

THE EXALTED CALLING

Living the Risen Life

Colossians 3:1-4

Over the past few years there has been a renewed emphasis on *practical ministries* in the church. Previous to this time, many of our churches had to go through a period of *theological recovery* for which I am very grateful. Now the church wants to know the *how* along with the *what*. They are looking for *practical solutions built on biblical truths*.

As we move from **chapter 2** to **chapter 3**, we are going to see that transition...how our *spiritual growth*, our *joy*, and our *fruitfulness* requires that we maintain a *foundation* based on *biblical truths* while having a *proper perspective* of this *world*. We are *strangers* and *exiles* on this earth, because our *citizenship is in heaven*, from which we *eagerly wait* for the Lord Jesus Christ to *return* (**Philippians 3:20**). *We may be in this world, but we are not of this world*. Until we realize this basic truth and live it...we will be ineffective in reaching the world with the truth of the Gospel.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

~Romans 12:2

It is only when we *rise above the world* that we can appreciate both the *appalling spiritual poverty* that surrounds us...that is, the *fallen world* in which most people live...and what it is to learn to *fix our minds on heaven*.

Because the things that are most important to us are in *heaven*...we must not allow ourselves to become *entangled in this present world*.

“...Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

~Hebrews 12:1b-2

I. SALVATION: (vs. 1a)

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ (vs. 1a)...

Paul told us to *test ourselves* to make sure that we are *saved*.

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”

~II Corinthians 13:5

Cultural Christianity vs. Born Again.

If...denotes reality as in **verse 20**...and is better translated *since*. The fact that believers **have been raised up with Christ** *is not in doubt*. The verb actually means *to be co-resurrected*. It's *an accomplished fact*.

“In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

~John 14:20

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life...Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

~Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

“If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.”

~Romans 8:10

“Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

~Colossians 2:12

This *new life* is *real* and *powerful*...but so is a *life* that remains in *sin*. Though *sin* is no longer our *master*, it can still *overpower* us if we are not presenting ourselves to God as *servants of righteousness*.

In this passage, **Paul** is once again stressing *Christ's sufficiency*... **with Christ (vs. 1)**... where **Christ is (vs. 1)**...**with Christ (vs. 3)**...**with Him in glory (vs. 4)**.

Unfortunately, many Christians fail to *understand* and *pursue* the *fullness of Christ*. Either because they *don't know* what Scripture says...or they *fail to apply* it properly. They are intimidated into thinking that they need something more than *Christ alone* to live the *victorious Christian life*. That when they're *vulnerable* and *fall prey* to...

- **False worldly, humanistic philosophies.** (It sounds good)
- **Legalism.** (Performance based religion...do's and don'ts)
- **Mysticism.** (Religious experientialism...emotionalism)
- **Asceticism.** (God in everything...environmentalism, idols)

II. STRIVE: (vs. 1b-2)

Keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth (vs. 1b-2)...

Keep seeking...Gk. *zeteo*, is in the **present tense** and *indicates continuous action*. This is to be the pattern of the believer's life.

The things above...We should have a *preoccupation with heaven*... and that preoccupation should govern our *earthly responses to life*.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

~Matthew 6:33

To be *preoccupied with heaven* is to be *preoccupied with the One who reigns there*...along with His *purposes, plans, provisions*, and *power*. It's also *to view* the *things, people*, and *events* of this world *through His eyes* and with an *eternal perspective*.

Paradoxically...before Christians can reach the world...they must first leave it!

Set your mind...Gk. *phroneo*, simply means *to think...to have this inner focus*. It's also in the **present tense indicating continuous action**. The believer's *outlook* should *orient itself towards heaven*... where Christ is. It's like the *needle of a compass*...it's always *orienting itself towards the north*.

“We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

~II Corinthians 4:18

Where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God...the place of *honor* and *majesty* (**Psalm 110:1; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33; Acts 5:31; Acts 7:56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 8:1; I Peter 3:22**).

III. SECURITY: (vs. 3)

Another **paradox**...before we can *live with Christ*...we must first *die ...die to self...die to the flesh...the sin nature has to die*. Sin's presence and power *still affect us*...but it doesn't have to *control us* ...and it certainly *can't condemn us*.

For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God (vs. 3)...

For you have died...Gk. *apothnesko*, it's in the **past tense**...*indicating* that a *death* took place *at salvation*.

“Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.”

~Romans 6:6-8

“I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 up for me.”

~Galatians 2:20

Your life is hidden with Christ in God...Believers share a *common life* with the Father and Son. *Eternally secured*. All the *riches of the eternal God* are available to those whose lives are **hidden with Him** through His Son.

“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”

~I John 5:11-13

IV. SPLENDOR: (vs. 4)

Although the world may not now recognize those whose lives are **hidden with Christ in God**, that will not always be the case.

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory (vs. 4)...

Is revealed...His second coming.

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”

~I John 3:2

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God...And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS’.”

~Revelation 19:11-13, 16

LESSONS WE NEED TO LEARN:

- **As a child of God...we must become in PRACTICE what we already are POSITIONALLY by God’s grace.** We must live what we already are positionally by God’s grace.
- **The key to living the risen life is to have a life CENTERED on Christ.** Focused on Christ. See everything from His perspective.
- **Christ...not this present world...is the CENTER of the true believer’s UNIVERSE.** It’s all about God...and to His glory.