

Colossians Ch 3 Vs 3-4

From the Grave to Glory

Vs1-4

Last week we began our study talking about the privilege and yet sobering responsibility that Christ has given us to reach out to the world, even to the uttermost parts of the earth with the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. But as believers before we can reach the world, we need to leave the world, or as Jesus would put it, we're to be *in* the world but not *of* the world for He has called us out of the world.

Now Paul is speaking about practical realities of what a life that's in this world but not of this world models, what does a life in Christ look like? and In short he's speaking of practical integrity, meaning that the things in our lives, need to mirror the message that we're proclaiming, or to understand it another way, if you're living like hell, people aren't going to respond to your message about heaven. Now if your life mirror's your message, they'll listen. But if you're mindful of the things of this world, then you won't be effective regarding your endeavors concerning the things of the Kingdom, because you're living in a dichotomy of sorts, which means you're being divided into 2 things that are mutually exclusive. and You're trying to lead a life that caters to both the Spirit and the flesh, you're seeking to serve 2 masters but it can't be done, and so your priorities are all out of line. Because you're saying one thing, but your passion is given over to another, and people aren't stupid, they see it, so if you're to be effective in your endeavors for the Kingdom and if you're to have a fruitful Christian experience, you need to walk in integrity, you need to be out with the old life, and in with the new life that's provided for you in Christ.

Peter put it like this, 1 Peter 4:1-3, *“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles-- when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.”* In other words occupy your time with heavenly, eternal priorities, not the things of this world, and the lusts of men, but rather with the will of God, you've spent enough time doing the will of the ungodly, but now you're to put those things off. and Quit seeking after the things of this world, and seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God, (and we spent a major portion of our time last week looking at a large portion of what that entails.) and We're to set our minds on things above, eternal things, not on things on the earth, so we're to “seek” the things above, and “set” our minds on them. Why?

Vs3

This is why it's so critical that you not be mindful of the things of this world, because you're dead to this world, you've died to sin, you've died to the flesh. You say when did I die to the things of this world, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life? Paul said, "I was crucified with Christ", you remember again in vs 12 of ch 2 we developed there this reality that was imputed to us in Christ, how God sees His death as our death, and His resurrection as our resurrection, and now the life we live, is His life. and Again in Gal ch 6 Paul said that through the cross the world was crucified to him, and he to the world, the moment you received Christ into your life, you said goodbye to the old life, it died and you were raised anew in Christ. That's why the bible says that "*if any man be in Christ he's a new creation, old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*" There are no words on this earth that do the implications of this phrase justice, "For you died."

The bible teaches us that as a believer you're dead to sin, and so Paul wrote to the Romans in Rom 6:2 "*How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*" The problem comes in when we refuse to reckon the reality of Christ's work to our lives. and We've talked before about God's initiative and human responsibility, yes God's initiative towards you in Christ broke the bondage of sin upon your life. But it's your responsibility to consider it so, to believe God for that. Let's look together at Rom Ch 6 (Vs 1-14)

Vs1-10

So all of this so far has nothing to do with you, this is all theological realities of what God has done for you in Christ, now in light of these things what is it that God would require of you if this is to be a practical reality in your life?

Vs11

That you would reckon, or consider yourself dead to sin, even as God says your dead to sin, or in short, believe Him for it, and act upon in, this is where the rubber meets the road, and where the positional becomes practical.

Vs12-14

But you see too many times we refuse to "activate" this truth into our lives, and so we continue on in the deeds of the flesh because we don't consider (through faith) our lives to be dead to sin and hidden with Christ in God. Someone who's dead doesn't continue to live the way they lived before, and likewise in Christ we're to find a whole new way to live, drawing from the resources that are now found in Him, we live and draw upon the resources in Christ, with Christ and from Christ as opposed to the fallen humanity that was passed onto us in Adam.

"For you died," but again, for the believer death was not the end, to the contrary it was only the beginning. Now our new life is "hidden" that is "tucked away securely and with complete satisfaction with Christ or in Christ in God." In other words your new life is found in abiding in Christ. Or as Paul put it in 1 Cor 6:17 that, "*he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*"

Now Rom 6:2 speaks about how we died and Rom 8:2 talks about how we're to live, it says, "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*" So this is speaking of the Spiritual law, or principal, that the Holy Spirit can take the life that's in Christ and make us free, or set us free from the law of sin and death (the fact that sin dwells in our members and it drags us down into spiritual deadness.)

So how does the life that is hidden with Christ in God become our possession today? By the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, through that principal, that anytime we trust in the Spirit of God, walk in the Spirit and depend on the Spirit, that the Holy Spirit takes the very life that's in Christ and make it our resource to live by.

That's what makes the Christian life more than just religious activity. Because if this were missing (the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus) then we would have nothing more than 1 more religious procedure to get to God, or try to please God in and through our own self-efforts. With out the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, we're condemned to live under the law of sin and death, there are no other options, you're either under the law of life (in Christ) or the law of sin and death apart from Christ.

So understand that the Christian life isn't something that's developed simply by you getting some "knacks" at this or that. A knack, or self developed ability to learn the bible, or a knack at praying or coming to bible studies or in exercising leadership ability or whatever. It's learning to grow in a life that's imparted to us from God above that's found in Christ, your life is hidden with Christ in God. Which is to say that I don't see you right now as you truly are in Christ, all I see is a shell, I see as it were the seed, but the flower is yet to bud forth, when will the world see us in Glory?

Vs4

Now, there's some things I want you to notice here, notice the word play here, the contrasts in these vs, in vs 3 the word associated with you is death, but in vs 4 the word associated with Christ is life, what's the conclusion? The self life equals death, the Christ centered life equals life, and we see words like "hidden" in vs 3, when it comes to our life, and yet in vs 4 with the Christ life the word "appears" is used, the life of the flesh vs the life of Christ couldn't be more black and white, every part them with out exception couldn't be more opposed to one another. That's why in the beginning I was speaking of this dichotomy that so many seek to live in, they want to serve the Lord, but cater to the flesh and it can't be done.

Rom 8:6-8 tells us that "*to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*" So it's absolutely impossible to try and fulfill the desires of the flesh and yet serve the Lord, because if you're in the flesh you cannot please God and in reality at such a point you're at war with God, you're at odds with God because the carnal mind isn't subject or doesn't submit itself to God.

Why, because God says kill the flesh, eradicate the flesh with out mercy, starve it and feed the Spirit and so when we starve the Spirit and feed the flesh we're in direct opposition to God's will for our lives and we're once again falling prey to the law of sin and death, it's dragging us down and killing us spiritually. But the law of the Spirit of life that's in Christ Jesus has set you free from that law (which takes us back to Rom ch 6) you're dead to sin, so why live any longer "in" it? The fact is your life is hidden with Christ "in" God. and (Read vs 4 again).

Now we'll deal with the appearing of the Lord in a moment, but let's concentrate on this 1st part of the vs, specifically the words "Christ is our life." If there are only as much as 7 words that stick to your memory out of the bible study today I pray that they be "For you died" and "Christ is our life" and again words fail me to be able to say this with the conviction and life changing revolutionary impact that's to be found in these words. "Christ is our life."

Now most bible believing evangelical Christians would readily confess to the fact that new life is given to us *by*, or comes *from* Christ. But if you're not careful you can almost slip into the mentality that it comes to us like a little package that's all wrapped up nice and neat and when it's ours, it's ours. and It's true that salvation for all intents and purposes is just that, it's the gift of God, but what about the life that we now live? Now that I've received salvation what is it that sustains me day to day? Yes most Christians would state the fact that life comes "from" Christ, but it's deeper than that. The mind-boggling reality, is that the life that He gives us is a participation in His own life. Yeah it's one thing for Christ to give us life, but understand that the life that He gives you isn't some disassociated package that is some how *from* Him but not *of* Him, it's a share in His *own* life. In Phil Paul would say, to live is Christ, and that's what we all need to be able to say, what is life for you?

If you're in the middle of some exciting event and you say, "Man this is life" then what you're saying is that Christ isn't life, if for you life is a million bucks, or life is the Patriots winning the super bowl, or life is a vacation in the Bahamas, or being out on the green or the lake or whatever. Then know that the testimony against you is that you're being mindful of the things of this world, and not on the things above and the law of sin and death is at work in your members.

Now I'm not seeking to place some heavy head-trip on you concerning a facieses statement that you may make in a moment of excitement. But I am seeking to provoke your thoughts as to what is your life? Paul said to live, Christ, and here we read Christ is our life, you're a dead man, and now Christ is your life, it's vs like this that make vs like Gal 2:20 make total sense, it reads, "*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.*" and So Paul's revelation here is progressive, in vs 3 our life is hidden in Christ, but really vs 4 Christ is our life (it's a parallel truth) your life is hidden in Christ, and now Christ is living in you and through you. So we understand that Christ doesn't merely *give* life, He *is* life.

Now again the book of Romans correlates very nicely here regarding what Christ's life means to you and me as believers. In Rom 5:10 Paul writes, *"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."* There's a book entitled "The saving life of Christ." and This is the vs from which it came, and again virtually every believer is aware of the reconciling death of Christ. God using the death of Christ to turn me (an enemy of God) into a friend; that's what reconciliation is, enmity removed and friendship, or oneness restored, through the death of His Son. Now, if He reconciled us through the death of His Son, how much more now that we've been reconciled shall we be saved (the on going experience of day by day living) by His life?

I'm telling you this is the study of failing words, because this scriptural premise is huge. and Most of us can share on the saving death of Christ, Jesus took my place and hung upon the cross, giving His life for mine that I might be reconciled to God, I was saved by that work on the cross. But how many of us can share on the saving life of Christ, Rom 5:10 sheds light on both, *"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."* Notice the emphasis on the words "Much more", in other words, if God used the death of His Son in such a magnanimous unfathomable way, by His death He was able to make enemies, friends, He was able to rescue all who would call upon His name, I mean the properties of this reality sky rocket off the scale of the significance meter.

Think of the work that God accomplished through the death of His Son, and the idea is that if He accomplished that much through His death, now that we're reconciled; how much more can He accomplish in us, through us and by us, through His life? If He was able to use His death to reconcile us, how much more can His life now save us? From what, well from self, from daily sin, self-centered living, the things that are in the world, you name it. If His death turned enemies to friends, what can His life now do for us? That's the reasoning here, this is huge; and it lifts one out of the mentality of focusing on self, I've got to do better, I've got to try harder. You see self help groups and or therapy won't turn you from God's enemy to His friend, thinking that you have to clean up your life and then maybe God will accept you, none of those things reconcile you to God. Believing in the work of the death of His Son on your behalf will, you see I counted on the dying work of Christ for my reconciliation to God.

"Well, that's good but what are you going to do now that that's out of the way, what do you count of for day to day living in the grind of this world?" The living work of Christ, and so just as much as we counted on the dying work of Christ to reconcile us, we count on the living work of Christ for daily living, rescuing me, delivering me from the snares of the world, the enemy and my flesh throughout the day.

Now the penalty of sin was dealt with at the cross, but the power of sin is still a very present reality that I cant avoid. But through the saving life of Christ, I can have victory over the

power of sin in my life, the penalty of sin has been dealt with but as long as we're in these tents called the flesh, the power of sin is something that we don't want to be deceived over. and It's through the saving life of Christ, the law of the Spirit of life that's in Christ Jesus, that we reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to Sin, but alive to God in Christ.

Christ is our life; you remember when Jesus was talking to Martha about the death of her brother Lazarus and the fact that he would live that He said, *"I am the resurrection and the life."* The life that the Christian is to live, is Christ, He is the Life, and the Life that He lived He shares with us. He said again in John 14:6 *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* He's the way to the Father, He's embodied truth regarding the Father, and He's the Life that we want to live as believers. 1 more reference 1 John 5:11-12, *"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. (Notice that life isn't just received "From" His Son, but it's to be found "in" His Son to be tapped into daily.) He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."* God has given you eternal life if you believe in Jesus Christ but the life that He's given you isn't simply *from* His Son; it's *in* His Son. When He appears, then you will appear with Him in glory, now don't be confused this isn't speaking about the rapture, He's not going to appear to the world at that time.

This is in reference to His 2nd coming, we read in Rev 1:7 *"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen."* and When He appears, you will appear with Him in glory, right now your life is as it were sort of "tucked away" in Christ and the world doesn't see you in glory, but when He appears that glory will unfold before the world. The bible says that, *"now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."* and When He appears we'll appear with Him in glory, Christ takes us from the grave, to glory. Let's turn to Rev 19 and we'll close there.

Vs11-16

When Christ appears, you will appear with Him in glory.

But if you're here this morning and you don't know Christ, I implore you to make a decision today to believe on Him. The bible says, He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he

who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. and I'm not seeking to scare you, but understand that God is Holy and He will not compromise His holiness or wink at sin. and Now He commands all men everywhere to repent and be saved. Because He's not willing that you should perish, but that you should come to repentance, and He bridged the gap between His holiness and our wretchedness through the means of the cross of Jesus Christ and That's the only way that any of us can come to God, so if you're tired of fighting, then do yourself a favor and surrender. Jesus said that the one who seeks to save his life will lose it but if you'll lose your life for His sake you'll find it. True life is only found in Christ.