

## **Raised with Christ**

**Colossians 3:1-5**

By [Ralph Kelley](#)

If you would, open your Bibles to Colossians, Colossians chapter 3. We're taking a break from our study in Hebrews while Dr. Duncan is away and when he returns we'll pick up that study again. Today we're going to give our attention to Colossians chapter 3. Before we read it, let's pray together.

*Father, it's our prayer that Your Spirit would show us glorious truths in this wonderful Gospel of Yours. And we pray this in Christ's name, amen.*

Colossians chapter 3, beginning in verse 1. And remember, this is the Word of God:

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of the Lord stands forever. Amen.

Well it was probably, I guess now, maybe five years ago. We were in our house in South Carolina and I was in the kitchen talking to my youngest son, Jonathan, and he stepped out of the room for a moment, and when he came back into the room I said, "Son, I have a confession I need to make to you." And he walked over to me, so serious, and he looked right at me and he reached up — now he reaches down when he wants to touch me but in those days he reached up — and he put his hands on my shoulders and he said, "Dad, you can tell me anything you want as long as you're not about to tell me that you don't really love me like you've told me all these years." I was blown away. All I was going to tell him was that I ate one of his French fries when he was out of the room! (laughter) But the point is, Jonathan had a solid foundation for what our relationship was and what my love meant to him. He knew that if he did something wonderful, I loved him, or if he failed, I loved him. If he pleased others, I loved him, or if he

sinned, I loved him. My love for him was not conditional on his behavior. He had that solid foundation.

And in this Christian life that we're in, we know that it's full of times of tremendous joy and it's also full of times that can be really hard, really painful, really difficult. And if we don't have a solid foundation, when those hard times come we can find ourselves quite lost. In our text that we have here before us this morning, Paul lays out a fantastic foundation that we need to grab hold of. He lays out this foundation and then he gives us three ways that we need to respond to knowing the truth of this foundation.

### **THE INDICATIVE: RAISED WITH CHRIST**

And the foundation is what we call the indicative clause, meaning what God has done, is doing, or will do in our life. And it's found right here in verse 1, this indicative clause, where we read that we have been raised with Christ. We have been raised with Christ. What a glorious thought that that is. As we celebrated Easter just two weeks ago, the resurrection where that was Christ's way of saying that "I have completed everything that the Father has given Me to do" and it has been approved that we join Him in resurrection. We have been raised with Christ. Our identity is in Christ. We could spend all day talking about the implications of what it means for us to be raised with Christ but we don't have time to do that today, so I'm going to look at two things very quickly with you in regards to this indicative clause that we have been raised with Christ.

### **REAL ASSURANCE**

The first thing that I want you to know is that because we have been raised with Christ we can have a real assurance of our salvation, a real assurance of our salvation, because we have been raised with Christ. There is no doubt that Christ has successfully accomplished His mission and along with that, we should have no doubt that we who are followers of Christ are in Christ. Christ is doing all the work but He's including us in His accomplishments. Think to Romans 8 beginning in verse 31 and following. We read, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us" — He's for His people — "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for all of us, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies." When the hard times come, the natural question that we sometimes find ourselves asking is, "Where's God in all of this? Is He really for me? Can I really trust Him?" The answer's, "Yes." We are raised with Christ. That removes all doubt that gives us full assurance of our relationship with God.

## **ADOPTED**

But we're not just assured in our salvation, although that's a wonderful thought in and of itself, but we're actually adopted into God's family since we are raised with Christ. Remember what Paul wrote to the Galatian church. "For in Christ Jesus you are sons of God through faith, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, 'Abba! Father!' so you are no longer a slave but a son, and then if a son, then an heir through God." That's our relationship with God through Jesus. We are His children. A tremendous word of encouragement as we think about what it means to be raised with Christ. That is foundational for us. That is our standing with God because of the work of Christ. So this indicative phrase here in our text tells us that we have been raised with Christ and because of that we can take heart.

## **THREE IMPERATIVES FOR LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

But there's also three, what we call imperative clauses in here, that tell us how we are to respond to that relationship that we have with Christ, being raised with Christ. And you find them there; one is in verse 1. It tells us to "seek the things that are above." In verse 2 it says, "set your minds on things above." And finally verse 5 it says to "put to death what is earthly in you." Paul here is reminding us that our sanctification is just as important as our justification, that God wants His people to be holy people. So the first thing we see here is that we are to seek the things that are above. Seeking or setting our hearts on the things that are in heaven. What kind of things do you put your heart into? What kind of things do you seek after? Jesus, in His most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 6, told us not to lay up for ourselves "treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroy or thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

## **THE CALL TO SEEK THE REAL TREASURE**

So when we think about this, the question that comes — "What is your treasure? What is your heart seeking?" For some of us it might be that our treasure is our status or our job title. For some of us it might be, maybe our children; maybe our grandchildren are our treasure. It might be that you want to be sure that you are liked by just the right people; it could be your reputation. Whatever it is, if your

treasure is not found in heaven, it's not a real treasure. It's fool's gold is what it really is. If your treasure is anything other than Jesus Christ Himself, then you're missing out on the greatest treasure of all the world. If you'd look back in your Bibles just a few chapters here in Colossians and turn to Colossians chapter 1 and pick up with me in verse 15, let's hear what Paul has to say about this treasure. Speaking of Jesus he says, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the Church. He is the beginning of the firstborn from the dead, that in everything, He might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross." Friends, that's a lasting treasure. That's what we need to be seeking. We need to seek Jesus Christ.

## **THE CALL TO PRAYER**

The second imperative that I want us to look at here this morning says that we are to "set our minds on the things above." An awful lot like the first one we looked at. If seeking the things above is pursuing Christ and the Christian life, then setting our minds on things above means that we are to give these things a large place in our thinking, a large place in our attention. What we really have here in this second imperative is a call to prayer, that we should be aligning our thoughts and our hearts with that of God. That's simply what prayer is. It is us aligning our hearts and thoughts to those of God's thoughts and heart. And certainly it's always right for us to lay out petitions before the Lord. He encourages us to do that. He is a benevolent Father. But when it gets right down to it, we should never approach God with the attitude of, "You need to do things my way." But instead, we should be seeking after, "What is the heart of God?" praying the things that He would have us pray for, praying for kingdom expansion, praying that the good news of the Gospel would go all over the world, that the lost would be saved. That's the way we should be praying. That's what it means to have the mindset of Christ.

## **THE CALL TO KILL SIN**

And finally, quickly, I want us to look at the last imperative that we find in verse 5 where it says, "Put to death what is earthly in you." The 17th century Puritan, John Owen, referred to this as "the mortification of sin." Now make no mistake at what Paul is telling us here. He is telling us that the sin that is in our life, we are to kill, we are to destroy. Now far too often, I'm afraid that we get this false sense of that - we understand this sin thing that's in our life and we've got it under control and it's not that big of a deal. And sometimes we want to act like sin is

almost our friend and we'll take it out of our desk drawer and we'll play with it for a little bit and then we'll put it back away and think, "That's okay; I've got that under control." But the reality of it is, is that the sin that is in your life is there for one reason and one reason only, and that's to destroy you. Take your sin seriously. That is exactly what Paul is calling us to do, is to kill the sin in our lives.

Growing up, my children growing up being the child of a pastor, usually whatever chores they got came along with the sermon that I felt appropriate to go along with it. And one standing sermon that always went along with one chore was when it was time to weed the garden, my two boys and myself, we would go outside and I'd start to tell them how weeds in the garden are a lot like sin in our lives and that some of them are just very obvious. They're just right there and you grab hold of them and you pull them out and they're gone. Some of them are a little bit more difficult. You reach down and you realize, "Oh yeah, those have thorns on them; they're going to hurt a little bit to remove but they still need to come out." Some of those weeds, they actually grow up in between flowers and you have to be really careful as you're removing those weeds. And finally, sometimes, you know, we could be out working on the flower bed and we're thinking that we're almost done and then my wife would come out who is supervisor of all household projects and she would take a look and she'd say, "Well you missed that one right there." And I'd say, "Well it's all flowery; I thought that was a flower." And she'd say, "No, it looks like a flower but it's actually a weed, and it too needs to come out."

The same is true with the sin in our lives, friends. It takes real work. It takes real care and caution but it needs to come out. Paul, here, is arguing for us to take the sin in our life seriously and to kill it. It's my prayer that we will think about what it means to be raised with Christ and these three imperatives of having our mind like Christ, seeking after the things of Christ, even on the point to where we see the sin in our life that we'll take that seriously and that we will deal with it.

Let's pray.

*Father, thank You for this brief time that we've had to look at Your Word. Lord, I pray that You will continue to take Your Word and roll it through our heads and our hearts all day long, all week long, Lord, and that we would seek after You, that we'd have the mind of Christ, that we would take sin seriously because we have been raised with Christ. We pray this in His name, amen.*

©2013 First Presbyterian Church.

*This transcribed message has been lightly edited and formatted for the Web site. No attempt has been made, however, to alter the basic extemporaneous delivery style, or to produce a grammatically accurate, publication-ready manuscript conforming to an established style template.*

*Should there be questions regarding grammar or theological content, the reader should presume any website error to be with the webmaster/transcriber/editor rather than with the original speaker. For full copyright, reproduction and permission information, please visit the [First Presbyterian Church Copyright, Reproduction & Permission statement](#).*

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#) (Thirdmill). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*.

#### **Subscribe to *Biblical Perspectives Magazine***

BPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like BPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [BPM](#), please select this [link](#).