



Colossians: Jesus Over Everything

September 17 – Colossians 3:1-4

Section 1: Introduction

As we begin to study chapter 3 of Colossians, we're reminded of the themes of Paul's letter to the church in Colossae. The believers, not unlike us, wrestled with the confusion of various competing philosophies, merging to form something of a compromised version of them all. For them, it was pagan philosophy, Jewish legalism, Jewish mysticism, and the merging of various lines of thoughts that were becoming a hodge-podge that misshaped their view of Jesus and his Kingdom.

Paul's solution for preserving purely Christ-centered thought consisted of affirming and elevating the unique person of Christ, his identity, sovereignty, authority, and ultimate sufficiency. As we begin Colossians 3, we see how Christ's identity and authority are to affect our very lives as his followers with the reality of our identity and the focus it should bring to our minds. Because Christ is reigning over all, that "all" should include our very own hearts, minds, and actions.

The focal point for our verses this week can be summarized with these simple three points: (a) the fact that Christ's people are already risen with him; (b) the appeal to an activity of the mind and will; (c) the object of that activity.

Read Colossians 3:1-4.

Mark any words or phrases that stand out to you, inviting God to lead your reading.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. - Colossians 3:1-4

Section 2: Walk slowly through this week's passage

Colossians 3:1

- Whenever we see a "since, then" or a "therefore" in Scripture, we look back to see what it's "there for." Take a look at Colossians 2:6-15 and 2:20 to see what Paul is reiterating in this verse. What is the reality for the believer based on these verses?
- Read Colossians 2:20. How does Paul describe our relationship to Christ? How is that the same or different than what he says in Colossians 3:1? What do you think this means?
- What does it mean to live in the status of "being raised with Christ?" What does it look like when a believer lives in Christ's resurrection?
- According to Colossians 3:1b, what are we to set our hearts on? Read Psalm 110:1-2, what does this tell you about Christ being seated at the right hand of God?

Colossians 3:2

- What does Paul ask people to "set" on things above according to this passage?
- What does Paul NOT want the Colossians to have their mind set on? What does this mean in a practical sense?

Colossians 3:3-4

- How does Paul describe the Christian's life with Christ in God? What does this mean for those who follow Jesus?

Section 3: Reflection Questions

N.T. Wright says, "Paul has just drawn out the implications of dying with Christ (2:20–23); the Colossians have left behind the old age. Now he draws out the implications of having also risen with Christ. They have entered the new age, and, belonging there by right, do not have to struggle to attain the status of membership in God's people: they already have it. They must now simply allow its life to be worked out in them."

- Is this reality of already having "the status of membership in God's people" something you think of often? How is this reality or "right" being worked out in your life?
- What evidence of being "raised with Christ" and living in Christ's resurrection do you see in your own life?
- Do you believe your life is truly hidden with Christ in God? Do you see your salvation as completely secure? If so, why? If not, why not? How does your belief affect where you set your mind and affections? How does that need to shift?

Section 4: Pray the Scriptures

Using Colossians 3:1-4, write out a prayer in response to what you've read OR use the prayer already constructed below to pray this passage.

[Sample Prayer]

Lord Jesus, who sits at the right hand of the Father, ruling and reigning over all creation, I accept the reality of my status as your redeemed child. Thank you for the ways you have rescued me from my former way of life and have secured me in your Kingdom. I pray for the perseverance to remove distractions from my heart (passions and desires) and my mind (thoughts and beliefs) that are not focused or centered on you. Uproot anything that pulls my affections away from you. Help me to choose you and reject the things of this world.

Grow in me the desire to seek you and your Kingdom. Just as you rule and reign over creation, rule and reign in my own life. Thank you for covering me with your righteousness. Thank you that in you, Jesus, I am hidden—safe and secure. Thank you that my future, eternal hope is secure and steady. Help the reality of my life to reflect the reality of my hiddenness in you. Keep me steadfast in my pursuit of you until you come again, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Section 5: Memorize Scripture

Throughout this series, we want to be memorizing Scripture. Use the prompts below to help you get Colossians 3:1-4 into your heart and mind.

1. Write out the passage: Write down Colossians 3:1-4 in your journal or on a notecard.
2. Memorize Colossians 3:1-4. Use various techniques to memorize the passage, such as repeating it out loud, creating visual associations, or setting it to a melody or rhythm, take time to commit these verses to memory.
3. Review and practice: Regularly review the passage throughout the week. Recite it from memory and reflect on its meaning and significance.