

## Resurrection Living

Colossians 3:1-17

### Introduction:

**Easter:** Why we make a bigger deal of Christmas than Easter, I'm still not sure (and Easter Bunny pics are *infinitely* creepier than Santa pics).

- Easter is almost upon us. Sometimes we spend so much time trying to *prove* the resurrection (has it's place) that we miss the Bible's emphasis on the resurrection. *We are raised to life in Christ*. What does it mean for the now? Not that Christ has been raised (that is the given) but that **we have been and are being and will be** raised.
  - "The evidence for Jesus' resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live" (Pannenberg).

**Why Do We Still Sin?:** What does it look like to embrace your new life in Christ? "Great! You've accepted Jesus. Now what?"

- Problem: If I have been raised with Christ, then why do I still sin?
- Out with the old, in with the new. Why am I not perfectly kind, faithful, forgiving, and so on?
  - Salvation is, at once, a reality that **has been** accomplished at the cross and resurrection, **is being** accomplished by the Holy Spirit, and **will be** accomplished when Jesus returns to make all things right. And all of these realities are present in us at once! So we can speak of our lives in Christ as past, present, and future.
- **Inaugurated Eschatology** (already and not yet). **D-Day and V-Day illustration**. The future is already won. The end is guaranteed. Our resurrection is as certain as the resurrection of Christ, though we have many battles left to fight!
  - The challenge in following Christ is living in the "now" according to the reality of what is "not yet" (dress for the job you want, not the job you have).
- In the gospel, every day we are becoming what we already are in Christ.

**Divided Vision:** I heard someone say, once, "right doctrine doesn't change you. Seeing God changes you. But right doctrine focuses God rightly, like focusing a camera on a beautiful sunset. Therefore we desperately need right doctrine. But doctrine is a means to an end. The end is seeing God. That's what changes us" (Dane Ortlund).

- This helps us frame the conversation today. Paul has talked about who Christ is, what he's done for us, and now he's helping us see how we live in the moment. What does it look like to *progress* in our salvation? **How do we change?** A lot comes down to the object of our focus.

Think of a guitar that is out of tune. What makes something out of tune? It is a tension between two notes, a disharmonious clash. With the right amount of adjustment, stretching, change, then the sound can go from painful to beautiful. There is a way the guitar is made (design), and set up, and when it is not adjusted in tune to its design, its reality, then it creates dissonance.

- I think for many **believers** (this is for believers; big “if” in v. 1), **their lives are filled with all sorts of tension, frustration, and failure because they are not living in tune with the reality of who they are in Christ.**
- IG tuning anxiety.

True transformation occurs when we align the way we think, love, and live with the reality of our resurrected life in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. <sup>5</sup> Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> On account of these the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup> In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. <sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. <sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

### 1. Resurrected Focus (vv. 1-4)

<sup>1</sup> If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

#### Union:

- The Bible talks about our salvation as union and participation in Christ. So that, what happens to Christ, happens to us. We receive his resurrection, his righteousness. Where he goes, we go. We are intimately connected to him: “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20).

**What's Your Aim?:** Since this is true of you, then you should seek the things that are above... Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

- If our ultimate reality is with Christ, in heaven, then that should determine the way we live here.
  - You head toward what you're looking at (e.g, mom driving, eye on the ball, see the rim when you shoot, straight lines with a lawnmower). "Fix your eyes on Jesus" (Heb 12:1-2).
- Here's the truth, we are often focused, obsessed, drawn to, or distracted by the spectacles of this earth rather than the realities of Christ. We move toward earthly things. We think in earthly ways. We are shaped by earthly ambitions and desires.
  - We have nothing to offer the world, because we're just like them!
- We are called to "a different way of being in the world" because we have a different allegiance and different destiny.
  - Remember the Israelites, called to the Promised Land, but as soon as it got hard, they wanted to go back to Egypt where they were slaves!? "It wasn't so bad."
  - God has called you to live as his son or daughter, don't live as a slave to sin.
- Step #1 in being transformed to be like Christ is beholding, gazing, studying, following, watching Jesus. Before you can put off sin, you have to see Christ clearly. Don't clean yourself up before you go to him. Go to him.
  - It is impossible to follow the will and character of Christ if you don't *know* the will and character of Christ revealed in Scripture.

**When Reality Becomes Real:** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory

- One day you will be more fully alive than you have ever been. When Christ returns, you will see what life worth living truly is. And that is more certain than anything here on this earth (singing in W. Africa about the second coming; we don't want the second coming, life isn't too bad now).

Hidden with Christ

- Your future life is guaranteed because Christ has guaranteed it. He has it (not you), so can't lose it. Your resurrected life is connected to his resurrected life.
- It is hidden, so the world can't see it if it can't see him.
- "The glory is hidden. Your death with Christ is hidden. Your resurrection is hidden. The true you — your true life that will be so much more glorious than the present life that you will say, 'this life in this world was scarcely be life at all compared to my life that was hidden for me in God.'" Walk by faith, not by sight.

**Life in Christ:** When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Christ's *appearance* or *coming* will complete the promise of eternal life, but Christ is your life NOW! "In him [is] life" (Jn 1:4). There is no eternal life without Christ and there is no life worth living without Christ.

- Disney Fireworks (Who is your favorite Disney character and why is Baymax? Body by Baymax): And they all lived happily ever after. Each of us has a dream, a heart's desire. It calls to us. And when we're brave enough to listen, and bold enough to pursue, that

dream will lead us on a journey to discover who we're meant to be. All we have to do is **look inside our hearts and unlock** the magic within... For you are the key to unlocking your own magic.

- The lights the magic are so compelling, a tsunami of emotion and nostalgia (Satan is an angel of *light*). The best lies come wrapped in the most attractive packages.
- It's simply not true. You are not the answer to your problems. Doing what you want when you want is a recipe for hurting yourself and others. Your joy your happiness, your self-actualization is wrapped up in the creator who made you and loves you. Your love and goodness and strength will fail you **but Jesus never will.**

**What Is a Worthy Life:** What is a life worth living? When I look around, I see a some people surviving and a few brief moments of joy but few seem to be truly flourishing (except on IG, which only makes the rest of us feel worse).

- Standards of living have risen exponentially in the West. By all accounts, we are safer, healthier, and wealthier *but not happier*. Maybe it's because true joy is not found in those things? Maybe, as the Scriptures tell us, true life is only found in Christ.
- God's way is the most joyful way! (e.g., roller coaster, above ground pool, etc.).
- "The child in my womb right now is truly alive, even though his life is utterly contingent on mine. He moves freely within my womb. But he does not control his location: where I go, he goes. Likewise, I am truly alive and truly free not independently from Jesus but enfolded in him. And just as escaping from me right now would mean not life to my child but death, so escaping from Christ would mean not freedom and life to me but a brief writhing before stillness. Enclosed in my body, dependent on my blood, protected by my immunity, and housed in my love, my son is, in a tangible sense, united with me. Because I trust in Jesus, I am similarly dependent on him. Where Jesus goes, I go. If he lives, I live. He died my death and took my punishment. He is my resurrection and my life" (Rebecca McLoughlin, *Confronting Christianity*).
  - We have life only in Christ, why do we seek it elsewhere?

## 2. Resurrected Character (vv. 5-11)

<sup>5</sup> Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> On account of these the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup> In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. <sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

**Grace-Driven Effort:** Because of the reality of our life in Christ we *can* fight for holiness and oppose sin and injustice. **Grace does not create passive bystanders but active participants.**

“The gospel is against earning, not effort.” We don’t earn salvation, but we do strive for godliness. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you (this is a command to action).<sup>1</sup>

- No one drifts into godliness.

**Is There a Difference?:** In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.

- Is there a difference between the unsaved and the saved you? The unregenerate and the regenerate you? Or could the thoughts, attitudes, and actions you had before faith in Christ still exist.

**Stakes are High:** It’s actually impossible. **Either you’re dead to sin or dead in sin.** Or, to put it more bluntly, either you **kill sin or it kills you.**

- “Sin will always take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.” You’ve got to cut off the line of supply to your sin. You can’t feed sin your hopes, love, affection, time, and energy. **What and how are you feeding the sin in your life?**
- Put to death (violent), violent as Jesus’ execution? Jesus says ‘take up your cross, die to self. Too often, we want to manage, domesticate sin,
- This isn’t just behavior modification (e.g., do not handle, do not touch, do not taste). This is about real victory over sin.
  - Putting to death is about victory, defeat, winning. There are many steps along that path, and you might not have complete victory until heaven. But we can’t just settle for a “truce” with sin. If the only thing keeping you from sin is avoidance, then you need to dig deeper into God’s freedom.
  - **Do you believe your sin can be defeated? It has been and it can be!**

**Examples of Sin:** Let’s get specific! Vague sins will not help us. Let’s name specific sins (this isn’t all sin). What it’s not before what it is.

- **Sex and Desire:** sexual immorality (πορνείαν), impurity (ἀκαθαρσίαν), passion (πάθος), evil desire (ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν), and covetousness (πλεονεξίαν), which is idolatry. Lots of people want to follow God until he tells them they can’t sleep with whoever they want.  
**Jesus is not just Lord of your prayer life but of your sex life!**
- We see the general prohibition against sex outside of marriage (i.e., sexual immorality). But the picture here is also of lust that overtakes us, uncontrolled sexual urges, desires that are evil (i.e., misdirected desire; good desire is to be encouraged). And we might think covetousness (or greed) has no place in this list, but it actually makes sense. Greed is the unchecked belief that “everything, including other people, exist for my own personal amusement and purpose”. This is why Christian marriage, when submitted to the Lord, has the potential to be so beautiful. In it, each person treats the other as a gift to be treasured rather than an object to be used.
  - **Self-indulgence**, me at the center, person seeking what doesn’t belong to them.

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<sup>1</sup> The “wrath” of God is not the malicious response of a capricious deity. It is not arbitrary punishment but the appropriate and necessary reaction of true holiness, justice, and goodness to wickedness, exploitation, and evil of every kind. In fact, there is no such thing as true justice without wrath toward sin.

- **Anger:** <sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all away: anger (ὀργήν), wrath (θυμόν), malice (κακίαν), slander (βλασφημίαν), and obscene talk from your mouth (αἰσχρολογία ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν). Put it *all* away (all sin). And look how unchecked, sinful anger grows. It goes from an idea to an action (rage). It becomes speech that harms others. Even called blasphemy (because you are speaking against people who are all made in the image of God). It shows up as filthy language (the kind of talk that is abusive and vulgar).
  - When we behave like that (as Christians), when we speak like that, we are not being true to who we are in Christ.
- <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. That was the old you, don't go back. Our new life will be fully revealed. In the meantime, we are putting to death those earthly ways of being.

**Affection:** You not only have to cut off the supply line to sin, you have to **replace** your affection for sin with affection for Christ. In fact, the best way to crowd sin out of your life is to fill it more and more with Christ.

**New Community:** One evidence of this new way of being, is it creates a new community of people who have Christ at the center of it all. Christ is all, and in all.

- Our unity is centered precisely and primarily on Christ. This doesn't erase our unique contributions to the body of Christ or our diverse experiences, but it does give us someone transcendent to pull us together.
  - Everything in the world will tempt us to divide and separate, but Christ unites the divided people of God. Not united around worldly divisions but around Christ.
- And if we put anything other than Christ at the center of our unity, it will eventually fail us. The center of our holiness is Christ.
- <sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.
- In Christ, what formerly divided can be united

### 3. Resurrected Community (vv. 12-17)

<sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**New Self:** <sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. Early Christian baptismal candidates would wear an old or dirty robe to their baptism and, after being raised out of the



water, would put on a new robe symbolizing their new identity and new allegiance (it's like being traded to a new team and wearing the new jersey). We are chosen ones (kickball, baseball card value).

- For us, the new clothes we wear are not physical but spiritual. We are marked by the clothing of the gospel. Compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,
  - Opposed to the ways of the world. If your vision of godliness, Christlike leadership doesn't look like this, then it is worldly not Christlike.

**Godliness:** <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

- What does godliness look like? It looks like the gospel. as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Notice the final ingredient to the gospel puzzle—love. Now, this is not just heart racing, butterflies in the stomach love. This is Christ-modeled, sacrificial, covenant love (love sincerely from a genuine and pure heart). That would fix problems.

**Community:** The church is supposed to be a pilot plant of heaven. A place where God's new humanity shows the vision of our future home, not perfectly, but truly.

**Growing in Godliness:** Where is your godliness going to grow and be nurtured? In a gospel-centered, Bible-teaching, disciple-making, mission-focused church. **You will not grow deep in godliness separated from a gospel community.** <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- In the church the peace of Christ should rule, not the worry of the world. In the church, the word of Christ dwells, not the voices of the world.
  - (1) In the church you will be fed the **Word of God**.
  - (2) In the church you will grow in **godly wisdom**.
  - (3) In the church you will be **taught** and you will teach others.
  - (4) In the church you will be **held accountable** (i.e., admonished).
  - (5) In the church you will **sing praises** to God.
  - (6) In the church God will get the **glory** in all things.

Are you part of that kind of church? If yes, then be thankful. If no, then get searching (and you don't have to search far).

**Conclusion:**

Let's go back to that original illustration about the guitar. One classic hymn puts it this way: "Come Thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace." When you tune a guitar, you twist the tuning pegs to tighten the string. You stretch the string to get it in tune.

- How does God need to stretch you to bring you in tune with his character? The result is a beautiful and harmonious tune which proclaims his glory.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Discussion Questions: (1) Would you describe your life as “in tune” or “out of tune” with the things of God? In what ways or areas is there dissonance between your faith and your life? (2) In your opinion, how do you put sin to death? (3) If you are a believer, in what ways are you tempted to go back to your old life? How do you reject that temptation? (4) How do you fuel your effort to follow Jesus?