

LIVING A CHRIST-FOCUSED LIFE



IS THE FOCUS OF YOUR LIFE SET ON JESUS CHRIST OR ON THE EARTH?

Paul writes to the believers in the church in Colosse. He has never actually met them, but he still cares for this new church as if he was there with them. This is evident from the first verse in chapter two where he says that neither they nor the church in Laodicea have ever seen him. This raises an interesting question. It appears that he also wrote a letter to the congregation in Laodicea (See Colossians 2:1 and Colossians 4:16.) although this never became part of the New Testament canon.

Nevertheless, Colossians is a beautiful letter of admonishing believers to remain in the faith. Paul teaches them to remain focused on Jesus Christ, their Saviour, and indeed, “walk in Him” (Colossians 2:6) and “rooted and built up in Him” (Colossians 2:7). Further on, Paul says that the Colossians were made alive (“quickenened”) with Him (Colossians 2:13). He then admonishes them with this statement:

¹If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ²Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. – **Colossians 3:1-4**

What an amazing challenge! If we have been made alive in Jesus through the rebirth (John 3:3), then we belong to Him and our focus should be on Him, where He is in heaven. Paul tells them to **seek** (actively look for and pursue) heavenly things. Our affection, that which we hold dear, should be **set** in heaven, where things are permanent, and not on the Earth, where things are destined to be wasted and burned (2 Peter 3:10).

In what way are we dead, as shown in verse three? We are dead in ourselves. He gave the same message to the churches in Galatia:

²⁰I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. – **Galatians 2:20**

Paul’s focus is very much on the fact that when we accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, we die in ourselves, the old person, and are made new in Him. I, the old man, no longer live, but Jesus lives in me. He continues in verse three that not only are we dead in ourselves, but our lives are hidden with Jesus. If I am then hidden in Christ, I should not fear anything as He is my protector.

In this piece there is also a wonderful prophecy, that of Jesus’ second coming to the Earth to reign in His millennial kingdom. Paul clearly states that we will appear with Him in glory – in our incorruptible bodies, the ones we received at the rapture, where mortal flesh and blood bodies, which cannot enter the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50), were changed to immortality (1 Corinthians 15:52-53). This is the glorious body he refers to.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Where is your focus today? Are you focusing on those things that are above (Colossians 3:1) or are you focusing on achieving as much as you can in this life, here on Earth? Just the other day I watched a video clip about self-centred people – the obsession with the self that is evident in the number of “selfies” floating on social media. For my life I cannot understand the obsession people (and not just youngsters) have to take photos of themselves, alone. Self-centredness goes even further than this. In fact, Jesus spoke about the same:

⁴³I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. ⁴⁴Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? ⁴⁵Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. –
Matthew 25:42-45

The quoted text sums up the attitude of many people in our time. Jesus quotes this in the second person, and so He focuses on people and what they did or did not do. Today, the prevailing attitude is simply: What’s in it for me? The demonic worldly spirit that has taken hold on most of society has caused many people to be so focused on themselves, they do not even see the basic needs of those around them. How then, will they even think of shifting their attention to God? The text goes even beyond this. Jesus states that they **did it not to one of the least of these**, a person probably lower in standing than themselves. Many people will do something to assist someone of a higher standing, so that they can be seen, be given credit, and their social status “be upgraded” when they are spotted in the right social circles. True service to your fellow man is where others do not see it and you stand no chance of being paid back or rewarded in any way.

Jesus refers to those who one day will be found on His left hand (the goats), the ones who are destined for eternal punishment. They have the same opportunities as the ones on the right (the sheep) but prefer to live self-centred lives, looking only at their own interests. The ones on the right, the sheep, refer to those who are saved and live righteous lives. Their focus on Earth is by looking to Jesus and how they can glorify Him through what they do on Earth, hence His reaction in verses 35 to 40 (Matthew 25:35-40). By serving our fellow man, we are serving Him and thus our focus is heaven and doing His will.

There is one text that for me stands out as it defines the political spectrum of our time, and the people who associate with either:

²A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left. – **Ecclesiastes 10:2**

One day the **wise** (those who have accepted God’s plan of salvation for their lives and did it His way) will be on His right-hand side. The **fools** (those who did it their own way) will be found on the left. Their destinies will be very different, based on the choice they made.

CONCLUSION

Today, do not focus on the world and its temptations. Look where you can assist and be light and salt. Focus on Jesus Christ and do His will for your life. You will be richly rewarded.