

## Colossians 3:1-4

### Verse 1:

--Paul has shown their death to sin and the requirements of the law, and now he moves to the focus of the new life beyond. Our old links with sin and the world were severed in our death (as pictured in baptism), and now Paul wants to talk about the new links we have in Christ.

--*If* . . . is really *since then you were raised with Christ*. We *were raised*. It is a sure thing that was done for us in the past in a once-and-for-all fashion. The literal spiritual life we possess is from Him, which means its quality is such that it has already come out from among the dead and ascended into heaven into the very presence of God.

--We are raised personally and corporately in Christ Jesus. There is a literal man in heaven, seated at the right hand of God, proving, securing, and directing our future life. When we see Him, we see ourselves. *Because I live, you will live also (Jn. 14:19)*.

--*sitting at the right hand of God*. . . This heavenly enthronement was distinctive of Messianic prophecy, openly claimed by Jesus Christ, and attributed to Him by the apostles.

*\*Psalm 110:1: The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."\**

*\*Mark 14:61-62: Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."\**

*\*Hebrews 1:3: Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...\**

-- *seek those things which are above*—and the language is to *keep seeking*. It is a command not simply to seek but to seek to obtain.

--Our life is more than surrendering a sinful world. God gives us something to pursue. The Christian should pursue things that are of the same quality and nature of their life—a heavenly and divine source of life.

--What does that look like practically? Well, what are Christ's pursuits on any given day? What does Christ desire to see in me personally, in my family, at my work, with my friends, in my local church body, in the world I live in, etc.?

### Verse 2:

--*Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth*.

--Notice the call. *Seek & Set!* Part of my seeking things above is by setting my mind on things above—which, of course, is best done by means His Word. If I "set" something somewhere, I am leaving it there to remain for a time—an infant, or tea, or your spot on the beach at the Jersey shore.

--This is the description of a mind settled in the sunlight of God's Word. His truth, the Divine Mind in the power of the Holy Spirit, washing over all our thoughts, purposes, and motives.  
--Our intention is to intertwine our present life with eternity. This heavenly pursuit leaves no room for a divided life of sacred and secular. We are not called to be saved and then freely give ourselves to whatever pursuit makes us happy on earth as long as it is socially acceptable.  
--If we are not setting our hearts, minds, and pursuits on heavenly things, what is left? Only earthly things. We become the very definition of worldly!

**\*Matthew: 16:23: *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."\****

**\*Romans 8:5-6: *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.\****

--The realities of heaven and eternity are meant to transform our thoughts about all of life! And yes, this will make us different and a bit awkward at times here in this world. \*Like a city boy on a farm or a farm boy in the city—we are citizens of heaven!\*

--Allow me to say this clearly: *God is not ashamed of heaven.*

--The *direction* of Christianity is very simple. Bunyan picked it up in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. We are saved, then begin our journey to the New Jerusalem in a new heavens and new earth. That *is* the journey. A secular mind is here. A heavenly mind is there. Where are our eyes set?

--Christianity has eyes set toward a city whose Builder and Maker is God and cannot be understood without acknowledging that! Eternity has always been God's ultimate goal and focus. Eternity is God's counterweight to the difficulty, injustice, and suffering we face from sin here and now. \*Grant that eternity is real, and it changes everything!\*

--That is why Paul calls the Colossians to seek and set their minds and affections on things above. Does heaven only cross our minds when someone we know dies or when life becomes painful? Do we live and talk as if heaven will only matter when we get to heaven?

--The Bible is clear that heaven matters right now, and we should think about it! A simple reading of the Bible will show that the thought of heaven should touch every area of our lives in powerful ways.

1) Ever been tempted?

**\*James 1:12: *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.\****

2) Ever faced mockery?

**\*Matthew 5:11-12: *Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.\****

3) Ever have your motives questioned or questioned the motives of others?

**\*1 Corinthians 4:5: *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.\****

4) Have you ever felt selfish desire or greediness?

**\*Hebrews 10:34: *For you have compassion on me in my chains. And joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.\****

5) Have you ever struggled to surrender good things for the cause of Christ?

**\*Mark 10:29-31: *Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You." So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.\****

6) How have Christians accepted torture, abandonment, suffering, and martyrdom through the centuries and still today?

**\*Hebrews 11:35: *Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.\****

7) Have you ever felt the pull of worldliness?

**\*Hebrews 11:24-26: *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.\****

8) What will be your hope when you come to die?

**\*Luke 23:43: *And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."***

9) What is the ultimate goal of your life? What kingdom do you live for?

**\*2 Peter 1:10-11: *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.\****

10) As always, Jesus shows us the way. Where were His eyes set?

**\*Hebrews 12:2: Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.\***

**\*John 17:24: Father, I desire that they also whom You have Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.\***

--It is impossible to correctly live the Christian life without the proper weight of eternity on the other side of the scale—not just when we come to die but in the unpoetic scenes of daily life. I cannot make that happen, but the Holy Spirit has been given to us, and He will make it happen if we ask and obey! \*He leads us into truth—width and depth\*

--So what does all this tell us? That God is not ashamed of heaven!

--God is not ashamed to tell those who suffer mockery, lies, and persecution here that they will jump for joy in heaven.

--God is not ashamed to tell those who sacrifice material possessions that will fade in this world that they have stored up incorruptible treasures in heaven.

--God is not ashamed to tell those who have missed out on a facet of life here that they will have an abundance of life in heaven.

--God is not ashamed to tell the grieving spouse, parent, or child that their friends and loved ones are in His presence and blessed to be there.

--God is not ashamed to tell all those who suffer here that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to compare with the crushing weight of glory that we will experience in heaven.

--God is not ashamed to tell those who are humbled as slaves here that they will reign with Him in heaven.

--God is not ashamed to tell those who die here that they will live and never die!

--God is not ashamed to tell the last that they will be first.

--God is not ashamed of heaven. . . but are we? Do we trust God with our eternity but not its worth? If it were not so, Jesus would have told us!

**--Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth!**

### **Verse 3:**

--**For you died.** . . They died? When? Was Paul writing a letter to zombies? Certainly not! Paul was pointing out the new spiritual and heavenly source of their true life (**2:11-15**). Did you die? Are you dead? Does Christ live in you?

--Maybe another way of describing it is by asking: What would *you* be doing if the unsaved *you* was not dead? What would the living unsaved version of you be about in this life? Don't be about those things!

--***and your life is hidden with Christ in God!*** Our true life, the life we now have which is different from that old version of us that died in Christ, has its source in Him alone. Paul is trying to describe the divine life that is unseen, beyond the reach of sin, and of divine origin in the strong love of the Triune God. \*Harold St. John story about his life in Brazil with the stream and the plant that grew in the dark.\*

**\*John 10:10: I have come that they may have life, and that more abundantly.\***

**Verse 4:**

--***When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.***

--Here is the final outcome of a life hidden with Christ in God. Christ ***who is our life*** will one day return and make outwardly public what has been inwardly known by every individual believer.

**\*1 John 3:1-3: Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.\***

--If Jesus Christ can wait for His revelation, then so must I. I will be revealed when He is! Should I have my glory known before the One who is the source of my glory is revealed and honored?

--Does all of this seem like a fairy tale? Too far away? Too strange? Too distant? But don't we speak of temporal things that are ahead of us with joy? Things like: college, independence, marriage, careers, retirement, grandkids, etc.?

--What will ***life*** be like when Christ is revealed in all His glory as King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

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

--Biblical Christianity has real answers to suffering and pain and death but those answers, more often than not, include eternity. Eternity is God's revelation not mine. I am simply seeking to remind us of the foundational truths where God has erected our hopes.

--The Bible brims with ***those things which are above*** from beginning to end. Who are we to think we have a better answer or hope for the trials of sinful humanity? We should trust the Word of the Great Physician. \*God doesn't promise it will all be easy, He promises that it will be worth it!\*

--Are you tired of the journey? Has your life become plastic or frayed? Are you overwhelmed with a burden of sorrow or loss? Has the meaninglessness of passing earthly things thinned the fabric of your soul and sapped your joy? Are you unsettled by a lack of belonging? Are you covered with darkness and feel there is nowhere to look for a light to dawn? Is the journey too great for you?

--Well, here is a divine word for you: ***Seek those things that are above & Set your mind on things above!***

--God calls us strangers and foreigners. We are pilgrims of eternity. God calls us such not because it is *what we should be* but because it is *what we actually are!*

\*Lewis (The Problem of Pain): *"The Christian doctrine of suffering explains, I believe, a very curious fact about the world we live in. The settled happiness and security which we all desire, God withholds from us by the very nature of the world: but joy, pleasure, and merriment, He has scattered broadcast. We are never safe, but we have plenty of fun, and some ecstasy. It is not hard to see why. The security we crave would teach us to rest our hearts in this world and oppose an obstacle to our return to God: a few moments of happy love, a landscape, a symphony, a merry meeting with our friends, a bathe or a football match, have no such tendency. Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home."*\*

--Embrace the fact that you are passing through this life to a greater life familiar to this one, but much better than all we have begun to know here! Remember the end of the story: ***You also will appear with Him in glory!***

--When you are overwhelmed, pray as Jesus taught us to pray: ***Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.***

--Satan will work to steal heaven from your mind or skew your thoughts of heaven. Do not let him! Look up. Memorize verses. Read some good books on heaven (Recommend some). Begin investing treasure in heaven by loosening your ties with this life before your soul leaves it altogether. \*Wouldn't you prepare for a trip or if moving to another country? What about entering the court of a human king? What about entering His courts for all eternity?!\*

--Is this Word not enough for you? Is heaven too small and earth too big? Well then, I hope you do not forsake God having loved this present world. Maybe you need to repent of your worldliness or secular mind? Or maybe you just need to begin living in light of heaven? That is between you and the Holy Spirit.

--We possess heavenly life. We have a heavenly calling. We are pilgrims making our way to the New Jerusalem. We are exhorted to lay hold on eternity. We are called to walk worthy of God who calls us into His own kingdom and glory. We should never be ashamed of what God has designed as an answer to our problems. Set your minds on things above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.

\*An ancient Collect expresses it this way: *"O God, the protector of all that trust in You, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; increase and multiply upon us Your mercy; that, You being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not things eternal: grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen."*\*