

of Colossians have pointed out that ascetic tactics are untimely to provoke Christian growth. Only the holy and undefiled Person of Christ is adequate. He is sufficient. Rather than getting involved in a bunch of legalistic pronouncements, the Spirit of God promotes an entirely different base of concern: the Person and Work of Christ. The heart that is taken up with Him will find sweet repose and blessed spiritual growth. May God help you to enter into these precious truths.

Jesus died and we died with Him,
Buried in His grave we lay,
One in Him in resurrection,
Soon with Him in heaven's bright day.

Death and judgment are behind us,
Grace and glory are before;
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus
There exhausted all their power.

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

"The Other Side of Calvary"
Colossians 3:1-4

Introduction

1. It was the death of Christ that was remembered on Good Friday. It is His resurrection that is recalled on the first day of the week.

2. When a person receives Christ into his heart, he identifies himself with Christ's death and resurrection. It is accomplished through the action of the Holy Spirit (cf. 2:12, 20).

3. To live at the cross is to find salvation and forgiveness, but to live on the other side of Calvary is to enter into the process of Christian growth (sanctification). To oppose an ascetic approach to growth potential is valid, but what is to take its place? The entire answer is Christ!

4. When Christ takes the focus, three evident time periods are noted. Each has a peculiar contribution to make in the process of spiritual growth and development. Study them carefully:-

1. PAST

a. Dead. v. 3.

The aorist tense of the verb marks it out as a specific fact. Better rendering: "ye died." It is a reiteration of 2:12, 20. The whole inadequacy of the ascetic approach is shown. The practical impossibility that those who are dead should be taken up with anything other than that which belongs to the new life is thus enforced.

b. Raised. v. 1.

Again the aorist tense of the verb is used pointing to the original decision for Christ. The first class condition in the Greek assumes the statement to be true: "since you are raised." Dying with Christ and rising with Him are as inseparable as the concave and convex of a circle.

c. Hidden. v. 3.

The perfect tense of the verb leads one to render the thought in this fashion: "has been permanently hidden." The idea of security is certainly here. Locked together with Christ and in God. No hellish effort of burglary can break that combination!

But the thought of concealment is also present. The secrets which make this life what it is are as invisible as Christ Himself. The secrets are different from the external routine of the Pharisees, Gnostics, and Ascetics. The whole life is bound in a Person. Let's not associate it with a system of externalities.

2. PRESENT

a. Seek. v. 1.

The verb does not have the idea of "search for" as if one does not know what he has nor where he can find it. Rather, "to desire earnestly" and thus to "strive for" are the true meanings. When one asks for, examines, or is inspired unto he is fulfilling the idea expressed here.

Why such an activity should be entered into is given: Christ is there! The comma is so important. The text should read "where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God." To seek things above is to seek things where Christ is! This is no periphrastic verb as the AV has it. In addition to Him being there, His particular position is noted--at the right hand of the Father, the place of authority and power.

b. Set. v. 2.

What a terrific addition here: don't only inquire about things above in a striving matter, but think about them. Don't only seek heaven, but think it! The verb means to give the whole attention of the mind to something. It has the idea of set purpose. It is not just reasoning. Heavenly thoughts are to be so filling one's mind that walking on earth is the bringing of heaven down!

To think on ordinances, worldly power, prowess, wealth, and ambition is to be entirely out of mind with heaven!

3. FUTURE. v. 4.

The end result of a believer is a marvelous participation in His revelation. The Bible clearly defines the two-fold phasing of His second coming. First there is the Rapture when the believers of this present Age of Grace are to be caught up to be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-18). This is the next assigned item on the program of God.

The next phase of His coming will be the Revelation. It is the great unveiling of the Son of God from heaven. He will descend with all the armies of heaven to establish His kingdom on earth. It is the time of His own unveiling to the world (Rev. 19:11-16). Then it will be that those mentioned in the text will also be made known.

A very important truth is mentioned in this verse: Christ is our life. Far too many have considered Him as a "way of life." He is in fact our life! It is He that makes the life what it really is (1 John 5:12).

Conclusion The previous verses in this lovely book