

Christ Community Covenant Church
Colossians: Redeemed! "I am hidden with Christ in Heaven!"
Pastor Dave Scherrer - July 5, 2015

Deep theology!

Last week we talked about the truth and how important it is to know the truth. The point is that we are not to add anything to Christ or to take anything that is rightfully His away. There are Divine Revelations of God regarding himself which represent absolute truth and are not to be embellished or diminished. It starts to enter our thinking and attitudes in pretty insidious manners.

Have you heard the phrase "I'm a good Christian." I kind of understand the sentiment of the phrase, but really it has no meaning. A person is a Christian or not and nothing I do makes me a better Christian.

Sometimes we get the feeling that some think you would be a better Christian if you joined a certain denomination. Perhaps Baptist or Catholic or Presbyterian or Lutheran. But that is not the case. I have met some home schoolers who, as Christians come pretty close to believing that you are a better Christian if you home school or put your child in a private Christian school that makes you a better Christian. We have to be careful here. Or if you drive an old car, spend lots of time at church. Or join the mission field. Or get a Christian tattoo where everyone can see it.

We cannot add to our Christian condition anything that constitutes "good." Remember how Jesus answered the rich young ruler when he called Jesus "good?" Jesus answered, "Why do you call me good, only God is good." So we have a good, in fact exceedingly good Savior but none of us can perform so grandly so as to change or to improve on our status as saved in Christ. But that isn't always how we think.

Jesus plus nothing equals everything! Ok let's go ahead and look at our deep theology this morning:

Colossians 3:1-4

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

Let's break this down a bit

If you have been raised with Christ . . .
Then set your **mind and heart** on things above
For you have died and your life **is hidden** with Christ in Heaven!

Let's look first at that "if then" equation in verse 1. If you have been raised up with Christ is a figure of speech that Paul loves to use. It reminds us of our baptism, where we are lowered down into the water as though dead with Christ and then partakers in life with Him as we are raised up. He is writing to the church in Colossae so the presumption is this is your reality. If this is who you are you are to set your mind on things above. That doesn't mean you are to be looking to the sky and the stars. That doesn't make sense! If you have been raised with Christ Paul says have your eyes on Kingdom purposes and Kingdom values. And you are to set your mind. That is an important theme or reality for us.

This passage is important to me. As a young believer I read this and things began to click into place for me. I had previously read Galatians 2:20

Galatians 2:20

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.

And then I read that my life is hidden with Christ in Heaven. He is mysteriously in me and at once I am hidden with Christ in Heaven. For you have died . that is past tense. Done deal! Somehow, if I understand this deep theology, I am already positionally found to be in Christ where he is seated at the right hand of God. I don't have to wait to enjoy the blessings of heaven, they are already mine!

But in order for this reality to take place we need to understand that something about you has died and somehow you are mysteriously no longer here. So what has died? To understand this idea we can look at another writing of Paul. Paul mentions the idea in Colossians 3 a bit further down in verse 5 we read ***Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.*** Paul also uses the same language in three other portions of Scriptures, one in Romans and twice in Ephesians. Let's look at the one passage in Romans as this will help us understand what has died:

Romans 6:6

We know that ***our old self was crucified with him*** in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Obviously I was nowhere near the cross to have my old self crucified there on that Good Friday cross. Paul is creating a word picture for us. It does seem that the old self, was killed once and for these passages, past tense. But in the Ephesians passage it reads just a bit different. We are told to ***put off the old self;***

Put off the Old Self . . .

Ephesians 4:20-24

But that is not the way you learned Christ! ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

What is the old self and how do we take it off?

Introduce Davey

Old self, flesh, members, carnal mind. He lies, and pursues things that kill me. You have one of these too. My sad habit is that I lay him down for a bit and then, kind of without thinking I pick up this old smelly decaying body and start to act as though it still has life and meaning. It weighs me down and distracts me. My only hope is to take it off and to walk away from it.

First, this record doesn't say **THE** old man.+It says **OUR** old man.+Your **old** man+is specific to you. The above verses are personal. These verses don't say there was some nature in us that died. They say **WE** died. Your **old** man+is you, not some part of you or some nature within you. It's you. It is the person you were before being born again. That person died. You are now a new creation in Christ. We did not literally die on the cross with Christ so to die to something is a figure of speech that means something no longer has power or influence over you.

So putting off the old person is putting off old practices **and** attitudes. Colossians 3:8 mentions things that lie beneath and behind practices- like anger and wrath. The old person is the old bundle of attitudes and emotions and practices that I used to be. That's who I was before I was called out of darkness by the voice of Jesus.

It is an intentional act of joining my will to God's will thereby embracing the transformed life

Jeremiah 17:9-10

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? %&the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.+

One last thing. Putting to death the old man and his lies and behaviors isn't about reforming him. We are not to try to contain these behaviors when people are watching or when we are at church. There is no reforming the old self.

%They try to reform the old man, not considering that he admits of no reform to any purpose. Just consider what the old man is--namely, a supreme intention to please self; and you will see at once that this intention can admit of no reform for the better.

You may change its direction from one form of selfish indulgence to another, but such reform as this, though very common, is yet perfectly useless.+ *Charles G. Finney, 18th Century Presbyterian minister*

What we need is new life not a reformed old self. Regeneration. This putting off the old man and putting on the new is precisely what the Bible means by regeneration. This is the change of heart of which the Bible speaks. And perseverance is also implied. We are to continue in this state. Paul is writing to Christians and urges them to put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man.

Remember - Living things die hard!**Put On the New Self. . .**

Colossians 3:12 gives the same kind of clue about the meaning of the new person that we are supposed to put on. Paul says, "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and loved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience."

So the new person is the new bundle of attitudes and emotions and practices that Jesus has called us to become in his school. We must take off the old person and put on the new person. It is absolutely imperative that we get our moral clothes changed.

It is a spiritual mind, or a disposition to please God instead of self. The new man is thoroughly committed to do the will of God just as the old man is to do the bidding of his fleshly impulses. The former lives for God; the latter for themselves. All of us will seek to please either God or ourselves. The new man is born of the Spirit--born from above; this is also deep theology;

John 3:5-7

Jesus answered, %Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, %You must be born again.⁸

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly . . ."

Freedom, true freedom is to live in the peace and hope that is Jesus Christ by living in the Spirit.

True Freedom? Living Life in the Spirit of Christ**Communion**

Communion celebrates the mystery of Christ, I in Him and He in me. A living word picture in a physical manner that is meant to express deep theology in a spiritual sense.