

Learning to Live Looking Down

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[0 : 0 0] Soul is satisfied in him alone. You know, I have said to us that every Lord's Day is Resurrection Sunday.

We are celebrating the resurrection every time we gather together because that's the hope that we have for life. Life now, life eternal. But we do have a certain time of year that we recognize Jesus being raised from the dead in glory, which is our hope.

And we're celebrating that next Sunday. I hope you'll be here. We have several families out today for various reasons or we would be overflowing once again as God continues to bless us with people coming to sit under the word of the Lord.

And it's exciting for Greg and I to see this. Our building filling up so that we're having to scramble around and figure out where we're going to put all the people that are coming in to hear the word of the Lord.

And it's a great, great issue, a great, wonderful thing for us to be experiencing together. So I say all of that to say this is my pre-Easter sermon.

[1 : 0 9] This is my pre-resurrection to the Lord sermon for next Sunday when we'll really get after what's on my heart and what God is dealing with.

So we won't be in Genesis today and most likely I won't be there next Sunday. And then we'll probably pick up Genesis chapter 4 in a couple of Sundays from now.

So I'm going to ask you to turn to Colossians chapter 3. You guys know this is a dear, dear place in Scripture to me. I go here very often reading from Colossians 3 to just balm my own soul.

Much, much glory here to the Lord Jesus. The title of the message, Learning to Live Looking Down. What in the world does that mean?

Learning to Live Looking Down. Let's look at the passage that we'll be looking into in terms of the exposition for this morning. Colossians 3 verse 1, Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

[2 : 2 4] Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

Paul goes on from here to talk then about the practical nature of being unioned with Jesus Christ as a way of overcoming sin in our lives.

In fact, the only way for you and I to experience the victory over sin and death is being joined to Jesus in the miracle of new birth. What we call regeneration or redemption, which takes in all the blessings of knowing Jesus Christ in a saving way.

Now, interestingly, commentator Curtis Vaughn, he's a long-time professor of New Testament at Southwestern Seminary, said this, These four verses, then, point to the believer's union with Christ.

So hang on to that phrase, union with Christ, as the root principle of the whole Christian life. It is the point of departure and the source of power for all that he does, that is, the Christian.

[3 : 54] Now, friends, our world has been and remains in a tailspin of frenetic activity as people try to seek out and think about the root principle for this life.

What is the foundation and the source of power for living a full life? And you and I could name here, I don't have to do it, if you and I could name here, a list of things that the world pursues, that the world seeks security in, and the world wants to be defined by as they chase the root principle of life, thinking they're going to be able to find this one thing that will do it for them, the one thing that'll bring all of the mysteries of life together for them, that'll fix all of the issues.

I told you last Sunday that we have this idea that we can science our way into a better life. We can psychologize our way into a better life. We can materialize our way into a better life.

We can buy it. We can produce it. We can manufacture it. And everything that we try brings us further and further away from the goal that we have. What is it that defines true, genuine, human living?

What is it that makes me most human? This is what our world wants to know the answers to. Now, would you agree that most people have thoughts about being a better person?

[5 : 31] You think at some point in their life or maybe several times throughout their lives, they kind of take stock and think, how did I get here? Or how do I make it better? Or why is life so boring?

Most people think about being a better person at some juncture in their life or along the way maybe several times. Some people take pains to try to be a better person.

Whatever that might mean. Because, of course, what is meant by better depends on who you ask. Their background, where they come from, what do they believe religiously, culturally, believers and unbelievers can strive for a higher level of morality, of living in the right or what they would call the good or perhaps doing good to others.

And again, they get to define good in those instances. But, hear this, friends, being a better person is not the goal of the Christian life.

Are you surprised? You are not called to be a better you. You are the problem. And nobody got up and nobody's leaving.

[6 : 53] You know I'm going to show you and I have been showing you. How many sermons have I preached in Genesis 3 over the past whatever? Five sermons. In Genesis 3 alone.

Establishing the reality of Scripture. God's perspective that what's most wrong with the human race is the human race. What's most wrong with you and I is the fact that we are by nature rebels against God.

By nature. Before you and I ever create or commit our first sin, we are already sinners at heart. That's why we sin. Because that's who we are. We are sin.

This is what we've been talking about for weeks together now out of Genesis chapter 3. No, the Christian life is not about being a better person.

Being more like Jesus is the goal of Christian living. Because being like Jesus is how we most glorify God.

[7 : 54] It's how we most honor and reflect God in life. I don't need more of Jeff. You don't need more of Jeff. You need more of Jesus in Jeff. That's what you need.

That's what I need. That's what my wife needs. Every day that she lives with me. The goal of the Christian life is becoming and being more like Jesus in order to honor and glorify almighty God by living the character of God in our lives.

That's how we glorify Him. Human beings need to be hear me now redeemed by Jesus. Redeemed. It's an important word.

Is it not? We need to be redeemed by Jesus. People need to be in other words what do you mean by redeemed? People need to be freed from and forgiven for their sins.

Now folks you see people out in your life every single day you have no idea what their spiritual condition is. You meet them in the grocery stores in the highways and byways of your comings and goings in this life.

[9 : 01] I understand that. I do too. But I can tell you what the scripture says is the greatest need of their life and I don't have to ask them because I don't know what I'll hear back when I ask people that.

I used to do that. Go to malls and stuff and ask people what do you think the greatest need of your life is? You'd be surprised by boy if I had a million bucks I can oh boy could I put some things right in my life. No one ever wants to talk about the spiritual nature of their life because we're constantly suppressing the truth and unrighteousness.

We don't want to have to account to a holy God. That's the truth about us. It's a tragic reality but it's a reality nonetheless. We need to be freed from and forgiven for our sins.

That's everybody's greatest need. Especially as we live coram deo before a holy God or in the presence of God. this work of redemption of forgiving and freeing from sin this is an exclusive work of the Holy Spirit operating and get this within a human being.

This is God the Holy Spirit coming to live inside a human being. Now add to that a human sinner. How does a holy God live in the life of a sinner?

[10 : 20] This is what Paul's talking about. This is what Paul's reminding the Colossians of. There are some things that are going on Colossae now that Paul's concerned about.

These people are beginning to drift somewhat spiritually and Paul wants to recenter them. This is probably the most perhaps the most Christological letter that Paul wrote.

That is a focus on Jesus himself. Who is he? What is he? Why did he come? And what does he mean to you? This is what Paul's dealing with. The work that I'm speaking of now in redemption God's work to free you from the power and penalty of sin and forgive you for those sins is a spiritual work of listen now transformation.

This is a spiritual transformation transformation not a work of self improvement. Very different ideas isn't it? So we're not talking about you being reformed.

We're not talking about you getting some kind of spiritual bath or something. We are talking about a complete transformation of your nature.

[11 : 38] this is a holy invasion of your soul and only God can bring it off. Now you would think if we really subscribe to those words and understand the gravity of what we're talking about here we would agree that when God comes to invade the human soul and transform the human soul from a sin nature to a saint nature that something radical would show in that person's life.

Amen? That's right. The reality is this world is constantly seeking to suppress and to push down the glory of the character of God living in us as his redeemed people.

The world hates that. It is convicted by that. You living for Jesus is a threat to them. They don't see you and I living for Jesus as a blessing.

They see us as a threat. This is one of the reasons that they put Jesus on the cross, is it not? He's a charlatan. He's a threat. He's not the real deal. He's a pretender.

These are some of the same things they could say about us. Friends, when a sinner is spiritually united to Jesus Christ, it is truly a miracle of God's saving favor and we never need to forget that.

[13 : 02] We don't want to get over the fact that salvation is a miracle of God. God credits you with living Christ's perfect, law-keeping, righteous life.

He credits that perfect, sinless life to you as if you lived it. How does he do that? Christ's Christ's own righteousness, Christ's own righteousness, being credited to your spiritual life, is the heart of what it means to be holy and right in the sight of God so that without Christ's righteousness you're not holy and you're not right in the sight of God.

It is not your righteousness, righteousness, it is the righteousness of Jesus Christ credited, imputed to your life by grace through faith in Christ alone.

These are the glories of the gospel that we rehearse together. This is why we have Easter, because of Christ, because of the wonders of Jesus Christ bringing hope to this sin-cursed world.

without Jesus' righteousness credited to you, you're lost in yourself, you're lost in your sin, and you're doomed to an eternity in hell.

[14 : 23] Of course, that's not the good news. But I can say right on the heels of this, my dear friends, being a better you is not the aim of a full forgiven life.

It's not. We don't need a better you. We need Jesus living in you. And that's what I need. That's what I'm desperate for too, because I'm just like you.

I'm a sinner in need of saving grace. So we come to Colossians 3, 1 through 4, and this is what I'm going to characterize it as. Paul then gives us four heavenly qualities of living as a person, made as a new in Jesus Christ, or four characteristics, if you prefer, of your spiritual union with Jesus.

These are deep waters. But this is a wonderful, wonderful reality. This is you and I living in and for Jesus, which is your heavenly calling for living in this life now and then for eternity.

You know, one of the things that I want to help us understand and apply to our lives, is all that we're talking about right now in the way of spiritual union, even as Paul presents it to these Colossian Christians.

[15 : 46] It is about the living that we do now, not just about what we will experience in eternity. But this is spiritual union and truth for holy heavenly living on earth now, which we rejoice in.

Now, the first characteristic that I want to outline for you in terms of living for Christ concerns then our authenticity. What I'm going to call our authenticity from verse one.

Therefore, your Bible might read since. That's a good translation. Therefore, since you have been. Paul is not offering inference here.

He's not making a suggestion. He's not saying something that, you know, could possibly or potentially be true about you. He's making a statement here in the Greek. It would come out.

Therefore, since you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. If then you've been raised up with Christ.

[16 : 55] Christ. Since you have been given. What is he talking about here? Resurrection life. Since you have been given resurrection life.

Well, what's that? What is it that makes me different from what I used to be now that I'm a Christian? What is it that makes me different as a believer from when I was an unbeliever?

That's a good question to ask yourself. Are you different? Are you even different? Does does the way you live on the outside reflect that there has been this radical transformation spiritually on the inside?

Does your life on the outside reflect that? Can you honestly in the deepest part of your soul and conscience say to yourself with great certainty.

I know that I have been spiritually reborn and spiritually transformed. I have been united to Jesus Christ so that I have been made radically new in the nature of who I am as a person.

[18 : 03] I'm a different human being than I used to be before Jesus, before faith in Christ. Any doubt in your mind about that? We all sin. We're not talking about you not sinning.

But what when you sin, what does that mean for you? What does that do to you? I know what it used to do to me. It used to make me want to sin more.

Before Jesus, I would sin and I enjoyed it. And if I sinned in ways that people should be ashamed of, I just hid it. So I could go do some more sin.

Well, how did that change when Jeff got saved? Now what's my attitude and action towards sin? Did that change? Does my life reflect that change? Can you see that change in my life?

Can I see it in yours? What is it that makes me different from what I used to be? What is it that sets me apart? That's the that's the language of holiness, is it not?

[19 : 11] What is it that sanctifies me? What is it that sets me apart from living my own way? Which used to characterize my life.

I decided about my priorities. I decided about what I did with my resources. I decided about what to do with my time. I decided what to pursue. Me, me, me.

Paul says in chapter three, verse one, since you have been raised up with Christ. He gets personal. This is what's different about you now.

You have been raised up with the Lord of glory. That's what's different about you. That's the difference about you. You have been raised up with Jesus Christ.

The person who created the universe, who flung the stars into heaven and can name every single one of them. The person who knows the hairs on your head.

[20 : 14] The person who sustains the sun and the moon. The person that keeps the earth alive. The person who invented DNA and made dinosaurs to roam the earth.

And all of the mysteries and marvels that capture our imagination and arrest our souls. you have been raised up in him.

Goodness me. Look in chapter two, verse 12, if you will. He's been really, really going after this for two chapters.

And had I been preaching verse by verse through this, you would be so prepared now to see this again. Chapter two, verse 12, you were also raised up with him through faith.

Faith in what? In the working of God who raised him from the dead. Just as God raised him from the dead, you have also been raised from the dead in him.

[21 : 25] And it's that in him that we need to deal with. I'll put it up here. We're putting our faith in God, not in ourselves.

You're not trying to put your faith in you being a better person. This is faith in Christ, in the transforming power of the gospel, of God's wonderful grace.

Now, friends, all of this that we've said even to this point operates as a spiritual reality. You hear me? This all operates as a spiritual reality and on a spiritual level.

We're talking about spiritual things here as they apply to your earthly life. You have been raised up with Christ. You have been given heavenly life for earthly living.

You hear that? Heavenly life for earthly living. so that you are now prepared or being prepared to live in a heavenly way as a husband with your wife.

[22 : 33] Wife, you are being prepared. You are being groomed, as it were, to live a heavenly life with your husband, with your children, to go to work and do work to the glory of God.

That is heavenly priorities in the workplace. To live out the glories of Christ in you in the way that you go about living your life and all these relationships, responsibilities.

So I'm saying because this is your soul, it touches everything you touch. It has to, doesn't it? So this isn't just about something that you do.

It is that. This is about who you are. You are in Christ. Now, that's big.

And that's what should define us. Now you might say, Jeff, I don't feel like I'm in Christ. All right, let's get through the feeling. I'm not going to do group counseling here this morning, but let's get past the feeling and let's ask ourselves this.

[23 : 40] What does my life show? Does my life show the priorities of heaven? You say, well, Jeff, what are those priorities? Well, let's just do three. Let's just leave it at that.

Do you have a growing love for God, Christ, Jesus? Does your life reflect a growing love for Jesus? Does your life reflect a growing love for God's word?

And does your life reflect a growing love for God's people? God loves his word. The father loves the son. The son loves the father. God loves his word.

And God loves his people. Does your life reflect a growing love in those three areas of living on this earth now? These are good ways for you to do a spiritual evaluation for yourself.

Just think about that. You have been raised up with Christ. You have been given heavenly life for earthly living. Now, why? Why did you need Jesus to give you this life?

[24 : 49] Well, again, go back and listen to the last five sermons that I've preached from Genesis chapter three because you were spiritually dead to God due to your sins. That's why.

Isn't that the bottom line? You need this life that Jesus brings because you were dead. Dead things need life or they stay dead.

Yes. It's a it's a basic principle for us to understand. Now, look at this in terms of Colossians 2 13. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him.

only God has the power to make a dead thing live. And God has done that in you. He's done it in me. This is a Christian.

This is what we call a believer. A dead thing has been brought to life in Christ Jesus. The life of Jesus now lives in that dead thing to make it alive.

[25 : 54] What a miracle. Friends, God met your greatest need as a sinful human being in Jesus Christ. You who were spiritually dead to God were made alive to God through spiritual union to his son, Jesus Christ.

Christ made alive. Well, Jeff made alive. OK, I was made alive from death. What what kind of life? What kind of life is this? What's Paul describing here?

By God's gift of faith in Jesus, you then receive listen, resurrection life. The same power and life that raised Jesus from the dead is the life that God gives to you in Christ.

You live resurrection life. It's the greatest power in the universe supplied by the love of God. Resurrection life.

That is the life that lasts for an eternity, friend. It never wears out. It never diminishes. Everything about the world that we live in is in atrophy.

[27 : 09] It's in this state of moving toward decay. Right. Just look at me and then look at a picture of me at 20. Very different human being standing before you now in many ways, at least physically.

Oh, I remember those days, Mark. Vitality. Recovery. You know, it was wonderful. Everything that we know in this life is decaying.

Everything. People are not getting softer. They're getting harder. People are not more pliable. They're not they're not more easily persuaded.

They're getting firmer, tougher, harder, more callous. It's happening right before our eyes and it's going to continue to happen. It's going to continue to happen to the point where children are going to come to the point where they turn their parents into the authorities to be murdered for their faith.

That's where we're going. That's what the scripture says in second Timothy three. They're going to be lovers of themselves and because they love themselves, they're going to do this list of terrible things.

[28 : 21] That's where we're headed. That's the path. We're not. Don't let that get you to the point where you're just like, oh, well, what's what's worth living for? Well, I'll tell you what's worth living for Jesus. Jesus is worth living for because he changes your life.

He makes life purposeful in him. He gives you purpose. He brings you back to being human. It's a wonderful, wonderful truth and reality of God's grace.

That's just the first one. What kind of life is this? It's resurrection life. What other kind of life is it? Spiritual life. Spiritual means of the Holy Spirit. This is of the Holy Spirit life.

This is the Holy Spirit living in you. This is authentic life. This is genuine life. This is the real article, real life, not pretend life, not possible life, not life for a little while.

Oh, friends, let me tell you, this is not your best life now. It's not. Heavens, what a terrible thought. Our best life is yet to come.

[29 : 33] And yet God gives us hope in this life. Hope of genuine living. In other words, we can have purpose. We can make a difference in Christ.

That's the difference. He is the difference. What other kind of life? This is everlasting life. Everlasting for all eternity. Won't wear out. This is heavenly life for earthly living.

That's what we have. That's what kind of life this is. You have been raised up to life in Christ. You were dead. Now you're alive. And that's the kind of life that you have. This is your life.

This is life as God means for it to be lived. Now do you hear me? Right on the heels of what we talked about in Genesis 3, this is the reverse of the curse.

Is it not? This is life. Whereas Adam and Eve plunged us into death, Jesus Christ, the second Adam, gives us life.

[30 : 35] And the life is in Him. This is a marvelous, marvelous truth. Folks, you are such a new person in Jesus Christ that you are no longer of this world.

You're an alien here. You're a foreigner here. You don't speak the same language as it were. Because you've been given an entirely new nature and now you have a new home waiting for you.

God has put His life in you in Jesus. How many ways can we say it? You have been raised up with Him. You have been made alive with Him.

His life is your life. So keep depending on Jesus. Notice this. You've been converted by the power of God, so be consecrated.

So this is what we see in Peter. This is what we see in James. Telling us, be holy as He is holy. You have been converted, so be consecrated.

[31 : 42] You are set apart to be holy unto the Lord Jesus Christ. That's your life. That's your calling. Every Christian receives that calling. Now the question is, how do I live this life of devotion, this set apartness, this wonderful love for God?

How do I even do that? Well, that brings us to the second point here, the aim of your life in Colossians 3.1. Therefore, if you've been raised up with Christ, that's what we've been talking about.

Now look at the aim. Keep seeking the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. What's the aim of your life? If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking Jesus.

That's what he's talking about. Keep seeking Jesus. If then you've been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is.

Keep seeking Jesus by actively seeking what honors Him most. Do you seek, do you know and seek what honors Jesus most?

[32 : 49] Is that even on your radar for life? Does this honor Christ in your daily life? Is it your highest honor in life to live to the honor of your sovereign Lord?

Is that your highest aim in life? Do you consider that to be the highest aim of who you are as a human being? My highest aim is to live to the honor of my Savior, Jesus.

I don't have to have a lot of stuff. I don't have to feel successful. I don't have to feel important. I don't have to make it all about me. It's enough for me to know that I get the privilege each day I have life of living to the highest honor of Jesus in any possible way that I can.

That's enough for me. Is that true? Is it paramount, supreme, and preeminent for those of us who know Jesus and have been given life in His name to live to His glory?

That is to reflect His character in all that we say and think and do. What Paul is telling us here, Jesus sits at the position of highest authority and honor at the right hand of God.

[34 : 09] And your life, your life, is hidden with Him in God. Where is your life hidden? Your life is hidden with Christ in God. Where is Christ?

Seated at the right hand of Almighty God at the place of highest honor. Where are you? You are seated with Him in that position. You are in Christ. This is a way of saying all that Jesus has received, all that Jesus has, is yours.

He is your treasure. It's not all the stuff that He simply gives to you or gives to me or the way He answers prayer. You are already blessed with the highest treasure you can possibly have by knowing and having Christ in you.

That's it. You can't get any more than that. Everything that God owns in His Son, you own in His Son. Man, this glorious stuff.

Mark, they pay me to do this, to tell this wonderful news. This is the most wonderful thing any human being can hear and know.

[35 : 16] What does it mean to be hidden like this? Well, you are joined to Jesus and this reality is largely hidden from the world. You being joined to Jesus.

There are a number of things we could say about being hidden with Christ in God. One of the things we could bring out about being hidden with Christ in God is your eternal security. If you're hidden with Christ in God, you are as secure as you can be.

You're never going to lose your salvation. There's no power in the universe that can take away from you what God has put in you. And now He has hidden you in His Son.

So it's as if you were tucked away with His Son. And here you are. And nobody can get through that. That's one aspect. But there's another.

Several, actually. Let me bring this one out. All that you are in Christ is not fully seen in this world. It's hidden from the world.

[36 : 15] It's hidden from the world in many ways from unbelievers because the God of this world is blinding their mind to the glories of Jesus Christ. This is why unbelievers just can't get their heads around why you are like you are.

You're old running buddies. People who used to know you in high school. I would, I don't even, if any of those people show up here, I would tell them at the door, I'm a different person now.

I'm in the Lord Jesus now. Don't be telling them those stories. They know me as in Christ. We all have a past, don't we? Thank God that He makes us different people.

There is this unseen from the world wonder of Jesus in you. And they can't see it because they can't see the Lord. Another way to say it, they don't get Jesus so they don't get you.

Because your whole life is Jesus Christ. He is your life. One of the most significant evidences and privileges of your life being hidden with Christ in God is that your Christian life clearly demonstrates the honor of Jesus as ruler of heaven and earth.

[37 : 34] At least, that's what you and I aim at. We aim to glorify the Lord. We aim to magnify Him, to put Him forward in our lives, in the way that we speak, in the tone of our voice, in the attitude of our heart, in the countenance, our demeanor.

We want everything about us to show the meekness, the humility, the gentleness, the patience, the tenderness of Jesus. If we're going to hate anything in this world, we hate false doctrine.

We hate the lies of the devil that capture men's souls and send them to a devil's hell. Your highest aim, your highest life here and now is the high privilege of living out the honor of Jesus' life in you.

So we need to understand the things above that we see here in the text, the things above. We need to understand that in light of the next clause.

Look at it with me. Where Christ is. This is another way of saying Christ is our aim. Christ is our treasure. Christ is the foundation and aim of our life here.

[38 : 47] It's to know and serve Jesus that is the reason for our living. He is the sovereign Lord of the universe who reigns over all creation.

So this is Paul's emphasis in chapters 1 and 2. We had read through all of that. He's exalting Jesus as this great God of creation and glory who deserves our praise.

Now folks, here's what we're saying. You have been given resurrection life. You have been given heavenly life purpose so that you can live to the honor of the King of Heaven while you are briefly on this earth.

What a privilege. So the heavenly road, you can see this toward the bottom, the heavenly road to the heavenly life now is this, that you may be filled with all spiritual wisdom and understanding so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects.

Amen. That's from chapter 1 of Colossians, verses 9 and 10. We live from heaven while on earth.

[40 : 03] We live from heaven while on earth. Now catch this with me. Because that's true of every Christian person, one of the greatest distinctions, one of the greatest differences between Christians and non-Christians is what they do when they sin.

I just alluded to this a few minutes ago. It's what they do when they sin. What do you mean? Well listen now, both sin. Unbelievers sin and believers sin.

Yes? You sinned after you've been born again in Christ Jesus? So have I. Now listen, both sin. However, the Christian, the believer's greatest concern in sinning is grieving and dishonoring the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even, even more so than the sin that you did to the other person. As much as you might have hurt the other person and maybe you started there, maybe, maybe your sharp words, your insensitivity, your pride, gushing out of your mouth and your heart, wounded that person.

And you see it in their face. You see it in the tears. You see it in the distance. You feel it. Maybe that was the first way that you were affected by your sin.

[41 : 29] But that is not the greatest concern of you sinning against someone. The greatest concern is that you sinned against Christ. You've dishonored His name and grieved the Holy Spirit.

That's the greater issue. That is the greater issue. It's not that sinning against this person isn't important, but it's not the greatest issue or concern of a Christian's heart.

Well, why do you say that? Well, now listen. Do you, do you believe that unbelievers can wound each other and feel bad about it? and can go and say, I'm sorry.

I, I, I'm sorry. I, I was, okay, I was drunk. I didn't know what I was saying. I was, I drank too much. Or, I was angry.

Okay, I was angry. I shouldn't have said those things. Unbelievers can do stuff like that with each other. What's the difference then? A believer, a believer will come to the place where they're on their knees before the Lord and saying, I know that that sin grieves your heart, Lord.

[42 : 35] I know that that sin did not represent you to this other person as the Lord of glory in my heart. I did not show meekness, humility, kindness, gentleness, selflessness.

I showed me and not Christ. You become so concerned with what sin does to your Lord and Savior that that becomes the greatest impetus for you to fight it.

you have such a love and a devotion to Jesus that that love and devotion to Jesus supplants the love of your idols. It's the wonderful, affecting, fighting reality of a new affection taking root in your heart.

What is that new affection? That new affection is love for Christ and that new affection is overwhelming and driving out any other affection. so your love for your idols begins to diminish because the love for Jesus is smothering it.

Isn't that wonderful? Now you're going to spend your life as a Christian in that process and you'll never arrive. You'll find yourself on your knees saying in that moment I loved my idol and myself more than I loved Christ in that moment.

[43 : 52] More than I loved my wife or I wouldn't have said those things. More than I loved my kids or I wouldn't have said that to one of my children or did that to one of my children. More than what I wanted to be and exemplify at my workplace or I wouldn't have done what I did at my workplace.

Whatever. That new affection for Christ that authenticity that genuine article of Christ living in you and teaching you the love of his heart.

That aim that you are raised up with Christ and so you are seeking things above. That's another way of saying you are seeking Jesus. What does it mean where Christ is?

It means Him. You're not seeking a place. You're seeking a person. This is just a way of Paul saying you seek Jesus where He is in the place of honor.

So honor Him because He deserves it. That's it. That's the reason. I honor Christ because Christ is worthy of the honor.

[45 : 01] End of story. He doesn't have to give me lots of stuff. He doesn't have to answer my prayers the way I think He should and then I'll give Him honor. You ever done that in an argument? Well, I'll tell you what.

I'll get my act together when you get your act together. You go first. We give honor to Jesus because Jesus is worthy of honor.

That's why we do it. We've been commanded to give Him the honor that He deserves. So our greatest concern is that we grieve and dishonor the Lord. The unbelievers, they're not concerned with that at all.

They don't care how their sin robs, dishonors, and grieves Jesus. They don't care. I didn't. I didn't even know how to think like that. So friends, look, it comes down to this.

Is your aim in life now, now, to keep seeking the honor of Jesus in you? What is the highest principle guiding the way that you think and live here and now?

[46 : 02] What's the highest principle guiding you? Is it money? Is it fame? Is it the approval of people? Is it your plans? Your future? Your designs?

Your purposes? Who you think you want to be? What you think you want to accomplish? What is it? What is the highest thing moving you, driving you, energizing you in this life?

Is it loving and honoring Jesus? Now look, as a child of heaven, you're seeking to live out the principles and values of heaven here in your earthly life.

So another important aspect of living a healthy, Christ-like life now is what Paul says next. Keep thinking Jesus.

Keep seeking Jesus. Keep thinking Jesus. Look at this verse 2. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things of earth.

[47 : 00] This is the attitude of your heart. So what should the attitude of your heart in your life be? Keep thinking Jesus. Keep thinking Jesus.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. Set your mind on, or this doesn't mean that you become no earthly good because you're so heavenly minded.

That's not what this means. It means set your mind or be intent on heavenly things. Be heavenly minded. Just as with keep seeking things above, we're to keep thinking things above.

It's about your perspective, your worldview. It's your way of seeing and understanding and defining the world that you live in. How do you see, how do you understand, perceive, and define the world you live in?

The circumstances of your life. Are you so thinking Jesus that Jesus truly defines and guides the way you think about your, say, for marriage?

[48 : 04] Your parenting, your job, your money, your vacation, your recreation, your hobby? How do you think about unpleasant, unbelieving people who've been nasty to you?

How about this one? How do you think about your pastors, your church family, your church life? How do you think about all these things?

Do you have, do you live God's mindset on these matters of life? Do you have the perspective of Jesus on these different areas and issues and matters of your life?

Do you think Jesus about who you are? Do you think Jesus about what you do and why you do it? Now, at this point, I hope you're not thinking, this is impossible.

Well, I know that. That's true to a degree, isn't it? this is impossible for people who don't have the power of the God of the universe living in them.

[49 : 13] But if you're a Christian, you do have that power. You have the power that overcame sin and death living in you. You can't have greater power than that.

So what does that mean? Well, it means we go back to what he's been saying. Keep seeking Jesus. Keep thinking Jesus.

There's no great big secret here, is there? There's no such thing as the secret to the Christian life. It's out. Jesus. Jesus is the secret to the Christian life.

It's not so much a secret, is it? If we'll preach the truth, that should be what we say every Sunday, isn't it? Every time we gather, we're exalting Jesus Christ. There's no secret here. Keep thinking Jesus.

Set your mind on heavenly things. Are we heavenly minded or are we earthly minded? Which one are we more preoccupied with, more defined by?

[50 : 17] That's the issue. If you have an authentic heavenly life, then you're concerned that the aim of your life is to be lived out according to heaven's value system.

Here and now, do I understand heaven's priorities, heaven's value system for my life? Am I earthly minded or heavenly minded? Folks, listen, what this doesn't mean, it doesn't mean you don't make your grocery list.

It doesn't mean you don't think about, ooh, let's see, we need more diapers. We're out of diapers. I'm calling. Get some more diapers while you're out before you come home tonight. We're out of milk. Get some more. It doesn't mean we don't deal with the mundane realities of everyday life.

It doesn't mean you don't make plans to go on vacation. That's not what this means. We're human beings. We're living life here. It means that everything that we're doing, we're thinking in terms of the priorities of heaven as we go about it.

Our greatest concern in the way we go about life is, is this pleasing to the Lord? Am I carrying a pleasure for Jesus in my very soul so that that defines the way I speak and do and think and plan and purpose?

[51 : 28] See? So we're back to what I said earlier. This is about who you are, not just what you do. This is the work that God's done in you on a spiritual level.

You will not be effective or consistent in this aim to please the Lord if you don't think about your life and this world the way Jesus does. Do you see yourself and this life the way Jesus does?

Thinking translates into living. This is true for unbelievers. What unbelievers believe, what they think, translates into how they live.

It's no different for a Christian. You don't stop thinking when you become a Christian. You just learn to think in a renewed mind. That is, you have the mind of Christ.

So are you thinking Jesus? That's what Paul's telling us to do. Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth. That's verse 2.

[52 : 34] Romans 12, 1 and 2 has helped us here. Whenever we've been on this theme, I'm going to turn there. Romans 12, verses 1 and 2.

Let's look at this. In terms of this kind of thinking, therefore, I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, this is the saving mercies of the Lord, to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, and notice, pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

See, all of life, as we live in this body as Christians, on this earth now, is about our spiritual service of worship. We're to present ourselves to God every day, all day, as an offering of worship.

Verse 2, and do not be conformed to this world, but instead be transformed. There's that spiritual transformation by the renewing of your mind.

So that you may prove or approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect. Your renewed spiritual mind puts you then in a position to live a life proving the truth of God's word over and over and over.

[54 : 00] What power? What freedom? What glory? To be privileged to be a part of that while you're still on this earth. You need to keep in mind now, dear friends, we're not in heaven yet, so don't expect this place to look like heaven.

It doesn't. Look, this should be the closest place to heaven we experience as we gather as his people and rehearse the wonderful joys and glories of what will be magnified by a million billion times when we get into glory with Jesus.

But this is where we're reminding ourselves we're not in heaven yet. And so we rejoice, we pray, we hug, we get each other and we say, man, be encouraged in the Lord.

We weep with each other and bear one another's burdens. We sing to the glories of Jesus and we're reminded we're not in heaven yet. But he's promised to take us there, hasn't he?

If you look back in Colossians with me. At chapter one. He speaks to this in chapter one, verse twenty one.

[55 : 12] And although you were formally alienated, you were formally separated and enemies in what mind and in evil deeds.

That's former life for these people. Formally, your minds were separated from Jesus and your minds were hostile to Jesus.

You thought hostile things, rebellious things against the Lord. That was your former life, not anymore. Now Paul is telling them in chapter three, since you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above and set your mind on the things above.

You can do that now. Through the Lord Jesus Christ. Look at verse twenty two, if you will, in chapter one.

But now he reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death. Jesus reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.

[56 : 14] Glory to God. Holy and blameless and beyond reproach. That's your new position before the Lord. Whereas once you were alienated and an enemy of Jesus, now you have been brought near and made beyond reproach, beyond accusation.

Satan can point his bony finger at you all he wants and make all the accusations. You are now in Christ and that covers the deal. Wow. Wow.

This is an amazing reality. But now Jesus brought you near to himself. How did he do that? How did he do that? Answer. By dying in your place in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.

Look, when God spiritually joined you to Jesus, you died to sin. What does that mean? In this new life in Jesus, gifted to you by God's grace and mercy, sin cannot, hear me now, sin cannot reign in your heart where Jesus is now Lord and Savior.

And that's why. Because Jesus is now Lord and Savior in your heart, sin cannot reign there. Sin can tempt you. Sin can deceive you.

[57 : 33] Sin can draw you away in these seasons and moments. But sin can no longer reign in your heart. It cannot do it. God will bring you around.

He will enlighten you. Because he'll discipline you if you remain obstinate. Won't he? You'll get a holy spanking from your heavenly holy father.

And you don't want that. If I ask for hands of anybody who has been spanked by the Lord under spiritual discipline, you would raise your hand and say, oh, yes, pastor, amen, you don't want that.

It's a fearful thing to fall on the hands of the Lord in that way and be disciplined by God. He's a disciplined father because he loves us. No. Look at verse three with me.

Colossians three, three. For you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God. We see this in chapter two, verse 20.

[58 : 30] If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why is if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to manmade decrees? Then he goes on to say, oh, don't do this.

Don't do that. Be a be about this. Be about those are all religiosity. They deal with all kinds of things that men make up. They're the teaching and commands of men. No, that doesn't matter because they don't help us fight sin.

Do they? They don't help us deal with sin. They don't help drive into the nature that is the root of why we sin. They don't deal with the heart. They're externals.

And they don't help us. You died with Christ. Then in verse 12, notice in verse 12 with me, if you will, having been buried in chapter two, having been buried with him in baptism in which you were also raised up with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead.

This is, again, a beautiful, beautiful reality. You were buried in Christ. You were raised in Christ. Paul dealt with this in Romans chapter six.

[59 : 42] In Romans six, the theme is a believer being dead to sin. It's how this spiritual union with Jesus in his death defines your life. Now, this is so important.

Romans six, verses two through 13 deal with this. Now, if you and I were to go and we were to read through this, Paul is telling them, do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies.

You have been baptized into the death of Jesus. What does all of that mean? Well, when he talks about being baptized into the death of Jesus, he's not talking about water baptism.

Water baptism is a symbol of an inner spiritual reality, isn't it? We're getting ready to do some baptisms here. What, Doug and June? Is that what we decided?

Doing it out at the Hogue home? We're going to do it in the river. OK, you know, he showed me this jarred enormous fish that swims around his dock with anyway.

[60 : 40] We'll be fine. We'll post deacons around us to guard us against these great big jaws and stuff. Right, guys? No. He's throwing us to the wolves, man.

No, he said, no, it ain't happening. His wife got baptized last year, so come on. All right. Anyway, Romans 6 deals with this concept of being baptized into the death.

It's not water baptism. This is a, listen, spiritual immersion. Immersed? This is a spiritual immersion. Dr. MacArthur said it this way.

It's a heavenly quality of life brought to you by the indwelling Lord. This is a spiritual baptism of a heavenly quality of life brought to you in Jesus Christ.

That's the only way you can have it. You died with, you were buried with, and now you are raised up with Jesus. And we have to understand the radical new spiritual life that now defines you and I as being united with Jesus.

[61 : 47] Folks, we are spiritually joined with Jesus so that we are working out that spiritual reality that he has worked in. That inner transformation that he's done, we are now called by Christ to live out, to work out of us in faithful, holy living.

We've been set apart to live like that. And so Paul says, I strive in the power of God to live a holy, a set apart life, demonstrating the spiritual transformation that God has worked in me.

And that's power. Where does it start? What do we start with in that life? L-O-V-E. How will they know that that's happened to us?

The way they see us love each other. Isn't that what it says? That's where it starts. The love of Jesus invading your heart, making you a new creature, filling your soul with this wonder, this awe, this holy reverence for this saving God who would condescend to know you and save you, bring you life, give you hope.

This is a glorious thing. People who come in and sit down with us and have problems in life, which we all do, they need to hear this message of hope, don't they?

[63 : 14] So believers, believers live new like God. To say godly lives is to say like God. Godly, that's what it means.

Believers live new like God or godly lives in new like God or godly realm because we've been transferred spiritually, transferred spiritually from Satan's spiritual kingdom and rule to God's spiritual kingdom and rule.

How? Through our union with Jesus. A spiritual transference has been made from one realm, Satan's, into another, God's.

You've been placed out of, taken out of one realm, Satan's, and placed in another realm, God's, through Christ. It's that sharp and definitive to God.

That's why he's writing this. So because we have the life of Jesus spiritually active in us, we live in God's realm of divine favor and right standing with him. You and I will never, ever again live in Satan's realm of self and sin and be defined by it.

[64 : 26] Why? Because we have died with Christ to the penalty and power of sin. What does it mean to die with Christ? When Christ died on the cross for us, he died paying our penalty for sin, death.

We deserve to die. Jesus died having our sins laid on him. Now that our sins are resting on, laying on Christ, God poured his full, holy anger out on his own son and punished him to death as a penalty for the sins that were laying on him.

My sins. Your sins. That's why he died. He wasn't sinful. He was perfect. Sinless. And so God punished Jesus to death because of the sins of my heart and my life resting on the Holy Son of God.

And he poured out his wrath on him in full, completely. Spent his anger on Christ. And when Christ died, he died the death of penalty for you and for me.

When he died the death of penalty for you and me, he released us from the greatest power that had gripped our souls. What is that? Death. Death. Death. What is the power that Satan holds over us in sin?

[65 : 43] Death. The result of sin. Death. Eternal separation from God. When Jesus died, he broke that. Only Jesus can do that.

But he did it. He did it for you and he did it for me. And so now to say that we have died with Christ is to say that Christ broke the penalty, paid the penalty, broke the power of sin and Satan over us because he took away the power of death.

That's his trump card. That's Satan's trump card. Jesus picked it up off the table as it were and tore it into pieces and threw it in the flames of hell. To be more scripturally accurate, the sin debt that you and I owe, a list of it, was nailed to the cross when Jesus was being crucified.

That list of indebtedness and sin that I owe to God, that you owe to God, was nailed on the cross and Jesus died and that debt was paid in full.

Paid in full. A spiritual transaction on a spiritual plane and level. It is beyond the sight of human beings. How do we then see the reality of that spiritual plane?

[66 : 56] How do we know it even exists in transformed lives, friends? We see it through faith. We see it through faith. The gift of faith. That's how we see it.

We see it in transformed lives. It's a marvelous... Look, this is the atoning, saving, redeeming, justifying work of God joining you with Jesus so that God sees you in his Son and he sees his Son in you.

Wow. You are so completely joined to Jesus that your old life is dead to God and your new life is hidden with Christ in God.

In your new life in Jesus, you are now a heavenly human. Did you hear me? Your new life in Jesus, you're now a heavenly human. This is life the way God meant for it to be lived to his glory in fellowship with him.

What Adam did, Jesus reversed. this is wonderful. This should be, it needs to be your attitude toward life now for you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.

[68 : 12] Verse 3, that should be the attitude of your life, the perspective on your life. Your source of life is Jesus. Your sphere of life is the new domain.

It's the new realm of God's heavenly kingdom where you are positioned, you are placed in Jesus. So, here's the title of my message and now I explain to you why I've titled it the way I have.

This may be a different way for you to think about it, but here it is right here in scripture. Look, this is what I mean. So, look down on the matters of your life from your new spiritual realm where your life has been hidden with Christ in God.

Jesus is your life. Seek Him, think Him, live Him and look down on the matters of life from where you have been positioned in Him for all eternity. Look down.

Look down and live for Christ. That's our calling. that's Paul's emphasis. Your life now is all about your future with Him.

[69 : 21] We can lay claim to a mind-blowing reality about living the Christian life and here it is. We follow our future. We follow our future.

What's our future? It's in Christ. We're positioned in heaven with Him. Nothing will ever change that. This, this, this body will die.

I'll get a new one and my soul will be lifted. Your soul will be lifted to heaven and placed where you've been in the mind of Christ the entire time. And all of that will catch up with the reality that God has established for you, for me.

So what am I saying? Keep, keep thinking Jesus. But then this, the last one, I'll be very brief. Keep thanking Christ. Look, last one, the author of your life.

Verse 4, when Christ who is our life is manifested then you also will be manifested with Him in glory. This is just another way of saying this, friends. Jesus is your life.

[70 : 25] When Jesus reveals Himself in glory to this dark sin cursed world, you will also be revealed with Him in glory because you are forever spiritually united to Christ.

That is how united to Jesus you are. When Jesus is revealed, you will be revealed with Him for who you really are. No more will the world see you and say, I don't get you because they don't get Jesus.

When He's revealed to the world, you will be revealed with Him and they'll see you in Christ and it'll be, whoa, that's who you are. That's why you did what you did.

That's why you live the way you live. That's right. That day's coming. So keep thanking Jesus.

Why? Because He's your life. He's the author of your heavenly life on this earth as well as your future life in the heavens. I want to give you this quote before I end. Look, this is from Susan Lutz, a writer, Christian author.

[71 : 30] She wisely observed, being thankful to God allows us to be a part of what's going on in heaven even before we get there. When you're thankful, you remember that you are living your life in God's presence.

As soon as you're thankful, you start to see your life differently through God's eyes. You are thinking like heaven even if your circumstances seem more like something else.

That's good. That's helpful. Live thankfully. People can't cut you open. They can't cut me open and see Jesus in us. They can't see the life and the light of Christ inside of us.

So they can't see the glow of the glory of God and God's love which energize us in heavenly thinking and living. Consequently, they don't understand that as we look down on the matters of this life from our heavenly position onto earthly things, we are led to think and live in honor for Jesus Christ.

Now you see how Paul ends this and this is where I'll end. Chapter 3, verse 12. So as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and graciously forgiving each other whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord graciously forgave you, so also should you.

[72 : 57] And above all these things, put on, here it is, love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Jesus Christ rule in your hearts to which you indeed were called in one body and be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratefulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Will you join me in prayer? Dear Father, we could ask the question, who really lives like this and who would want to and why?

But you have called us as your people to be this kind of people, to live this kind of life before you. And so I pray for my brothers and sisters as they have their hearts enlightened and encouraged in the word of truth, that they will meditate and think about very carefully, prayerfully, this passage of Scripture where we have been put into Jesus Christ.

We have been so spiritually united to Him in this miracle of saving grace that you see us in your Son and your Son in us. Thank you so very much, God, for the wonders of the Gospel and the saving grace that you bring to us.

[74 : 24] Thank you for the death and burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. thank you for giving us cause to celebrate the glories of this wonderful truth that Jesus is no longer in the tomb but raised again in new life as the first fruit of many of us who will follow with Him in that resurrection life.

Help us to live to your pleasure and honor now even as your people. In Jesus' precious name, Amen. Amen.