

Set Your Minds on the things that are Above

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[0 : 00] Let us worship God. We shall sing to his praise in Gaelic from Psalm 40. Psalm 40 from the beginning of the psalm.

And in English these words are, I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay.

Don a rocky set my feet, establishing my way. I je■li udah gesagt you won't say you too. No we should stand there unto you I hope should be healed next day.

You're praying which white aquellos rude practice will roar all the way inside of there.

[1 : 21] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[3 : 53] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[7 : 11] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. burden of responsibility for which we must all answer. That we have that word and that you are able to bless it to us however we are met around it. We are not just around your word, we are under your word and you remind us of the need that there is to bring that word to bear upon our hearts and upon our minds, upon all our activities in this world. We pray that you would remember our nation at this time as we continue to enter into a phase of recovery. We don't know whether that will remain the case or not. We know that there are nations close by to us that are entering into a third phase of illness and that illness affecting many more. You are sovereign in the way that you bring things about and even in our own nation.

We have not seen any marked improvement in the spiritual condition of so many of us, even though you speak to us loudly and clearly through the providence that has assailed us and left us without so many of our liberties. We pray that you would keep us safe and that you would keep your people safe and that you would open the eyes of our understanding to see what you have to say to us and that you would heed what God the Lord speaks for you speak peace to the souls of your own people in particular.

We ask that you would bless those who are suffering, those who are ill in whatever way. We pray that you would bless them. We know that the Covid situation has affected those who are suffering from various illnesses over and above and above Covid itself. We pray that you would remember any for whom this time is a sore and a vexatious providence.

We pray for healing. We pray for grace of patients even under your hand. Guide those who are responsible for ministering to the needs of the suffering. Doctors and nurses and carers of all descriptions. Remember all places appointed for the alleviation of suffering, hospitals and care homes and hospices. We pray for those who are working within our communities, remembering those who are housebound and ministering to them within their homes. We pray for those who have experienced sorrows and sadnesses in recent days. They may not know that they are being prayed for because many of the privileges that we enjoy as a community. To know that there are those who pray with us and for us have been denied us. But nevertheless your people are a praying people and we ask that you would encourage them to continue to pray for those who are in need of being prayed for. We ask that you would remember the proclamation of the Gospel and that you would encourage those who are entered to respond to it in faith. Those who are the children of faith that they may know that they can grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[11 : 28] And despite the restrictions that have been upon us, that that growth is expected and even anticipated until the day of Christ Jesus. We pray for those who have been spared wither too, that they may understand that this is something that you have allowed them to enjoy. The opportunity to repent, the opportunity to avail themselves of this day of grace. For we know not what day of our will bring.

Not one of us can presume that tomorrow will be as the day before. And you encourage us to think long and hard about the use that we make of these privileges that we enjoy. For we will answer to God for them.

Bless us, we pray, and bless those who govern us. Bless those who rule over us in whatever way. Be merciful to those who are indifferent to the truth that you've set before us, that we are created in your image, that we are created body and soul, that death will sever body from soul and the soul will return to God who gave it.

And the day will come when all must answer to you, without exception, whoever they are, be great or small. We ask that you would remember our young people who are growing up in a religious situation.

They see the world about them, so half-passard and so carefree and indifferent about the things of God. But that does not mean that you are not blind to their plight. So be merciful to them, draw them to yourself.

[13 : 18] Witness to them through your people and sanctify that witness that the eyes of the mind that are blinded by the God of this world would be healed and that they may see the graciousness of the God of heaven and the goodness that has provided for us a way of salvation. Without that provision we are lost.

So continue with us, bless the word to us as we continue to think on it and read it and meditate upon it in whatever way we are able so to do. Watch over us for giving sin in Jesus name. Amen.

We are going to hear the word of God as we have it in the New Testament Scriptures. Reading from Paul's epistle to the Colossians from chapter 3 and we are going to read from the beginning down to verse 17. Colossians chapter 3 at the beginning of the chapter.

1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. 2. For Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

3. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience, in the which he also walked sometime, 4. When you lived in them? But now you also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, 4. Filthy communication, out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man 5. With his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. If any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body. And be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. And so on down. May the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word and to his name be the praise.

[17 : 10] I'd like us to turn for a short while to this passage that we have read. And we're looking at the opening verses of chapter three.

Colossians chapter three at the beginning. Now the best clue to alert us to the problems identified by the apostle in the church of Colossae is found in the words of chapter two and verses six to seven, six to eight.

It's not a meaningless G up, but a serious shot across the bows. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Now these words are followed with the solemn warning of verse eight. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.

What is all this about? Well to put it simply, some of the Christian believers in Colossae were being tempted away from the fullness of the blessings that belonged to a believer.

[18 : 45] To embrace or include other elements that were at least heretical and spiritually destructive.

Just to identify the main ones highlighted by theologians should be enough at this point. Angel worship, false philosophies, Judaistic ceremonialism and asceticism that encourage monasticism of sorts and a separation from the world in order to gain mastery over the world.

In chapter three we find the apostle reminding the believers of what has already happened in their life. And secondly, what will yet take place because it must be if they are believers.

Our focus this evening is on the opening four verses. Now what I'd like us to notice what is true of the believer and in what sense. They are risen with Christ, they are dead, or the better translation, you have died, and Christ is your life.

The second thing that we consider briefly is what must be true of the believer as they go on. We are to seek what is above and to set their affections on what is above and not on other things.

[20 : 19] And thirdly, what they can anticipate. Now the fact that Paul begins the chapter with the word if does not imply dead.

He is simply referring back to a truth that he has previously declared. Otherwise to speak about a resurrection before a death would be a nonsense.

But Paul bases these words on the assumption that the believer is someone who is by faith in Christ.

Just look at the marvelous statement we find in chapter 2. We can read from verse 9. 1.

For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

[21 : 24] 2. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 7. 8. 8. 9. 9. 10.

10. 10. 11. 11. 11. 12. 12. 12. 12. 13. 14.

14. 15. 15. 15. 15. 16. 15. 16. 16. 16.

17. 17. 17. 18.

[22 : 33] 17. 18. 19. 18. 20. 19. 20.

Paul in another context in Romans 6 and at verse 5 writes, For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Believers, as we said, died with Christ in his death. And as Jesus was buried, so too was the believer. And as he rose, so he rose in him.

Why is this important? Well, we know it's important, doctrinally, but more important is the implication stressed by the use made of it in the context.

Because this is true of you, that this happened in your experience, then it must follow, that the risen you is different to the you that you were before you came to be in Christ.

[23 : 53] In his epistle to the Galatians, Paul writes, in the second chapter, in verse 20, In Colossians, in chapter 2 and verse 20, Paul insists that when this happens, there is a radical change in them.

Indeed, there must be. You are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. Somewhere else, he says, by being in Christ, they become new creatures.

New men, new women, finished with the old. Hugh Martin, the Scots Divine, states that when Jesus died and rose from the dead, he divested himself of the covenant of works, purged his relation to the Father from every element of obligation, and claimed his Father's love and promises as all most fully earned.

All the stipulated service, the obedience unto death, had been rendered. All the legal elements removed by the laws being wholly satisfied.

But Hugh Martin follows this with words that seem to me to be even more astonishing. Like him, and in him, you divest yourself of the covenant of works.

[25 : 38] You take the promise. Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more as being free to you without money and without price, without condition or works on your part, as much so as the risen Christ at God's right hand is free from obligation to suffer any further penalty or pay any further price.

Now this is no cheap grace we are talking about. It is taking God at his word. And you, by trusting in the truth of it, show you truly believe what Christ has done, was done on your behalf.

Christ is indeed your life. But I want to go on to emphasise that this requires something to be true of the believer in Christ.

If you look again at verse 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Seek these things that are above. Where above? He explains where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

[27 : 05] Jesus died and rose again, but it does not stop there. He ascended to his Father. He is now seated.

Many of the Bible scholars refer us to the words of Psalm 110 and verse 1. The Lord did say unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy foes a stool, wherein thy feet may stand.

Jesus himself anticipates the fulfilment of this, once the hour of his departure came. When interviewed by the high priest prior to his crucifixion, Jesus said, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.

To the high priest, Jesus' words were blasphemous, yet Jesus saw it as going to his reward.

It was God who was to set him at his right hand. We know this as truth, repeatedly referred to in the scripture. But what are we meant to seek there?

[28 : 24] The commentator William Hendrickson suggests that what is meant by the word seek is not so much a seeking to discover, but rather a seeking to obtain, with the emphasis falling on the object sought.

We are to set our affections on what is above. The word translated affections in the AV is translated minds by other translations.

An affection suggests a more emotional act, whereas the mind is a more thoughtful process. We are to think often and much of the risen, ascended and glorified Christ.

As J. Philip Arthur suggests, our powers of thought were intended to be used for his glory. And there are ways of thinking that threaten our well-being.

We cannot multitask. Our minds cannot think about Christ and sin at the same time. And is that not the truth? What exercise can you give to your mind?

[29 : 39] Is it something that we do often? Occasionally the question will be asked, what will heaven be like? What do we think heaven will be like?

How much do we give to our minds and our thought processes to reflect upon that question? Do we set our minds upon it, as the Apostle says?

Do we think of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, because heaven is their dwelling place, that is where God resides?

Do we think of their activity, God's activity, an inter-Trinitarian activity? What heaven has God's place of abode us like?

Do we think of the angels? Do we think of the seraphim, the cherubim? Do we think of the disembodied saints awaiting the great day of resurrection? But our life, we are told as with Christ's, so such a thought should not be strange.

[30 : 52] Paul says you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ, in God. What mysterious words they are, and yet Christ often spoke mysterious words to his disciples.

Because I live, he said, you shall live also. Put yourselves in their shoes. They felt very much alive, but there was more than a hint in these words, there was more to come.

As Matthew Henry argues, Christ is at the present, a hidden Christ, or one whom we have not seen. But this is our comfort, that our life is hid with him, and laid up safely with him.

If you are a believer, you could not be more secure, even though you are at times riddled with fear. The final thought is contained in verse 4.

When Christ, who is your life, our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him, in glory, Paul says. Do you detect the certainty, of the first part, of that statement?

[32 : 08] There will be a parousia. There will be an appearance of Christ, at the last. According to his promise, he shall appear, he shall be revealed.

We cannot but think, of the birth of Jesus, born into poverty, born at a time, where the world was ignorant, of his presence, for the most part.

But he will come again, to be seen, this time in glory, majesty, power. All these things, will radiate from his presence, he will not be hidden.

The myriad hosts, will make their presence felt, and every eye, will be upon him. Every eye, shall see him. There is no way, that he will come, without people knowing, who is coming.

The preacher, George Philip, refers to countless, texts, that teaches, the awesome wonder, of that great day. In Philippians chapter 3, and verse 20, we read it, for our conversation, is in heaven, from whence also, we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change, our vile body, that it may be fashioned, like unto his glorious body, according to the workings, whereby he is able, even to subdue, all things unto himself.

[33 : 40] George Philip, says, it is the destiny, of the believer, in Christ. Then ye also, shall appear, with him in glory.

That's what Paul, insists on. It seems, implausible to us, that any one of us, who would share, in his glory. But we are the fruit, of his sufferings.

If the father, delighted in Christ, then most assuredly, he delights, in those who are, in Christ. He delights in them, in the same way, that he delights, in his son.

Because we are promised, that they will be, like him. So many promises, that by grace, we should make our own, because we are in him.

God's people, are kept people. Kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed, at the last time.

[34 : 44] When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, Paul says, then shall ye, also appear, with him, in glory. We don't doubt, the first part of that.

We don't doubt, one, jot, or a jot of it. Because it is, the truth, concerning, Christ. Christ, he has promised, to come again, to his people, and take them, to be with himself.

But the promise, also, reminds us, that those, who, are his, shall be with him. And if they are, to be with him, they are going, to appear, with him, in glory.

Whatever that means, as I said, there are many mysteries, in the word of God. Many mysteries, that, may not be fully, interpreted, by mere men, in this world, at this time.

But they will all, be disclosed, when it is, the right time. We give thanks, that the promises, are ye, and amen, in Christ. And that for those, who are his, and those, who are in him, that they will never, be found disappointed.

[36 : 06] May he bless to us, these very few thoughts. Let us pray. Most holy God, we bless you, and thank you, for the wonder, of being in Christ. Those who were, out of Christ, and knew, what it meant, to be separated, from him.

Who knew, what it was, to live a life, where there was, no desire, to be, with him, or like him, or one of the number, that was his.

It was the last thing, they wanted. But the day came, when you, when you came in mercy, and brought them to yourself. Not only to yourself, but to, be one with you, by faith.

We give thanks, for all that means, to your people. We give thanks, for the privilege, that they enjoy, of sharing, in the blessings, that you have promised, to his people, and that, they can anticipate, greater glory still, when, your work, will be, brought to full fruition, in the sense, of having, your people, with yourself, for eternity.

Watch over us now, we pray. Continue, to keep us, free from falling, arise free from tears, cleanse from sin, and now, may grace, mercy and peace, from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you all, now and always.

[37 : 42] Amen. Amen.