

LIVING THE CHRISTLIFE
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Colossians 3:1-4

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

—Colossians 3:1-4 (ESV)

v 1 – “If then you have been raised...”

The Bible and time

Here: speaking of the future as if it were the past

It has already been accomplished on our behalf

So certain that we can “consider it done” and, for that matter, it is done

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.—Ephesians 2:4-6

We are the elect in this sense as well, that we are elected to an office and are waiting on the inauguration

But even now, “raised with Christ” speaks to our *present* reality.

Because of Christ’s defeat of death, we have passed out of spiritual death into life through His power resulting in our new birth and possession of the Holy Spirit

The possession of His Spirit is our Earnest (as in “earnest money), our Seal, our Assurance, our power for living—and one day we will also receive glorified bodies—as did Jesus

Since this is true, “seek the things that are above...”

This is not a new teaching

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.—Matthew 6:33

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.—Matthew 6:19-2

The life that is seeking first the kingdom of heaven will be the most useful, the most loving, the most contributing life on the earth—the kingdom of heaven is operative now!

“Seek the things above,” (lit. seek the above) means to seek what is godly and pleasing to Christ

It also means to seek the rewards that come from God—to live with an eternal view—and not to seek the passing rewards that a fallen world can offer

“where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God”

Jesus is in a body. He is in a place—although heavenly “places” may not correspond exactly to earthly “places.” And He reigns with the Father at the Father’s “right hand.”

Where Christ is seated – literal and figurative.

We might ask “Who sits on the throne of England?”—and what we mean is “Who is the Monarch of England who, at times, actually sits on the throne, who is the only one who can do so, and who at all times holds the authority of that position.

I do think we will see Christ on His throne—as will all of creation.

At the Father’s right hand means that Christ reigns with the Father in the position of highest honor. I also believe we will see this visibly manifest, even though the Father is Spirit.

This is all true now! And we are to seek what is above now.

v 2 – “Set your minds on things that are above...”

Paul is reinforcing the instruction he just gave

What we “seek” is completely dependent on what we have “set our minds” upon.

What do you really care about, truth be known, more than anything?

What do you truly live for, hope for, strive for, look forward to, invest in?

That is what we have set our minds on. That is what we are seeking.

This can be very hard.

Early Christians were faced with life or death decisions.

They were forced to give up all that they had if they were to live for Christ.

They were persecuted and suffered for the sake of Christ.

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.—1 Corinthians 15:19

To “set our minds” we have to believe—truly believe—not just give lip service to faith. It can be hard to know the difference until we are put to the test.

v 3 – “For you have died...”

It takes the strongest possible language to describe what must occur—what our relationship to the old life, the old man—to the world—must be: death.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. — Galatians 2:20

Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it.—Luke 17:33

Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.—John 12:25

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.—Revelation 2:10

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.—Romans 6:8

And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.—2 Corinthians 5:15

This is not “fanatical” Christianity, this is Christianity.

“and your life is hidden...”

Exactly! We do not stay dead. Our new lives are hidden with Christ in God.
“hidden” indicates both protected by God and unrecognized by the world
God has hidden us with [syn] Christ in Him!

We are raised with Christ, joined to Christ, one with Christ, and hidden by the
very hand of God with Christ in Himself!

Nothing can be more wonderful, more secure, more blessed, more filled with
promise.

The world will not recognize this or affirm it.

The world hated Christ and it will hate those who are His.

A Christian who is seeking affirmation or hope or encouragement from the world
is very misguided and will constantly be discouraged and weak

All the more reason, we must set our minds on what is above—where Christ is!

Our affirmation is from Him!

v 4 – “When Christ, who is your life...”

The ChristLife

Our life is the very life of Christ Himself, imparted to us through the Holy Spirit, who
will be with us forever

This is the message of Communion—His body, His blood—Christ has given us His very
life

We can know this without “understanding” it—and we do.

Christ cannot die. But were He to die, we all would instantly die as well. And creation
would vanish. But to repeat, this is not possible. The point is that He is not just an
example for us—He is our life itself.

“appears...”

more lit. when He shall be revealed, when He shall be manifested
at His Second Coming—which is a day on earth’s calendar

then you also will be revealed with Him, you will be manifested with Him

Christ will no longer be concealed—nor will those who are His

“in glory” – in the full blessedness and eternal restoration that is ours in Him

The glory is Christ’s – and we will see His glory and be blessed by His glory because we
are in Him