

An Open Letter to Pastors / Continued VIII ~

Colossians 3:1 – 5

~ Each epistle Paul the apostle wrote is divided similarly; that is, a doctrinal section is presented first, followed by a practical section. In this report, our Spiritual Safari will begin to consider the *practical* section of the letter to the church at Colosse. We have examined the preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ, as we have seen Him presented as a member of the Trinity, as the Creator of all things, and as our Redeemer Who gave Himself a ransom for us. Now, Paul is going to insist that Christ be made preeminent in our lives. I hear so much today about being “*dedicated*” to the Lord; but, until He is first and foremost of all things in our day to day existence, then you aren’t dedicated to Him, friends – and He isn’t dedicated to you, either.

There are multitudes deeming themselves dedicated Christians who continue to live however and do whatever they please in the world. There has been no change in their hearts or lives. Well, those people are not dedicated Christians; in fact, they’re probably not even saved. Quite candidly, those who profess to be dedicated Christians, but whose lives do not show it forth in a Scriptural way, lead people *AWAY* from the cause of Christ. Living a Christian life means Christ living through us, speaking through us, loving others through us, acting through us, and working through us. The fulness of Christ must be poured out through the life of the believer; and that’s the only way He can be poured out, too. The thoughts and affections of believers must be Heavenly minded. That will only ever happen when and if our heart is seated in the Heavenlies where Christ is right now....

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

~ The “if” in verse one of this chapter is not an “if” of condition; it is the “if” of argument. We have seen this many times in Paul’s writing. These Colossian Christians had clear evidence in their lives of their salvation by their faith, hope and love. In fact, all of the fruits of the Holy Spirit were manifest in this church. The word was out that the church in Colosse had a living faith in Christ Jesus. They loved other believers; and that’s first and foremost in importance today amongst those who call themselves Christians. However, we’re not talking about our modern-day sentimental slush of sloppy agape. No, as a pastor, you exhibit your love for others when you give them the Word of God properly, correctly and completely. Doing so is a labor of love; and it will be laborious. If you don’t love it, you won’t be doing it very long. If you are a believer in a good church, then you evidence your love for your pastor by supporting his Bible teaching ministry.

This is all very practical; and it touches the bottom of our feet where the skin meets the sidewalk. If it doesn’t do that, then whatever you have is no good. Running around patting others on the back, and telling them what a fine job they are doing, and that you love them so much is perfectly meaningless. People can and do talk about love all day long; but have no earthly idea what love is. Love manifests itself in reality, friends. If that reality isn’t there, then the love isn’t real – it’s just that simple. Since you have been raised with Christ, seek those things which are above. If you are incessantly talking about end times stuff and the sins of the world, then you are not seeking those things which are above – because that would be impossible! Seeking Christ Jesus Personally should be our urgency and excitement.

There are so many people who take up a small-minded, pseudo-psychological course with a smattering of Scripture stirred in to lend it credibility – and they run with that thing like a dog with a bone. Well, these people mix things up and hand out the result of a few self-help lectures disguised as Bible study to other crippled Christians. They act as if their offering is the end-all solution to the problems of this life – from a

cantankerous mother-in-law to a workplace boss who is a dirty old man. They honestly think they have discovered how to treat everyone in every circumstance. Well, the answers to those things only come to the sincere student of Scripture who is seeking that which is above at the right hand of God, my beloved. That means the Lord Jesus Christ. You won't find answers in a crash course; and you won't find it in a book *about* the Bible, either. No, you'll only find those answers in a sincere, systematic, daily, educated, proper, correct, complete, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led study of Holy Writ; taught by a man who honestly loves, trusts, believes and obeys God — and is Personally ordained by Him.

The purpose of this Spiritual Safari is to get the Word of God to you in a simple, frank and candid manner. If you are honest, I believe you will admit that there are not many people in this world who are willing to accept that liability. My intention is to reveal to you the True and Living God — the Lord Jesus Christ — and to place your hand in His Hand. If the Spirit of God isn't using this expedition through the entire Word of God to draw you closer to Christ, then, well, you likely stopped reading a long time ago; and that's your problem — not mine. The Bible reveals Christ — period — full stop. We're not looking at a picture of a dead person now; we're looking at the True and Living God. Why don't you stop right here and ask the Lord in prayer for wisdom, judgment, spiritual discernment, knowledge and understanding thereof?

And with that, allow me to be personal for a moment, please. There is no shortcut to learning the Word of God. A one year course isn't adequate — not even close. Scripture cannot be fully comprehended through an abbreviated overnight theological class. This safari teaching is, actually, *MUCH* longer and more detailed than any college course in any subject on the face of the earth taught in university! I recognize that is quite a claim. When Paul came to the end of his life, he said, *"....oh, that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings."* I am attempting to bring you to the place where you seek those things which are above. I am trying to show you eternal life by showing you Christ. I suspect the number of readers who honestly reach that place are alarmingly few. Well, that's okay, because as long as there is just *ONE* of

you dear readers, I am going to continue in the Lord's will. So, for now, let's just keep moving along....

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

~ "Mortify" means put to death; put your members in the place of death. "Members" refers to the energies and activities of the old man. Paul deals with specific sins now: "Fornication" refers to physical and spiritual sexual perversion. Is your sin listed in this menu? There are many people trying to cover these things up in their lives. They are typically the ones who talk about dedication to Christ, too, by the way. "Uncleanness" includes thoughts, words, looks, gestures. "Inordinate affection" means misdirected and uncontrolled passion or unbridled lust. "Evil concupiscence" is an evil desire. "Covetousness" is must-always-have-more-ness! Saying, "I couldn't help myself" is a cop-out. Inevitably, these things happen because we have placed ourself in a compromising position. Well, God ultimately judges sinners for these sins, and God judge believers for committing them *in this life*. God says it simply will not be otherwise ~

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