

09-22-13

Title: What is your focus?

Review Colossians 1:18

Raised with Christ

Colossians 3:1

Therefore

What do we have to do?

Looking back...

B/c Jesus is the head

B/c we are complete in Him

B/c we don't need anything but Him

Therefore, we should...

Doctrinal section of book is finished

Teaching part – now we get to practical stuff

There is always practical application in Scripture

There is knowledge – things we need to know

That should always affect our lives

Because of all we know, what we have learned

We should...

- *...if you have been raised up with Christ*

If, or since...therefore, since you have been raised w/ Christ...

Since we have been co-resurrected w/ Him

This is an accomplished fact for those in Christ

You have been raised – this is God's work, His action

It is not by our efforts, rather by God's that we are raised

We are raised to new life

When we repent and trust Jesus...

At that moment we die

We enter into Jesus' death and resurrection

Galatians 2:20

United with Him

When we are immersed into Jesus' death and resurrection

Totally identified and united w/ Him

We possess eternal life

Not just endless existence

There is a heavenly quality to this life, now

Because He lives in us

We have new life in Him

This new life is real and powerful – it is in Christ

The word Christ appears 4 times in these first 4 verses...

With Christ, where Christ, with Christ, when Christ

Having Jesus, the Messiah is everything

We are complete in Him

Jesus is all we need

There is nothing else...

Don't need anything else

We have risen w/ Christ

This is the path to holiness

No longer our old life

We have new life on a new plane

We have died already – when we came to know Jesus

We have died and are now raised

We have died to the things of this earth

We are in a new dimension, a different level

We have gone from regular biological life

To real life, new life, eternal life

Seeking Christ

- *...keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*

B/c we have been raised w/ the Messiah

We are called to seek the things above

We should be preoccupied with Jesus

Don't be intimidated by someone's list of do's and don'ts

Or b/c they have had some "special, higher" experience

Or they have made such self-sacrifice

Jesus is all we need

Things above are not angels, or visions

Things above refers to Messiah, to Jesus

Jesus alone is to be worshipped

- ...keep seeking

Continuous action

Stay preoccupied w/ eternal realities

What is found in Jesus?

Matthew 6:33

Our focus on heavenly things should

Affect our response to earthly things

Preoccupation w/ Heaven is preoccupation w/ Jesus

He is reigning there

Need an eternal perspective on everything

Make this the pattern of your life

Once a father took his three sons on a winter hike. They came to a field glistening white from a snow the night before. There was not a single track of any kind that had been made in the field. The father, wanting to challenge his youngsters and perhaps teach them a lesson suggested they have a contest: Which one could walk the straightest path across the field?

The first trudged across the field keeping his eyes down to watch each step, trying to put each foot directly in front of the other.

When he reached the other side, he looked back, and to his surprise the tracks were curved like the letter "S" in their course.

The second lad started, taking a few steps and then looking back to see if his path appeared straight. About every ten to fifteen steps the process was repeated. When he finished he eagerly surveyed the entirety of his course, but discovered it wasn't really straight at all - it was in segments, veering to right, and then to the left.

The third, seeing the other two had failed, employed a different strategy! He looked directly at his father who stood on the opposite end of the field. He walked toward his father, never taking his eyes off of him. Having completed the trek, his path was the straightest of the three by far.

The wise father then taught the boys, saying, "Sons, there is just ONE path in life that is straight and true, and that is the way of Jesus Christ (John 14:6). As you go through life, keep your eyes on

Him, 'looking unto Him,' (Hebrews 12:2) and your course will always be right! Remember, He is the Way. Trust Him, and DO what His Word teaches and you won't go wrong."

We often focus on things we shouldn't
We often look down, or back to see where we're going
We often don't focus on the One thing we should
 Keep seeking Jesus
 Keep your eyes on Him

God is the only One *seated* in heaven
 Everyone else is on their feet
 Christ being seated is – His work is finished
 It is complete, He is God...

Thinking Christ

Colossians 3:2

Seek the things above
Set your mind on things above
 Keep thinking about
 Dwell on these things
 Dwell intently

Focus on things above
 Reject things of the earth
 Reject earthly desires

Focus on heaven where Jesus is seated w/God
The realities of heaven
 Do not focus on things on earth – things that refuse to
 acknowledge Jesus as Lord of all
 Avoid things that distract us from Jesus
 Worship Him as the only, rightful object of worship

Seek the things above – Jesus
Think about the things above – Jesus
 Things above vs. things on earth
 Human tradition vs. Jesus
 Shadow vs. substance

We are not to escape the physical world
Rather our focus in this world is Jesus

*Back in 2010, we were in the process of moving back to Colorado
Hauling loads of “stuff”
A huge hail storm hit the area
We saw it, saw the black clouds, knew s. bad was coming
Didn’t hit us, somehow we dodged it
Not the case for the wheat fields
Nearing harvest – tall wheat, looking good
Good harvest for the farmers – years wages depended on it
And then, the hail hit
Broke windows, broke siding on houses
Destroyed the wheat
All they had worked for, gone in a matter of minutes
Very hopeless situation...
I remember a comment one of the farmers made at church the next
Sunday – glance at the fields and gaze on Jesus...*

It looked bad – keep your eyes, gaze on Jesus

Set your mind – *phroneo* – think
Have this inner disposition
Continuous action
Not just seeking, thinking about heaven
Everything we do should focus us on heaven

*My internal compass has been messed up since we got up here
Never has been very good
Grew up in Denver – mountains were always west
Could tell directions that way
Visiting in South Dakota – usually knew where mountains were
That’s west
Lived on other side of mountains for a time
Mountains were to the east
In my head – still in west
If it’s cloudy or dark I’m in trouble
In Nebraska everyone gave directions by the compass
One of their favorite things was to ask me a question*

It should be in the north-west corner...

Then they would watch my brain working, slowly of course

OK, mountains should be there, that's west

So that way is north

So they're talking about...

Since moving here haven't gotten it at all...

Maybe a compass in my pocket would help...

You know how that needle always swings north

That is how our minds should be

No matter what happens, even if our lives are turned upside down

Our needle should always point to heaven

Where Jesus is

Always pointing toward Him

Always focusing on, thinking about Him

Scripture is greatest help for this

It all focuses on Jesus

Most reliable source of information about Him

Should dominate our minds, our lives

We are to focus on the One in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

Set your compass on true north - Jesus

The risen and glorified Messiah

The One who is seated at God's right hand

In the place of honor and majesty

Died with Christ

Colossians 3:3

Why should we focus on things above? On Jesus?

For...

B/c we died w/ Him

We have died to the system of this world

By this we are united w/ Him

We are raised w/ Him

We are liberated through Him

Galatians 6:14

At the time we repented and trusted Jesus
Not only were we raised, first we died...
Not something we do
Something that has already happened
God did this for us – we died w/ Him

2 Corinthians 5:17

The penalty for sin has been paid
The wages of sin is death
We must die
When we are united w/ Messiah
We die the required death (penalty for sin) in Him
Sin can never claim us again
We died to sin in that the penalty has been paid
It's presence and power can affect us
It can never condemn us

We died to sin and
Our lives are hidden with Jesus in God
We are dead here
We are alive in Messiah, and...

- *...your life is hidden with Christ*

Hidden w/ Jesus is to be in close association with Him
We have participated in His death and resurrection
We have become partakers of the divine nature
The world cannot understand the new life we have
It is hidden in Messiah

We are hidden w/ Messiah, safe in Him
When God looks at us what does He see – Jesus
When the world looks at us – what does it see?
There is often confusion...
What's wrong with them...
How can they be like this...
Man looks on the outside
Our new life is hidden w/ God – who looks at the heart
Our new life is safe and secure with Him

God's riches are made available to those
whose lives are hidden w/ Jesus

Our present existence is in participation w/ Jesus' resurrection

Living in Christ

Colossians 3:4

The world may not currently recognize our new life in Messiah

One day they will – they will see Him in His glory

We will also be revealed with Him

Lightfoot says, "The veil which now shrouds your higher life from others, and even partly from yourselves, will then be withdrawn. The world which persecutes, despises, ignores now, will then be blinded with the dazzling glory of your revelation. I live by faith, soon I'll live by sight."

- ...who is our life

More than sharing our life

More than giving life

He is our life!

He gives meaning to our lives

Our lives are identified with Him

Galatians 2:20

Philippians 1:21 – *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain*

One of the greatest lion tamers and animal trainers of all time was Clyde Beatty. He was a big game hunter who became famous as a lion tamer beginning in the 1930's and often appeared in films and on television for the next thirty years.

Standing only five & a half-foot tall, Beatty had the courage and mastery to go into a cage of 40 snarling lions and tigers with only a whip, a pistol and a chair. The whip and the pistol were used to get an animal's attention, but many people wonder what good would a chair do against a wild animal?

It turns out the chair is the most important of the three tools a lion tamer has at his disposal. The tamer holds the chair by the back and thrusts the legs towards the face of the animal. The cat tries to

focus on all four legs at once. In the attempt to focus on all four, a kind of paralysis overwhelms the animal. It becomes weak and tame because of its divided attention.

Lions and tigers are not the only creatures affected by this problem. We also tend to become unable to perform our duties when our attention is divided among too many things.

Where is your focus? Is it on Jesus Christ?

Conclusion:

We are to be seeking and thinking about Jesus?

 Sounds good, sounds simple

 Not always easy

 Many distractions – things trying to gain our attention

How can we do this?

How do we do this?

 More fully understand – we have died w/ Jesus

 We are resurrected with Him

Easy to say, heard it before – this is huge!!!

 We died with Him – our penalty is paid in full

 Ever been released from a debt, unexpectedly?

 Jesus paid the biggest debt

 One that was impossible for us to pay

 We often forget this

We died w/ Him and He gave us new life

 Have you accepted this gift?

 Repented and trusted Him?

Where is the focus of your life?

What is the focus of your life?

 Are you gazing at the trials?

 Are you gazing at the Lord Jesus?

Benediction:

Hebrews 12:2

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

Sermon outline

Colossians 3:1-4

What is your Focus?

R_____ with Christ

S_____ Christ

T_____ Christ

D_____ with Christ

L_____ in Christ