

Consecrate Yourselves Before God

Colossians 3:1-10 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

❖ Today we will begin a study on Setting yourselves apart unto God (TAKE NOTES)

- **First we will deal briefly with the Importance of being Set Apart unto God**
 - For the **first half** of the sermon I am going to give an example from the book of Ezra
 - The **second half** we will detail practical instructions from Paul in Colossians
 - And each week we will continue looking at sections of Scripture that:
 - **Teach us to live the Sanctified life**
- **All of this falls in line with Romans 12:1-2**
 - Paul tells us to present our bodies as living sacrifices unto God
 - He says that is our reasonable Worship
 - **Then, in an effort to give us more details on how...**
 - Paul says... do not be conformed to the world
 - But be transformed by the renewal of your mind...
 - **What did we learn?**
 - We learned that if we want to live lives of worship to God
 - We must renew our minds with the Word of God
 - And when we do this, it shapes our thinking
 - And when our minds are shaped by God's Word
 - Our lives are lives of Worship...
 - Very practical right?

❖ Let me share a scenario with you...

- **Consider a woman of a terrible reputation.**
 - And she has truly earned this reputation
 - She has lived unwisely all her life.
 - She has had many boyfriends that were not her husband
 - And she was very sinful in all of these relationships
- **Let us consider that she also did not take good care of herself**
 - She did not eat right things or drink right things
 - Rather she over indulged in alcohol and food
 - She has altogether made herself a very unattractive woman
 - And her unattractive nature is on the inside and outside of her
- **She is also very uneducated**
 - She has no very good way to make a living
 - She is broke almost all the time
 - And to survive she eats off the street from what she can beg off people
 - Because of her poverty she also can not dress very well at all
 - She goes around in rags
- **Let us also consider that very nice gentleman comes along**

- **And He sees this woman of ill repute**
 - And He has compassion on her
 - And He takes her off the street and puts new clothes on her
 - He feeds her the nicest of foods
 - He gives her money to handle all of her debts
- **Let's consider that this man asks her to marry Him...**
 - And she says yes...
 - He has done everything for her.
 - She has nothing to offer...
 - But, He has loved her greatly
- **Now, Let us consider her reaction**
 - We all know how she should react right?
 - With love and gratitude for her future husband...
- **But, let us consider another scenario**
 - Let us consider that instead of loving her future husband and being faithful to Him
 - She wants to find another man to be with
 - And He is no good for her, and he can not provide for her
 - He takes advantage of her
 - But she gives herself to him
 - And she goes back to eating from the dumpsters
 - And she neglects her body, and does not eat of the good food provided by her future husband
 - She also wants to wear her old stinky torn up clothes instead of the beautiful clothes
- **If I told you this was a true story:**
 - You would laugh me out of this building wouldn't you...
 - You would say I am crazy...
 - No woman in her right mind would return to a life of poverty and being taken advantage of
 - If a wonderful man came along to take care of her... No ONE!
- **But, this is what it is like for the person who has come to Christ**
 - Yet continues living in the world
 - Yet continues living in their sin
 - Continuing under the bondage of Satan and of sin...
 - This is Exactly what we are doing people!!!!

❖ **Consecrate Yourselves Before God**

- **What does consecrate mean?**
 - It means to be Holy... But the best way to describe it is "set apart" usually for special use
 - **To be set apart... this is what happened in the O.T.**
 - Certain people were set apart for God's use
 - Certain things were set apart for God
 - **We are called to set ourselves apart and to God!**
- **Leviticus 20:7-8 'You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. 'You shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the Lord who sanctifies you.**
 - This is our calling. It was true in the days if the Israelites being led out of Egypt
 - And it continues to be our calling as Christians living in the grace of Jesus
 - **1 Peter 1:14-16 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, but ^alike the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."**
 - **An example that illustrates this**
 - When a woman is preparing for her wedding day
 - She wears all sorts of clothes... She has all sorts of places she must go all dressed up

- She has dresses for this occasion and for that occasion
- But there is one dress she has bought and set aside to be used for something special
- She has bought this beautiful white wedding dress
- She has it in a special place... she has only put it on to make sure it fits
- It is not allowed to be used for anything else.
- She makes sure it stays in a safe place so as not to get dirty before that special day
 - ◆ You know any women that put their dress on and go to chili's?
 - ◆ Or maybe wears it riding down the road eating some mcdonalds drive through
- Heaven's no... it is too special of a dress...
- She has set it apart!

❖ **Consider how those during the period of the law kept fellowship with God**

- We should consider this because these laws were shadows
- And word pictures of reality in Heaven pointing toward Jesus
- **In the Old Covenant b/w God and His people**
 - They had to bring sacrifices to God to continue in fellowship with Him
 - **Faith in God was their means of Salvation**
 - Before the Law came... Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness
 - Sacrifices were a means of continued fellowship with God and continued forgiveness of sins
- **In the New Covenant b/w God and His people**
 - Jesus has died as the Passover lamb... the lamb of sacrifice
 - John calls Jesus the Lamb of God
 - In Hebrews... it teaches us that Jesus death was a once for all sacrifice
 - And it cleanses people from all sins...
- **But... once Jesus saves us... is that it?**
 - Or do we need to be a part of maintaining fellowship...
 - Yes! We must set ourselves apart to God daily
- **Practicing Holiness is Something We must Continue in**
 - Jesus has made us Holy by His shed blood
 - But now we must continually set ourselves apart to God in how we live...
 - **This is what it means to be Holy for I am Holy**
 - Jesus makes us Holy
 - Then we live out our holiness
 - By doing things that are holy...
 - **Or, Let me put it another way...**
 - Holy... meaning set apart...
 - Therefore... we must daily set ourselves apart from the world and to God
 - Set ourselves apart from the profane and ungodly things of this world
 - And set ourselves unto God
- **Are You doing this?**
 - All believers WILL long to do this!
 - Especially when we are confronted with it...
 - I am not saying it is easy... But are you doing this?
- **Shame on those who have heard the Word**
 - But have not responded
- **Let us not be like those who are hearers only**
 - James tells us to be doers of the word and not hearers only...
- **In the Book of Ezra we see a man who cared about Setting Himself apart unto God**

- He cared about His people being set apart unto God.
- In the Book of Ezra we see the Jewish people returning to their nation
 - If you remember the nation had been conquered by the Assyrians and then Babylonians
 - **And this happened because they had not obeyed God's laws**
 - ◆ They had treated His Word as if it did not exist
 - ◆ They did what was right in their own eyes
 - ◆ They began to live like the nations that lived around them
 - ◆ And they followed other gods and ways that God has commanded them to flee from
 - King Nebuchadnezzar had taken many of the people of Judah captive
 - So, after Babylon fell and the next Empire had arose
 - God began to allow some of the Jews to return to their home
- **The Medes and Persians had come to power**
 - And God turned the heart of their Kings to him
 - Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes all played a part in the Jews return home
 - And it started out that they went to rebuild the temple
 - And begin sacrificing to God again
 - So they could restore their fellowship with their God
 - Fellowship they had broken because they had sinned against Him
 - ◆ And He disciplined the whole nation by the hand of the king of Babylon
- **Things are going well...**
 - They have rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem
 - They have celebrated Passover...
- **And after this Ezra returns from Babylon...**
 - Ezra was a Scribe and it is written of him that he was skilled in the law of Moses
 - ◆ And He had come to Israel to teach the Law to the people
- **Now, when He came, He found that things were not as they should be**
 - In all of this time of rebuilding the temple and other things
 - Many of the leaders and people had been disobedient to the Lord
 - They did not set themselves apart from the cultures around them
- **The people had begun to intermarry with the people from the other nations**
 - Now, this was a big problem then... even as it is today...
 - The problem was not so much the nations they married into,
 - ◆ rather it was the worship of these nations.....
 - These people did not follow God ...
 - God allowed Jewish people to marry people from other cultures...
 - ◆ but they had to be believers in the one True God
 - **Look at what God had told them:**
 - ◆ Ezra 9:11-12, "The land that you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land impure with the impurity of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations that have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. ¹² Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever."
- **But, They had intermarried...**
 - And when Ezra saw they had disregarded the Word of God to do their own thing
 - He saw they had not set themselves apart unto God
- **This was his response to God:**
 - Ezra 9:3 As soon as I heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled hair from my head and beard and sat appalled.

- Ezra 9:5-6 And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens.

- **Do you know what they did?**

- A great number of men women and children wept before the Lord
- They called for all those who had returned to Israel to gather together in Jerusalem
- And they did... they all came and gathered in the open square before the temple..
- And it was pouring down rain...
- And they are all standing there in the rain to get themselves right with God...

- **And right there in the rain they agreed they would make the matter right.**

- And over the course of the next 2 months they settled the matter before the Lord...

- **What I want you to see is this:**

- When they were confronted by a teacher of God's Word...
- With God's Word... They saw their sin... Ezra wept bitterly...
- And they set themselves apart to follow God...

- ❖ **Living Holy as He is Holy**

- This is our calling... let's look at Paul's very practical instruction to Help us:
 - Live the Sanctified Life.
 - 7 brief points to consider... But we will only get to 2 today

- ❖ **1) If You Are A Believer**

- **If then you have been raised with Christ**

- **Raised with Christ?**

- What does Paul mean here?
- **1) The very first thing you need to know is: You have died...**
 - **Who you used to be is dead**
 - ◆ Now, this really trips a lot of people up...
 - ◆ One of the reasons it trips so many people in the church up
 - ◆ Is because so many people in the church have never come to Christ...
 - **It simply means that who you used to be**
 - ◆ With all of his or her desires and ways is dead
 - ◆ The old person is gone...
 - **If you look back; this is what repentance was...**
 - ◆ This is that change of attitude to agree with God
 - ◆ To see your sins as they are... And trust in Christ
 - ◆ You have now followed Christ

- **2) Second thing you need to know is: You have been raised**

- When the old person dies, a new person is raised
- Now I know this knew person is a lot like the old person in many ways
- But not in the substance of who you now are
- You are now a new person with a new identity in Christ

- **Simply put: You have given yourself to Jesus... you have been born again**

- **If you have been Raised**

- **Paul uses this terminology because it is true of us...**

- You may say... look preacher, I ain't never been raised up
- Well, for those who have followed Jesus it is a reality
- It is a reality in heaven that will be played out one day in the life of the person

- **It is such a reality that Paul speaks of it in the past tense in Ephesians**
 - ◆ Ephesians 2:5,6 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and **raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,**
 - ◆ Raised us up and seated us with Him
- **Paul also tells us in Phillippians that our citizenship is in heaven**
 - ◆ Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

➤ **If Then...**

- **If:** This is a conditional statement... But... it could be taken as real or hypothetical...
 - **Then:** this is a conclusion...
- So Paul is saying... If this is true of you... If this has happened to you
- **Being raised with Christ... having followed Jesus...**
 - And He could have just said... If you have followed Jesus...
 - But then, He is not able to bring into remembrance their position with God
 - With who they really are, which will be important in fulfilling Paul's instructions

❖ **2) Set Your Minds on Jesus**

- **seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.**

➤ **The Saying: "To heavenly minded to be any earthly good"**

- I get where people are coming from with this, but it is an incorrect saying
- You can **not** be too heavenly minded to be earthly good
- **It is impossible... Heaven is the dwelling place of God...**
 - So... if you are heavenly minded... you are godly minded...
 - And since Jesus came down from heaven
 - And He says His kingdom is not from here
 - Then I suppose the more heavenly minded a person is...
 - The more earthly good they will be...
 - Paul is telling us here... to be heavenly minded...

➤ **Seek the things that are above... Set your mind on things that are above...**

- He then tells us exactly where to set our minds and our seeking...
- Where Christ is... seated at the right hand of God...

➤ **1st: Remember Christ is Risen and exalted as Lord**

- **...where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God**
- **A) Jesus is Risen:** Isn't that what He is saying... Jesus is Risen from the dead...
 - Set your mind on the truth that Jesus died, but did not stay dead...
 - ◆ **Rather, He rose from the dead...**
 - Do you ever think on that...?
 - Do you ever think about the time the man Jesus from Nazareth was crucified
 - And then see walking around town 3 days later
 - It can be very powerful...
- **B) Also... He is exalted as Lord**
 - Jesus is no longer humbling himself as a servant that has come to die
 - Rather, He reigns in heaven as God
 - He is Lord over all.. He is **seated at the right hand** of God
 - And He will be exalted above all, and every knee will one day bow to Him...
- **Consider these things when you want to live your own life**
 - **When you are apathetic and lazy in your Christian walk...**

- When your prayers are only selfish prayers, or only very childish prayers
- When they are repeated day after day with no thought put into them
- When there is no struggling in prayer...
- **Consider that Jesus is the Lord of all creation when you will not read your Bible**
 - ◆ Because your TV shows are just too important
 - ◆ When a little extra sleep is too important...

➤ **2nd: Seek the things above ...Set your mind on these things**

- I find it interesting how Paul writes this...
- It seems like He is repeating the same thing, but he certainly isn't
- There is an order to this...
- 1st We **SEEK** the things above...
- 2nd We **SET** our minds on things that are above...

➤ **1) SEEK the things above**

- **Seek:** So this word is an imperative which means Paul is giving us a command
 - It is also in the active voice which calls us to action
 - We must be getting to this work
 - **This word "seek" is a great translation... it truly sums up the meaning of the word**
 - ◆ To search out or look for
 - ◆ Jesus says in Matthew 7 "seek and you will find"
 - ◆ This is the idea behind Jesus leaving the ninety nine sheep to find the one missing sheep
- **Illustration: This is what Paul has in mind here**
 - It is like the man seeking a great treasure...
 - There are people up in Nova Scotia on an island called Oak Island
 - And they are look for a buried treasure...
 - At least that is what they think it is... There is nothing at over 200 feet,
 - But they believe there is something below that
 - **They have drilled holes**
 - ◆ People have went down into a deep shaft
 - ◆ 6 people have died seeking the bottom of this treasure
 - ◆ They have spent thousands upon thousands of dollars to get to the treasure
 - **They have been meticulous**
 - ◆ They have sent down divers because the shaft is full of water
 - ◆ They have put sonar in and mapped out what they think is the money pit
 - **They have dug in the swamp surrounding where they think the treasure is**
 - ◆ They have searched for anything they could find using metal detectors
 - ◆ They are looking for every clue they can
 - ◆ To see if it is worth more of their time and money to completely dig the thing out
 - Notice: They have spent their **TIME, MONEY, ENERGY, and ABILITIES**
 - ◆ Seeking this treasure
- **This is to be our mindset...**
 - Seek the things above!
 - Now... after seeking... we must set our minds...

➤ **2) SET Your Mind on These Things**

- **Set:** To concentrate... to direct one's attention and thought toward something
 - Our biggest problem is that we are so busy living our lives here...
 - That we never focus on the things of God...
 - We are constantly focusing on the things of this world, as if they will last
 - **Although this is not the same word used in Romans 12:2**
 - ◆ Paul is getting to the same thing when he says

◆ **Be transformed by the renewal of your mind**

▪ **Example: Set your mind:**

- I can not help but think of building a fence...
- When you build a fence out of barbed wire...
- The corner post needs to be set in concrete...
- So we dig a whole about 3 feet deep and we put about 80 lbs of concrete in it
- To begin with the post can be moved and manipulated while the concrete is still wet...
- But once it is set... the post will not move...
 - ◆ And you put so much pressure on it and it still will not move...
 - ◆ You can place five strands of wire and pull it as tight as you can...
 - ◆ And if the post is set right, it is barely going to budge....

▪ **This is how Paul wants you to place your attention toward God**

- Do we do this? Have we set our minds affections on God
- **What have we done instead?**
 - ◆ I can say, I think we have not done this...
 - ◆ I believe our church would more of a light in this community if we did this...
 - ◆ **Where is the direction of our minds focused?**
 - ◆ **Living Life? Television? Sports? Books? Hunting? Fishing? Pinterest? The News? Facebook? Food? Drink? Sinful Behaviors? Nothing? Have we zoned out and ignored God's call on our life?**
- **The Person that has been raised with Christ**
 - ◆ Will hear this and have conviction on his heart...
 - ◆ He or she will say... I **must** set my mind on the things of God

▪ **Setting Your Minds on things Above**

- When David was preparing the people to build the house of God, He said:
 - ◆ **1 Chronicles 22:19 Now set your mind and heart to seek the Lord your God.**
 - That has a lot of implications for us as we are seeking to build a name for God here in Waldheim
- **Consider this:**
 - ◆ When we are not setting our minds on the things of God, but on the earthly things...
 - ◆ We are to be considered like Satan
 - ◆ Seriously... We could be called Satan...
 - ◆ Do you believe me? Do you think this is a little bit extreme for me to say this?
 - ◆ **Jesus said it to Peter:**
 - **Matthew 16:23 ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."**
 - How serious is this? Ponder this for a minute

➤ **What is it that we should be focusing on above?**

- This is for you to find out as you seek and set...
- I will share briefly some main things...

▪ **1) Jesus is there!**

- This is first and foremost where our mind should be focuses
- On who Jesus is
- On what Jesus said
- On What Jesus did
- **Hebrews 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

◆ Fixing our eyes...

▪ **2) God's Word is from Above**

- It is through His Word that we are able to know anything from above

▪ **3) Our blessings are there**

- Ephesians 1:6 ... (God) has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
- Ephesians 2:7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
- 1 Corinthians 2:9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

▪ **4) God and His Will are There**

- After focusing on the Word of God...
- And setting our minds attention on Jesus
- We will learn to discern the will of God
- And then live a life that brings glory to God
- **As we seek the things above, and set our minds on them...**
 - ◆ We will learn to grow in our love for God...
 - ◆ He will become our treasure...

➤ **Consider God as your Treasure**

- Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!
- Psalm 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

❖ **Invitation:**

- Come to the Alter and confess your sins to God
- Ask Him to Help you in your constant fight to live for Him
 - And separate yourselves from the world