

Colossians 3:1-11 “Ready, Set, Set!!”

Good morning and thank you for joining us!

Before we begin our study, today is a very special day as Zach and Cayleigh Levine have asked to publicly dedicate their little baby, Talia Abigail Levine.

Dedicating a child acknowledges God's sovereignty not only over the child, but also Mom and Dad. Parents present their child before God and His people, asking for grace and wisdom in carrying out their parental responsibilities. Parents also come praying that their child would one day trust Jesus Christ as Savior for the forgiveness of sin.

We're told in 1 Samuel 1 that Hannah presented her son Samuel to the Lord. In Luke 2 we read that Mary and Joseph brought their baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem in order to present Him before the Lord.

In the same way, Zach and Cayleigh today bring their daughter, Talia, presenting first themselves and then their daughter before the Lord our God.

Zach and Cayleigh, I call your attention to the commands of God recorded in the Bible.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 tells us:

5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

This vow of dedication, made to the Lord, is witnessed before the congregation, much like in a wedding. It then becomes the congregation's duty to pray for and hold the parents accountable to their vow in the months and years to come as they raise this precious child.

Zack and Cayleigh c'mon up and we'll pray for you.

Talia Abigail Levine was born on March 26th this year. The name Talia means "dew of God".

Her middle name, Abigail means "Father Rejoice".

Proverbs 3:26 For the Lord will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.

Lamentations 3:26 It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the Lord.

LET'S PRAY FOR THE LEVINE FAMILY AND TALIA

Would you please turn in your bibles to Colossians 3?

As we get to this 3rd chapter, Paul has now finished the doctrinal part of the letter-who Jesus is and why we worship Him. Chapters 1 and 2 tell us some of the most remarkable things we've regarding the deity of Christ in all of the New Testament.

We're about to see a similarity in the book of Colossians to that of the book of Ephesians. You'll recall the first 3 chapters in Ephesians tell us who we are, then 4-6 say now here's what you're to do in light of who you are.

And Colossians follows a similar format. Chapters 1 and 2 remind us who Jesus is, and now starting in Chapter 3 here's the exhortation-here's how we should live our lives according to these incredible truths.

Now I don't want to seem overly dramatic, but please know what we're about to read this morning can absolutely change your life.

These verses can change your marriage, it can change your relationship with your boss, it can change your friendships, it will help heal wounded and broken hearts.

We're gonna study verses 1-11

The title of this mornings message is Ready, Set, Set!!

Let's pray

We're gonna read all of verse 1 and break it down

1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Last week in chapter 2 we saw how we've died with Christ. Of course it's not speaking of our physical body, but spiritually speaking. We entered into His death on the cross 2000 years ago. We were participants in Jesus' death because our sins were there, and we have since been raised then with Him in the newness of life-everlasting life.

And now v1 says if then, meaning since you have been raised with Christ.

seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

What are those things that are above? It's interesting one of the the scholars I read says they are undefinable. You can't quantify them because one Christian who's found out his child has cancer is seeking one thing at the throne of God.

Another Christian who's struggling with some injustice is seeking another thing at the throne of God. Another Christian is just worn out. The tank is empty, he's got nothing left. He's seeking something else at the throne of God. Another Christian that's rejoicing and just been blessed seeking something else

So we all at this present moment might be seeking different things, but it says seek those things that are above. Since God raised us with Christ, we should keep seeking heavenly things. Keep looking up.

...1 where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

So it's telling us something very unique here. Christ is seated-and why is He described as seated? Because His work is done.

And this description of the seated Christ is a direct contrast to the priests in the Old Testament who constantly offered sacrifices. Remember there were no seats in the Tabernacle or the temple. There was nowhere to sit down because their work was never finished.

But Jesus offered Himself once for the sins of the world, and He sat down, signifying that His work is done. And it says where He's

sitting is at the right hand of God's majesty, which is the place of ultimate power and greatest majesty.

So it says for you and I, since we've been risen with him, then we should continually be seeking those things that are above. And they are specifically at the right hand of God where Christ himself is seated.

So as we pray we're coming boldly to the throne of grace. We're coming to a Lord whose work is done.

There is no greater power. There is no higher place to go. The Christ that we come to is the Christ whose work is done, and all authority in heaven and earth confirm the fact that as a Christian you are blood bought, that you are His. So we can go to the throne and we can seek Him with complete confidence. **Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

V1 tells us to seek...

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

Memorize this verse!!!!

Wanna know how to win the battle in your mind-**Set your mind on things above**

When your heart is hurting from rejection, or betrayal-**Set your mind on things above**

How do you battle temptation-lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life-**Set your mind on things above**

This verse can revolutionize your life because what you fix your mind on, your heart becomes set on.

The greek grammar tells us both v1 and 2 are present imperatives. That means we need to continually do this. It's not a one time thing, it's active. And listen-it's each of our individual responsibilities to do this. Nobody can do it for us.

Now it tells us that we should continually be seeking, continually setting our mind upon the things that are above. And what that insinuates, and each of us already know is this is not natural to us is it?

I don't know about you but I constantly need to pull my mind back from all the things around me, and I have to remind myself 'what difference does that really make, cause Christ could come today'.

It's so easy to get our minds just stuck in gear on the horizontal plane, when we need to think on the vertical plane.

But the bible is clear, the responsibility falls on each of us individually to do this. Nobody can do it for us.

Now I want to be clear-it doesn't say we can't think about other things. It doesn't say we can't excel and thrive here on earth.

What it is saying is that our mind shouldn't always be on the things of the earth.

SHOW PIC It's not wrong to think my car's dying, I gotta shop for a new car. That thinking isn't sinful. That's not wrong. You gotta think about it. You're gonna spend money. You gotta research a little bit and plan it out. **CLOSE PIC**

SHOW PIC You're a young Christian going on a date, you're not gonna be like-I can't think about what to wear, I'll just wear a burlap sack, gotta keep all my thoughts heavenward. That's not what it's saying. **CLOSE PIC**

But sadly you meet some Christians and all they think about and talk about are worldly things. They obsess compulsively on earthly things like cars, or politics, or football or their job. And that's what it's saying that we shouldn't be doing.

Folks, we must never forget people are gonna read us who aren't gonna read a Bible. And what a tragedy if they came away saying 'well I know they really loved football' instead of saying 'I know he really loved Jesus.'

See most of our problems in our lives are Lordship problems. Every Christian rejoices to have Jesus as Savior. Everybody wants fire insurance.

But where we all struggle as Christians is when He's speaking to us about our time, about our thoughts, about our attitude, about our mouth.

And I find in my life there has to be a constant seeking on my part of those things which are above, I have to deliberately do this, I have to set my mind there. And it can be very hard sometimes

Look the outworking of this will probably look different for each one of us. One of the hardest things I had to do is when I was actively boxing, and the Lord said 'what if you spent all that time you spend training for fights, and you spent it with me'. I look back and I'm so grateful I did that.

What are we setting our minds on? The news? Our phones? Social media? We have to take our mind, our thoughts and set them on things above, not on things of the earth.

Verse three it gives us the rationale, here's why we're to do this- because we're dead

3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. That should make everything really easy. If you're a follower of Christ you're dead.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. The old me and the old you died when we accepted Christ. Our life is hidden with Christ.

For the false teachers at Colosse, they said the treasures of wisdom were hidden in their secret books. But for believers, Christ is the treasury of wisdom and our life is "hidden" in Him

And here's the problem, unbelievers that are around us don't see the hidden life. They don't understand the things we're excited about, they don't understand why we watch current events with Israel so closely. They don't understand why we spend time reading the word.

What the world does see is the headline if a pastor or a priest or somebody in the church has molested a child, they see that. They take note if it says somebody has fallen into sexual sin or stolen money from the church.

As Christians our carnality is recognizable and noticeable, because Christians are supposed to be something else. The world is watching for our sinful nature, but what the world never sees is our hidden life, which is with Christ.

And this reminds us that the greater quality of our lives has not yet been realized. It will be realized **1 Corinthians 15 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."**^[fn]

**55 "O Death, where is your sting?^[fn]
O Hades, where is your victory?"^[fn]**

Even creation is longing and waiting for that day to take place.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

One day our life will no longer be hidden with Christ. When is that day?

4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory It doesn't say if Christ shows up, it says when He shows up, we will appear with Him.

Folks the day is coming when Jesus is coming back!!!

Now there's a difference between Christ coming for His church and Christ coming with His church. Those are two different things.

1st, Jesus will come for His church. And it says it's like a thief in the night. **Matthew 25:13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour[fn] in which the Son of Man is coming.**

We'll study all that in depth when we go to 1st Thessalonians in a few weeks. Jesus is coming to take the church-His bride and carry her across the threshold. That's the rapture-Christ coming for His church.

After the rapture we'll see the rise of the antichrist, the tribulation period, and then armageddon takes place.

At Armageddon when Christ returns and manifests Himself to the world, it says, we come with Him. **Rev 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had^[fn] a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,^[fn] followed Him on white horses.**

And verse 4 tells us our future-ready- we're going to be right there alongside Him. That's our future-can you believe it!!!

So Paul says then in light of that, in light of these truths of who we are as Christians and what our future holds:

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Now we'll define these in a moment, but remember back in verse three, he said you are dead. Now he's telling us to put to death. But wait, if we're already dead, why are we gonna put anything to death?

Judicially, before the throne of a perfectly Holy and righteous God, we died and rose with Christ. As far as heaven is concerned, we're justified, sanctified, and glorified. God the Father in heaven sees you and I in the very righteousness of Jesus Christ because of His completed work and our faith in that.

But then there is the working out of those realities in our lives in our practical daily lives.

This is the will of the heart of a Father who's given everything and done everything for us. He's held nothing back. Now in v 5 he says to us His sons, His daughters, this is what I want you to do; we're to put to death the wrong behaviors that aren't compatible with the reality of who we are in Christ.

The problem is we still have that traitor, our fleshly desires that live within us. **Romans 6 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

v5

fornication Porneo. We get the word pornography from it. It describes any sexual activity outside of marriage.

Uncleanness, this describes impure actions or thoughts.

Passion, This isn't speaking of passion for your spouse, or even passion you may have for a sports team. (Pathos) means uncontrolled illegitimate desire, "like an inward fire that is kindled in the heart."

evil desire, reaches out for some forbidden thing in order to satisfy itself

and covetousness, which is idolatry. It's the constant desire of having more. And the problem is folks become obsessed with having more, and it becomes an idol. The new car, the new house, the baby, all wonderful things, until we covet them and without knowing it can become idols in our lives.

6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, God is holy, and one day He will pour out His wrath on this earth as judgment for those who reject His son Jesus Christ.

In the book of Revelation we're told before God brings the fullness of His judgment, He sends an Angel in Revelation 14 preaching the gospel in every language. Think about that-an angel soaring through the sky preaching the gospel, and how does mankind respond? **Revelation 16:11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.**

They actually know the judgment coming on the world is coming from God, and they still deny Him.

7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. How we act today as Christians should be radically different than before we became Christians. Why? Because a true Christian can not be comfortable in habitual sin.

Of course it's possible that these sins should occasionally mark a Christian's life, but they must not be a manner of living.

8 But now So verses 8-10, he says, this is what I want you to do...

you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.V8 put off

verse 10 put on

verse 12, put on.

This is describing for us the Christian experience-our walking out our lives as followers of Jesus. And part of the process is that of putting off.

Anger, is a settled attitude of hostility.

wrath, means a verbal outburst of evil passion

malice, is ill will, that results in hurting someone

Blasphemy, Now this is in the context of fellow human beings. It's the same word for slandering someone else. It's speech that injures someone's name. Some of you are old enough to remember Zoro. You ever meet people like this? You get around them for one minute, you'll walk away and you're bleeding. They just slice and dice you with their words.

filthy language out of your mouth Listen there is no room for swearing as a Christian, or dirty and inappropriate jokes. Our words should be used to edify, build each other up.

V 9 continues with behavior that should cease

9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, Since we're born again spiritually, the old me has

died, how can we be lying to each other like we used to do before we got saved? It ought not to be.

We're to put all these things off

JACKET

10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, We're told when we become saved, we're born again in the spirit, we're a new person. **2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

And v 10 says that new creation is renewed continually as we're growing in the knowledge of Him.

The more you know about the Lord, the more you grow in love for Him.

The more you love Him, the more you let go of your own life.

And I've found as I get older, as I advance in years with Christ, the less I sin, but the more I repent.

I am much more repentant now than I was then because I realize my own depravity. I realize His grace and His glory more than I ever have, which magnifies the love that He has towards me.

We are sinners saved by grace. The majesty of His love and His power and His grace is overwhelming. And it says as we're growing in that knowledge, the new creation is constantly renewed.

11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Because Jesus is the 1 identifying birthmark of every Christian, there's no room for any racial distinctions or class separations. There's no categories with God. All that distinguishes us now is whether we're in Christ or apart from Christ

When we seek and set our minds on Christ, it changes our lives. Bitterness dissipates, temptation flees, world events are put back into focus instead of overwhelming us.

Nothing about this is easy. Doesn't say this is easy at all does it.

When we set our minds on things above, we'll sin less. Hard to watch pornography while you're singing along to worship music. Hard to be angry at someone when you reflect how much grace God has shown you.

If you're a Christian and you've been playing around with sin, knock it off. Better yet, put it off. Be done with it. Make the decision right now b/w you and the Lord saying I'm done with lust, I'm done with the anger, I'm done with the unforgiveness.

V 10 put on the new man, the new you in Christ. And set your mind on Him-keep your mind there, actively do it.

Philippians 4:6-8 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things