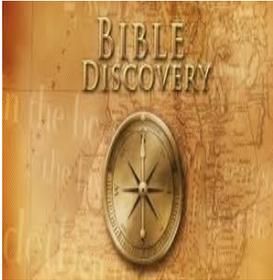


November 16, 2014

Colossians 3:1-10

Raised with Christ



As a Christian, God wants you to be aware of many things - the power of prayer, the sufficiency of the cross, the depth of His love, the power of forgiveness, the need for patience. He wants you to know from where you have come and to where you are going. He wants you to put away the old man and put on the new man.

But God also wants us to use our minds and our mental faculties which He has given to us to use in a whole new way - in a holy, constructive, and faithful way. He wants our attitude to be positive. He wants our focus to be on Him. He wants us to know that we're dearly loved by Him. And there's something God wants us to do, something He wants us to seek. God expects us to live a new life! We're no longer who we were having been "born again" - we've been raised with Christ!

When Christ overcame the grave, rolled back the stone with all the power of God, left the devil in the dust and surmounted the evils of this world, He claimed you and me as His own; only asking that we accept His salvation, His gift of grace and give our lives to Him that He might rule forever in our hearts. Yes you've been raised with Christ! But, for someone to be raised they must have died. You say hey wait - I'm alive, I haven't died! So why, then, do I say you died? Your death occurred on the Cross. Before you were even born into this life, Christ died for you, carrying your sins and nailing them to the cross, and God, your Heavenly Father has separated you from you sins if you are then in Christ. You're so closely tied to the cross in Jesus that it's that you've died with Jesus when He went to the cross. This is **if** you're "in Christ." IF you've accepted Jesus as your Saviour, you've died and you've been raised - each of you who've joined yourselves to Christ. You, who once were far off, but now are near. You once participated with the world in their earthly, fleshly vices - because you've now been raised with Christ - you've also died with Christ. You died when Christ died. You're united to Him so completely that God sees you as having died with His Son. "*The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus.*" [Romans 6:23]. YOU sinned. You must die - either on the cross or spiritually in hell separated from the Father for all eternity. May you choose the cross! The way opened for all who would surrender to Jesus. Paul reminds us, "*For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died*" [2 Corinthians 5:14].

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The Cross, the place of forgiveness, the place of death, the place of God's atonement is the reason for your spiritual resurrection. You're no longer dead in your trespasses and sins. You've been raised together with Christ. You've been given a life of holiness, sinlessness, and perfection--a life that will be joined to you for all eternity when time is complete.

Having died, you have also been raised. As Jesus represented you in His death, He also represents you in His resurrection. This death isn't merely symbolic; it's no exercise or simple ceremony. It's every-day practical. You're to consider yourselves dead to sin--dead to the earthly patterns and desires.

This new life must have full control of every aspect of your life – not just Sunday mornings, it's for Mondays at work, Wednesdays around the kitchen table and Saturdays out with friends.

This again brings us to what I want us to understand today. This new life in you through your union with Christ must have full control over every aspect of your life – with “every” being the key word. It's not just for Sunday mornings – it's for Mondays at work, Wednesdays around the kitchen table and Saturdays out with friends. In short the Apostle Paul teaches that the Christian's experience in Christ calls not simply for regulating our old earthbound life through all the do's and don'ts, but for digging out its roots and utterly destroying it. I've said before that though we continue to be in this world, we, as believers in Jesus Christ are foreigners – ambassadors for a country to which we've never been. We have accepted citizenship in a new world and must learn to live in it. We don't do this by continuing in the earthly nature of the world following “*sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed*” but in seeking those things that come from above. The verb “seek”

implies a persevering effort; therefore, it is a reminder God wants you to continually seek those things that are above. He wants you to strive for, pursue, go after the things that are above where Christ is. Paul adds “where Christ is” to help you understand the level of holiness to which you are to set your mind. He is calling for you and me to center our lives on the crucified, risen, ascended, and glorified Lord Jesus who is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Paul is calling for us to pursue those things mentioned in verses 12 and 13 of this same chapter of Colossians...

“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

Paul also instructs us on how this is possible. He reminds us it's with your mind you train and transform your soul. Elsewhere Paul explains, “*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.*” [Romans 12:2]. And in his letter to the Philippians writes, “*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – let your mind dwell on these things.*” [Philippians 4:8]. So then the message is clear: God wants you to set your mind on heavenly things. If we maintain a view of God, indeed, if we regularly focus on heavenly things, on the presence of Christ in our lives, on the worth of the great gift of grace given to us by our Heavenly Father, who, while



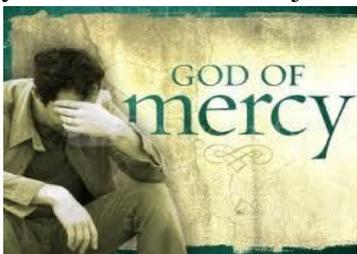
we were yet sinners sent His Son, Jesus to die for our sins, then how could we possibly do less than to follow His command to put to death or *“rid yourselves of all such things as anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language.”*

We’re charged to make this death given us in Christ real in everyday practice. But how can we put to death that which is still alive in us? Paul is speaking here of the progressive character of sanctification. Yes, Paul lists those things which you are to put to death – vices which he calls idolatry. But how are they idolatry? Idolatry is the honor, adoration, devotion to false gods. But here Paul calls these sins--these vices--idolatry. These vices, then, are like idols. An idol can be carried around, hidden from view, taken out in private to be honored, and fed with sacrifices of sin. It can also be displayed and shared with others. What in your life is a secret sin that you carry around? Do you have idols which supplant God as first in your life? Do you have secrets that only you and God know about? Maybe you have some old sins that you carry around with you that you haven't given up to God yet . . . or maybe you have and you take them back every now and then. If you know you have something that you hold onto that takes away from your adoration to God, then acknowledge it before Jesus, confess it, receive cleansing, and consider yourself to be dead to sin. Confess your sins and trust the Lord Jesus to forgive you . . . it’s the only way.

Do you have secrets that only you and God know about?

It suggests that we’re not simply to attempt to suppress or ignore evil acts and attitudes. We’re to wipe them out. Such action has been likened to a man who while working at a machine gets his fingers drawn between the rollers. *“Another minute and he may be flattened to a shapeless mess. He catches up an axe lying by and with his own strength hacks off his own hand at the wrist – it’s not pleasant, but it’s the only alternative to a horrible death.”*

Sounds like I’m calling for you to live perfect lives as of today. Wouldn’t it be wonderful? Wouldn’t it be great to never sin again, never say the wrong word, never fail to do what you’ve promised to do, never think the wrong thoughts or pursue through wrong motives? Not there yet? Welcome to the journey! Since we aren’t perfect and since we can’t find the perfect church,



it’s good to remember our God’s a God of Mercy! Because He’s a God of mercy, you’ve a new identity in Christ; you’re continually being renewed in Him. This renewal, which is accomplished by God, helps to keep you from sin. This renewal of the new self comes with knowledge. It takes place as a believer, as you come to a deeper, personal, knowledge of and fellowship with Christ, being made and formed into the image of Christ.

Because you’ve died with Christ, because you’re covered in the *blood of the Lamb*, because your faith and trust are in the Lord Jesus, *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* [Romans 8:1]. Though sins attract judgment like a magnet attracts iron, Jesus has set you free from its draw and promises to keep you from willful sin and destruction. That is why Paul can write, *“Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.”* And at Ephesians 2:13 *“But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”* And at Ephesians 5:8 *“for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.”*

So then I want you to search your hearts, to acknowledge you’re so completely united and identified with Jesus that you’ve died and been raised with Christ. Jesus bought you passage into the presence of God. God’s not given you a command that He’s not enabled you to obey.

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Keep seeking that which is in heaven; pursue holiness, strive for it, and you will find. He says, "*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*" [Matthew 7:7].

Contact us today at 1-519-317-8659 or email us to office.mbbc@xplornet.com.

God Bless,

Pastor Dave