died
 - Paul is saying that we are dead to the world

Galatians 6:14 *May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

- Your life is now hidden with Christ in God
 - We are joined with Christ as one

1 Corinthians 6:17 *But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.*

Note: This is a profound statement. It is a mystical union that we have in Christ. Stated this way: When God sees David, He sees Christ. When He sees Christ, He sees David. We have been united as one. What statement for a child of God! What statement for us to be hidden with Christ in God. We are not separable.

- We are hidden from the world

Psalms 27:5 *For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of His tabernacle and set me high upon a rock.*

Note: We are concealed from the world. The world will never understand or accept us because we are aliens, strangers in this world. Each passing day it becomes so clear that the world will never want us here.

- We are secure with Christ in God

John 10:28-29 *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand.*

IV. Our Future in Christ (4)

- When Christ, who is your life, appears
 - His Second Coming
 - His appearing will be very visible—everyone will see Him
- You will also appear with Him in glory
 - Christ is our life

Note: Christ doesn't just give life...He is life. He gives Himself. Our spirit and bodies will be consummated at His coming...we will appear as He appears.

- The unveiled Christians

Note: From Lightfoot: The veil which now shrouds your higher life from others, and even partly from yourselves, will then be withdrawn. The world which persecutes, despises, ignores now will then be blinded with the dazzling glory of the revelation.

Conclusion

Is Christ Jesus our focus? If we are to impact the world, we are to leave this world behind and place our whole focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. If Christ Jesus is the center of your life, then you are in the heavenlies with access to His power and blessing. Positionally, we are in the heavenlies right now, but on earth, we act as if we are far from heaven. Paul says that we are complete in Christ...everything we need for godliness, for faith, for power we have access right now in Christ Jesus. Thus Paul encourages us to laser our focus on Jesus Christ that will transform us here on earth. We will experience the heavenlies. When we are in the heavenlies with Christ, then we can go out and reach out to people for Christ.