

COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

Kingdom Life: Living Heavenward

Memory Verse

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."

Colossians 3:1-2

Real-life Problems

Perspective—We often focus our lives on earthly things, living according to the flesh.

The Good News

Christ has transferred us into the kingdom of God, where we live a new life.

Gospel Definition

God's grace and **redemption** for sinners through the life, death, and **resurrection** of Jesus **Christ**.

We have been redeemed and transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God, also known as the kingdom of heaven. When we repent and believe, we are resurrected with Christ from that old place of darkness to this new place, where Jesus reigns as king.

Some Key Definitions

The Now and the Not Yet—When Jesus came to the earth, rose from the dead, and sent His Holy Spirit, the kingdom of heaven came to the earth. By this we mean that the presence of heaven now overlaps with the fallen earth. Heaven is "not yet" fully here and the fallen world still exists. The two currently overlap.

I. Introduction:

OPENING QUESTIONS

Idea #1: Have you ever transferred from one school to another? What was different about the new school vs. the old school?

Idea #2: Have you ever gone to an amusement park? What was life like inside the park vs. outside the park?

Idea #3: Have you ever gone to an event where you had to be "proper" and "on your best behavior"? (Example: a fancy restaurant, a funeral, a wedding, etc.) What was the event? How was your behavior different there as compared to your normal life?

PRAY

Open your time together in prayer.

REHEARSING THE GOSPEL

What does gospel mean?

Good news.

What's the good news?

Jesus died for my sins.

Why did He die for your sins?

So that I can have abundant life in relationship with Him now and forever.

What is grace?

God's undeserved love for sinners.

THE BASICS

1) Who wrote the book of Colossians?

The apostle Paul wrote Colossians.

2) Who was the original audience of this book?

The church of Colossae was the original audience.

3) Why was the book of Colossians written?

Paul wrote Colossians to address divisions in this church, to strengthen their devotion to Jesus, and to instruct them in the Christian life, as people resurrected with Christ.

What's going on?

REMINDE:

In the previous lesson we looked at the intimate, joyful, and fruitful relationship with God into which Jesus has saved us.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN:

- 1) Christ has transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God.
- 2) In this new kingdom, we have died to our old self and have a new self, which God is transforming into a person more like Jesus.
- 3) Since we live in a new place (the kingdom of God) and have a new self, we turn away from old, sinful patterns of behavior and we live in a way that honors and glorifies God.

Read

First, read **Colossians 1:13-14**. Then read **Colossians 3:1-17** aloud in your group.

II. Questions for Discussion

A. WHAT?

1) In Colossians 1:13-14, where does Paul say we have been transferred from and transferred to?

We have been transferred from the domain of darkness and to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

2) What does Paul say we should set our hearts and minds on in verse 2? What is Paul speaking about when he refers to "things above?"

Paul says that we should set our minds on "things above." Paul is speaking about heaven and heavenly realities. The New Living Translation of the Bible translates it in this manner, "Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven."

3) What does Paul say not to set our minds on in Colossians 3:2? What do you think that means and refers to, based on the rest of the passage?

Paul says not to set our minds on earthly things. This seems to refer to sin, as evidenced by the list of different sins later in the text associated with living in an earthly manner.

4) In verse 5, what does Paul say to "put to death"? List some of the examples of "earthly living" that Paul names.

Paul says to put to death "earthly things." He lists the following: impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk, and lying.

5) In verse 9, why does Paul say that we should not lie to one another?

Paul says that we shouldn't lie because we have put off the old self, of which things like lying are a part, and put on the new self.

6) In verse 10, what does Paul say is happening to the new self?

The new self is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

7) What are the behaviors and attributes of the new self, as listed in verses 12-17?

These attributes are compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, love, devotion, worship, and gratitude.

B. SO WHAT?

1) What do you think it means when Paul says, "if you have been raised with Christ"? In what way are we "raised"?

When we repent and believe in Christ, we are raised to a new life. In a similar way that Jesus rose from the dead, we, too, rise out of darkness and into new life in Christ. (At the second coming of Christ we will rise in the body as Christ did. In this life, it is a spiritual rising.)

2) Earlier in Colossians, Paul wrote, "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:13-14). How do

you think this verse relates to having been "raised with Christ," having "died," and having "put on the new self" in Colossians 3? What does the word redemption mean (based on the gospel definition above) and why is it so important in Colossians 1:13-14?

All of these relate to moving from an old realm to a new realm. Believers formerly lived in the "domain of darkness" and now live in the "kingdom of His beloved Son." We have died to that old realm. We are raised into the new realm, the kingdom of God. We have a new self in the kingdom of God.

Redemption involves being transferred from one place to another. This verse and Colossians 3 both demonstrate how we move from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God through the gospel when we put our faith in Christ.

How To Act When Meeting the Queen of England

When you enter a room where the Queen of England is, there are certain behaviors that are automatically expected. You must always stand. If she approaches you, you are expected to bow. You should have a gift to offer her. You never call her by her first name. You do not speak to her unless she speaks to you.

We serve a kind, loving king who loves us like a warm Father. At the same time, since we live in His presence at all times and we live in His kingdom, the way we live changes as well. God's commandments in the Bible give us guidance on the royal code of behavior for us as citizens of the kingdom of God.

3) What does it mean to you to be "hidden with Christ in God"? What feelings does that evoke?

This means that we, in some spiritual manner, dwell in the heart of God when we are saved. Answers may vary, but to some it may give them a sense of comfort and security to be hidden with Christ in God.

4) What does it mean in common language that the new self is "being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator"? Say that in your own words.

It means that we are being changed into people who are more like God.

5) Connect the dots: Paul says to keep our minds on heavenly things, not earthly things. Then he describes sinful behaviors as "earthly." How might Paul describe the "good behaviors" that he lists in verses 12-17? If he calls the bad ones "earthly," what might he call the good ones?

He might call them "heavenly" behaviors.

6) Evaluate how this statement could sum up this whole passage: You have been transferred into the kingdom of heaven and now have a new self as a citizen of this new kingdom. Remember this fact and live as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

C. NOW WHAT?

1) How can you set your mind on heavenly things? What are some practices that can enable you to set your mind on heaven?

Reading about heaven in your Bible in places like the book of Revelation is a place to start. Imagining what heaven will be like would also be a helpful practice.

2) When we are living in unrepentant sin (the earthly behaviors that Paul lists in verses 5-10) how does it make us feel inside? Does it give us the peace, hope, joy, and fulfillment that we expect to have in heaven?

It generally makes us feel empty, isolated, and afraid.

3) How does thinking about God's commandments as "heavenly living" make obedience more appealing? How could it be more hopeful and promising?

While obedience can involve sacrifice and suffering, when we think about it as "heavenly living," there is the promise that obedience will draw us closer to God and give us joy.

Main takeaway

Through the gospel, Jesus has redeemed and transferred us from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God, where we have a new self. In this new place and with this new self, we live in a new way that honors and glorifies Christ.

III. Closing

REMEMBERING THE GOOD NEWS:

Christ has transferred us into the kingdom of God, where we live a new life.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Lord God, bless us with heaven-mindedness. Help us to remember that our true home is in heaven, not this fallen world. Bless us with heavenly fellowship with You and the joy of heaven. Help us live on this earth as we will in heaven. We pray that Your will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

GOSPEL BUILDING BLOCKS:

Building Block #9: Through the gospel, Jesus has redeemed and transferred us from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God, where we have a new self. In this new place and with this new self, we live in a new way that honors and glorifies Christ.

Building Block #8: Jesus saves us into a close, intimate relationship with God, in which we abide in Him in order to have joy and bear fruit for God's glory.

Building Block #7: When we, through faith, receive the righteousness of God as a gift, Jesus forgives our sins and makes us perfectly acceptable before God.

Building Block #6: To receive the gospel, God calls us to repent from being our own savior and god and to instead trust in Jesus to be both for us.

Building Block #5: As sinners, we need a mediator between a holy God and us. Jesus is our mediator who advocates on our behalf before the Father.

Building Block #4: To satisfy God's justice for our sins, Jesus served as a substitute. He took the punishment for our sins on the cross in our place.

Building Block #3: Every person, Christian and non-Christian alike, must answer to God for their lives. Non-believers answer for their sin at Judgment Day; Jesus answered for believers' sins on the cross, saving us from His judgment. Christians still go before the judgment seat of Christ to present their lives as an offering to God as an act of loving worship.

Building Block #2: Mankind has broken that relationship through sin and thereby created separation from God.

Building Block #1: A holy, loving God made us to live in blessed relationship with Him.

Supporting Resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Have you ever thought about how you have been transferred into a new, heavenly kingdom as a natural result of your salvation? How does that feel?
- 2) Colossians 3:10 says your new self "is being renewed," meaning that God is doing the renewing. How can you personally allow God to do this work of renewal in you? What things can you do to rest in this work that He is doing?
- 3) How has this lesson caused you think about obeying God's commandments in a new way?

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS:

- 1) What does it mean to be heaven-minded?
- 2) How is it freeing to realize that you have been transferred into the kingdom of God?
- 3) How is it comforting to know that you have been given a new self?