

Colosians 3

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[0:00] we sing now from psalm 27 psalm 27 first two stanzas of the psalm in gaelic the lord's my life and saving health who shall make me dismay my life strength is the lord of whom then shall i be afraid verses one and two in gaelic of psalm 27 we remain seated to sing shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara shatia mahala shatia mahalasi kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani tengulanna kubhudis yakulara shatia mahalas ismulani kubhudis yakulara

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. I ask you, O God.

[4 : 09] If I could invite you now to turn your Bibles, please, to Psalm, not to Psalm, but to Colossians chapter 3. Colossians chapter 3, and let's pray as we go back there.

Heavenly Father, as we have thought with the children about the great need that we have of the help of the Holy Spirit, for every day we are conscious that we have a particular need when we come to your Word.

We need the Holy Spirit to be our teacher, so that what's said and what we do in terms of response to what's said, Lord, would be guided by you.

So help us, we pray. May we know the presence of the Holy Spirit amongst us. And we pray, Lord, that he would show us our great need of Jesus and that he would lead us to Jesus.

We ask, Lord, that there might even be someone here who would, for the first time, give their life to Christ today. We ask, Lord, that you would be with the children and that they would see the Gospel message and hear it clearly, and that they would respond in faith.

[5 : 39] We pray for every congregation that meets as we do. We pray especially for
Leverborough today, and we pray for Farrakhan, as he opens your Word here, that he
may know the help of the Holy Spirit, as we pray that we would know the help of the Holy
Spirit now.

So guide us, we pray. Take away our sin and enable us to see Jesus. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. For several weeks, probably actually a number of months now, some of the boys and girls who are through next door and in different places have been learning their words and their music as they prepare to go to the National Mod in Dunoon.

I think for most of the boys and girls, it's certainly one of the highlights of their year. Definitely one of the highlights of the parents' year, I know that. But when they go and perform, they go as themselves.

Their own names are read out when they stand on the platform or on the stage. When they take their place and they put their hands there and they stand as they're talked to, their own names are read out, and their ages, I think, are read out.

They're identified in that way, but they don't just go as themselves. They go as those who are in City Scott School. They go as themselves, but they go as those who are in Harris.

[7 : 12] So there's different kind of dimensions to their identity. They have their own name, their own personalities, their own style. But they're also connected with a school.

They're connected with a place. That's all wrapped up in their identity. And Paul, in the verses that we come to today in Colossians 3, he speaks to the Colossians about their identity.

He speaks to them as those who are in Colossians with real names and addresses and postcodes and front doors.

But they're not just people who are in Colossians. They're people who are in Christ. They have a place, not simply in Colossians, but they have a place and address that has been prepared for them in eternity.

As Jesus speaks of in John 14, those who love him, those who are trusting him. He says, I'm going to prepare a place for you. And that was true of the Colossians, and it's true of all who are in Christ.

[8 : 22] And so Paul speaks to the Colossians, and he speaks to us about our identity, and how our identity should shape our vision and our thinking, and indeed the whole way that we live out our Christian lives.

Remember that film, I've quoted this line a few times from the film over the years here. There's that line in the film where it says, What we do in time echoes into eternity.

Well, with Colossians 3 open, we could say what we are in eternity echoes into time. Meaning, if we are in Christ, if that's our identity, if that's our eternal position, if that's our status, then that will be seen in the way that we live in time in this world.

So that's what I want to think about today, as we're guiding through these verses. I want to think about various points. And the first point that Paul draws out here is, he talks about the death we died.

If we are in Christ, there is a death that we have died. He says in verse 1, Since then you have been raised with Christ.

[9 : 49] That's the believer. Now, you can only be raised if you have once previously died. And Paul makes clear in verse 3, past tense, For you died.

So, in which sense has the Christian died? Well, we've died to our old, sinful, independent, self-centred self.

That's a death that we've died if we're in Christ. We read Romans 6, which probably gives the best commentary on these verses.

And in Romans 6, if I just pick out a couple of lines from it, In verse 2, the Apostle Paul says to the Romans, We died to sin. Past tense.

In verses 6 into 7, he says, For we know that our old self was crucified with him, with Christ. So there's an old self that has to die before we are born again in Christ.

[11 : 01] See, the death that Paul makes reference to is in these terms. The old you and I, we were lost in our sin.

We were dead in transgression and sin. But God, in his mercy, he showed us our predicament. He showed us our sin. He showed us our lostness. He showed us Jesus, who could save us from our sin.

And when we trusted Jesus, the old sinful, you and I, died. And the new saved you and I was raised up.

These are the facts of what Jesus has done for those who are in Christ. The old man, the old self, has died.

And the new man, the new woman, in Christ has risen. These are the facts that Paul seeks to explain here.

[12 : 05] But we need to live in the light of these facts. When I was a wee boy, I used to live at 37 Kennedy Terrace, Storno.

And when that was my home, you know, I went there and I made myself at home and comfortable in that address.

I played in the garden. I had my toy box upstairs and my own bed. You know, I had access to the fridge and I used it often. Now, that's the way it was.

If I was today to go into Storno and go to 37 Kennedy Terrace and walk in and look at my toy box and sleep in that bed and open the fridge and raid it, Gordon would send somebody to lock me up.

Because we've moved on from there. And Paul is saying to the Colossians, you need to move on in your way of thinking and living from the old you.

[13 : 12] And you need to set your minds, verse 2, not on earthly things. That's what the old man did. Now, sometimes we have a phrase and we kind of pack that phrase with meaning.

And you might think, well, what does earthly things mean? Paul says, set not your mind on earthly things. What's he talking about there? Well, I think, and some of the commentators would back this up, that this is Paul's way of sort of summarizing everything that he's been teaching them previously to turn away from.

There were false teachers in Colossae. And they were saying, you can save yourself. You can save yourself through your religion. You know, you can be saved through other people, other deities, other ways.

They were pulling them away from Christ. And they were bringing in kind of earthly philosophies and earthly teachings. And that was the way that the Colossians had once thought.

And Paul says, you're not like that anymore. You're now in Christ. So set your minds not on these earthly things that you once thought about and that these false teachers are trying to drag you back into.

[14 : 33] They were trying to get the Colossians to take their focus off Christ. And his cross. And Paul says to them, don't set your minds on that earthly, futile, false thinking.

Whether it's dressed up in religion. Whether it's pagan quoted. Whatever way the teaching comes, Paul says, don't set your minds on anything that takes you away from Jesus and his cross.

One of the commentators, Steve Brady, says, all these petty rules and regulations. And that's what we've been in in past weeks. All these petty rules and regulations seem so clever and fantastic.

They promise to help us spiritually, but actually they do nothing to tame the wild beast of lust and sinfulness that lies in every human heart. Our hearts can only be changed and transformed by the renewing power of Jesus Christ.

And anything that causes us to deviate from that, that's the earthly things. That's the earthly, futile thinking that we are not to set our minds and hearts upon.

[16 : 04] This is a reflection, I suppose, on what would be a fairly short time in ministry.

I've been about 10 years in ministry now in terms of standing at a proper and going into houses. And when I think about it from the pastoral point of view, I think the greatest barrier to heaven and the sin that sends the greatest proportion of people on the road to heaven is pride.

It's the old man of self. I can do it. You know, it's thinking that you can save yourself by the things that you do, the places that we go, the religion that we apply ourselves to.

It's thinking that we can save ourselves by doing certain things well and avoiding other things which we know are bad.

it's thinking that you can cut a deal with the Lord on the basis of your performance. The vast majority of people in this country have a religious interest.

[17 : 46] Think that way. If I try hard and I be nice and I read enough chapters and I do enough prayers and I sit in these chairs for enough weeks, then God will look at me and say, yeah, you've done not bad.

We can get a place in heaven for you. And Paul is saying here, that's earthly thinking. That's futile. That's false.

That's what the false teachers are trying to drag you back into. And that needs to die if you are to be saved. And that needs to die if you and I are going to make any kind of spiritual progress.

We need to remember that Jesus has done it all. Jesus lived and died rose to do for us what you and I, the old man, can never do.

So the independent, proud, you, needs to die if Christ and his grace are to live within us.

[19 : 07] so it's the death of the old man, the I can do it man, that death needs to die.

That funeral needs to happen. It's the death that we died. Second point here is there's the life that we live. Remember Nicodemus in John chapter 3 is probably one of the best known chapters in scripture.

Nicodemus was a man who looked from the outside like he had every religious box ticked. He did have every religious box ticked. He looked like he was a man who was well qualified for heaven.

He certainly from the outside appeared to be very morally upright. He was a well respected leader of men and yet Jesus looked into his heart and he said, Nicodemus, you need to be born again.

You need to be reborn, Nicodemus, into spiritual, Christ-given, life. Remember a young man who gave his testimony years ago in the YF and Inverness when we were there.

[20 : 19] He would have been about probably 17 when he was speaking. His name was Ian. And he had the word Christian. Imagine a flip chart.

He had the word Christian in big letters behind him. And he spoke about when he became a Christian. And he said that when he became a Christian, and as he's gone on as a Christian, he was realising day by day that Ian, at the end of Christian, had to die.

And Christ had to live. Ian had to get smaller. And Christ had to get bigger. It's that prayer of John the Baptist.

He must increase and I must decrease. And the song that we often sung at the same YF was that song that's based on Galatians 3, which I believe you looked at at the fellowship last Sunday evening.

It is no longer I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me. Galatians 2, 20, I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

[21 : 41] And that's the amazing reality of the Christian life. I think we sometimes lose the wonder of this truth.

the Christian life is a life where Christ lives in the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

That's the life that we're given when we believe the power of the Holy Spirit comes to live with us and in us. So when somebody says to you, what's a Christian?

don't tell them codes and regulations and rules. There are guidelines for the way that we live and they're important. But a Christian is someone who has God living with us and in us.

Where did I get that from? Just listen to the verses. verse 1 since then you have been raised with Christ.

[22 : 55] You, the new man, has been raised up with Christ. Look at verse 3 for you, the old man, died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Now try and take a moment just to take that in, in application here. To be a Christian is to have Christ with you and in you.

And that's the offer of the gospel that's extended to all who have ears to hear who are sitting here this morning. The gospel is the good news about Jesus.

It's about his death on the cross for sinners. It's about his resurrection. It's about all that happened on Calvary's hill all these years ago in that place. But today, in this place, at this time, if you and I trust Jesus, he comes into our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

he comes into our lives to put our sin to death and to bring his resurrection life day by day into our hearts.

[24 : 25] Or to put it another way, when we believe all that Jesus did, all that he achieved on the cross, when he said, it is finished. It's applied to us, personally.

The old man of sin dies with Christ. And the new born again man in Christ rises never to die.

And it's at the point that we trust Jesus, that we really experience the fullness of life that God wants us to experience. Sometimes people think if they eventually give in to Christ and become a Christian, their life is going to become dull and uninteresting.

Life is going to drain out of you. That's the devil's lie. That's the tale that's spun in this world. That's what some perhaps even in the room today are swallowing.

And yet Jesus said, the thief, Satan, comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come, says Jesus, that they may have life and have it to the full.

[26 : 04] So there's the death that we die if we are in Christ. There's the life that we are given and we then live when we are in Christ and Christ is in us.

The third thing is there's the vision that we have. You know, we've had the negative in the first point. Do not set your minds on earthly things, but then the positive is given here also.

Verse 1 and verse 2. Since then you've been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above. Verse 2, set your minds on things above.

That's the positive instruction that we're given when we're in Christ. Set your minds, set your hearts on things above. And it kind of fits with the first hymn that we sang, Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart.

Paul says, set your minds, set your hearts on Jesus. Take a few moments to flick back into chapter 1.

[27 : 09] And at verse 15 through there to verse 23, we have this amazing section where Paul, as the Spirit of God inspires him, he paints this picture of the wonder of the deity and the supremacy and also the humanity of Christ.

And Paul says, set your minds, set your hearts on Jesus and his gospel. Set your minds, set your hearts on who he is and all that he has done in that amazing eternal plan to seek and save sinners.

Paul is saying you're with Christ Colossians and you're in Christ you're in relationship with him once you were his enemies now you are his friends once you were alienated from him you were enemies and now you are reconciled with him once he was the one who was preparing to condemn you now he's your savior he's the lover of your soul he's your helper who responds to your cries as you pray he's your deliverer so Paul is saying ponder these things set your mind and your heart on Jesus the tense of the word here which you lose in the English but it's in the Greek the tense of the word for set or seek depending on your translation there is the present tense so literally what this is translated as is keep on setting and keep on seeking your minds and your hearts on

Jesus and his gospel personally everybody here will have one of these devices whether a phone or an iPad or a tablet whatever you call them and when you buy them they work perfectly and then as you use them for a bit and you start to download music and you put all these photographs on and they get loaded up with apps they start to slow down they start to get cluttered so what do you have to do well you have to reset them and in the life of one of these devices you might have to reset them dozens of times to actually have them working effectively and Paul is saying here you need to keep on resetting your mind and your heart on Jesus because there's so much of this world and we import it into our lives and our minds and our hearts and it clutters our thinking and it busies our activity and it blurs our vision so much so that we start to live unwisely we start to live just for the here and now and we lose sight of eternity we lose sight of

Christ because we're so busy with the here and the now the critical things I think it's a Christianity explored that the quote comes don't let the urgent get in the way of the important and so much of the urgency of this world's tasks comes in on us and blurs our vision so that we neglect the most important thing of all and that is our hearts and whether or not we are saved and whether or not we are living in a way that pleases Jesus the other day I was coming out of the study I had my glasses off and I put my glasses on and I was heading out to study and I thought it's awful smoking in here kind of a steamy haze about the place

[31 : 22] I thought what on earth is wrong nobody else was in the house so charged off downstairs and headed for the kitchen expected to see maybe a pan that was sitting there since the morning or toast that was stuck in the toaster no pans boiling kitchen clear cook it off nothing in the toaster starting to sweat looking around and for a second I took my glasses off and took my glasses off no smoke it's like a haze a dirty smudgy smoggy haze that was on my glasses so I had to clear them then I had sharp vision so much of this world's activities that can be like a smoke and a smog that blurs our vision so Paul is teaching the Colossians here to watch their vision and to set their minds and their hearts on Christ and when we set our minds and our hearts on Jesus and his gospel when we see him clearly you and

I will live wisely we won't waste our lives with things that are passing in a flash but we'll make investments for eternity perhaps a helpful exercise this afternoon would be to sit down with your diary if you have one and think about where your and my time and talents and energies and resources are going what proportion is passing in a flash and what proportion of our lives are we investing in eternity there's the vision that we have there's the security that we have here when we are in Christ the phrase that keeps coming up and keeps coming up we share in Christ's death our sin dies with him we share in Christ's resurrection his resurrection born again never ending life comes to live in us and we also share in the security that is found in him do you remember when you were a little person you used to do hide and seek and somebody would count and you'd all charge off into the cross or whatever and if you could move fast you could sometimes get hiding places that were just exceptional if you were a bit of a chubby boy like me you know you ended up in the in the hiding places that you knew you had about two minutes worth and then you were going to get sprung but the places that were that were really good when you find a new place in hide and seek do you remember that you would sit there maybe for 20 minutes 25 minutes feeling absolutely invincible absolutely secure till eventually the person would say right I give up

I don't know where you are where are you and you would come out at that point you felt secure in that hiding place now it says in verse 3 for you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God now think about the security that there is in that statement could there be a more secure hiding place for time and eternity than to be with Christ in God think about the double protection the double dual layers of security that there is in that position there's the double protection of father and son which echoes the teaching of Jesus remember in John 10 Jesus says I give them eternal life and they shall never perish and no one can snatch them out of my hand my father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one can snatch them out of my father's hand

I and the father are one do you have this vision of the Christian in the hand of Jesus who's in the hand of the father there's that absolute security I have a waterproof jacket which I wore this morning when I went out for a walk in this pouring rain and I was noticing on the tag that it's got sort of multi-layered technology it said there's different layers of membrane and it worked because there wasn't a bit of rain that got through now for those who are in Christ we have that promise in scripture that sin the punishment for sin now Satan in his attempts to kill us at soul level at death itself and hell these great enemies of our soul they can't get to us when we're in Christ because we are secure in the hand of the son who's secure in the hand of the father so we can sing with gusto at the end hopefully rock of ages cleft for me let me hide myself for me let the water and the blood from my rib inside which flowed be of sin the double cure cleanse me save me from its guilt and power so that's the security the personal security that is afforded to those who are in Christ and we listen to the words of Paul as he speaks but we just take a glance as we move to concluding here at the posture of Christ we see even more in the way of security verse 1 since then you have been raised with Christ set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated do you notice that where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and the posture of

Jesus there should give us more confidence Jesus is at the right hand of God he's looking down at this world he's looking down at all that we see that seems to be so much in rebellion against God but he's not standing nervously poised and waiting to intervene Jesus is not pacing anxiously but he is sitting he is seated regally on his throne the work of salvation is complete we go to Hebrews to see another dimension of that the threats and the rebellions of this world against Jesus are of no alarm to him he reigns he rules and there is no one and there is nothing that can dethrone him he is seated on high and if we are in him we can rest secure one more point but I think there's no more time so let's pray heavenly heavenly father we pray that these truths which are expounded in this letter from

[39 : 26] Paul to the Colossians we pray that you would apply them to our lives here in the power of the Holy Spirit we ask that you would help us as we go from here to meditate upon these things and we ask Lord that you would change us to be more like Christ if we are in Christ and to be in Christ if we are still apart from him help us to see all that he has done for us and help us we pray to believe so that all that he has done is applied to us in time and for eternity and we ask this in Jesus name Amen we'll sing to conclude our mission praise 582 582 mission praise to finish rock of ages quest for me let me hide myself in thee let the water and the blood from my red and sideways flow ff he of send that who oleh h he heanha dice me thou thou bey I ■■■■■■ Iparable ao

Sai ba by■ of sin could not at all thou must stay round the world nothing in my heart I pray simply to thy cross I pray make it come to thee for dress helpless look to thee for grace of light to the fountain high wash me, Saviour, long I die on I draw this fleeting breath when my eyes shall close in death when I soar through traps of no see thee on my judgment throne look a wager's plan for me let me hide myself in thee and I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore

Amen