

Put Your Mind on the Things Above (Colossians 3:1-13)

Introduction:

Has this been a busy week or what?! To only be one of 365 days, Christmas really takes a toll on finances, time, and energy. It really can make it hard for us to focus on some things, like jobs or school. This happens not only this week of the year, but even as far back as November, when most people start really talking about and planning for Christmas. Many things that usually occupy a lot of our time are put on the backburner for later, and it is over in one day.

- I. This is where we may fall into danger, especially at a time of the year as this.
 - a. We lose our focus as to what we should be doing at work.
 - b. We lose our focus as to what we should be doing at home.
 - c. We lose our focus as to what we should be doing in our communities.
 - d. We lose our focus as to what we should be doing for Christ.
- II. There are fourteen instances in the New Testament where a command is made to seek or not to seek something.
 - a. Three are searches for God's kingdom and the things above
 - i. Matthew 6:33
 - ii. Luke 12:31
 - iii. Colossians 3:1
 - b. Four involve commands to abstain from seeking to change relationships with Judaism or spouses..
 - i. I Corinthians 7:18 (2)
 - ii. I Corinthians 7:27 (2)
 - c. The rest (7) are commands to seek godly qualities or to abstain from ungodly ones.
 - d. So ten of them involve looking for heavenly things as opposed to earthly things (about 72%).
 - e. Does God count for anything close to 72% of your focus?
- III. We need to be sure to focus on where Christ is, at the right hand of God.
 - a. Hopefully today we will all learn better how to focus on Christ instead of worldly things.

Discussion:

- I. Why?
 - a. Human nature is to get the "here and the now."
 - b. We are taught in Scripture in several places that human nature is not what should govern us.
 - i. Proverbs 14:12 – *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."*
 - ii. A similar analogy to the one given in Colossians 3:1-4 is Matthew 6:19-21: *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

- c. We have died (3).
 - i. The “man” who was governed by human nature is dead, and we no longer answer to him. He laid up treasures on earth, and went the way that seemed right to him.
 - ii. This “man” was crucified with Christ, that his body may be brought to nothing, and that we would no longer be slaves to sin. When “he” died, we were freed from sin.
- d. We have been raised with Christ (1)
 - i. Now we have risen in the likeness of the resurrection of Jesus. We are no longer slaves to sin, we no longer follow the desires of human nature, and we begin to store up treasures in heaven.

II. How?

- a. Put to death the earthly things (Put off the old man).
 - i. If we have been resurrected from death, and if we are free from sin, then our deeds will show it.
 - 1. Romans 6:13 – ***“Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.”***
 - 2. Therefore what we do is God’s bidding—not our own.
 - ii. Most sins can be categorized into two groups.
 - 1. Sins of Selfishness
 - a. Sexual Immorality
 - b. Impurity
 - c. Passion
 - d. Evil Desire
 - e. Covetousness
 - f. Idolatry
 - 2. Sins of Self-Control
 - a. Anger
 - b. Wrath
 - c. Malice
 - d. The Tongue
 - i. Slander
 - ii. Obscene Talk
 - iii. Lying
- b. We put on the heavenly things (Put on the new self).
 - i. The new man is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.
 - 1. This is the same way man was originally created (Genesis 1:26).
 - 2. This is how God intends for us to live.
- c. The new man puts on godly qualities.
 - i. Qualities of Selflessness
 - 1. Compassion
 - 2. Kindness
 - 3. Humility

4. Meekness
 5. Patience
 6. Bearing with one another
 - ii. Qualities of Thankfulness
 1. Forgiving one another as God has forgiven us.
- III. But it's too hard.
- a. Do you think that God sent his only son into the world to be able to say "I did my part, now let them fend for themselves?"
 - i. John 3:16-17 – ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."***
 - ii. Romans 8:31-39 – ***"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."***
 - iii. Do you think that God would just send his Son and then tell us that it's all up to us after that? That would be wasting his Son!
 1. II Peter 3:9 – ***"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."***
 2. He wants us to get better. Therefore, he is willing to help us. In fact, he already has provided a way out.
 - a. I Corinthians 10:13 – ***"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."***

Conclusion:

- I. If you are entangled in a temptation this morning, do you want to escape?
 - a. First of all, that requires you to stop committing the sin itself.
 - b. Then it requires you taking positive steps in the other direction.
 - c. Ephesians 4:25-31 - ***"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be***

angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

- d. Then you must do the ultimate deed in focusing on Christ.
 - i. Die to sin and its practices (Romans 6:11).
 - ii. Be buried with Christ in baptism (6:4).
 - iii. Be raised in the likeness of his resurrection (6:5).
 - iv. Become a slave to righteousness (6:18).
- e. If you need help with one of these right now, you can come make it better right now, while we stand and sing.