

# Our Exalted Calling

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Colossian 3:1-4

**Preached on:** Sunday, July 14, 2013

What a joy it is to be able to come before you again this morning and minister the Word of God to you. I would for you to take your Bibles and turn to Paul's epistle to the Colossians 3. I want to speak to you this morning about Our Exalted Calling.

According to a 2007 Gallup Poll, 81% of American adults say they believe in heaven and 80% of those surveyed in that same poll, believe that they are going to spend eternity there. But also about 1/3 say that they don't believe in hell or they're not really sure if it exists and about the same number doubt very seriously if there's any such thing as a real devil.

Certainly this makes sense according to the Word of God. We know that he has put eternity in the hearts of men, according to Ecclesiastes 3:11 and we also know that man has a very high opinion of himself and he is very certain that God shares that opinion and that God evaluates us on the same standard that we evaluate ourselves, our same standard of righteousness. We also know that people are fascinated with heaven. All you have to do is look at the best-selling books these days, many of them are on that subject where you read about folks who claim that they have gone into heaven and come back and they tell us all that they saw there. Of course, all of that is bogus; all of those things are lies. If you read those books you'll see that none of their testimonies bear even a remote resemblance to what God has described about his abode in his Word.

This, of course, makes sense because most people don't look to the Word of God for their source of information because they don't believe it's the Word of God. In fact, according to a 2011 Gallup Poll, we learn that in the United States, only 3 in 10 people say that they take the Bible literally.

But you seldom hear anyone talking about heaven, do you? Very seldom and when you bring the subject up, it's kind of like bringing up politics, you know, it's just something you don't really talk about. Nobody really knows much about it and then beyond that, human beings are hopelessly earth bound. Our focus primarily is on us, on our families, on our jobs, on our life, on this life, this world. And, unfortunately, even as Christians we find ourselves very attached to this life, infatuated with the short-lived realities of this world. Jesus commands us otherwise. He says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasure upon earth but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven." He goes on to say, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

I would ask you this morning, Where is your treasure? All we have to do is take an honest look at our checkbooks and we will see where our treasure really is. Most of us tend to spend the majority of what we make on ourselves, especially our extra income, always saving up for something that's going to make us happy. In fact, we live in a culture of unbridled self-indulgence and trivial pursuits. Maybe you've seen the little sign on the back of cars, "He who dies with the most toys, wins." That's really the mindset of

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our culture. One shoe company captured the heartbeat of our culture in its advertising slogan, it says this: “Life is short. Play hard.” I would add: “Jesus says life is short. Serve hard.”

Look at your calendar. If you’re honest you will see that you spend every spare moment pursuing the fleeting pleasures of this world; from sports to Hollywood, people spend billions of dollars on entertainment. Most Christians spend far more time on Facebook and watching television in one week than they do in private study in a whole year. Maybe you’re in that category. Many professing Christians will spend the majority of their life serving themselves and yet never spend a full day in selfless service to Christ. And yet, we will be like the proud peacock and strut around, flaunting the full plumage of our religious affiliations and our church attendance. Take inventory for a moment of your thought life. What are the types of things that you focus on. Most people are obsessed with the things of this world that will make them happy because, after all, life is all about me and my needs, not God and his glory.

Dear friend, if this describes you and you name the name of Christ, there is something dreadfully wrong with your spiritual condition. The things of the world have seduced you; you’ve forgotten that this world is not your home. These attitudes and actions betray a man that has been banished to an island of spiritual infancy and is of little use to anyone especially the God they claim to worship.

And so, this morning I would call you to repentance and remind you of a very different perspective that is pleasing to God, one that will reap untold benefits in your life. We must, for example, follow the great heroes of the faith who have gone on before us. They understood that they were, according to Hebrews 11:13, “strangers and exiles on the earth.” And like them, we are to “desire a better country, that is a heavenly one.” In Hebrews 13:14 we read, “For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.” That, by the way, is a reference to the New Jerusalem that Abraham was seeking according to Hebrews 11:10, “whose designer and builder is God.” And, of course, that is described in vivid detail in Revelation 21. This is the capital city of heaven, the crown jewel of heaven that will descend from God out of the third heaven and it will hover over a recreated earth and be illumined forever by the dazzling brilliance effulgence of the glory of God. Are you looking for that city? Does it ever go through your mind?

This is just one aspect of our glorious inheritance, just one aspect of what awaits the redeemed and yet, many Christians really know nothing about it, much less, long for it. I often ask forlorn and discouraged Christians that I’m working with a variety of questions that ultimately betray their earth bound, self-centered heart and one of the things that I will ask about, “Do you ever think about the New Jerusalem?” And for the most part, most Christians will look at me and say, “The new what?” “The New Jerusalem. Are you looking for that? Abraham did.” How sad.

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Beloved, do you realize that we are citizens of another Kingdom right now? Your name has been written in a book. This isn't our home. According to Philippians 3:20, "our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." I ask you this morning, Are you eagerly waiting? Our prayer is to be "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Right now, we are to be joyfully proclaiming all that our glorious King has done. We are to be doing the will of our King. We already wear the robes of righteousness that he has given us, we're already being served by his ministering Spirit and this is just a foretaste of what we will experience some day. We already sing the glories of his triumphant grace.

In Galatians 1:4 Paul stated that Christ "gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age." So, beloved, why are we so caught up in it? How can we possibly be effective in telling other people about the Gospel of Christ if we, ourselves, are not longing to see him face-to-face. Why would anyone want your Savior and the glories of heaven when you're obviously so bored with both and prefer the material things of this world?

Dear Christian, "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind," Paul has told us in Romans 12:2. And we want that renewing to begin today as we look at some very practical admonitions given to us by the Holy Spirit through his inspired Apostle Paul here in Colossians 3, the first four verses. Let me read them to you,

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

These four verses form the bedrock of personal holiness upon which we can build the superstructure of spiritual maturity. And, my friends, if you understand these things and you live these things out, you will see a great change in your life, but if you don't, you will remain in a state of spiritual infancy.

This morning I wish to draw your attention to four crucial truths that every believer should hold dear. We must: 1. have a proper perspective; 2. have a persistent preoccupation and that's going to be based upon #3; 3. a provable premise that guarantees, you guessed it, a preeminent promise. And if you will cease these profound concepts and make them your own, if you will commit yourself to them, knowing that they have been revealed to you by your Creator and your Redeemer, your life and your testimony will never be the same because, beloved, this is our exalted calling.

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First I want you to notice what it means to have a proper perspective. In verse 1, he says, if then “you have been raised up with Christ...” Here Paul begins with a simple yet very profound appeal. He has spent the first two chapters exalting the person and the work of Christ. In fact, in verse 9 of chapter 2, he says, “For in him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form and in him you have been made complete and he is the head over all rule and authority.”

Here’s what is absolutely staggering: he says we have been raised up with Christ. What does this mean? It literally means that we have been co-resurrected with him. In fact, in chapter 2:12, he reminds us that we have been “buried with him in baptism in which you are also raised up with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead.”

Now, this is not speaking of water baptism but it’s rather speaking of the idea that we have been spiritually immersed into his death and into his resurrection. And, certainly, water baptism is a beautiful picture of the believers union with Christ; it symbolizes the identification that we have in his death and burial and resurrection. But, according to Romans 6:6, at salvation “our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.” And we know, according to 2 Corinthians 5:17 that we have become “new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” So, in other words, we have a whole new disposition that longs to be pleasing to God, to live a life that is pure and holy.

Beloved, this is the proper perspective that we must have. We have been “raised up with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead,” he says in chapter 2:12. An amazing text. He’s done this through the working of God. Working translates the Greek word, *energeo*, and from this, by the way, we get our English word, you can hear it, the word “energy.” So, in other words, what happened at the cross and in the resurrection, is appropriated to every believer today. Do you realize that he is working in you right this moment? For this reason, Paul said in Colossians 1:29, “I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”

My friends, you must grab a hold of this. The Spirit of God repeats these concepts over and over again and because of this, Paul prayed earnestly for the saints to gain this perspective. Do you remember that great text in Ephesians 1 beginning in verse 18, he says, “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.” Then in verse 19 he went on and talked about how he longed for them to know “the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance,” catch this, “with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.” So, this is truly amazing and this is why in Colossians 2:13, Paul says, “He made us alive together with Him.”

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Think about this: because of this we no longer live in the realm of the spiritually dead who have no capacity to respond to spiritual stimuli. A spiritual transformation has taken place, something radical has happened, something that God has done, something that continues to work in us right now. Doesn't this make you just want to run out to the mall and buy stuff? Doesn't this make you want to escape for hours into television or into some video game? Doesn't this make you want to promote yourself all afternoon on Facebook? Oh, dear friends, how warped we have become in our priorities, how easy it is for we as believers to live in a fool's paradise. How can we so quickly, like Esau, trade our inheritance for a bowl of soup? Indeed, the heart is more deceitful than all else, it is desperately wicked. God's words to apostate Judah through Jeremiah are equally fitting for us today. He said, "My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this and shudder and be very desolate declares the Lord, Jeremiah 2:11-12.

So, this morning I plead with you to develop a proper perspective of who you are in Christ, to grab a hold of what he has actually done and what he is doing on your behalf. And with that proper perspective, you will have secondly, a persistent preoccupation. Notice, verse 1, again, he says "if," or it could be translated "since then you have been raised up with Christ," what are we to do? He says, "keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

So often I will hear people say, "Aw, I'm just really seeking the Lord's will." Well, my friends, here is a verse right here, I could give you hundreds of others, but here is one right here, "keep seeking the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." This is an imperative command. It is not a casual suggestion. "Keep seeking," it's in the present tense in the grammar which indicates continuous action. Don't stop doing this; this is to be an ongoing priority; this is to be an enduring preoccupation of the desires of your heart; this is what should drive you.

"Keep seeking the things above." What are those things? Well, what's above? The glory of God, the holiness of God, the love of God, the communion with him, the fellowship with the saints, worshiping and serving him. Right now we are to be all about the Great Commandment and the Great Commission: to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength and to go and to make disciples and to teach others to observe all that Jesus has commanded. That should be the center of gravity around which our lives orbit. It shouldn't be something out here on the edges that we do every now and then. We need to become, in practice, who we are in position.

My friends, to put it very practically, we have a higher calling than a fancy car or a nicer house or a bigger 401k. Some will quip, "Yeah, but you can be so heavenly minded you're no earthly good." Really? I don't buy that. I think those people have missed it. I would put it this way: if you are not heavenly minded, you are no earthly good and you're no heavenly good. Instead, you're going to be a sucker for every advertisement, a sucker

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for every get-rich-quick scheme, you're going to be an entertainment addict, you're going to be a worry-wart about all of the things of this life, you're going to be self-absorbed, you're going to be self-indulgent, you're going to be earth bound. And you're not going to feel like and think like a child of the King whose citizenship is in heaven. Don't seek the pleasures of this world. Enjoy what God has given you. Don't be consumed with all the needs of this world, God has promised he'll supply that. Don't get distracted with all of those types of things. Jesus said, "Do not be anxious then saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or with what shall we clothe ourselves for all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek, for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you." There's the priority. Seek his priorities. And what are those things? Well, his Kingdom and his righteousness. In other words, seek his will, seek his authority in your life and tell others about his Kingdom. My friends, live now in the glow of heaven's glory.

Charles Spurgeon said this,

"Oh, seek to know on earth the peace of Heaven, the rest of Heaven, the victory of Heaven, the service of Heaven, the holiness of Heaven. You may have foretastes of all of these - seek after them! Seek, in a word, to be preparing for the Heaven which Christ is preparing for you. You are soon to dwell above - robe yourselves for the great festival. Your treasure is above, let your hearts be with it. All that you are to possess in eternity is above, where Christ is! Rise, then, and enjoy it! Let hope anticipate the joys which are reserved and so let us begin our Heaven here below. If you, then, be risen with Christ, live according to your risen nature, for your life is hid with Christ in God."

So, Paul tells us, "keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." The right hand is the place of honor, it is the place of authority, it is the place of sovereign power. Beloved, this is our Redeemer/King that we are to seek, the lover of our souls who suffered in our stead and died to purchase our redemption. This is the omnipotent sovereign of the universe, unrivalled in majesty and power. Behold him. Fix your gaze upon him. Cause your life to be lived to the praise of his glory. Make your thoughts take flight and soar into the heavens. Go before the throne in your mind and through the Word of God. Fly away to the one who gave himself for you and will come again to receive you unto himself. This is where Christ is.

Philippians 2:9, "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." There is the name above every name. And, again, think about it: if you're in Christ you have been united to him, you're hidden in him. In some inscrutable mystery he dwells within us. The same power that

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raised him from the dead is working in you right now to bring you into the glorious presence of the Triune Godhead. How could anything be more magnificent in your life than that?

This should be the supreme, all-consuming preoccupation of our mind, not Obamacare. This is our exalted calling, not political activism. Nothing else in life really matters. We get caught up in all of the stuff that Satan wants to feed us in the news media and all of these things. My friends, all of this stuff that's going on in our world and, granted, it's wicked but God has ordained all of this to happen ultimately to accomplish that which he has decreed to bring glory to himself. We get all worked up about people, whether they be presidents or judges or some other politician or whatever. My friends, these people are fleas on fleas. God is the one in charge. Don't get distracted with all of that stuff.

These are the things that remain forever. That's why he says in verse 2, "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." If I can make a distinction here, the first command really speaks of the practical pursuit of the Kingdom and righteousness of God in our every day lives but here we are commanded to literally think about the things above, not the things on the earth. When he says, "set your mind," it could literally be translated "keep thinking on this seriously," "keep on giving serious consideration," "let your mind dwell on this," "have this inner disposition." Again, grammatically, it's in the present tense so there's continuous action. I like the way the old King James put it, "Set your affection on things above."

Is not Christ our head? And are we not members of his body? Should we not be responding to the head. What loving wife would fail to think about her husband while he is away? Beloved, catch this: this is the stuff of spiritual maturity. A person that thinks often about the God of glory, the throne of God, the centerpiece of heaven. That realm of indescribable glory where we will one day be. To help you think about it, read Ezekiel's description of God's throne. You will hear him try to describe the indescribable, Ezekiel 1. Read John's description of the throne room in Revelation 4. Read about Daniel's vision of the pre-incarnate Christ. Read about Isaiah's terrifying vision of the all-surpassing glory of God that emanates from his throne.

Everywhere in Scripture, the imagery of the throne room with God is written in such a way as to produce shock and awe. Boy, it does, doesn't it? When you read it, it's almost overwhelming and yet, because of Christ, catch this, we are commanded to "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need," Hebrews 4:16. That is absolutely mind-blowing. It seems incongruent, doesn't it? This incredibly glorious place that evokes overwhelming fear in all of the inspired writers who saw it and yet now because of Christ, this is going to be our home. We come there boldly even now. In fact, we're promised that "in his presence there is fullness of joy, at your right hand are pleasures forevermore," Psalm 16:11. I can't wait for that, can you?

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John MacArthur said this,

“The believer’s whole disposition should orient itself toward heaven where Christ is just as a compass needle orients itself toward the north.”

Now, my friends, understand this: when you set your mind on the things on earth, you become like a foolish pirate that I saw on some goofy movie. His ship was shot out from under him and so what did he do? He grabbed a fairly large bag of gold and he put it in his arm and he jumped into the water and he’s trying to hold on to the gold with one arm and swim with the other. Many times that’s how we go through life, even as Christians. Too often we value those things that will bring us to ruin and we’re too foolish to even see it.

Like a young man that would spend every spare dime and all of his extra time customizing a truck. Now, what eternal value does that have? You might as well collect doughnuts and store it in a fancy case. Or, the young woman that I talked with a couple of years ago. I heard from her not too long ago and I was reminded of this young college girl drowning in credit card debt and yet she had the latest smartphone, closet full of designer clothes and shoes and purses and was driving a new sport’s car. I mean, folks, this is beyond stupid, this is idolatry and I told her that and by God’s grace, she was convicted. Or, Christian parents that will spend thousands of dollars, literally thousands of dollars and every spare minute of time so that their child can participate in some kind of a sport and yet those same parents will see no need to invest themselves in bringing up their children in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord. My, how warped we can get and what a tragic spiritual harvest those parents will reap in those children.

Believe me, dear parents, your child will seek what you seek and what you set your mind upon. Will you bring your child to the same spiritual ruin that you have brought to yourself? Think of all the idols we worship, things that we think are going to bring lasting joy but only bring us disappointment. How else can you explain the massive credit card debt that most people have? It’s now pandemic in our culture. You see, we tend to be far too absorbed in and attached to the things of the world like those who are an enmity with God that Paul described in Philippians 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.”

Dear Christian, please hear and heed what the Lord said here, “Keep seeking the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” Christ is highly exalted. He is the source of your life and blessing. For this reason, he says, “Whatever you ask in My name,” John 14:13, “that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”

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I would ask you: Why would you seek life any place else? This should be so encouraging, especially to those of you that are struggling in some profound way over some issue in your life, some great calamity, especially those that may be listening who are being persecuted for their faith. I'm reminded of Paul's great suffering. In the midst of that suffering, here's what he said in 2 Corinthians 4, beginning in verse 8, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." Then he went on to say this in verse 16, "We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

O, dear Christian, live in light of his glory. Develop an eternal perspective. View your life as merely a journey toward your heavenly home. Loosen your grip on the things of this earth. Set your mind on the things above, on the things of God. And look closely at this corrupt world and when you do, you will abandon it.

Augustine said this,

"No one longs for eternal incorruptible and immortal life unless he be wearied of this temporal, corruptible, mortal life."

How true that is. So, may Christ in his glory, which one day we will all share, be your persistent preoccupation.

Then, of course, this is based upon a provable premise, number 3. Notice verse 3, he says, "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God." An amazing statement. You have died, past tense, which indicates that a death took place sometime in the past. When did that happen? When did you die? Well, you died at salvation. Believers have died to sin. We have died to this world system designed to destroy us. Again, Paul makes it so clear in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If any man is in Christ, he's a new creature. The old things pass away, behold the new things have come." And so now, our life, Paul says, is hidden with Christ in God. Once again, this is mind boggling.

Believers actually exist in Christ. Do you realize that? That he is the source of our spiritual life? Think about it: even as Christ is hidden from this world, we as believers share a common life with Christ, a secret communion that is also hidden from this world. That's why the world cannot understand us, they're spiritually dead so they hate us even as they hate Christ. Nevertheless, we are hidden in him and we are "partakers of the

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divine nature,” 2 Peter 1:4. But you must understand, the full experience of this divine nature and the full manifestation of all that we are in Christ will not be revealed until Christ is revealed. We’ll talk about that more in verse 4.

When I was a little boy, I remember being fascinated with Superman. In fact, we would often go from Illinois down to Murray, Kentucky where our family is from and we would drive through metropolis Illinois. And, of course, everybody knows that’s where Superman is from. In fact, they had a big statue of Superman and it said there, “Metropolis, home of Superman.” And I remember that vividly as a child. And I always liked watching those little movies or whatever about Superman and you would see bullies picking on Clark Kent, that newspaper nerd, and they had no idea who they were messing with, but Clark knew. He was an alien. He was in this world but not of it.

My friends, this is how we need to see ourselves. Not as some comic book superhero, but as a glorified child of the living God that is empowered by his Spirit that will one day be manifested in unimaginable glory. For this reason, Paul said in Romans 8:37, that “in all things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.” *Hypernikaō*, we are super conquerors because of Christ. In fact, in Romans 8:19, we read that “the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for” something and what is that? For “the revealing of the sons of God.” You see, friends, they don’t see our cape right now. Alright? We don’t experience much of it either. We have little glimpses of it. They know nothing of the powers that we have in Christ and the powers that are going on to protect us from this world. O, but dear friends, one day they will and we will experience this. John has made it so clear in 1 John 3:2, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be.” O, dear friends, some day the world will see something infinitely greater than Superman.

So, this is the provable premise. This is the basis of our hope. Verse 3, “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” So, in other words, if that is true, your life is going to increasingly look more and more like Christ. It will manifest more and more of the virtues of Christ. This is the great doctrine of the union of the believer with Christ.

May I remind you that Scripture has revealed to us that we were once united to Adam but now, as believers, we are forever united to Christ and that union secures our complete identification with Christ in his work of redemption. It’s an amazing thought. What a marvelous supernatural union that God has authored. Jesus says in John 14:23, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”

Again, friends, this is staggering. We exist in him spiritually, not physically but spiritually. Think about it, Christ came to earth not only to pay the penalty for our sin but to establish this intimate, living, eternal union with us whereby we become one with him.

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# Our Exalted Calling

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** Colossian 3:1-4

**Preached on:** Sunday, July 14, 2013

Galatians 3:28, we “are all one in Christ Jesus.” 1 Corinthians 1:30, “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”

In Scripture we see how the Holy Spirit helps us grasp this unfathomable mystery by describing it through various figures. You will recall that we see in various places the idea of how we’re married to Christ. Ephesians 5, we have the description of the bride and the bridegroom. The idea is that we belong to him and that we enjoy this intimate spiritual oneness of relationship and everything that belongs to him belongs to us. And because of this, he will one day, according to Ephesians 5:27, “present to himself the church in all her glory having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she should be holy and blameless.”

We see that wonderful union in John 15 in the figure of the vine and the branches, the picture that life-giving organic bond that we have in Christ. There is this likeness of nature. There is an eternal impartation of life. There’s this ability to bear spiritual fruit. We see it also in John 6 in the figure of the body and the food. We have life by partaking of Christ even as Christ had life by partaking of the Father. In Ephesians 1 in the figure of the head and the body, we see the same thing, this union that we have with Christ. And the body of Christ is pictured in 1 Corinthians 12:27 where we read, “Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.”

So, we’re part of this amazing spiritual organism. We are unable to function outside of the body as independent organs and we will only be able to respond to the body if we’re attached to its head, the Lord Jesus Christ. And then together, we serve his purposes. John 17:21 we see it again in the figure of God the Father and God the Son and the oneness that we share with them. And because of our union with Christ, again, we come back to Colossians 3:1, “You have been raised up with Christ.”

Again, folks, let this sink in. This is a supernatural union that has been authored by God himself. This is a living union by which Christ’s life becomes our life. You see, he has redeemed us so that he can inhabit us. He does not work upon us from the outside but from the inside where he abides. This is an amazing indissoluble union that can never be severed. In fact, it is a mysterious union that finds no parallel. There’s no analogy that we have in human experience for this reason, Paul said in Colossians 1:26, this is a “mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Literally, our union with Christ is the basis of our salvation. It is the basis of all of the blessings that we receive. You cannot bypass the Lord Jesus Christ and come to God through any other way, nor can you find any spiritual blessing apart from being in Christ. This is the proper perspective that we must have in our life. This should be the persistent

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preoccupation of our mind because this is based on a provable premise in our life that we have died and our life is hidden with Christ in God, that he has made us alive together with him.

Romans 6:4, we read that “we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might,” what? “Walk in newness of life.” Expanding upon this very thing, Paul says in Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.”

This is amazing. While our unredeemed flesh is still subject to temptation and sin, we are no longer slaves to those things. Why? Because the same power that raised Jesus physically from the dead has raised us up spiritually from the dead and will one day also raise us up physically. Now, I ask you: if you have been raised up with Christ, if you are a new creature in Christ, if your life is hidden in Christ, why would you want to remain in the tomb of this world? What resurrected Lazarus would want to remain in that loathsome sepulcher?

We’ve been raised up with Christ, my friends. He’s made us alive together with him. Our life is hidden with Christ. We are no longer spiritual corpses. So, we need to rise up from the coffin of this world. We need to take off the shroud of sin, bid farewell to all of the corruptions of the flesh and live for Christ because, again, verse 3, “you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

And all of this, of course, guarantees #4, a preeminent promise, verse 4, here it is, “When Christ, who is our life, is revealed,” O, I love this phrase, “then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” Beloved, can there be any greater incentive for setting our minds on the things above and not on the things of earth? I love to meditate upon Philippians 3:21 where Paul says that Christ himself “will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”

Get ready, wicked world, you are about to see something that will make Superman look like Girlyman because of what Christ has done and what he is going to do. We are children of the King of kings and the Lord of lords who is one day going to descend from heaven in power and great glory and all of those who have been hidden in him will be revealed in that glorious day.

Lightfoot comments this way,

“The vail which now shrouds your higher life from others and even partly from yourselves will then be withdrawn. The world which persecutes,

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despises and ignores now, will then be blinded with the dazzling glory of the revelation.”

I want to close this morning with John’s vision of Christ’s Second Coming when we will be revealed with him so that very practically we can be doing this morning what I’ve been preaching and set our minds on the things above. Here’s what he says in Revelation 19, beginning with verse 7, “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’ Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’”

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.” There we are, folks. There we are. “From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.’”

As Christians, we can enjoy a foretaste of heaven on earth right now by seeking the very things that we will one day enjoy perfectly and forever. By setting our minds on the things above. My friends, can we not right now enjoy communion with our God? Aren’t we able right now to worship him in Spirit and Truth? Are we not able right now to sing praises to his name? Are we not able right now to hear the sound of his voice through his Word? To do his will as revealed by his Word? Can we not right now adore his majesty and power? Aren’t we able to right now bask in the pleasures of his holiness by seeking his kingdom and his righteousness? Can’t we right now cherish rich fellowship with the saints?

I challenge you to make these things a priority in your life. And the way you do this is by having: 1. a proper perspective of Christ and who you are in him; 2. having a persistent preoccupation of the glories of heaven which are based upon 3. a provable premise that you have died and your life is hidden with Christ; and, of course, this will guarantee a preeminent promise that you will one day be revealed with him in glory.

Beloved, this is our exalted calling and I exhort you to be faithful to it.

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Let's pray together.

*Father, we thank you for these eternal truths. We pray that you will overwhelm us by them, that we might live them and enjoy more fully all that is ours in Christ until the day comes when we will enjoy them perfectly and eternally. And, Lord, for those that know nothing of the Savior that we adore, I pray that by the power of your Spirit you will so overwhelm them with the wretchedness of their sin in contrast to the glorious hope of the Gospel that today they will repent and cry out for the mercy that can only be given to them by the one who suffered in their stead. May today be the day they experience the miracle of the new birth and may we be instruments to these ends. Thank you, Lord, and we give you praise in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You've been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at [otcr.org](http://otcr.org).

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