

Colossians Series - #16 “Looking Up- Day One” Colossians 3: 1-4

Introduction: IL- Walking down the street and so focused on cell phone that the person can't see the curb, trips over the curb and falls face down on the pavement! It is critical to our spiritual walk that we stay focused on truth and especially the truth about our position in Christ, now and for eternity to come!

Reality- the middle point of Paul's letter. Chapters 1 and 2 are doctrinal- redemption, forgiveness of sin, Jesus as the Creator/Sustainer and Head of the Body. Chapters 3 and 4 are focused on the practical application of truth- humility, patience, forgiving others, family, prayer, witnessing , service in the local church and more....

We have been raised! We are positionally already in Heaven like our Risen Savior! He is seated at the Father's right hand and so we are in Heaven through His merit.

Jesus Christ is seated in a place of power and authority! Ephesians 1: 21 tells us He is “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but in the one to come.”

Our life is hidden with Christ in God! And through God's grace and mercy our life is hidden (protected) with Christ in God and that place of security is eternal in nature- we can never lose that spot!

Responsibility- The commands Paul gives, prompted by the Spirit! Paul gives TWO practical commands but is directed to include these two by the Holy Spirit who lead the writers of the books of Bible to write without dictating word for word- these are the very words of God!

‘Seek’- things that are “above”! First command- seek the things that are above! Don't spend your time trying to make sense out of the world's philosophies and ungodly attitudes. The things that are ‘above’ are of godly quality and eternal worth and will never change!

‘Set’- our minds on things that are “above”! To ‘set’ one's mind on “above” things means to concentrate on and value things related to the Godhead and God's intentions for all of life into the future! God's Spirit will help you point your affections heavenward!

Focus on things that have eternal value, unlike the things on earth! Don't bother focusing on the mindless expressions and activities of the unsaved world- keep your thoughts set on what will benefit you all life long and for eternity.

Return- We do not know *when* Jesus will come, but He *will* come! My favorite part of the text this morning because it turns MY thoughts to Heaven and to my Savior. I also think much about my loved ones who have gone on ahead of me! Someday I will see them again in glory, but until then I will stay focused on serving my Master well and His people, my brothers and sisters alike, with all dignity and honor and respect. And I will care enough about my unsaved friends and relatives that I will speak lovingly, kindly, firmly and frequently to see them become saved!

The Rapture is next on God's timeline! When the subject of Christ's return comes up I like to emphasize that nothing is holding back the return of Jesus for His church, His Bride except what God has ready in HIS timing. When Jesus returns He will come with those saints who have gone before who are the "dead in Christ". They will witness the call from the grave for those saints who are bodily in the ground on that glorious day.

"The dead in Christ will rise first.." (1 Thessalonians 4: 16) [See also 1 Corinthians 15 and John 14] To be "in Christ" means to be a believer whose spirit has ascended and then will come with the Lord to meet living believers who join them in the air.

If we are alive then, we will be "changed- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."
(1 Corinthians 15: 52) Those of us who may be alive at the Rapture will be caught up (raptured) with the triumphant ones in that meeting in the air! Everyone left on earth will wonder what happened and many will weep that they were not ready to be a part of the glorious reunion and the eternity we will share in glory!

Conclusion: So- look up and get focused, and **thank God** for making your future (and our present) secure! The best thing we can do is stay focused on heavenly things, share our faith, rejoice in the prospect of reunion with our believing loved ones and thank Jesus for making it all possible through His shed blood and His resurrection and ascension to glory. Don't move with your eyes closed or your mind focused on the world's so-called "good life" which can't begin to compare! On this New Year- Day Eight- **look up!**