

## MY FAITH LEADS ME TO LOOK UP

### (Colossians 3:1-4)

#### I. The command (Colossians 3:1-2).

- a) Paul was writing this to Christians, which can be seen in the first phrase.
  - i) There is a definite allusion to baptism.
  - ii) The only time “risen with Christ” is mentioned, or something akin, is when the resurrection is being discussed or baptism is being mentioned.
  - iii) We know that Paul is not here speaking about the return of Christ.
  - iv) So it has to be a reference to baptism, especially since that has just been discussed in Colossians 2:12.
- b) If we have been baptized, we are commanded to seek those things that are above.
  - i) The word “seek” carries the idea of giving effort, even strenuous effort.
  - ii) We are to be giving effort to find those things that are spiritual in nature.
- c) Paul describes them as the things that are where Christ is: in heaven.
- d) Too many times we are like Bunyan’s muckraker.
  - i) The things of this world catch and hold our attention so much that we fail to think spiritually.
  - ii) If we want to be where Christ is, we have to focus on what Christ wants.
  - iii) Constantly searching and scratching around for the next dollar or next physically pleasurable moment keeps us from looking up to Christ.
  - iv) When we live this way, we are missing out on so many blessings and joys.
  - v) There was a man who talked about his change in viewpoint that was brought about by dealing with cancer.
  - vi) Listen to what he said: “This illness has put everything into perspective. Though I believed in Christ I realized that I have put all my thinking and energy into my career and the standard of living it afforded. Because of this crisis I have met the Savior about whom I have heard so much in church for so long. How sad that I’ve missed all those years with him.”
  - vii) Don’t look back on your spiritual life thinking about what could have been.
- e) There doesn’t have to be a sense of sadness if we will develop and use our faith.
- f) In the next verse, Paul describes it a little more by telling us to set our affections on things above, spiritual things, and not on things on the earth, carnal things.
  - i) The word for the phrase “set your affections on” carries the idea of “to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek or strive for; to seek one's interests or advantage; to be of one's party, side with him”.

- ii) We must put forth effort on directing our mind towards spiritual things.
- g) Did you notice the last meaning: “to be of one’s party, side with him”?
  - i) By setting our mind on things above, we are siding with God.
  - ii) We are saying to the world that we are in God’s party or group.
- h) This is a whole different mindset than the world has and it is going to cause problems.
- i) You probably know that I am a Chicago Cubs fan.
  - ii) Their manager is an interesting guy.
  - iii) There is a new rule that there can’t be any type of rookie hazing that demeans any group of people.
  - iv) Maddon says that he likes the hazing of the past because it makes guys uncomfortable off the field which will help them on the field when things get difficult.
  - v) You and I like comfortable don’t we?
  - vi) Setting our affections on things above will require some discomfort at times but it is well worth it as we will notice.
  - j) Something we need to note is that Paul does not leave us in the dark as to what needs to have our attention and what does not.
  - i) Beginning in verses 5-11, Paul tells us that there are somethings we have to remove or put off (Colossians 3:5-11).
  - ii) Then, in verses 12-17, there are somethings we need to put on spiritually speaking (Colossians 3:12-17).

## II. The cause (Colossians 3:3).

- a) There is a tremendous reason for this command: we are dead.
  - i) This is not a reference to physical death.
  - ii) We know Paul was writing to living, breathing human beings who were Christians.
  - iii) This is a reference to spiritual death to sin, which has already been discussed by Paul when he was referencing baptism back in chapter 2 (Colossians 2:13).
- b) Being dead to sin causes us to be different people than we were before baptism.
- c) However, notice that he says our lives are hid with Christ in God.
  - i) Baptism is the putting on of Christ (Galatians 3:27).
  - ii) We are to look like Christ in our actions and lives.
  - iii) When the world sees us, they need to see a Christ-like life.

- d) When we are rooting around in the muck of the world, there is no way that we look like Christ.
- e) We are commanded to seek the things above, or set our affections on high, because we are to look like Jesus to the lost.
- f) We don't live for self anymore because we are clothed in Christ.
  - i) The way we think, talk, and act are to all have changed.
  - ii) Listen to how J.B. Lightfoot described this new life: "The apostle's argument is this: `When you sank under the baptismal water, you disappeared forever to the world. You rose again, it is true, but you rose only to God. The world henceforth knows nothing of your life, and (as a consequence) your new life must know nothing of the world'."

### III. The crown (Colossians 3:4).

- a) Paul has pointed out our death to sin and resurrection to spiritual life.
- b) He now points us to the return of Jesus.
  - i) There is no doubt to Paul that our Lord was and is coming back some day.
  - ii) He made this clear throughout his inspired writing.
  - iii) This is something our Lord mentioned as well.
- c) If we have obeyed the command, we will receive the crown.
- d) Paul did not doubt the return of our Lord at all.
  - i) Notice that he said "When Christ shall appear."
  - ii) We must never doubt this because it is a worldly way of thinking.
  - iii) Some in Peter and Paul's day did and were chastised for it in 2 Peter.
  - iv) One who has put on Christ lives in full hope and assurance of the return of our Lord.
- e) We live in hope because it means we will be glorified on that day.
  - i) We will be allowed to appear with Him in the glory He will have.
  - ii) John said it this way...(1 John 3:1-2).
  - iii) Paul told Timothy that he and others like him, Christians who long for the appearing of Christ, will receive a crown (2 Timothy 4:8).
- f) For this glory to be ours, Jesus must be our life.
  - i) He has to be more important than anything else.
  - ii) Our minds must be fixed on Him and not on things of the earth.
  - iii) We have sung the words, "He is my everything, He is my all".
  - iv) For this glory to be ours, He must be our everything.

- v) He is our life, because we have given Him ours.
- g) Only when we have done this will we receive the crown.