

Temporary or Eternal

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Preacher: Jacob Kwashi

[0 : 00] This is the morning service at Holy Trinity on the 23rd of September 2001.

The preacher is Jacob Kwashi. His sermon is entitled Temporary or Eternal and is from Colossians chapter 3 verses 1 to 11.

Please be seated. Don't tell Paul this, but I feel it is good sometimes for him to travel so that I'll be in charge.

Don't tell him that. I didn't say that anyway. We thank God for this moment and this day. Shauva heads as we pray.

Father, speak to us from your word and may we be blessed by your word. So that by the time we leave this place, people should be able to see Jesus in us and hear Jesus when we speak.

[1 : 13] We ask this in his name. Amen. I want to make a confession.

And I just want to also ask that maybe someone here seated might have passed through the same thing I passed through.

One way or the other. It might not be exactly the way I passed through. It might not be exactly what happened to me that might have happened to you. But maybe in a point in time in your life, you discover that something has gotten the whole of your attention, your mind, your thoughts.

Everything is fixed on that thing. And whether you are asleep or you are awake, everything is just going around that single one thing that has come upon your life.

And I will never forget the 14th of November, 1994. When a brother of mine, my brother, he said to me, look, he was in Joss and he said, Jacob, come down to Joss and we have something to discuss.

[2 : 39] And when I went down to Joss, surprisingly, to my greatest surprise, he gave me a key to the Mazda car they've been using for the past three, four years.

And he said, today this car belongs to you. Ooh, and that's the first time owning a car in my life. The first time.

So that was so great that I took my time to be a very good driver from Joss to Kaduna, which is about two and a half hours journey, if you are going on 100 and 110.

But I decided to go below 90, which took me more than three hours or so to get to Joss, I mean to Kaduna. Because it was a precious thing to me.

I've never had a car in my life and that was a false car. And when I got home, I was wondering because where we were living then is a place whereby we don't have security.

[3 : 42] And there was no garage for me to park the car therein. So I kept wondering, what should I do? Where will I park the car? Because there is no security in the car either. So what will happen if I keep the car and I was fast asleep in the night and so on?

Come and steal it away. So a thought come to mind. And I decided to park the car very close to our bedroom window. So that whatever happened, I'll be able to hear.

But I did not only stop there, I went into the bedroom quickly. My wife was not around. And I quickly looked at the room and I decided to make some changes. I quickly moved the bed from where it was to the window.

So the bed would be right beneath the window. With the intention that if we lie down on the bed there and sleep in the night and if anyone touched the car, I should be able to hear.

And when my wife came back, she looked at the room. Everything was changed. Beautiful. Oh, you've done a wonderful work. I said, yes. She did not know the secret why I did it. And then that started the whole of misery in my life.

[4 : 52] From that very night, I lost what is sound sleep. I did not know what sleep is because we were surrounded with so many rats. So a movement of a rat, I thought someone has come for the car.

And then I would quickly wake up and look people through the window. Any movement at all outside, I'm thinking of the car. My attention, my thought, my everything just went to the car automatically.

Two weeks, three weeks. And my wife discovered that my life has changed. I spent three hours on Saturdays washing the car. And she said to me one day, I hope, Jacob, this car will not take you away from me.

Because your thoughts, your attention, your everything is now on the car. You hardly sleep in the night. And when you wake up in the morning, the first thing you want to be sure it is there is the car.

You open the door to go and see whether the car is there. And the car has taken the whole of your mind and your attention. But that is the truth.

[6 : 01] And that was what I passed through. Because something came into my life in November 1994, that thing changed my life.

It changed everything pertaining to me as far as sleep is concerned. It changed everything pertaining to me as far as thought and imagination and everything is concerned. Because something new happened.

Colossians chapter 3, as we look at verse 1. St. Paul started an argument, or he started an explanation in chapter 2.

He said in chapter 2 that we have died with Christ. We have been buried with Christ. And in chapter 3 he said because we have been raised with Christ, this is the argument.

Something new has happened. Something wonderful has come upon us. Therefore, set our hearts, set your hearts and minds on things that are above.

[7 : 04] He started the argument from there. He said that because something new has happened, because of the death and the burial, which he used baptism in the olden days, and baptism by immersion, that because you are put into the water, and the moment you come out of the water, it signified you were dead and buried with Christ, and now you are out of the water, you've been raised with Christ.

So set your hearts on things that are above. But today we can confidently say that, of course, as we all know that baptism is not a certificate to heaven. The certificate to heaven is accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

So having accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, we've died with Him. We've been buried with Him. Now we've been raised again with Him. And St. Paul went on to say, Then set your hearts on things that are above.

Something new has happened. Something has taken place. As a result of knowing Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, something new has happened. Therefore we must depict that something new has happened.

Our thoughts must change. Our thoughts must be on things that are above. And he went on to explain more.

[8 : 24] That look, as Christians, as those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, the things of this world, that the world considers so important, and people are killing themselves, and struggling in order to get those of us that we have our hearts fixed on eternal things, on things that are above.

We will not do such a thing. The world's standard will not be our own standard. The thought of the world will not be our own thought. Instead, the standard of God will be our own standard.

The thought of God will be our own thought. Our desire, our everything, will be fixed on God. Paul is not saying here that, therefore we should get out of the world, go to Sahara Desert somewhere there and stay.

No. Paul is not saying that, therefore close your shop, no more selling, no more buying. No. Paul is not saying that, therefore quit your appointment with that company, or with the government, so that you go and stay in your house, lock your doors, and never you go out.

No. Paul is saying that, as long as we mingle in the world, as long as we go about doing things in the world, we have a perspective in our heads and in our minds, that we are fixing our hearts and our minds, not on the things of the world, but on things of God.

[9 : 45] He is not saying that, things of the world are bad either. He is not saying that, money is bad. He is not saying that, all these things that we have around us are bad. But by the time that, these things of the world dominate our lives, control us, and our everything is surrounding around these things, we no longer think of things of God, then there is something wrong.

Our absolute concern, must be on things, above. And then, after that, St. Paul, in a wonderful way, he went on to let us know, that, for the fact that something has happened, there is a need, for something also to happen.

Since the world is no longer the ultimate, since the standard of the world is no longer our own standard, since the things of this world, no longer dominate us, St. Paul said, we must know this one thing, the reason why we must set our minds and our hearts, on things above.

And he argued out in verse 4, he said that the reason why we must set our minds on things above, is for the fact that we've been hidden in Christ, with the Greeks, in the olden days, if somebody died and is buried, they will refer to that person, he has been hidden in the earth.

So, Paul said, we've been hidden in Christ, because we've accepted Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Savior, we've been hidden in Christ. We no longer walk on our own, we are walking in Christ.

[11 : 34] As I said this morning at 8 o'clock, just imagine a pregnant woman, who is having a pregnancy of about 7 months old, or 8 months, just about to deliver.

And every day she wakes up, goes to work, and one day she decided to go to work as usual, and she was stepping out of the house to go to work, then the baby would say to her, mommy, I'm not going with you to work today.

That would be a surprise. The reason the baby is alive, is because she is in the womb of the mother, and it's because the mother is there. The baby at that age cannot live on her own, until after 9 months, then the baby can come out and begin to live in the world.

But as long as the baby is still in the womb, from day one, until the day the baby is being delivered, the baby lives in the womb, inside the mother. As long as the mother lives.

But that is even, the one that Paul is even saying here, is even better, far better than the baby in the womb. Because in Christ, we will no longer die again.

[12 : 45] Christ died once, and he has been risen again, never to die. So as long as we live in Christ, we will never die again. The baby could die in the womb.

We've heard of stories of baby dying in the womb. But in Christ Jesus, there will be no death, as long as we live in him. So he argued it out here, that the reason why we must set our minds on things above, is on the ground that we are hidden in Christ.

It's great. It's wonderful. To know that we live and move, and have our being in Christ. Brothers and sisters, outside Christ, there is no life.

I must confess, the world might tell us that, things are good, yes, and it is true, things are good. The world might tell us that, you can have wonderful things in the world.

That is true. But believe you me, outside Christ, there is no life. In him we live, and move, and have our being. No wonder, when he wrote a letter to the church in Philippi, in Philippians chapter 1, verse 21, he said to them that, in fact, he summarized everything in that verse 21, Christ is life.

[13 : 56] Christ is life. He is everything. No wonder, that's why we must set our minds on things above. Where Christ is seated, on the right hand side of God.

In another word, Paul is saying, we should set our minds on righteous, on things that are righteous, things that are holy, things that are right. Because on the side of God, there is no iota of sin.

On the side of God, there is no room for worldliness. On the side of God, there is no room for flesh. On the side of God, there is no room for anything that comes from the pit of darkness. We set our hearts and minds on things that are righteous.

And having speaking in a very wonderful way as a theologian, Paul now went on to bring some ethical demands upon each and every one of us as children of God, and as believers.

From verse 1, he said, put to death. That is the beginning. Or verse 5. Sorry, from verse 5. He said, put to death.

[15 : 00] And that is the truth. Those who are setting their hearts and minds on the things that are righteous, on the things of God, must then put to death.

The ability is still within our reach. We can do all things through Christ that strengthens us. If we have the desire, the willingness, the heart, willing to do it, God will give us the strength.

And then he said, put to death things that belong to the nature of the flesh. In another word, he is saying, eliminate everything.

You know, I like food so much. And in the finals, I felt very bad. I'm a Carlton supporter, but Carlton, they lost long ago. But you need, you see, when you come to quarterfinals, semifinals, they are unique because they are called elimination.

You just, the moment you are defeated, you are defeated. the moment you are defeated, you are out of the game. Eliminate it. Remove it away. Get rid of it.

[16 : 11] And St. Paul now went on and listed the things that we should. He started by making it so clear that brothers and sisters, those who are setting their hearts on things of the Lord, eliminate any sexual immorality, any kind of sex, outside marriage, before marriage, as children of God.

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Get rid of anything evil. That as far as sex is concerned. Get rid of anything evil in a sexual way.

Live a pure life. And that's the next thing he said. Get rid of anything that is impure. Impurity must not be mentioned among us as children of God. It sounds funny and unbelievable that man and man will think of having sex.

Woman and woman will be thinking of having sex. Or with animals, human beings will be thinking of having sex. Impurity. Things that are not good in the sight of God. Things that are not even good in hearing, talk less of seeing them.

Get rid of impurity. Get rid of lust. The lust of the eyes. The lust of the flesh. The lust of the things of this world.

[17 : 25] And he went on and on. And he mentioned them. Evil desires. Desires that yes, we will have them purposely to fulfill our own pride.

To fulfill our own desires. Not to bring glory to God. Some desires, we might not even know them that they are evil. We will think as if like David, when he said, let us count and know how many soldiers were there.

It was good to just count soldiers and know as a commander. But before God, that was an evil desire. Some things will come, we might not know that they are evil. And St. Paul said, get rid of evil desires.

Get rid of greed. The desire to want more. Every day, I need more. I want more. I want to add more and more and more. It is not a crime to want more.

It is not a crime to need more. But by the time that the needing of more and wanting of more is dominating us more than the things of God, then there is something wrong somewhere.

[18 : 31] It's good to have two cars, three cars, four cars. But by the time that these two, three, four cars are dominating your life instead of things of God, then there is something wrong somewhere.

Get rid of greed, which of course St. Paul said, greed is another brother of idolatry. Any life that is so occupied with so many things of this world without Jesus Christ is a life that is filled with idols.

And he said, put to death all these things. Why must we put to death in verse 6 quickly? He said that we must put to death because verse 6 made it so clear.

the wrath of God is coming upon all these things. The day will come whereby when Christ is being revealed, the wrath of God as well will come with him.

And the wrath of God will descend upon anything that is done in this world which is contrary to the will of God. So for the fact that the wrath of God is coming, we must put to death.

[19 : 39] He started by telling them that look, we must put to death everything because we've been raised with Christ. But even if you are not so confident with being raised with Christ, you better know that the wrath of God is coming.

Therefore, put to death. It's so great as Paul continued and in verse 8, he now brought us to another illustration and another important point.

Putting off and putting on. And he said in verse 8, he said, put off. It's a picture from the early church also.

In the early church when a candidate is being baptized through immersion, the moment he is lifted out of the water and he comes out of the water, they will remove the rope that he was wearing then and bring a new white rope and give it to that person to wear it on.

And that is what St. Paul is saying here. That we've been buried with Christ. We've been raised with Christ. We're no longer raised, we are no longer coming up with Christ to remain in the garments we used to be.

[20 : 55] We now put off the garment of sin, of flesh, of the things of the world and now put on the garment of righteousness.

And he listed the things that we must put them off there. He started with put off anger which is very important.

Anger might not really surface itself, you might not really see it. There is some anger that are quiet in the heart. just silence anger in the heart. I had a friend who said to me there was a business he went into it with someone and that person cheated him on that business and ever since that day the moment he sees that man anywhere he will be my friend will be boiling within him with anger.

He feels as if something should just chop off the neck of the head of that man. That is an anger that is inside. And St. Paul said put it off. Put off rage.

The outward display of anger of annoyance. The outward display of annoyance. And you will shout on top of it I will kill you. I will destroy you.

[22 : 10] A member of our church so many years back he called on me he said pastor you must come and help me. I said what is it? He said my wife needs deliverance.

I said no your wife she's I know her she's okay. He said no. Whenever we have misunderstanding whenever anything come between us and we quarrel that day he must list down the things that he must buy again in the house.

In another word he said the moment she becomes angry she will begin to throw away things. They have bought television seven times because she has broken every single time they buy.

Because of wrath, anger, annoyance. Destroying things out of annoyance. St. Paul said put it up. And he went on and said put up malice.

Having the spirit of not forgiving someone he is keeping malice for years. The point is that St. Paul is saying how can we be thinking of heaven? How can we be thinking of eternity and still behave in an unworldly way?

[23 : 22] How can those who are thinking of staying with God be living in sin? How can malice be found among us? Get rid of malice. Get rid of slander.

The kind of destructive gossip about neighbors, about colleagues. We gossip, we destroy people. No, it's not for those who are fixing their minds and hearts on things that are eternal.

filthy language that are not good lies to one another. Put it away. These things are not helpful. And especially in filthy language, as parents, we must know that children could easily learn quickly and faster from us.

The moment a son begins to see father kicking his mother or doing some things, you think as if that's a normal thing for a man to do. there was this man who normally takes his son to school every day and he would need 30 minutes to get to the school and every day he would not leave in time, he would leave 50 minutes late.

And of course, our own traffic, you don't talk of traffic, no traffic light to tell you when to stop or when to move. So everybody drives away, he feels like driving or she feels like driving.

[24 : 39] not at the convenience of anyone anyway, at my own convenience I drive. So he will leave home 50 minutes late and he will be there rushing going and of course he will not be the only one on the road.

There will be other drivers. Someone will just cross him and he will march his brake and he will turn around, you idiot and bastard and he will continue and another one will make a cross and he will march, you idiot bastard.

And when he got to school, the boy will come out and go to class. One day the man traveled, he was not around and the woman decided to take her son to school.

They got on the road as usual, she left very early, they got on the road, she was just singing and the same way of pattern of driving people were doing and someone will cross her, she will just look, smile and continue and then someone will make a kind of U-turn and she will just brake, wait for him to pass and she will just smile and continue.

And when they got to school, the boy was coming out of the car and he said, thank God. Then the mother said, thank God for joining mercy. And the boy said, no, thank God that we do not see bastards and idiots today.

[25 : 54] Because his father used to see bastards and idiots on the road. And the people are not to the glory of God should not come out of us.

We are heading for heaven, we are children of God. The languages that should come out of our mouth should be languages that are of the heaven, of eternity, of God.

And having said put off, St. Paul now went on in verse 10. He said we must put on, put on now, new life, new self, which is in Christ.

And I like this verse 10. He said that this new self in Christ is not something that you just do it once and for all. No. It's a thing that you do it continually. You renew it every day.

Just like the way we wake up every day, we breathe in and out oxygen. Just like the way we wake up every day, we eat food and drink water. That is the way we put on the new life in Christ.

[26 : 54] Every day we renew. Every day we become like Jesus. We talk more like him. We walk more like him. We resemble him. And more and more every day we change for the better.

Paul is not saying here that you will be a perfect human being in a perfect way sometimes somewhere in this world. No. There will be no perfect human being at a perfect time in this world.

Our perfection will be fulfilled when we go to heaven. But as long as we are in this world, every day we look forward to becoming more like Jesus, talking more like Jesus, pleasing God more, and doing more of the things of eternity.

It's great. God and he close it up in verse 11. Those who are heading for heaven will have no room for division.

I like verse 11 too. He said there is no division in verse 11. We are all one. And as I said in the morning, thank God for Holy Trinity Don Casta, where people could come from any part of the world, from Sri Lanka, from Malaysia, Africa, from any part of the world, and we will sit down together as one family.

[28 : 13] This is a picture of what eternity will be. Eternity is going to be a place whereby believers from all over the world will be one. There will be no heaven for any person.

There will be only one heaven for all the children of God, those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord living in this world as children of God, we should be promoting unity, we should be promoting oneness, we should be promoting walking together as one big family.

Get rid of division. Anything that will divide the church of Christ, we say no to it. We walk in righteousness to the glory of God.

Brothers and sisters, I don't know whether you've ever been consumed by the thought of heaven. Because the thought of heaven will force you to change some things.

The car that came into my life forced me to change the arrangement of bed and everything in the room. Because I had a thought of the car, imagination and everything about the car.

[29 : 26] When I got the news that by the grace of God my family will be coming, I found my wife and I told her the good news. She was so happy. Three, four weeks after then, I think, about so, I didn't call them again to just talk and chat.

And then she said to me, do you know what has happened to your son? I became shocked at that moment. I said, I hope he's okay. She said, no, he's doing well.

Amos is fine. Then I said, what has happened to Amos? I said, since the day he got to know that he will be going to Australia, he has been going around telling his friends that if I go to Australia, because he knows that Australia, it is not a country that belongs to the blacks.

He knows that one. He said, when I get to Australia, where the Oyebos are, Oyebos are the names we've given to the white. So, if I get to Australia, I will Australia, how will you be talking?

I thought the mommy was just trying to pull my leg. If I get to Australia, I will be talking like Oyebos and I said, that's good. Talk like Oyebos and let me hear you. And what will you be saying?

[30 : 45] I be saying, good morning, how are you? Come here. I said, that's good. That's the way Oyebos man talks. And I laughed over the phone.

And then I said, let me speak with your mom. But she did not stop there. She now said, look, that is not even the main thing. Amos has developed a kind of character that I must let you know.

Then I said, what is it? She said that there was a day that Amos was doing something and she tried to stop him from doing that thing. He refused. Amos stopped it. Amos refused. I am going out with the car.

I will not go with you. Amos said to her, you can go, I'm not going with you. Amos stopped that. I wouldn't. And then just a drop of a word came to her mind. And that word said to her, say to Amos, no more Australia.

And she came back and she said, Amos, I have asked you to stop that thing. And Amos said no. And then she said, okay, no more Australia. Magic word.

[31 : 49] He just jumped up from his feet. Say, mommy, I am sorry. I am sorry. Okay, I have stopped it. And that becomes a magic word for her. Amos, go and brush your teeth.

Amos will say, no. Okay, no more Australia. Oh, okay, I will go. I will go. Amos, get ready for school. Amos will say, no. Then she will say, okay, no more Australia. Okay, I will go to school.

Amos is ready to sacrifice anything that will stop him from coming to Australia. He's ready to do whatever his mother will ask him to do as far as that will take him to Australia.

Have you gotten a thought of eternity at all? Have you been thinking of heaven at all? How heaven wonderful will be? I think if we have that kind of thought of eternity of heaven, we should be able to let the desire of eternity, the thought of eternity, the everything of eternity to consume us to the extent that we be ready to sacrifice anything that will come our way against eternity.

Things in this world are temporal. Things that are of the Lord are eternal. Fix your eyes on things that are above.

[33 : 08] We have a choice to make tonight, either to live for temporal things of this world or to live for eternal. Amen.