

Colossians 3

Part 1

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[00:00:01] If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth 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, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, for occasion and cleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry.

To which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience, in the which ye also walked some time when ye lived in them. [00:01:06] But now ye also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scyllian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, vows of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, non-suffering.

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also did ye. [00:02:11] And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord, and whatsoever ye do in word or deed to all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. [00:03:09] Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well

pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with high service as men pleases, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily unto the Lord, and not unto men.

Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons. The hymn which we sang, Head of the Church, which is Christ's Body, [00:04:05] rather opens up scriptures like these to us.

In the first chapter it specifically states that he, such a one, is the Head of the Body. And the one who is the Head of the Body is said to have all the qualifications in that it is preceded by our attention being drawn that he created all things.

What a remarkable statement that is.

All things created by him and for him, and by him all things consist.

And in the creation of these things, in verse 16 of chapter 1, it includes things that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, [00:05:13] whether there be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him.

Now that introduces the greatness of the person of Christ.

And then it immediately says, and he, such a one, such a one, is the Head of the Body.

There can be no doubt about his competency at the Church. He is the Head of the Body.

We are told the Body is the Church.

And it is Christ who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence.

[00:06:13] In chapter 2 we have a statement which is a source of comfort intended to be that.

In our prayer tonight we look to God for just what the saints need in this world, the comfort they need.

And here is a verse in chapter 2 and verse 2 which speaks of a source of comfort which is in the revelation of God, respecting the place that Christ has and how the Church is his companion.

[00:07:07] And in that mystery, the mystery of God, are hid all the treasures, all that is valuable, all that can be considered of value. When it says all, and this is a characteristic word of Colossians, all, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

And that the hearts of the saints are comforted as being in a state with our hearts knit together in love, a cohesion which is of God, in regard to now the Body or the members of that Body, that is collectively being knit together in love in a state which is unto all riches of the full assurance of

understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God.

[00:08:15] In verse 3 it says in whom or in which are hid in that mystery all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. How the saints are fortified in the light of God's purpose centering in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And whilst we are permitted to look on Christ, this epistle tells us that the saints are to be considered in relation to Christ as being his Body. For where there is marriage and in this union, what status of the husband brings the wife into the status of the husband.

[00:09:02] We see that in the book of Ruth. Ruth was a gleaner, a gleaner to what was left.

But when ultimately united to the mighty man of wealth, she shares in the reaping and ceases to be a gleaner. It's not the leftovers, it is the inheritance, she shares in the inheritance. And the place that Christ has according to God is the head, head over all things, head over all principalities, nothing can obtain without him.

And the saints are in the light of this, that there is a union between Christ and the Church.

This epistle doesn't take us to, as Ephesians does, to be seated in the heavens according to God's purpose, that is the ultimate. [00:10:07] But the triumph of it is that down here and before that actually takes place, we are in the light of this here. And so where there is everything to discourage, our hearts are to be competent in the great things that God has determined in regard to Christ. In respect of the universe of bliss and for our interest to be there.

And there is, our hearts would be encouraged or competent as we are in the teaching of this great thought of God respecting Christ and the Church.

Now coming to the chapter which we have read. It is an accepted thing with Christians that Christ is risen from the dead. [00:11:04] We couldn't be Christians without accepting that statement, this is the gospel testimony. 15th of 1 Corinthians makes that clear. Declare unto you the gospel hour that Christ died for our sins, according to scriptures, was buried on the third day, he was raised according to scriptures. There is no Christianity without a risen Christ. The Holy Spirit couldn't come without Christ being risen and glorified. Now the remarkable thing about chapter 3 is that the saints who believe are also risen with him. Even though Christ is there, the believer is risen with Christ.

That is when that operation of raising Christ from the dead, the saints are raised according to God at the same time. Now Christ has left this world and is ascended and is glorified. [00:12:01] But the saints are risen but not ascended and not glorified. And so the triumph of God is that his people, his saints are here in this world in the light of being in the place that Christ has given us as raised from the dead. And so the statement is a positive fact in verse 1. That the saints are viewed according to God as risen with Christ. It corresponds to the 40 days when Jesus raised from the dead and before he ascended, there were 40 days going in and out amongst his disciples.

And he was seen of them. Just as we have the account in the end of John and in the beginning of the Acts where the disciples saw him going into heaven. [00:13:02] So it was 40 days. They had to wait another 10 for the occasion of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down, baptizing them to one body. So that the saints according to this verse are viewed as corresponding to those 40 days when

Jesus was risen from the dead but not ascended. And so the saints are risen and of course we are waiting for Christ to come. That will complete the operation. But being risen with Christ our interests are where Christ is. Seek. And it says things. There are things above. If as we know there are things on the earth as verse 2 says. For it says not on things on the earth but just as there are things on the earth there are things above. [00:14:03] There are substance. There are substance. One hymn number 12 in sing without ceasing sing tells us two things that are above.

Life and glory. Surely.

What is quite in keeping with all that God has established and brought us into. Life. We are in a seed of death where death is prevalent. And shame.

The things above are where Christ is. Life and glory are there. And so everything appertaining to Christ is in connection with life and glory. They are not enumerated in that way. I just refer to those in the way the hymns refer to them. Life and glory. But it is where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Our interests are there. [00:15:02] We are looking in that direction waiting for the Lord to come. The first move in power will be for Christ to come from that place. So our interests are there where Christ is sitting.

His work is done sitting at the right hand of God. Now it is a matter of our affections. There is much that claims and calls for our affections.

But this is viewed in verse 2 as a fixed thing. Set your affection where Christ is on things above.

Not on things on the earth. And then the statement in verse 3 which is put to our account. It wasn't what we asked for. If God is to bless us this blessing is in this realm of resurrection.

[00:16:04] And we have to accept the place of death.

Verse 3. What a solemn statement this is. But that is the negative side. We have a life. We have a life and it is safe. It is hid.

It is in the risen man. It is in Christ. Your life is hid.

Our real life by which we live to God is hid in Christ. In God.

And then another positive statement. Verse 4.

Our life.

Christ is that life. When Christ who is our life shall appear.

Then shall we also appear with him in glory.

And seeing that we are not in heaven. Verse 5 tells us and states things in this way. [00:17:04] We are to put to death or mortify. Now one of the misconceptions with many Christians is to suppose that we die to live.

But actually as being in the Christian position it is because we have life that we can die.

That is a remarkable thing. That is a remarkable thing. But it isn't the actual thing of going into the grave and coming out. That will be at the resurrection. But in the blessing of Christianity we have this life. And it is because we have this life in the risen Christ that we can accept what is stated here to put to death. Put to death. Put to death. Our members which by which we express ourselves, our members are to be mortified and we are on the earth.

[00:18:10] But it gives the list of these things which were unworthy and dishonored God. And how right it is that we should be in accord and see how improper it would be to continue in this state of things.

And even idolatry which is putting God behind one's back. We have got Christ as object. Idolatry.

And so verse 6 is that list of things for which things say the wrath of God cometh on the children in disobedience.

What a solemn statement it is that the Colossians were characterized in this way in which he also walked when he lived in them. [00:19:09] So verse 8 is but now put off all these things.

Anger.

Wrath.

Malice.

Blasphemy.

Unworthy practices. Unworthy habits. Filthy communication out of your mouth. What a solemn thing that these things have to be said to the saints. What a solemn thing that these things have to be said to the saints. And how we acquiesce and see how right it is to have done these.

And the premise for this is that everything is done in the light of Christ who died for us. And he is risen and he is the true life of the Christian. [00:20:03] We are not to be false. Things have to be in the light and nothing that is untrue.

Lie not one to another seeing that to be consistent with this fact that we have put off the old man and with his deeds. And with his deeds. And verse 10. And hath put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of God who created us.

And in this state of new creation nationalism hasn't a place.

Neither Greek nor Jew.

[00:21:02] On the religious side the Jew and the Gentile and there was a difference. But since if there is to be blessing for man it is on the principle of death. The death of Christ indicates to us that these distinctions have no place when the man who was distinguished by these distinctions is removed. So the Jew and the Gentile. The believing Jew or the believing Gentile. The differences did exist but no further place since the man was put out in death in Christ's name.

There is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision. And even the barbarian or the slave master or the one who is a slave.

[00:22:03] But what we have in Christianity is a beautiful expression at the end of verse 11. Christ is all. He is all as object.

A wonderful thing that we have Christ as object. And in all as life.

Our life is Christ's life.

And as we are in the body these things are true of the Christian. What a wonderful thing this is before actually we were there in the glory. This is our way of thinking which God directs us.

And then verse 12 is the positive side of things which is rather relief. And what we have in verse 12 are the very delightful things which are true of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. [00:23:01] Elect. Elect of God. We shouldn't be afraid of this expression. Elect of God. And this is to be accepted. This is our new dress. Put on therefore as because we are the elect of God we are to come out in that character. Put on therefore because we are the elect of God. And it is said of Christ himself. Behold mine elect in Isaiah.

And it is said of Christ himself. Behold mine elect in Isaiah.

And this is said of the saints too. The Lord Jesus was holy. And so are the saints. And the Lord Jesus was God's beloved. And so are the saints.

And therefore there is a complete change.

And there are bowels of mercies or compassions.

[00:24:06] And there is the kindness. And there is the humbleness of mind instead of the haughtiness which characterizes man. And there is the meekness which accepts the position and counts upon God for strength in whatever position God chooses us to be in. And in that position where meekness marks us we accept the position in non-suffering. Now these features they do not spring from nature or man in culture, neither the Jew nor the Gentile.

But a wonderful thing it is that such things are attributed to the saints who are members of the body of Christ. It was on the occasion when he was criticized by Aaron and Miriam, an account in the 12th chapter of Numbers.

[00:25:14] Moses was in the position that God had put him in. And Aaron and Miriam spoke against Moses and God heard it. And it is there where it says that man Moses was very meek. Not weak, but meek. He was meek because he left the issue with God and didn't take it up himself. He waited for God to do it and God did take it up. God heard these Aaron and Miriam, this is Kamauchi 3, and they had to listen to what God had to say. And God put the matter right and indicated there to them that Moses had a place of special distinction which they had to recognize. Now it's a wonderful thing and the same with the Lord Jesus when he says in the 11th of Matthew, I am meek and lowly in heart. [00:26:05] He could be in that place because he was conscious of this that God was the deciding, the one who would decide all things. Even though there's a period now when the time of his

manifestation is drawing nigh.

God will demonstrate to all and give an answer to all the meekness of Christ in a public way. He's already exalted and this is a wonderful thing for us to know. There's a day coming, Isaiah speaks of it, Isaiah chapter 2, the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. That will be a day of public display of that very fact. So in Philippians 2, Jesus came in servant character below angels, made in the likes of men to serve.

He humbled himself, becoming obedient to them, he conducted the cross. [00:27:02] Well, God as it were watched every stage of descent only with a view.

The change in the whole situation in respect of what was right, righteousness for the place for that person was at the top and not at the bottom. Wherefore also God highly exalted him and gave him a name above everything. That was the name of Jesus every knee is to bow. There we don't confess that Jesus Christ is Lord after public acknowledgement of God's approval of the person of the Christ. And in the view of that day, this matter of meekness which counts upon God giving the answer both to Christ and the saints. These things are stated for us where God's elect and we're holy, that is we have the knowledge of good and evil, refusing the evil and choosing the good as Christ did. [00:28:12] And we have the consciousness that God's love rests upon us and the measure of that love is the love which he has for Christ as son. And so the model features of Christ come out in the saints and what we have to see in Colossians is that whilst in the gospels all these things were seen in Christ. And Christ has gone back to God by way of the cross.

The triumph of God is that Christ is perpetuated in the members, those who are his body for they derive from Christ who is their head.

And in deriving from Christ our head the same model features which delighted the heart of God. [00:29:04] For this drew down the God's approval even when he had it mantled, thou art my beloved son and who is my delight.

He was alone in that but now the saints who are his members take that place down here and they come out in the exact features of Christ. There is a perpetuation of Christ in the members even though Christ has gone away by way of the cross. This is the triumph of God and what a privilege it is for the saints to answer to this. And waiting for the day of when God will change it publicly and positionally and when the saints will be seen to be admired in all them that believe.

So until that day patience amongst our minister Marcus and meekness that is however opposition whatever opposition we have to bear. [00:30:10] We take the place of meekness and long-suffering knowing that God will give the answer in his own time. That is when Christ comes out publicly. And so verse 13 instead of rushing into things as this world does we are not to be like this world. There is the forbearance, forbearing one another. What a beautiful thing that is. This doesn't spring from the first man, forbearing one another.

Saul of Tarsus was a cultured Jew. And he was an overbearing man.

Here it is forbearing. These things can be accepted by us because we know the blessing side and the position side is secure for us in Christ. [00:31:04] And so the adverse side when the world judges us and deals as it does with God's faithful ones.

This is the character. It is the character of Christ. When he was reviled he was reviled not again. So the privilege that we are brought into is to bear the features of Christ. And naturally this would be impossible.

But it is because we are his members, members of his body in the recognition that he is the head. And drawing from him, deriving from him.

This is how it is practically carried out.

And this calls for communion on our part. And the consciousness as our brother referred to it in prayer, holding the head which is held in chapter 2 of this epistle. Holding the head, that is being conscious that we derive everything from Christ who is our life. [00:32:07] Instead of going to resources in this world in regard to that matter. Christ is our life and we derive from him in the manifestation of that life. And so such verses can be considered as becoming to the saints who are his members. And then even this matter, oh how these matters have obtained, if any man have a quarrel against any.

There are no quarrels in heaven so this is definite down here. If any have a quarrel, how is it to settle?

How is it to settle?

There are two ways we can settle it on impulse. And the way that having our own rights would dictate to us. This is what the world does. [00:33:02] We see this everywhere. But there is another way, this is the Christian way. This is the way the members show it. And with being members one of another, God is placed as a close contact, close proximity. As in the assembly, this is the assembly character. And we have opportunity to show that we are above nature in this. And act on the result of being conscious communion with our blessed Lord from whom we derive the motive and the strength because he is our life. He is our life and the way we live to God is in the life of Christ. Not in the life of the old man. Whatever expression there is of the old man even in the Christian is not limited to God. We live to God in the life of Christ. And so it necessitates our conscious communion with him because he is our life. So this is a very wonderful favor on our part to be given the place that Christ had in this world.

[00:34:10] And alone in it we are given the same place now that Christ is absent. If any man has a quarrel against any, well, here is the standard, not the world standard, even as the Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Now verse 14 is a verse which has a place to itself.

We have much doctrine and doctrine is necessary but evidently it isn't everything.

It doesn't complete. You may have a machine and the machine is perfect but in functioning other things have to be considered, lubrication, things like that.

[00:35:16] And the proper use of it, the proper use of doctrine. Much damage has been done amongst Christians in knowing the doctrine and not knowing how to apply it.

Now verse 14 tells us how doctrine has to be used. But it says, above all that has been said in the

way of doctrine, put on or add charity or love the divine nature and of that it says, which is the bond of perfectness.

Now I believe this is a very important principle. [00:36:04] It shall be brought out to the front in any gathering of Christians. In the way we can keep the proper balance amongst us even though we may know the doctrine in all its correctness. This is a verse which will tell us how to apply it and the right approach and how we have to be considered. It will be in self-judgment and a true estimate of oneself and counting upon God in his great love. And how we shall regard saints as his beloved and what a place he has for his saints and to be able to exercise forbearance and understanding and so to keep the unity of the spirit in the united bond of peace. It will take us back to the verse in chapter 2 where the hearts of the saints being knit together in love. [00:37:03] A beautiful expression. How close the saints are intended to be. Both as to position and as to practice. And in the assembly the Lord has put us, has gathered us by the gospel individually but he hasn't left us on the circumference. He's brought us into a circle and to be close together and to be conscious that we need one another as his members. And that each member derives and is sustained in the consciousness of our close contact in communion with our head in heaven was all the competency to be, to function. To break down our ways. People in positions break down. But the Lord Jesus is in the highest position and he has all the qualifications and is able to function as head and sustain us. So this verse is a verse which has to be considered as the top stone of all that is known to be important in the way of divine teaching of his doctrine. [00:38:08] And then verse 15 is let the peace of Christ allow it. It is there and we are brought into it. For it says we are called into it in one body. Let the peace of God dominate, rule in our hearts.

For we are called to that peace as considered as one body.

One body and no peace would not answer to God's thought of the body. There is the closeness of cohesion and the acceptance and all the closeness of what members are as in the body.

[00:39:15] Not working against one another but in cohesion. And so that verse in chapter 2, that state is necessary for us to derive encouragement in regard to God's great thought which is deposited in the body. In which our head it says all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The following, it is very beautiful to see that we have an outlet in this verse 15 and onwards.

Let the peace of God, we are not to seek this peace, it is there. [00:40:01] We are called into this peace as being in one body. So in the recognition of this, this peace has to preside in our hearts. And for the practical carrying out of this, we shall have to judge ourselves in regard to that which could bring in discord.

It is a matter of judging oneself and leaving out that which would bring in any discord and interfere with that which characterizes the body which is peace. Instead of confusion, there is peace. And I believe when peace is mentioned in this connection, it is the antithesis to confusion. In the world there is confusion because there is lawlessness. Lawlessness is put away, we are brought into accord with God. And therefore, instead of contributing towards disorder, in any way whatever, we contribute towards that which marks the body, that is peace, it has to preside in our hearts. [00:41:09] And it is followed by be thankful.

A very necessary word, be thankful. The opposite to being complaining. In the first of Romans we are given the reason why there was departure from God even before the flood. Neither were they

thankful. It became vain in their imagination and so on. Neither were they thankful. It began there. They gave God up afterwards.

And it wasn't until they gave God up that God gave them up. But a solemn thing it was when God gave them up. But things are viewed as in recovery now.

[00:42:01] And surely one thing that marks a Christian is being thankful. And the word of Christ is to dwell in us. Give it a place, for it to have a place there. Dwell, come to stay.

Richly in all wisdom and able teachers and admonishers or admonish one another in this beautiful expression of appreciation of all that God is, the way God is to be known in Christ.

Admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing with grace in your heart the Lord. There's an outlet for all the exuberance that God puts into our hearts.

And then the ordinary things of life are taken up.

Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, we have the Lord before us.

[00:43:05] The one who is in authority, it's not headship now, but it's the one who is in authority. Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus and give him thanks to God and the Father by him.

And the place the wives have and the place the husbands have and the place the children have. And fathers are to consider the children in view of them being encouraged rather than being discouraged. And servants, a beautiful word here in a timely word at the present time.

Submission, obey, Christ obeyed.

Servants obeyed all things your masters. I suppose these were slaves and so they were not, Christianity did not take them out of slavery. Didn't release them as slaves, but as slaves they were to adorn Christianity as slaves. [00:44:07] Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh. Not with eye service as men Jesus, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily unto the Lord, as to the Lord, and not unto men. And verse 24 is the most important verse in regard to these such matters as being servants, obey the masters. For the settling of today is not today.

Now this poor world in its ignorance supposes that it's within the right of everyone to settle matters for themselves. And even to determine and assess their own worth. It's scarcely, we are not expected to know our worth as to wages.

God alone knows our worth and is able to assess whatever we do in this world. [00:45:06] Now this world has a limited view and it wants the blessings and the advantages at this moment. Rather the Christian is taught to wait for the answer.

And the answer is when Christ himself comes into the inheritance. And so this is put forward and we are taught and we're in the knowledge of this. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. And Christ himself has not yet come into the inheritance probably. And so his people are here and we may be low paid.

But this word knowing is that we shall get the balance when the Lord himself comes into an inheritance. [00:46:01] He shall receive of the Lord the inheritance. And it's far better to have the Lord's assessment of whatever we do in this world than assess it ourselves. Or presume to be able to assess our worth.

Rather we learn to trust in the Lord for his assessment of whatever detail.

And he takes account of every detail that is done in the name of the Lord. And it's then that they have rewards. Ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance for ye served the Lord Christ. Paul speaks about the righteous judgment. What a wonderful thing it is if righteousness does not obtain in this world. It departed from this world in the crucifixion of Christ. But it will return when Christ comes. And Paul says you'll receive the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judgment. And he has the perfect divine assessment.

[00:47:05] Takes account of all that is done. So we are enlightened in this way. We know of the Lord that we shall receive the reward of the inheritance. And we are able to patiently wait for that day. Knowing at the same time God does not allow us to be neglected. And he supplies all our needs. So there is the contrary in verse 25. A very solemn reminder that God takes account of the one that is commendable.

And he takes account of that which is unworthy of the Christian. Well may the Lord encourage us that the reality of a chapter like this. Which opens up with such a word that we are risen with Christ. What a wonderful thing that is. Who but God could give us that ground. [00:48:02] It's God who raised us from the dead. And although before we are actually raised. It's because Christ is raised that we can accept that premise.

We are raised not without Christ.

It's because Christ is raised. If he then be risen with Christ. And it cannot be disputed by the Christian that Christ is raised. Christ is raised. Therefore the saints are raised. And we have to come out with a new character. And we derive from Christ our head in heaven. And fortunate members as this chapter tells us in Solus Deity.