

**Text:** Colossians 3:1-3

**Title:** The Resurrection Mindset

**Truth:** Christians need to have different priorities than the world.

**Date/Location:** Sunday November 8, 2015

## Introduction

- 1 **If** therefore you were **raised** with Christ,  
[**then**] **seek** those things which are above,  
where Christ is,  
sitting at the right hand of God.
- 2 **Set** your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.
- 3 For you **died**, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

We must first consider the meaning of the “if/then” construction, called a first-class condition in the Greek language. It makes us think about whether we are in that group of people who have been raised with Christ. Simply put, being raised with Christ happens the moment we are saved through repentant faith. Are you in that group?

## I. Have Heavenly Priorities Operational, v. 1

- A. **Seek things above**, where Christ is. Obviously this is a reference to heaven where Jesus is, sitting at God’s right hand, waiting until his enemies are made his footstool. The verb is a present active imperative (a command) for the entire church. It is not an optional piece of good advice. It is essential to the Christian life on an ongoing, daily basis. It is given to the entire church, so that both individuals and the body as a whole need to be seeking things above.
- B. **Seek** is a very common word, 418 times in the Bible (Greek OT and NT). It has four nuances: 1) to ask for something, 2) to try to find something, 3) to seek information, or 4) to devote serious effort to reach an objective. The use in Colossians 3:1 is an example of the fourth.
- Examples: Matthew 6:33, 7:7; Luke 11:9, 12:29-31; Romans 2:7; 1 Cor. 10:24, 14:12; 1 Peter 3:11. There is a negative example in Matthew 26:59.
- C. What I’m aiming for here is to get us to see that “seeking” is not a mere mental exercise. The mind is the focus of verse 2; actions are the focus of verse 1. In Acts 9:11, Ananias had to “go” to seek Saul to give him a message from God, not just sit there and think about Saul. The point is

that each of us who are Christians is responsible to have heavenly priorities *operational* in our lives.

D. The reality is that many of us are most busy seeking those things which are below, not seeking those things which are heavenly. That can be proved by a time study and a deep look into what our priorities are. You check yourself out to see if I'm right.

E. Do you want me to give examples?! OK, if you insist!

1. Do church meetings often get a back-seat to other activities you want to do? I believe that is wrong—wrong because the local church is at the heart of God's program today. It is where love for others is expressed; where worship of God is done; where God's word is proclaimed. We desperately need those things. But it is very easy to say, "Right now, this event or activity is more important than being with God's people." They and God in that sense get second, third, or fourth place.
2. Do you spend time in the Word and prayer in your home, with the people in the home—your spouse and children?
3. Do you give a portion of your time to help others, especially those in the church?
4. Do you give to the Lord's work?
5. Do you spend time doing sinful things? Things you know you should not do?

## **II. Have a Heavenly Mindset, v. 2**

A. This is kind of a prerequisite to verse 1, but Paul wrote it second, so we deal with it second.

B. We are talking about the same *things* here that verse 1 did.

C. The things we are to think about are *not* things on the earth. The kinds of earthly things that we are to avoid in our thinking include everything characterized by sin and world-likeness; -isms and -ics and philosophies, etc. It includes false religious regulations like in 2:20-23 which have no value in curbing sinful internal appetites and the outworkings of them. It includes religious festivals, holidays, angel worship, asceticism, and indeed everything that departs from Christ. It includes big desires for clothing and houses and lands and cars and colleges and everything. Our thoughts must not be centered on those things.

- D. The verb “to think” means to give careful consideration to and be intent on. Again it is a present active imperative, so it is a command, to be ongoing all the time for every individual in the church and the church as a whole.
- E. This setting of the mind is on heaven...the things of God and Christ. Your life is there in Christ...why do you set your mind on things “down here” that are earthly, temporal, sensual, and even demonic (James 3:15)? This place we now live is, in a sense, the realm of the dead. We’ve been raised to new life and should exhibit that in our desires.

Fanny Crosby hymn: I Live But in Thee

I care not for treasures that rust and decay,  
I seek not for pleasures that vanish away,  
Enough that my Savior my portion will be,  
O loving Redeemer, I live but in Thee.

- F. Consider: what is your greatest desire? The things of this world? The pleasures of sin for a short season? Or is it to honor God with your life and money; to avoid sin and live a holy life; to witness for the gospel; to be more like Jesus?

### III. Because Christians Died with Christ and Rose with Him, v. 3.

- A. This section has to be understood in light of the preceding context. In 2:20, the text reads, “if you died with Christ.” This is a past tense verb. The assumption is that the reader did in fact die with Christ. That means that the reader was saved. When the believer was saved, they did not die physically, but they died to their old state of spiritual death. They were disconnected from that life among the walking dead and were connected to a new existence. Colossians 3:3 adds “for you **died**” and this is also in the past tense. The fact of the matter is, felt or not, each and every Christian died with Christ. That is revealed here in the Bible, and there can be no quibble with it.
- B. In 3:1, we read “if therefore you were **raised** with Christ.” Obviously there is a connection between 2:20 and 3:1 and 3:3. Christians died to their old life, sin, Satan, and the world, and are alive now to God, in Christ.
- C. This section also has to be understood in light of the wider Biblical context.
1. If you are a Christian, your old man was crucified (Rom 6:1-9) and put off (Eph 4:22 and Col. 3:9). Actually before you were a Christian you were dead spiritually toward God and alive to the world and your

sinful self; salvation reversed that condition and caused you to die to the world and your old self and be raised to new life toward God.

2. This effected a basic change in your relationship to the world, to sin, to your own flesh, to Adam, to death, the devil, and to God.

Before	Now
Friend with the world	Enemy of the world and hated by it
Comfortable with sin	Uncomfortable with sin
Slave of sin	Freed from sin
At ease with yourself and sin	At war with fleshly tendencies still inside
In Adam	In Christ
Destined to eternal death	Presently possessing eternal life
Father was the devil	Father is God
Hated the gospel	Love and believe the gospel
Denied the Lordship of Christ	Acknowledge Christ as Savior and Lord

You become a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). You die, but also are raised to a new life.

3. By the way, water baptism is a symbol of these truths—that you died, were buried, and rose again with Christ. Each Christian is commanded to follow through with water baptism by immersion because of this theological truth. Sprinkling, for instance, symbolizes *cleansing*. But cleansing from sin is not the only thing that happens when you are saved; you die to the old self and rise to new life with Christ. Immersion baptism correctly symbolizes that total reality for the Christian.

- D. As a consequence of dying with Christ and being raised with him and having our life hidden inside of His, we are given the two commands to seek and think on things above.

## Conclusion

The death of Christ is the death which provided for us to die with Him to our old life and be raised to a new life. That life then demands that we forsake earthly things and **seek** and **set our minds** on heavenly things. Seek first the Kingdom of God.

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