

Christ our life

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[0 : 00] Third chapter, and I want to read with you the first five verses. If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is on the right hand of God.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ is our life to appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry. If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is.

Or since we are risen, ye are risen with Christ. Seek those things which are above where Christ is. Paul is writing this letter, of course, to the Christian church at Colossae.

And knowing their dangers, and knowing their propensity towards looking upon things material, and being conditioned by the world in which they were living, together with the fact that there were those who were bent on destroying their Christian liberty, Paul writes to them to remind them of their privileges, and on account of their privileges, their responsibilities.

[1 : 31] If ye then be risen with Christ. Or since ye are risen with Christ. Because in the preceding chapter to this one, Paul has been emphasizing the fact that they are risen with Christ, because they were buried with him in baptism, whereof they are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

And you being dead in your sins, and uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven your trespasses, and blotting out the handwriting of ordinance that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Now there Paul is speaking of what Christ has done. And as a result of what Christ has done, they have been blessed, as he says elsewhere in writing to another church, with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.

They have been raised with Christ. We sang together here today that psalm, The last, O Lord, was glorious, ascended up and high. There was purchased gifts for men, even for the rebellious.

And the gifts which Christ has purchased, for sinners such as us, as a gift, can be summed up in one word, the gift of eternal life. But then they can be enumerated, if you like, when we consider all the blessings, that are ours on account of being given eternal life.

[2 : 54] Now all of these, have been purchased, by Christ, by his death, on the cross. You will notice how God's word emphasizes, that all things are ours in Christ.

How the word of God centers upon Christ. How the word of God brings Christ to the forefront. And this is what we ought to keep in mind continually.

That Christ is our salvation. That Christ is Lord. That if we are anything, if we are ever to be anything, it is because of Christ. It is because of what he has done. It is because of what he is.

It is because of what he is going to do. It is what he is, because of what he shall be. Christ is all in all, as God's word here says. And so it is, if you then be risen with Christ, or since you are risen with Christ, seek those things, which are above.

And I want to notice with you today, first of all, what we are, or where we are, if we are the Lord. So that's a question we must all ask ourselves today, at the very outset.

[3 : 59] Are we the Lord? Are we those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ? Where we are then?

Now, we are, he tells us here, risen with Christ. We are risen with Christ. Next in importance to the resurrection itself is indeed the biblical doctrine of the federal headship of Christ, and the union of all his people, with him.

It is a wonderful truth to lay hold of, and understand, even in some small way, how we are united to Christ.

And on account of being united to Christ, how wonderfully blessed we are. I believe that as Christians in our day, we do not at all glean from God's word what we ought in regard to the truth which is brought before us here.

It is because that we, it is because we are in Christ that we became partakers of everything that Christ did. we died with Christ.

[5 : 22] You see, as in all, men sinned in Adam, God's word tells us, and fell. So it is true that those who are in Christ died in Christ and rose again with him.

He is our federal head. And this is the truth concerning all God's people. They were originally dead in trespasses and sins, but from all eternity they were chosen in Christ.

So that when Christ came into this world, we were inseparably connected to Christ, united to Christ. And so when he died, we died with him.

When we were buried with him. But the glorious truth is this, that Christ is risen. And we were raised with him. Raised and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Because as we were chosen in him, we cannot be separated from him. There was never a time to put it in the only words we can use.

[6 : 40] There was never a time when the church wasn't safe, if you like, in Christ. But yet much had to be done on behalf of the church, by Christ, in order to redeem the church.

Because the church is made up of sinners who were the children of wrath, even as others. But this wrath had to be taken away. And Christ suffered the wrath of God for us.

He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastardment of our peace was laid upon him. The command was given, Awake, O sword, against my shepherds.

I will smite the shepherd, says God. Why? Because he is the representative of his people. He is the federal head of his people. He is the mediator between God and man. He is the one who took upon himself to suffer all that we deserve.

And so he died, our death. But he rises again from the dead. And we are worshipping today the living Christ. And the church is united forever to Christ.

[7 : 40] You, my believing friends, are united to Christ today in such a close unity that words cannot describe it. You will go on throughout eternity learning more of the oneness that subsists between Christ and his own.

We rose with him. Now, the believer has risen with Christ in two ways. Representatively, first of all. That is, all the elect, as I've already said, rose in Christ.

On the day he rose from the dead. He is having died once unto sin, having paid all his people debts and come forth triumphal from the grave. So it is, we came forth with him.

We came forth with him. No matter, it's why my believing friend, no matter what the devil says, no matter what your own heart says, you can face death and say, oh death, where is thy sting?

Can you say that today? Can you face the reality of death and yet say, oh, where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory? We have the victory in Christ, my friend.

[8 : 54] He has gone into the grave. Someone has put it this way, that Christ has warmed the grave for his people. But not only so, he has risen out of the grave.

Triumphant. Triumphant. And we have the victory in him. He endured all things for us.

The sentence of the law. Oh, my friend, you know yourself today as a sinner. And you have broken God's law. Some people argue against that, but you don't. Some people say you don't need to bother about the law of God.

Some people tell you sin isn't really all that bad after all. Indeed, the very, the very subject of sin is one that people do no longer want to discuss. There's no such thing, many tell us.

But you, my believing friend, know otherwise. You know what sin is. Because God, by the Holy Spirit, has convinced you of sin. The truth concerning sin. It is that awful thing that God cannot stand.

[9 : 55] And you are conscious of sin not as an entity outwith yourself. But you know sin as that which is in you. As a disease, a disease, if you like.

A condition that is yours. And you know that your sin is offensive to God. You say with the psalmist against thee, ye only have I sinned in thy sight done this ill.

And you know that you're run by nature under the condemnation of God's law. That God is righteous, that God is true, that God is just. And he will not allow the sinner to escape. But friend, look to Jesus Christ today.

Oh, I wonder if there's anyone here today who either too has never looked to Christ. Are you here today and you've never been able to look to Jesus Christ as the psalmist says they look to him and lighten where?

Will you not look today to the Christ of Calvary who died on that cross of shame and scorn and suffering and pain? Why does he die there?

[10:59] Because he's bearing the sins of his people. God is dealing with sin in Christ, on the cross. My believing friend, will you not look today anew and see the truth concerning sin and its cash?

What is it through? It's through this. He has nailed, he has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us. All things were against us.

But he took that out of the way, nailing it to his cross. This is our hope today. This is your hope as a sinner today.

Come to this Christ whoever we are, whether for the first time or for the millionth time. There is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved.

But he will call Jesus for he will save his people from your sins. Would you be saved? Look to Christ, my friend. And you, my believing friend, burdened with your sins. Burdened with that besetting sin.

[12:03] Crushed perhaps by a consciousness of your own sinfulness as never before. Feeling as never before the reality of the offensiveness of sin to a holy God.

Would you not look to him? He died and bore away the sins of his people. Well, the believer has risen with Christ as he rose from the dead.

The believer was raised with him there representatively. Time can get a hold of that. But there was a second sense in which we are risen with Christ as God's people.

That is in our spiritual resurrection. You have he quickened Paul says in writing to the Ephesians. You have he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.

He has quickened you now by his spirit. And that is a consequence of Christ having died representatively for his people. It follows logically upon that that we would be quickened if we are his.

[13:20] Because this is what is true of us by nature. We are dead and we have to be quickened. Because God is spirit. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. And you remember what Christ said to Nicodemus unless a man be born again he cannot enter he cannot understand the kingdom of God.

He cannot enter into it. He cannot enter the reality of it and understanding of it. He cannot be a partaker of it. You must be born again. Well this is what has happened in the experience of all God's people who believe.

They wouldn't believe otherwise. They have been quickened. They have been brought to life. they have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. They have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

Christ in them is the hope of glory. The Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts creating a holy desire after the things of God and holy abhorrence for everything that is against God and his law and so on.

we have been quickened. We have been brought to life so that we now have an appetite for the things of God.

[14:24] Now you may ask yourself today how can I know that I have been born again of the Spirit of God? How can I know that I have been partaker of the life that is in Christ that I have been born again?

How can I know? Well you can know it by the fact that if you have been born you're living. That is you have spiritual life.

You have a spiritual appetite. When a child is born into the world the child cries. And that is the evidence that the child is healthy and living.

Now I remember well hearing the old men used to speak on the question day in the West Islands here. Some of them used to illustrate the life of God in the soul by this using the cry of the child of the newborn child as expressive of three particular things.

That when a newborn child cried there were three desires in that cry if you like of the newborn child. And the first one was wash me. Wash me.

[15 : 36] Because I am unclean. And you know this is the first thing that the mother did and the nurses do now when the child is born surely they wash the child. And the second desire of the child was feed me.

Feed me. I'm hungry. There's a healthy child crying out for washing for feeding. And the third was clothe me. because the child is naked.

And so it is spiritually speaking when new life is instilled into the soul the soul cries out. Naturally cries out to God if you like in a spiritual sense.

And what does the soul cry for? Wash me. Do thou with his or sprinkle me I shall be cleansed soul. That is the prayer of the man of God and the woman of God the child of God.

from the moment they're born again until they leave this world. Cleanse me because I'm polluted in my own blood. And praise me to God when that cry goes up from the living soul God answers.

[16 : 45] Because the blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleanseth from all sin and we enter into the reality of being clean in Christ. Of being accepted by God in Christ.

Now are ye clean says Christ through the word which I have spoken unto you. And if Christ says we're clean then indeed we are clean. If the son shall make you free you shall be free indeed. It's none other than God who declares his own child clean as he looks upon him or her in Christ. But then there is a cry for spiritual nourishment that began there in our spiritual infancy.

and a hunger after righteousness that began there and goes on and will go on until ultimately we're holy. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

There is a sign a mark of God's grace in the soul a desire for the word of God a desire after God a hungering after the truth of God after the things of God after everything that is pleasing to God.

[17 : 56] They are blessed to sow hunger and so thirst after God. Others may be satisfied with ceremony may be satisfied perhaps with sitting in the house of God for an hour and a quarter or so and then going home and forgetting all about it.

They may be satisfied with saying their prayers they may be satisfied with reading their Bibles but the child of God is one who cannot be satisfied except with Christ and in Christ.

They hunger after him who is the very bread of life who came down from heaven. Christ has made bread to their souls and they want more of this Christ and so they turn to the word of God that they might see Christ therein.

Why do you read your Bible my friend? Is it because it's expected from you? Is it not because you want to find Christ there and you know Christ is there and you want to see more of him, learn more of him, be more like him on a count of him and you fed upon him there in the word?

Why is it you pray? Is it not that Christ may be formed in you that Christ may be your meat and your drink? Why do you want fellowship with God's people? Is it not that you might meet with Christ in them?

[19 : 00] And praise be to God we do from time to time. Ah, but it is Christ himself who is precious. Why? Because he has created that hunger in our souls after him.

After him who is the hidden manna. Remember the children of Israel? They were fed by the manna each day on their wilderness journey and they died not. And so it is with God's people.

We feed upon Christ who alone is the manna of our souls. Ah, but then there is the other cry of the soul. Clothe me. Clothe me. Ah, you feel your nakedness before God when God impresses upon us our sins and convinces us of our sins.

We feel that we are open and naked to his all-seeing holy eye and we feel ashamed in his presence. Ah, but you remember the prodigal son my friend when he returned to his father.

What did the father say take out the best robe and put it on him? Not any robe at all but the best robe. And so it is that God has clothed his people with the best robe. With the robe of Christ's righteousness.

[20 : 03] What a beautiful robe that is. Is there any righteousness better than that? Once you have this righteousness you have it forever. And once you have it you would not part with it for anything where you would be offered the world with all its religious systems or whatever or philosophies.

Oh no. You have found in Christ all your soul desires. And you go on hungering and thirsting after him still. There is the resurrection of the believer thus into a new spiritual realm that constitutes him as a living soul with living desires after the living God.

With an appetite for the things of God. With an eye for the things of God. With an ear for the things of God. And so on. But of course this resurrection of the believer is yet to be fully realized.

Yes we have been raised with him. But at the second coming we will be the full realization of this resurrection that is ours will be ours.

Because in the meantime if Christ carries we must die that is our bodies must go to the grave and our souls however they immediately pass unto glory.

[21 : 18] But our bodies are united to Christ until the general resurrection when Christ will come again. And then we shall go to be with Christ body and soul and enjoy in full possession that which Christ has purchased for us by his death on the cross.

It's only when we get to heaven my friends that we'll realize what is ours in Christ. We've only begun here to understand it. The most advanced in spiritual knowledge and the most spiritually mature person here today has only begun to learn of what is ours.

We know not yet what we shall be but then we know when we shall see him. We shall be like him. Oh what a change must take place you say. Yes my friends but he who began a good work will continue that work and we shall see him as he is.

Friend are you in Christ today? What an empty life is yours if you're not? What future do you have without Christ? Nothing but death and terror and fear.

But we have not been given the spirit of bondage again to fear says Paul concerning the Christian. We have been given the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba Father. Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

[22 : 34] And oh yes we may have our trials and our troubles. And we feel ashamed before God because of our failing in the past for our shortcomings and so on. But in the middle of it all we know our Redeemer liveth.

I know whom I have believed says Paul. Can you say that today? Rest not until you do my friend. No matter what the world says. No matter what your friends say. No matter what your neighbours say.

What does that matter? Ultimately you must meet with you. You're God. And so must I. The same God. God. And we'll be judged not collectively but individually.

But a glorious day that's going to be for those who believe in Christ and have been raised in Christ and are enjoying fellowship with Christ here. Come ye blessed of my Father it shall be said to them inherit the kingdom prepared you from before the foundation of the world.

It shall be said to others away with you. I have never known you. This is what we are then. But you will notice secondly what we are not to do.

[23 : 37] As those who have been raised and blessed thus and oh friends if only we would stop to consider what God has done for us in Christ. One might say looking on how well surely these people need not be exhorted what they ought to do and what they ought not to do.

But you see God is wiser. God knows. He knows our weaknesses. He knows our frailty. He knows our shortcomings. How easily we can go astray. So in his word blessed be his name he has exhorted us in certain directions and he brings us here before us to these words that we might understand what we are not to do.

Set your affections not on the things of the earth. Set your affections not on the things of the earth. Friends a person who has been brought out of the tomb.

Surely wouldn't want to return there. Can you imagine Lazarus wanting to go back into the tomb he was in for a time? You see this world has become a tomb.

A sepulcher. The place of death to the believer. Why? Because we're living in Christ. We're in a plane above the natural plane. We've been blessed in heavenly places in Christ.

[24 : 52] We've been partakers of this heavenly realm. So this world has become a sepulcher to us. A place of death.

That's what it really is anyway. The world is dying my friends. Why will we not just be rid of it then? Dwell no more on these things, these worldly pursuits, this materialism that is eating away like a cancer into the souls of so many of God's people in our day.

All of us must guard against this my friends. It's ruinous to our souls. These things that keep us bound.

Ah friend, we so foolish you listen to the devil who tells us, you know it doesn't really matter if you do this, doesn't really matter if you do that. Well maybe these things in themselves will be quite innocent things but insofar as our souls welfare are concerned, they ruin us.

They bring us down. They bring us into bondage. We lose our liberty, we lose our freedom, we lose our joy, we lose our contentment, we lose our peace. Now if we know that the church at Colossae was inclined to, the people there were inclined to fall into cardinal ordinances as God's word says, that is, cardinal ordinances, that is, to become ritualistic, to become as well as materialistic and so on.

[26 : 29] And you know friends, we ourselves, although we may consider ourselves today as a church to have broken away from ritualism and so on, we can become very ritualistic in our worship.

If, for example, I were to begin the service next Sabbath morning with a reading instead of a psalm, or if I were to begin with a prayer instead of a psalm, everyone would sit up and think there's something wrong, he's doing wrong.

Not to intend to do that, I have no intention of doing that, but if I were to do it, it might be good if I did, if I were to do it, because it would stir us up out of our bondage to ritual.

Friends, everything must be done decently and in order, and I'm the last person to try and change our order of service. That's not the point I'm making at all.

But what I want to point out is this, that we must seek to be delivered from being ritualistic, even in the simplicity of our worship. It can become a ritual. We can come to church and sit there and wait patiently for the hour and ten minutes to pass so we can get away again, and lose out, gain nothing from the word, gain nothing from having had fellowship one with another.

[28 : 00] And we must seek to cultivate fellowship one with another. We belong to one another in Christ. We've been raised together, in Christ.

We should seek to cultivate one another's spiritual welfare in church and out of church. And so that would protect us from becoming more materialistic than we are.

Set not your affections on the things of the earth. Come out from the world and be separate. That's what God's word says again and again to God's people.

people may try and change that as they will. But you cannot change the word of God and the authority of God's word and the authority of Christ.

Friend, it's not me who says this. Christ says it. He is our Lord and our God, our Master, our King. And he says, I am a jealous God.

[28 : 57] You shall have no other gods before me. All this materialism, all this worldliness, must be done away with as that which is offensive to God. But you see, that's overly negative.

That's what's wrong with the free church. No, friends. God's word is not negative. Because there's a process to decide here.

Having done that, having come out of the world, having got rid of your materialism, having got rid of your ritualism, having got rid of everything in that direction, then set your affections on things that are above.

Your heart, your mind, your whole being, have these set on the things that are above, on the things that belong to the realm to which you belong now.

You're no longer of the world. You're not of the world. You've been bought with a price. You are the Lord's. He has blessed you in Christ. You have been raised with him out of the sepulchre or the grave.

[30 : 05] And you're now on this new plane. And have your mind and your thought upon these things. Keep on seeking these things. The word says it's constant, daily seeking.

Let your minds ascend to heavenly things. Fill your mind with these things. And friends, you cannot fill your mind with worldly things. And have your mind filled with the things of God and things of heaven and things belong to Christ.

It cannot be. Let your whole mind, soul, spirit, heart, rise up. Every good and perfect gift is above and comes from above.

You know, I hear again and again and again Christians talking of what was through in the past. Why is it that we're not what we were in the past?

And I must honestly ask myself, as every Christian within these four walls today must ask themselves, is it because I am not doing what God's word here exhorts me to do?

[31 : 14] And I think if we're honest with ourselves we'll find that the root cause of it all is just that. Let us seek the things that are above that belongs to this wonderful realm that the children of God are in.

Seek to have more faith first of all in the Christ who loved us and gave himself for us. Seek to have more love for Christ. To have more patience, to have more zeal.

Let us seek more brotherly kindness. Let us seek greater humility. Ah, friends, there are so many things wherein we become so terribly shocked.

Let us seek, in other words, to be more Christ-like. Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus though in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal of God yet made himself of no reputation.

He took upon him the form of a servant. That doesn't mean to say he was only in a sense a servant. He was fully a servant. If the God of glory so humbled himself, how much more ought you and I as sinners created for his glory, how much more ought not we to humble ourselves in the very dust where we belong and forget once and for all this idea of being somebody or something.

[32 : 39] Seek the glory of God in everything. take care in this life.

Be most careful with what we do with the things God has given us in this life. Use them to the glory of God. Oh friends, haven't we all come so terribly short in that direction in the past?

God has loaded us with his mercies. What have we done with them? See, there's nothing wrong with possessions as such. Abraham was a rich man, the father of the faithful, but by the grace of God, he used all things to the glory of God.

So what we, friends? Seek heavenly joy, heavenly peace, rest, love, all these things. And the time has gone.

finally, there are a few reasons given us why we should do so. For you're dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. You're dead, and yet you're alive.

[33 : 54] Some say that's a contradiction. No, yes, you're dead to sin, dead to the law, but you're alive to God, alive to Christ, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Isn't that wonderful?

What does that mean? Well, first of all, it means safety. it means this also, as Christ himself is hidden from the world, and they cannot understand Christ, and they cannot understand you when you talk to them about Christ, and his glory, and his kingdom, and his word, and so on.

So it is. They cannot understand you either. They cannot. Why? Because your life is hid with Christ in God. There is a hidden element there that the world cannot understand.

and so, as surely as they refuse to believe in Christ himself, they refuse to believe in you also, as a Christian even. So on. Our lives are hid with Christ in God, safely hidden.

Safe. Oh, isn't it good to know? You know, our lives sometimes become so difficult. There are so many loose ends, and we sometimes feel as if we're going to be crushed by the various responsibilities and callings of our lives.

[35 : 06] But it is good to know if we are the Lord's, if we believe in him, our lives are hid. With Christ in God, we needn't fear. We needn't be protected, watched over.

Oh, God loves you, my believing friend, with a love that is unchangeable. Who can measure it? Who can measure it? Christ is the very life of the believer also.

When Christ to us our life shall appear, then shall he also appear with him. When Christ to us our life shall appear, then shall we appear with him.

He is our life in so many, in the sense in which I spoke of already, when we spoke of the fact that we feed upon him for our life. But our very living as believers is so wrapped up in Christ that our life is his life.

This was his prayer, that they might be one as we are one, thou in me and I in thee. And he's praying that they would be one in him, and so on. And God answered all that on account of Christ's death on the cross.

[36 : 19] Oh, friends, what we have in Christ. when Christ shall appear, he says then, and this is what is so wonderful, that he is going to appear. And it is therefore only logical that the believer look up to Christ or to his appearance.

We need patience to wait until he comes, but he's going to come. When Christ to us our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory. In the meantime, you're hidden, as he is. But in that day, he shall be made wonderful in them that believe. Paul says in writing to the Thessalonians. And that is what is to be true. And this is why we should have our affections on the things that are above.

Because we belong to Christ, who is from above. And we're going there to be with him, as Paul says, to be with Christ, which is far better. We shall appear with him in glory.

Notice why our minds should be much in that place. Now, you've heard it said, as I have, and you've read it, as it's been written, that such and such a person was so heavenly minded that he was of no earthly use.

[37 : 31] That is an impossibility, friend. The more heavenly minded you and I are, the more our affections are upon the things that are above where Christ is, the more useful we will be on earth.

The more useful we'll be in the cause of Christ, the more impact we will have upon the world in which we live. Ye are the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

But if our light is dimmed by materialism and worldliness, how can we shine? But if our minds are set upon the things that are above where Christ is, who is the light, and upon that place where there is nothing but light, oh how much we will shine in this world, to the praise and glory of God and to the good of others.

Would you not like to be of some use to people in this world the little time you're here? Would you not like to glorify Christ more than ever before in what lies ahead of you?

Well if that is our desire, let us have our affections on him, on the things where he is. And there's no doubt whatsoever but that we will be of some use to Christ.

[38 : 45] We may not be used necessarily in the direction we anticipate and expect but you can rest assured of this, whether we know it or not, we shall be used of Christ.

And what does it matter whether we know it or not? We would like to know it but it doesn't matter providing we are useful to him. May God bless his word to us, let us pray.

Oh grant us in thy mercy that thou would bless thy word to us this day and grant that we would indeed have our affections upon the things that are above where Christ is. Grant this in thy mercy and bless us as a congregation.

Take us home safely. Unite us in thy love and grant us to know that God in the midst of her doth dwell nothing shall her remove the Lord to her and help her will and that right early proof.

Go before us now and take away our sin for Jesus sake. Amen.