

## **What You Think?**

(Colossians 3:1-4)

(preached 5/8/16; Sunday AM)

## **Introduction**

Open your Bible to Colossians 3:1-4....

As we continue our look at Paul's letter to the church at Colossae.

Every word of it was breathed out of the mouth of God to Paul, who write it down and sent it to the church at Colossae...

As we read it today, we affirm that the Word of God is living and active and instructive not only for the Colossians but for the church in 2016 as well...

So follow along as I read the first 4 verses of Colossians 3...

***3 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 [a]Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.***

Let us pray.

The contraption that you see on the screen behind me is a Swiss Army knife.

This particular model has 21 functions...

- blade, large
- reamer, punch and sewing awl
- can opener
- screwdriver 3 mm
- bottle opener
- wire stripper
- screwdriver 5 mm
- Phillips screwdriver 0 / 1, long
- wood saw
- metal saw
- metal file
- scissors
- pliers
- key ring
- tweezers
- mini screwdriver 1.5 mm
- corkscrew
- toothpick

It sells for \$110 plus tax and promises to be all you need to survive in the woods for months.

The Swiss Army knife was first made for the Swiss army in 1891 to lighten the load of its soldiers.

It quickly gained popularity in the army and eventually made its way to the US after the World Wars.

It is still going strong today because of its all in 1 design...

For the first two chapters in the book of Colossians, Paul has been pointing us to the all in 1 design of Jesus Christ.

Like a soldier who would carry a screwdriver and a swiss army knife at the same time, Paul was telling the Colossians to see the completeness and sufficiency of Christ...

Paul was telling them.

Jesus is all you need.

Stop trying to carry the man made laws and Christ; Jesus has fulfilled the Law.

Stop trying to seek a higher wisdom; all the wisdom of God is found in Christ.

Stop seeking a higher knowledge and deeper experience; seek to hold on tightly to Christ, who is the head of the church...

Paul was simply saying in chapters 1-2....

“Colossians, you have an all in 1 pocket knife; why are you trying to carry a tool box on your back as well.”

And the focus of these opening chapters has been on the completeness of Jesus Christ...

Imagine Paul in chapters 1 and 2 as the Swiss Army knife salesman...

This knife is all you need...

This Christ is all you need...

You hold on to him and you will be fine...

But in chapters 3, the purpose of the book shifts from pointing us to the completeness of Christ to pointing us to what we have in Christ...

In a sense, for these next two chapters, we are taking the folded up knife out of the box, and we are going to learn how to use all of its features...

We are going to learn how to use what we have in Christ...

We are going to learn what it means to hold on to the head and experience the blessings of knowing that Christ is all we need...

Today, the first of the tools that we are going to learn to use is our mind and heart...

And this is the perfect place to start because the mind and heart of a person lead to the actions on the outside...

If you see Christ as all you need, the first thing that should change is how you think...

And so today, we are going to examine the New Mind that is Given to those in Christ...

We will do in by looking at 3 truths that should describe all of those who call themselves Christians...

- I. A Life that Is Seeking (1)
- II. A Mind that Is Set (2-3)
- III. A Future that Is Sure (4)

Let's look back at verse 1....

## I. A Life that Is Seeking Above (1)

*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.*

Most of us can remember the first time that we thought we fell in love...

It may have been in middle school or high school or even later in life, but the memory of getting to know someone better brings back sweet memories...

Listen to some of the quotes from people talking about falling in love...

“I once called him 52 times in one day and hung up just to hear him say hello”

“One time on a math test, I wrote his name for every answer. I got a zero but it was the best zero ever.”

“I saved everything from every time we were together. At one point, I had 15 of his used toothpicks from our first 15 dates.”

Though those are funny, many of us relate to that time when we were first falling in love..

And one thing that was true about that experience is this...

Our minds were constantly filled with that person...

I wonder where they are.

I wonder what they are doing.

I wonder what they are wearing.

I even wonder what they are thinking...

Ever been a car driving down the road and look at the person beside you and ask them what they are thinking?

That is how falling in love is..

It consumes our minds for days or weeks or months...

And we desire to be with that person whenever possible...

We seek out opportunities just to be in the same room with them...

That is the intensity and more of what God is commanding us to do in verse 1 if we are saved...

“Seek the things above.”

In other words, be filled with a desire for the things of God...

And why should you do that?

Because if you a Christian, you have been raised with Christ..

What does that mean?

It simply means that salvation is the act of dying to the ways of the world and being resurrected to the ways of God...

At salvation, you were raised to life for the very first time...

Your physical birth brought you into the world, but your spiritual birth makes you dead to the world and alive to God...

And here is what I mean...

Salvation awakens us, resurrects us, raises us from the dead to life...

Now what does that mean for you today?

First of all it means that you have the ability to think heavenly thoughts..

You have the ability to tap into heavenly wisdom and have heavenly insight...

When you see an mass shooting, you don't need to ask the question that CNN asks over and over of WHY did the shooter do it?

You know that he did it because God teaches us that men are evil and haters of truth...

When you see an earthquake hit South America, you understand that even creation is broken because of sin and earthquakes are a part of that fallenness...

When you get mistreated at work, you don't wonder why, you know that trials and persecutions often come to believers to prove their faith...

Things that you never understood before make perfect sense once you have died to the wisdom of the world but have been raised with Christ and have access to heavenly wisdom...

And what Paul is commanding here is this...

Keep seeking the things of heaven..

Don't be tempted to go back to your former way of life...

Don't seek the things that you used to seek...

Don't seek the fame or the money or the selfish pleasure that you used to seek before you were saved...

Seek the things above by seeking to please the Lord in all you do...

And why should you seek out things above....

Where that is where your Savior is...

He is SEATED at the right hand of God...

And let me just take a moment here to point out the importance of such a statement....

One thing that settles the mind of a believer is knowing that your salvation is settled...

That it has been completed in Christ...

It eases our minds to know that Jesus has secured our salvation.

One thing that a Muslim or a Jehovah's Witness or a Mormon or a even a Roman Catholic never has is a settled mind when it comes to his salvation...

Every false religion that is based upon works never gives peace of mind to its members...

Because there is always some more work to do to secure their salvation...

In other words, people in false religion can never seek things above because they are so focused on working on this earth...

True Christians, on the other hand, are able to seek things above because they know that Jesus has accomplished all that is needed to save them in his life, death and resurrection...

And take note of this, Jesus is sitting down by the Father in heaven...

What does that tell you?

There is no more work to be done that what he has accomplished...

Listen to Hebrews 10:11-14..

***11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which***

*can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for [f]sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are [g]sanctified.*

In the OT, the priest was a busy man...

He was all the time sacrificing something in the temple to cover the sins of the people before Christ...

But once Christ came and died and was resurrected, there is nothing more that needs to be done...

Jesus made a sacrifice and sat down...

Do you know people who get antsy when they don't have anything to do?

It seems like they just have to work or they will go insane...

Not Christ.

His life and death satisfied the payment for sin..

There is no more work to be done..

As a believer, you don't have to sit up at night and think of ways to go out and earn your salvation or keep your salvation...

It is secure in what Christ has done for you...

So secure that he has sat down and ceased from the work....

And because there is no work left to be done, we can take our minds off this earth and seek out the things above where Christ is seated....

And let me say this before there is any confusion...

This is not a command to sit and stare into space..

We are called to go into the world with the gospel...

And to live in the world as Christians...

That means that we have to think about buying groceries and doing our work well to provide for our families...

This is not a call to become a monk and just seek God all day with our thoughts...

We talked about the error of that last week...

This is simply a call to have bird's eye view of the world instead of a snail's eye view...

You need to realize that this world is not our home as believers...

Yes, we physically live here but mentally we direct our thoughts to heaven...

We seek that above when we make a decision...

We seek that above when we parent our children.

We seek that above in our marriages, in our career decisions....

Heavenly wisdom and seeking to do all we can to please our Lord should drive the Christian's life because we have a God's eye view of what this life is all about...

So, first of all, your life should be seeking out the things above...

Next, your mind should be set on the things above as well...

## II. A Mind that Is Set Above (2-3)

Let me read verses 2-3 again....

***2 [a]Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***

There is an old saying that I was told by my dad and my granddad, and it isn't a bad thing...

And I don't mean to burst your bubble if you have ever told someone this...

But the saying goes something like this...

***If you set your mind to it, you can do anything.***

Now that sounds real good and sweet and we tell our kids that to encourage them, but it is not always true..

There have been millions of people who have set their minds to accomplish something and fallen way short of doing it...

Ultimately, you will not do anything that the Lord wills for your life...

Doesn't matter how hard you set your mind to it...

If that saying were true, it would mean that a man can overcome the plans of God by simply concentrating on his goal...

Since we don't have time to look at all the verse that teach that no one overrides the plans of God, just take my word for it...

God is in control, no matter how much you set your mind on something...

However, that being said...

The concept of setting your mind on something is a biblical concept....

You see it right here in Colossians 3:2, and you see it in other places of Scriptures..

The only catch is that our minds are to be set on the things of God and not our own desires for our life...

Now, are there times that God changes the desires of our heart to match his plan for our life?

Absolutely, and that is why it is so important to get your mind filled with who God is and what He wants...

The word for set carries the idea of exercising your mind and concentrating your thoughts on the things of heaven...

What does this look like?

***Phil 4:8-9....***

***8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is [e]lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, [f]dwell on these things. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.***

The simple application to setting your mind on the things above is to set your mind on the good things of God...

Think about truth by memorizing Scripture and hiding in your heart...

Think about what is honorable in this world...

Men and women who live lives sold out to their service to the Lord.

Think about things that are right in this world...

We get enough talking about the things that are wrong in this world...

In fact, I think this may be the most violated verse in today's church....

I cringe when I hear Christians bitterly complaining about all the things that are wrong with this world...

We should be the least shocked about that...

Yet so many people spend their time dwelling on the things that are wrong rather than what is right about the world....

And do you know what is right about this world?

Jesus Christ has come to save sinners out of this world.

Dwell on that.

Think on that.

Don't focus on the evil of the world. See the goodness of God to save people even in the midst of a crooked world...

Think also on the pure things of this world...

Not on the immorality and the injustice but think about how God is still revealing himself in the midst of that immorality and injustice...

Paul then goes on to say, think on those things that are of good repute or character...

Think on things that are excellent or deserve praise..

That is how you set your mind on the things above...

Again, this is not the power of positive thinking at all...

Paul isn't saying that if you set your minds on things above and think only good thoughts that nothing and will happen to you...

I assure that is not the case at all...

If you live in this world, you will have heartache and trouble....

The point is to have a heavenly mindset no matter your circumstances.....

How do Christians battle cancer with a smile?

Their minds are set on a better world awaits them if they die...

How do Christians endure unfair treatment in the world?

Their minds understand that man cannot do anything to them that will rob them of their salvation...

How do Christians in history past refuse to deny Christ and stand before firing squads or are burned at the stake....

Their minds are set on things above and not on the things of this world...

And why should we set our minds on things above?

Verse 3....

Because we have died to this world...

And our lives are hid with Christ...

What a beautiful picture this is...

We set our minds on things above because we are dead to the world...

When I got my first tackle box, it was very special to me....

I kept it cleaned out, and all the baits in the right trays...

A stain or dirt never stayed on it very long...

It was my very own tackle box, but then a year later, my dad bought me a new one...

Guess what happened to that old one?

It went to the closet and probably hasn't been touched to this very day unless my dad picked it up to throw it out...

When I got a new tackle box, the old one died to me...

The same should be said for this world to those who are saved...

We need to be dead to this world, and we are dead to it...

Because according to verse 3, we are hidden with Christ...

And where is Christ, he is in heaven at the right hand of God...

In a very real sense, our lives die to this earth at salvation and we are reborn and united with Christ, who sits in heaven....

I don't want to get mystical about this or make our minds hurt to understand this...

But Christians become strangers and aliens to this world once they are saved.

Their home address also changes at salvation...

They go from someone who calls this earth to someone who calls heaven home...

Salvation hides the believer in Christ, who is in heaven...

That is why believers can seek heaven and set their minds above, their lives are essentially there...

We go to the beach in a month with our family...

But my daughters are already there in their mind, right?

They are already making lists of clothes they are going to wear each day...

They are already picturing themselves there even though we are 4 weeks away...

They are at the beach even though they are physically 200 miles away...

The same should be said for every believer in Christ...

We may be physically here, but the great portion of our lives after salvation is found with Christ in heaven...

That is one of the many verses that teach the idea of the eternal security of the believer...

In order to lose my salvation, I would have to go to heaven and rip my life away from Christ....

And I assure you...that is not possible...

My life is hid with Christ on high...

So, set your mind above because that is where the One who you are joined to is....

A final truth about believers in these 4 verses is this...

So, in Colossians 3:1-4, we have a life that seeks above, a mind that is set above...

### **III. A Future that Is Sure Above (4)**

The Bible is clear....

Everything that is hidden in this age will one day be revealed in the age to come...

Most of the time, we think of this in a negative sense...

All of our sinful words and actions will one day come to light...

And that is a good motivation to do the right things today...

But the promise of things being revealed in the future is also a great hope as well...

Verse 4 simply tells us that Christ will one day be revealed...

Though we love Him and we Know Him and we are hid with Him, our hearts still long to see Him...

We long to see Him to silence the doubters of this world...

We long to see Him to thank Him for what He has done for us...

We long to see Him so that He can set this out of order world back in order...

And the promise of verse 4 is that He will one day be revealed...

And when He is revealed to the world at the Second Coming, we will also be revealed to the world..

We are now hid in Christ...

The world thinks we are strange because of the choices we make...

Unbelievers call us unusual because of the obedience to Christ we show....

They accuse us of believing in an invisible God, yet there is a coming a day when the unbelieving world will be quieted as Jesus makes a glorious world wide return...

In that day, HE will come but all of those in Christ will come with Him as well...

Our lives that are hidden with him will be made known to all the world...

That is a glorious truth that every believers possesses...

Today, you live in an era where you are called foolish because you believe in Someone you can't see...

In the future, those calling you foolish will be judged by that same Someone whom they will see...

### **Conclusion**

When we let our mind go back to the Colossians, they were people who were being attacked by the evil forces of this world...

False teachers who were empowered by Satan to make them question the simple gospel...

They were taking the Colossians minds out of heaven and focusing them on earthly things...

Follow these rules...

Keep these laws...

Make these sacrifices...

And now that has exposed their error, he is simply going to lead the Colossians back to a heavenly mindset...

Stop focusing on working on this earth, and start focusing on the work that Jesus has already done on your behalf...

He has sat down from his work, and if you are saved, you are sitting with Him at the right hand of God...

Keep your mind there and keep it away from men who would want you draw you back to this earth...

You are saved and you have been completely reborn with a new mind....

Refuse to fill that mind back up with the trash of this earth and instead began to fill it with the truth of God's Word....

For years, one man had made a living out of selling rabbit stew in his hometown.

No other recipes even came close to his concoction.

People loved it and paid good money for it...

The man was growing older and decided that he would pass the recipe down to the next generation..

So, he gathered a few young men together to cook a stew and share his recipe...

The men were honored to be there and couldn't even wait to see what the secret was and began asking a lot of questions..

Then one man asked... “Ok, what is the single most important step to cooking a good rabbit stew?”

And as everybody and leaned in to hear the old man’s wisdom....

He simply said this....

The first and absolute most important step to good rabbit stew is.....

First....

Catching a rabbit.

And I would say to you that the first step to living as an effective Christian in this world is to change the way we think...

And to change the things that we think about..

The Colossians needed to get their thought life in order before they could get their lives in order...

And much of the same is true today...

Christians try to cook the rabbit stew without the rabbit when they try to keep rules below without setting their minds above...

It is only when we have a heavenly perspective that we can ever have a correct earthly perspective.

We can never make sense of what is around us until we spend our time thinking about what is above us...