

Living Godly Lives in Christ Jesus

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[0:00] Paul's letter to the Colossians, chapter 3, and I'll read the first four verses in your hearing. Since then you have been raised with Christ. Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. It's a joy to be with you today. We rejoice together in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And I thank God for you. In the Sunday school hour, I said that our brethren in Italy wish to start a church in the center of Rome so that it may be said again of Rome that their faith is declared throughout the whole world.

Well, in the world of Reformed Baptists, your faith is declared. We thank God for you. We thank God that you have given us two members of the Administrative Council. We praise God for that. We thank God that you are sponsoring Olivier Favre and for your generous support of the association. We praise God for you, and we thank God for you. I invite you to turn with me in your copy of the scriptures to the book of Colossians.

[1:21] Colossians chapter 3, and the text that was read in your hearing just a few moments ago. Colossians chapter 3, and my text this morning is verses 1 through 4 of Colossians chapter 3.

Colossians chapter 3, and the city of Colossians chapter 3.

Later, a number of years later, in 401 B.C., Xenophon called Colossae a city inhabited, prosperous, and great. This was not true of its size and population.

This was not only true, I should say, of its size and population, but also because of its strategic location. However, after this time, there are two other cities that soon overtook Colossae in significance and size and importance.

These two cities were Hierapolis, which was 13 miles away, and Laodicea, which was 10 miles away. Both of those cities dominated the region.

[2:48] And after the Romans conquered, then Colossae became less and less significant. By the time of the New Testament, Colossae had dwindled in size and importance.

It was now no more than a very small town. Much smaller than Bremen, Indiana. Probably closer to the size of the town in which I grew up, and I was not a town boy.

I was a country boy, which we were very proud of that, of course. A town of Steamboat Rock, Iowa, which is about 300 in population on school days when all the country kids were in.

So the ruins of Laodicea and Hierapolis have been at archaeological digs. They've found significant ruins with theaters, city walls, an ancient gymnasium, arches, and baths.

But just a few little foundations have been found at Colossae, and that's all. So as I said, it was like Steamboat Rock, Iowa. It's a peek-and-plumb town. You peek around the corner, you're plumb out of town.

[3:55] That's the way that Colossae was. And on top of that, the church of Colossae was not started by the Apostle Paul. Chapter 2, verse 1 makes that very plain.

For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea. And for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. It was probably Epaphras who started this church.

Now there's a great debate as to whether or not Paul even ever visited this town or went through the town. It's likely that he probably at least traveled through the town because it was en route to other locations.

But he evidently never stopped there. He never knew these people. And yet he wrote a letter to the Colossians. Now I take great comfort in that because I came from a small town.

[5:09] It seems to me that the heresy in Colossae was somewhat different from the heresy of the Galatian churches. You all know the heresy of the Galatians. The Judaizers came into the region of Galatia and said that unless you are circumcised, you are not saved.

Praise God for that. We don't have to become Jews to be Christians. We become Jews by faith in Jesus Christ. In Colossae, however, the heresy seems to have taken a little bit of a twist and a turn. Evidently, the Judaizers in Colossae knew that they had lost that battle. Now, I know I'm guessing here, but just follow my reasoning and see if you agree with me. They knew they had lost the battle. And so what they said, well, it's true. Faith in Jesus Christ will save you. However, if you want to be a really good Christian, one who's really growing in grace, one who's really having victory over sin, and what Christian doesn't want victory over sin?

Now, the reason that I say that is because of what Paul writes in chapter 2. In chapter 2 of this epistle, for instance, at verse 4, he says, Now this I say, lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

So these teachers were teaching something about the basic principles of the world, which was not in accord with Jesus Christ. What is it that they were teaching? Well, we don't have to guess, because in verses 14 and following, or 18, let's go down to verse 18 and following of the second chapter, the apostle Paul explains the false teaching that they were receiving.

[7:58] He is the one who holds us together. He is the source of our growth. But look at verse 20. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourself to regulations?

You've got to add something to Christ. You've got to do these things. When I grew up, I grew up in a church. It was a fine church, but it was a church that had extra rules and regulations from the Bible. And we used to speak of it this way. You know, if you want to be a real good Christian, you don't drink, you don't chew, and you don't go with girls that do.

And it had the appearance of wisdom. It was a self-imposed religion. It was adding things, and for a good and lofty purpose. It was so that they could be better Christians to get rid of their sin.

[9:55] And the Apostle Paul, of course, is saying, that's not right. That's not right at all. And in chapter 3, he turns the corner, whereas he has laid open the heresy in chapter 2. Now in chapter 3, he deals with the subject as to how it is that they may conquer sin, how it is that they may grow in the grace and wisdom and knowledge of Jesus Christ. And in a nutshell, what he says is, the answer is Jesus Christ. How is it that we're saved? Jesus Christ. How is it that we grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ? It is the person and work of Jesus Christ. And Paul does in chapter 3 what he does in almost all of his writings. He tells us everything he's going to tell us in a few brief sentences, and then he opens it up. And so the first four verses of this chapter, he tells us everything he's going to tell us in chapter 3 and actually on through chapter 4. And then he explains it in some detail after he does this. I admire the mind of Paul, don't you? I mean, just as a man, I admire his logic and the way that he wrote. Well, and we just see it all the way through the scriptures. Amazing, amazing logician. I don't think he's ever been matched in his ability and logic. But that's what the Apostle Paul does here. And we're going to look at the summary, or as it were, all that he wants to tell us about how it is that we may live godly lives in Christ Jesus. And as we approach this text,

I want to approach it by addressing three questions to the text. First question is this, who is it that lives a godly life? And as we answer that question, we'll be looking at the essential foundation for living a godly life. The second question that we will address to the text is this, how do we live godly lives in Christ Jesus? And here we'll be looking at the fundamental activity in which we must be engaged if we are to live godly lives in Christ Jesus.

And the third question that we will ask of our text is, what will keep us living godly lives in Christ Jesus? So here we'll look at the, some three encouraging motivations for continuing to live godly in Christ Jesus. So now I've told you everything I'm going to tell you. I just got to expand on a little bit. Okay. Let's look first of all at who is it that lives godly in Christ Jesus.

And look at verse one, the first part of verse one, Paul tells us, he says, if then you were raised with Christ, who lives godly in Christ Jesus, it's those who have been raised with Christ. My dear friend, none of us, no living man can ever live godly in Christ Jesus. If he hasn't been raised, he must be resurrected. You must be a Christian. Now our text says, if you've been raised, but Paul is not using this if in the sense of asking us to step back and determine whether or not we are believers.

I mean, that's a legitimate thing to do. We are to examine ourselves, but that isn't why he uses the word if here. It's a condition of reality. In other words, what Paul is saying is something like this.

[13:18] Since you have been raised with Christ Jesus, then do these things. He's not questioning whether or not these Colossians are believers. He's giving them the foundation for living a Christian life.

You must be raised with Christ. You must be born again. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. All things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new or are becoming continually new, is what 2 Corinthians 5, 17 says. In Colossians 2, 12, the apostle Paul said that we've been buried with him in baptism, in which you were raised with him through faith and the working of God who raised him from the dead. In Romans chapter 6, Paul says, after explaining our union with Christ and the fact that our salvation isn't because of us, even we can't even take responsibility for the fact that we're sinners because it is in Adam that all sinned. I mean, it's all outside of us. And so he says in chapter 6, he said, should we continue in sin that grace may abound? He says, God forbid. How can we? He says, we've been baptized into the death of Christ. We've been raised with Christ. We cannot continue in sin.

He says, since you've been raised with Christ, that is the foundation for godly living. There can be no Christian living without resurrection. You remember old Ben Franklin, don't you?

I remember reading something that Ben Franklin said somewhere in one of the literary things that I read. He said something to this effect. He determined that he was going to be a moral man.

And so he set up all the rules that he was going to keep. And after he'd attempted this for some time, he confessed. He said he found it was more difficult than he ever expected it to be.

[15:22] He couldn't even keep his own rules. This was the fellow who wanted Whitefield to go out and be with him. He was going to be the governor or the leader, the political leader in Ohio. And he wanted George Whitefield to go out in Ohio to be the spiritual leader. Whitefield wisely rejected Ben Franklin's request. But Ben Franklin found it more difficult. Well, my dear friend, it's not only difficult, it's impossible. You must be alive before you can ever live the Christian life.

And you know, there are a lot of people who try to live the Christian life who aren't alive yet. And maybe you're one of them. It's not just that you struggle, because we all struggle with sin. But you know, the Christian sins in a different way from those who are not Christians. The Christian sins against his own will. It's described for us in Romans chapter 7, when Paul says, I do do the things that I don't want to do. It's no longer me, he says, but it's sin that's dwelling in me. The Christian hates his sin. He mourns over his sin. He takes his sin to the cross of Jesus Christ. And there at the cross of Jesus Christ, he finds cleansing from the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is poor in spirit. The man who is trying to live the Christian life without Christ, he gets upset with the fact that he's not doing as well as he ought to do, but he doesn't think to go to the cross. He doesn't seek to find cleansing at the foot of the cross and the blood of the Lamb.

It's only the one who's been resurrected, who, in the words of Bunyan and Pilgrim's Progress, has been at the cross and has had the burden of his back. It's rolled off into that empty tomb, and it's gone. His sins are forgiven. My dear friend, this is the foundation for godly living. It is to be raised with Christ. And that's where Paul starts in his whole doctrine of godly living, or sanctification, as the theologians call it. It is to begin with the fact, since you have been raised with Christ, then these various things can be accomplished.

Well, let's move on to our second question, which is, how do we live godly in Christ Jesus? We're looking here at the fundamental activity in which we must engage. Now, I want to describe this, first of all, negatively, before we describe it positively from the text.

[18:10] It's very clear from the text that living godly in Christ Jesus is not some mere outward association with Jesus Christ. There are nominal Christians. There are serious nominal Christians. There are people like the Pharisees. There are people who can be very faithful in all the outward religious duties and activities of Christianity. There are people who attend church faithfully and regularly. There are people who help the poor. There are people who go to the rescue mission and fix meals for the men of the rescue mission. There are people who read their Bibles. There are people who wouldn't think of beginning a day without praying. But all that can be done and it can be a mere outward activity without getting to the root of the matter as the Apostle Paul describes here in our text. And we'll look at the positive in just a matter.

You see, this is not a mere intellectual interest in theology or an intellectual interest in philosophy. You know, the Christian religion is a beautiful religion. And the Reformed faith shows its beauty beyond any other theology. It is a glorious system. It is such a glorious system that those who are given to philosophical thought can see it and see its beauty and its glory. You know, Yale University has republished the world's life. And the Bible says, in the Bible, the Bible says, they read Jonathan Edwards and they marvel at his mind. They marvel at his system. They marvel at his logic. But they think, if only he could have gotten out of the rut of his presuppositions, he could have been much greater. We look at them and say, hey, you don't understand the reality of the faith which Jonathan Edwards had. I had the privilege for five years of translating Greek with a bunch of liberals in the Quad Cities at Augustana College. And it was a love-hate relationship on my part. I loved it because it got me back into my Greek New Testament. I hated it because so many of these liberals didn't believe what we were reading. Now, they understood what it said, and we could generally agree on what the text said. But I kept wondering, do you guys believe this?

And one time, the second year into the reading, the professor, the classics prof, decided, and I was so happy he decided to do this, to go around and ask each man and woman who was in the group what their view of the text was. There were two of us who were conservatives in the group, and the first man to answer was my buddy. And he answered, or no, I guess I was the first one to answer. And I gave my view of the text that it's the authoritative word of God that is inspired by God. And my friend who spoke next said, I believe, I agree with everything that Gordon said. He says, I would just add that I believe it's inerrant. And I said, yeah, I believe that too. And the next person was a woman pastor who was part of the Quad City Progressive Clergy. Now, Progressive Clergy means that they are pro-gay marriage, pro-abortion, and any other thing you can think of there for it that we as Christians would find in the Bible to be against. And the first words out of her mouth were this. She says, the Lord inerrancy has never crossed my lips, she said. Well, of course not. Now, she knew the Greek text, and she could translate the Greek text, and she found the Bible to be a most fascinating book that drew her in. And she was one of the best translators in Greek. How can this happen? Well, my dear friend, you see, one can be outwardly associated with the Bible, outwardly associated with Christianity, and yet not know the Christ of the Bible. Now, none of you are

probably progressive clergymen that are here today. And if you are, I know you'll let me know after the service. But I tell you, my dear friend, though you may not be theological liberal like this dear woman of which I've just spoke, you can still be in a position where you know the truth, in a sense accept the truth, are here this morning in some sense practicing the truth, without knowing the Christ of the truth.

To grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ is not merely to have an outward association with Jesus Christ. It is much more than that. Remember again, Bunyan in Pilgrim's Progress? Tells us about talkative. And it was only after talkative was asked the question about the power of things, and specifically about his home life, that he got mad and left. He knew everything. He could talk about all theology. He could talk even about experience until it came to his own experience.

[23 : 50] And again, this goes back to our first question that we asked. What must be true if we are to grow in grace? We must be alive. We must personally know our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

But I'm asking the question, how do we live godly in Christ Jesus? Well, there are two activities. And I noted that in the translation that was read, the two different words were translated the same way.

Verse 3b, we are to set our minds on those things which are above.

I'll have to read my translation. It says, seek those things which are above. Verse 2 says, set your mind. There are actually two different words here. They can be translated, they're much the same. They're very similar.

So we can say it's just one activity, but we look at it in two different ways. We are to, first of all, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God.

[24 : 59] We are to set our minds. Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth. Now notice these two words, or the same word in your translation perhaps.

Notice it is command. It's the imperative move. Do this. Set, set, or seek and set. Notice also that it's present tense.

This is not a one-time action. It is the continuous activity of the Christian. In other words, what Paul is saying, he's saying, I want you to continually seek those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

I want you to continually set your minds on things above, and not on things of the earth.

It's like the present tense of Matthew 6.33. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

[26 : 04] In other words, what the Apostle Paul is saying, you must give yourself completely and entirely to Christ and to the things which are above. This is the Christian's primary concern.

Let me say that again. This must be our primary concern. As I look at this audience, I see what I would expect to see.

There are fathers, there are mothers, there are children. There are grandfathers and grandmothers. And you know that as children, as parents, as grandparents, we have certain responsibilities. And I suspect it's here, as it is in most of our Reformed Baptist churches, that there's a great deal of emphasis placed on the family.

And that's good. But I tell you, dear friend, our primary concern is not to determine how we as husbands are to relate to our wives, or how wives are to relate to their husbands, or how children are to obey their parents, or how grandparents are to fit into the whole scheme of the family.

[27 : 25] Above that is seeking Jesus Christ. Because it is from seeking Jesus Christ that all these other duties flow.

And that becomes obvious as we continue reading in chapter 3 of Colossians. Paul does get to the matter about the family. But he begins with a summary of the essential foundation, which is to be raised with Christ, and then having been raised with Christ, we are to seek those things which are above, and we are to set our affections on those things which are above, and not on the things of the earth.

In other words, he's saying what we need beyond all else is to have a heart for Christ, to have an affection for Christ, and to be seeking Christ. And if we have that, everything else will flow from that. I'm not suggesting that that alone is all that we need, but I am suggesting that this is foundational to crucifying sin, to living in the home, and all other Christian duty.

It is to be consumed with Jesus Christ, to find Him and His glory to be the love of our life. And when we fall down here, we will automatically fail in our growth, and fail in conquering sin.

[28:45] It begins here with seeking Christ, a yearning to know Christ. Like Paul said, Oh, that I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His suffering, and be made conformable to His death.

When we have a great love, it's amazing what we will do. Have any of you ever fallen in love?

Some of you young people will. I guarantee it.

Maybe not all of you, but most of you will fall in love. What did you do when you fell in love? You did some of the craziest things. Didn't you?

And you made, no doubt made some sacrifices. Let me tell you what happened to me when I fell in love. I'm not going to tell you everything. But I'll tell you some of it. There was this red-headed girl on campus who took me by storm.

And finally came to the place where I knew that I wanted to marry her. And you know, if you marry a girl, you have to have a diamond ring, right? So where was I going to get this diamond ring?

[29:58] Well, I intuitively knew where I could raise the money to get a diamond ring. See, I loved horses.

I got a pony when I was just a little kid. And I rode that pony all around the barnyard. And when I finished my eighth grade year, I wanted a horse. You know, pony is all right, but when you get bigger, you need a horse.

And I had a friend who was actually my great-uncle's son who said he knew about a palomino horse that wasn't very far from where he lived.

And he told me it cost \$100. That was in 1958. Okay? I don't know how much money that is today.

She's a mare. That's good because I wanted to raise some colts.

And so I found that out and I bugged my dad. I said, Dad, I found this horse. It's a Palomino. It's what I want. And I kept bugging him so much to where he had to tell me to be quiet and not talk about it anymore.

[31:01] But eventually he took me over there and I saw the horse and I paid the \$100 on the spot, put a bridle on her and rode her home. It must have been close to 15 miles that I rode her home. I think I rode her halfway one day, stopped at Sonny's place, and then the next day went to get her and rode her the rest of the way home.

And she had a beautiful filly the first year, Palomino. I registered her, Palomino Color Registry. And she had Star, beautiful, beautiful colt. And then the next year she had Blaze, another beautiful Palomino colt that time.

And then Star had some offspring. Well, I fell in love. So what did I do? You know what I did? I sold Penny. And I only sold Penny.

I sold all my horses so I could buy a diamond ring. Now, why would a guy do that who loves horses? Because I love this girl more than I love my horses.

And I wanted her to be my wife. Now, you see the point that I'm making, don't you? The Apostle Paul says here, set your minds on things above, not on things of the earth.

[32:09] What is going to take our affection away from the earth? We have a lot of nice things on the earth. We have the beauty of the earth. And here in America, well, let's face it.

We have a lot of nice things, don't we? We have homes. We have cars. We have food. And food. And wonderful food. We have vacations.

We have all these wonderful things which God has given us. What would cause us? What would cause us to consider them less?

It is the love of Christ. You see, when he says, set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth.

What's above? Well, he tells us in verse 1, Christ is above. And what is Christ doing above? He is sitting at the right hand of God. And from there he rules.

[33:08] This glorious Savior who suffered for us because of our sin and was redeemed us by his blood and was ascended to heaven to the shouts of the throngs on high.

There he is interceding for us. Is it a great difficulty to set our affections on things above?

Oh, but we must do it. It's so easy to get wrapped up in the world and the earth and all the things of the earth. But we must behold our risen Savior who suffered in our behalf.

And you see, this is the essential activity for growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Let me tell you what a person will say who is, who is, doesn't understand the beauty and the glory of Christ.

[34:12] A preacher will preach a sermon about Jesus Christ, his beauty and his glory and the wonder of Christ and the need to worship him and the need to fall in love with him more and more.

And a person who doesn't understand Christ and know Christ will perhaps say something like this, you know, why don't you get downright practical, preacher? Why don't you give me the steps that I need to take to be able to conquer this particular sin?

Now, there are, I'm not denying there are steps that we need to take. But what I say is, before we take the steps, there must be Christ central in our hearts and our minds.

That must be the case. Well, let me move quickly on to the third question that I wish to address to our text.

And that is, what will keep us living godly in Christ Jesus? And here we're looking at the motivations. And there are three truths that we find in these verses that will motivate us to keep living godly in Christ Jesus.

[35:20] They are glorious truths. At least I think they are. And I hope I can persuade you that they are glorious truths before I get done in my explaining of them. First truth is found in verse 3.

For you died. For you died. This is the same truth that the apostle Paul taught in Romans chapter 6. I referred to Romans chapter 6, but I want to read some of these verses to you because Paul has a fuller explanation and commentary on that clause in Romans 6.

He says, What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not. How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know?

That is, many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. Therefore, we were buried with him through baptism into death that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life.

[36:31] Then verse 14, he says, of Romans 6, for sin shall not have dominion over you for you're not under law but under grace. What's Paul teaching here? Well, he's saying, you've died to sin.

You've been baptized into Christ's death. Sin no longer has dominion over you. Now, some of us may say, if sin no longer has dominion over me, why is it that I sin? Well, of course, what Paul is talking about here is a radical break that is made with sin when one is converted to Jesus Christ. There's a radical break. There's an entire change. One is alive. As I said before, we don't sin in the same way that we used to sin. We sin against our will. When we sin, we mourn.

We go to the cross. We seek cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ. And a non-Christian never does that. A non-Christian may be troubled by his sin. He may have great guilt over his sin, but he doesn't go to the cross.

And that's how our sinning is very different. Why is it we go to the cross? Because we've died to sin. We hate that sin. We don't want that sin anymore in our lives. Even if we wander far from Christ for a long period of time, we will come back because of the grace of God.

[37:38] And we will find cleansing again and afresh and anew at the foot of the cross. And this is what will keep us living godly in Christ Jesus to remember and know that we have died to sin.

You see, the apostle does not come to us and say, now you need to die to sin. He says, you had died. And what a great comfort it is, even when we find ourselves doing what we don't want to do, to remember that there's been this radical break and this sin doesn't control us anymore.

It's there to our grief and to our sorrow, but no longer does it control us. You see, the sin of the guilt-ridden soul without Christ produces sorrow.

But it's the sorrow of the world that produces death, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7.10. This was the kind of sorrow that Esau had.

He was very sorry. He wept when Jacob took the birthright and the blessing or took the blessing from him.

[38:57] He was extremely sorry. But it was a sorrow unto death. The sorrow of the Christian is very different.

It is a, the sorrow of a broken heart that he has sinned against God. and against his Savior.

And he goes to his Savior seeking the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ. And my dear friend, I submit to you that this is a tremendous motivation for living godly in Christ Jesus to remember that we have died to sin.

Sin does not control us. I tell you, that helps me so much so many times. to think, sin doesn't control.

Sin doesn't have dominion. And someday, someday, I will get to that in a moment. Let's look at the second truth. The second truth is, found also in verse 3, B, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

[40:12] Here's the second motivation. salvation. Oh, and this is a glorious truth. As I was thinking about this again this morning, it excited my soul.

Your life is hidden with Christ in God. Now, if you'll allow me, let me just mention this.

What we have here is a perfect active indicative in the Greek tense, which means nothing to most of you, but I love the perfect tense in the Greek language.

It just excites me because what it means is this. this is something you're hidden with Christ in God.

What it means is it's something that happened back here in time, in the past.

But that tense also carries with it the meaning that what happened in the past, the results of that continue into the present and will continue.

[41:20] And so what Paul is saying, your life is hidden at some time in the past, Epaphras came to you. He preached the gospel. You were converted. You came to believe on Jesus Christ. And at the moment you believed your life was hidden with Christ in God and you're still hidden with Christ in God and you are hidden now and you will be hidden with Christ in God forever.

The results will never cease. What a glorious truth that is. This is absolute security.

we are hidden with Christ in God. Jesus put it this way in John 10. He says, he talked about, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give them to them eternal life and they shall never perish.

And no man can snatch them out of my hand. No man can snatch them out of my father's hand. For my father has given them to me and I and my father are one. We are secure in Jesus Christ and I tell you this is a motivation for living godly.

We can never be lost. Those who believe in works salvation will come to us and say how are you ever going to convince people to live godly in Christ Jesus if you tell them that they're secure and they can never be lost.

[42:35] And we retort and say this is the foundation for living a godly life. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. This is the Pauline way. This is the Jesus way. This is the Bible way.

To know that. Isaiah 49 16 says that we have been engraven in the hand of God. When I was a young boy one of the great preachers of my youth came and preached at our church.

His name was R.T. Ketchum. He was one of the ten greatest orators in America during the time when she was alive. And I shall never forget actually two or three of his sermons.

And I was only a boy of maybe 10 or 11 maybe 12 years old at the most. And I remember his sermons. You know that he was quite an orator for a 10 or 11, 12 year old boy to remember a sermon.

But Dr. Ketchum was preaching from that text in Isaiah 49 16 that we are engraved and in the hand of God. And he said that he was trying to get to the root of that text and trying to figure out exactly what it meant and how it would apply.

[43:42] And it was his habit on every Saturday to go down to his barber and get a haircut. So as his custom was, he went down to the barber and he was getting his haircut and he noted that the barber had a tattoo on his arm.

And he noted that the tattoo had the name of the barber's wife. So he asked the barber, he said, when did you get that tattoo? I said, he said, when did you get that tattoo?

I mean, was it before or after you were married? It always was before I was married. He said to him, what would have happened if you hadn't married that girl? And the father said, well, there's nothing I could have done about it.

I mean, the tattoo was there, it just would remain there. Well, he says, yeah, but isn't there some way to get rid of that tattoo? And the barber says, no, there's no way to get rid of that tattoo.

Well, Dr. Ketchum pressed him, he said, there must be some way to get rid of that tattoo. And the barber said, well, yes, there is. But it would have to be burned off and leave a scar.

[44:47] And Dr. Ketchum said at that point he took the apron and he said he threw it in the air, shouted hallelujah, ran out of the chair, I don't know if the care cut was done or not, ran all the way to the study because he said he understood that text.

We are engraven in the hand of God. He says, I know no one's going to get to the hand of God and burn us out. We are secure. Your life is hidden with Christ in God.

And that's a second motivation for living godly in Christ Jesus. And you know what it gets better. verse 4 is a third motivation.

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. This is the hope for every single saint.

You see, we have died. Sin doesn't rule us. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. God. And the crowning jewel to know that Christ is going to appear.

[46:02] Or in the words of the psalmist, when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness. Or Psalm 73, you guide me and afterward receive me to glory.

Or John 15, 3, Jesus said, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also. Or 1 John 3, 2, Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

And as Paul says, when Christ to his life appears, then you will appear with him, in glory. You know what? I'd be happy just to see Christ, but to appear with him in glory is beyond my wildest imagination.

Why would we not want to live godly in Christ Jesus? Why would we not want to continue our study of Colossians 3 and put to death our members which are on the earth when we realize who we are and what is ours and what will be ours in Jesus Christ?

When you take an acorn, what do you see? Is there a whole oak tree in an acorn? Well, of course, we know there is, don't we? But we don't see the oak tree.

[47:36] we don't see it. Is the image of Christ in you? We don't see it, do we?

But it's there. And just like the full oak tree is in the acorn, so the image of Christ in you, and it will be displayed to the watching world.

when Christ who is our life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory. This is our future. This is what we're heading toward.

Praise God for that. You see, what the Apostle Paul makes clear here is that Jesus Christ is the answer to the Christian's walk. Just like Jesus Christ is the only way that we can be justified, Jesus Christ is the way that we are sanctified.

We must not be deceived by the vain philosophies of the world. We must not be deceived by those who would say that we must not touch, we must not handle, that we must add all kinds of rules and regulations if we are really to become great Christians.

[48:55] No, we follow the Bible way and realize that Jesus Christ is central. Now, let me say this. This all has to be worked out in detail. This is just the beginning. It's the foundation.

It's the starting place. Because Paul does work it out in detail in verses five and following. He talks about putting to death your members which are on the earth. And we must do that. But remember as we do that, that we do it because we've been raised with Christ.

We do it because our affections have been set on Christ. Christ. And we do it because we have died. Our life is hidden with God in Christ.

And we shall appear with him in glory. Yes, we work it out in detail. We must do that. The detail is very important.

But the foundation is where we must always begin with Jesus Christ. Putting to death sin. Being renewed in knowledge. As the elect of God, holy and beloved, in verse 12, put on tender mercies, kindness, and so forth.

[50:03] And whatever we do in word or deed, in verse 17, do in the name of the Lord Jesus. But you see, it begins here. And that's where Paul begins. And it's where we must always begin if we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Oh, to love him more. Oh, to see more of his beauty and glory. Oh, to realize more and more of how secure we are in Christ.

It brings joy. It brings godliness. It brings the motivation to live for Jesus Christ. I wish I knew him better. And I believe that many of you do as well.

There may be some of you who have been trying to live the Christian life without Christ. I beg you, look to our glorious Savior. He died in the place of sinners.

Do you know your sin? Do you have all that guilt that's on your soul? I tell you, dear friend, one look at the cross and the burden rolls away.

[51 : 07] Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Let's pray together. Our Father, we thank you for the gospel.

We thank you for Jesus Christ. We thank you for the hope that we have because of what he has done for us. We thank you for the hope that lies before us in the future. Oh, Lord God of heaven, help us to set our affections on things above.

Help us to seek Christ with all of our hearts. Help us to remember that we have died, that our life is hidden, and someday we shall see Christ and be like him and behold him in glory.

Bless, we pray, your truth to our hearts this day. And we do pray, Father, for those who are yet outside of Christ. May they behold the beauty and the glory of our Savior.

May they come to the cross and find cleansing through the blood of Jesus. We pray this in his precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[52 : 12] Amen. Amen. Amen.