

Colossians 3:1-14
(John 17:20-26)
“New Life in Christ” II

Introduction

In order to understand and apprehend what Paul is teaching us here, we must be clear about this: By nature, we are born spiritually dead. Only God’s grace can bring us to spiritual life. By nature we are alienated from God, and only in Christ are we reconciled to God. By nature, we are condemned sinners and only through faith in Christ are we justified and no longer under God’s wrath and curse. So how does God accomplish this? And how does this begin to transform, not just our hopes with regard to the future, but the living of our lives here and now? How does one who has been made a child of God by grace begin to live as a child of God?

The New Testament definition of a Christian is simply this: a man or woman united to Christ. Christ is in you by the gift of his Spirit, and you are in Christ as a member of his body. God continues to walk the earth in human flesh through his body, the church, which consists of all those who have been born again through Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God the Father, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (1:27). That truth, repeated numerous times throughout the NT, is the foundation of what Paul teaches us here about the life that we have been called to live in Jesus Christ.

This morning, we will return to three of the four themes that we began to study last week, and seek to pursue them in greater depth.

Body

1. First, we must be clear about our identity (3:1-4):

In Christ’s death and resurrection his people died and were raised.
In Christ’s enthronement his people are kept safe and secure.
In Christ’s final victory the glory now hidden will one day be revealed.

2. So, what does Paul mean by writing, “do not not set your minds on things that are on earth”? There is a death we must die every day (3:5-11).

The desires of the flesh: Sexual Sin as an illustration of all such passions.
The desires of the eyes: Covetousness as the root of all such idolatry.
The pride of life: Broken relationships as a denial of grace.

- 3. And what does Paul mean when he tells us to “seek the things that are above” and to “set [our] minds on things that are above”? There is a life we must live every day (3:12-14).**

*Know your identity as one chosen and beloved in Christ.
Be a conduit of the life of Christ in all your relationships.
Let the final test of your profession of faith be Christ's love in you.*

Conclusion

This is the way of life. It brings healing to the broken heart, the broken home, the broken friendship, the broken neighborhood, the broken city and the broken world. It is “the love that drew salvation's plan, the grace that brought it down to man, the mighty gulf God spanned at Calvary.” It is the life already given to those who are in Christ and in whom dwells the Spirit of the risen Christ.

The secret is in learning every day, throughout the day, to die to the flesh, to the old rebellious ways of insisting on our way rather than joyfully submitting to God's way. It is in dying to live. And it is already ours in Christ Jesus our Savior and our Lord. As we will sing at the end of the service:

The old is gone, the new has come.
What you complete is completely done.
We're heirs with Christ, the victory won.
What you complete is completely done.

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