

Heavenly Minded

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles this morning and open them up to Colossians chapter 3. We've been walking through the book of Colossians together as a church family, and we've come to Colossians chapter 3, and our passage this morning is verses 1 through 4.

If you don't have a physical Bible of your own that you brought with you, that's okay. We have them all over the room and seat backs nearby, but I would encourage you to have a copy of God's Word available to you as you look on as I preach this passage this morning.

When you found it, Colossians 3 verses 1 through 4, let's stand this morning together in honor of the reading of the Word of God. Paul says, If then you have been raised with Christ, Seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.

[1:28] Father, we pray once more this morning, God, would you transform the minds of this church so that we would seek the things that are above, not things that are of the earth.

Would you fill our thoughts with heavenly things? Would you fill our hearts with a love and a desire to seek Christ? We pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.

You may be seated. I recently had the opportunity to share an important life lesson with my boys several weeks ago. One of them was just sitting innocently at the dinner table, minding his own business, looking off into the distance, apparently a little quieter than usual.

And so Amanda looked at him and asked him, Hey, what's on your mind? To which he replied, Honestly, nothing. And I said, you know, this is one of those opportunities as a father that you have to capitalize on to be able to teach about God's world in which we live.

And so I called all the boys together and I said, Hey, listen, I want you to understand exactly what just happened here. The female mind cannot comprehend the thought of having nothing at all on their mind.

[2:48] This is one of the main differences between men and women. I'm going to speak in general terms here. I know that there are general exceptions, but if ever there was evidence that these two genders are not interchangeable, this is it.

The male mind is like a railroad and the female mind is like Spaghetti Junction. At any given time, they are thinking of 10, 15, 20 things, but the man, honestly, is possible for him to be thinking of genuinely nothing at all.

There is a distinct difference between the mind of a man and the mind of a woman. That's how God has made us to be. This morning, as we look at Colossians chapter 3, Paul puts that same question before the church.

What is on your mind? And gender differences aside, for a minute this morning, he's helping us to see that there ought to be a distinct difference between the mind of a believer and the mind of a non-believer.

The Christian is called to be heavenly minded. So let's take a look at the passage, and I want us to see it in three parts this morning. This will be our outline. We try to make it easy for you to follow along and take notes.

[4:03] So three parts this morning. We'll see the mind of a Christian first. Second, we'll see the motivation for the Christian life. And third, we'll close with a method for Christian thought, a method for Christian meditation.

I want to get very practical with you as we close this morning. So three parts, the mind, the motivation, and the method. Let's take a look. First, we see the mind of the Christian. Look there with me to verses 1 and 2.

Paul begins here with a very important if, before he gives any sort of command here. Paul says, if then you have been raised with Christ, meaning if you are a Christian.

To be a Christian is to be raised with Christ. It's to be united to the risen Christ by faith. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above.

That's an important if, isn't it? You know, the non-believer cannot be expected to set their minds on heavenly things. And they're still of the earth.

[5:06] But, Paul says, if you have been raised with Christ, then seek the things that are above. He's continuing this line of application that he started in chapter 2, verse 6. This was sort of the banner verse of the application section of Colossians, chapter 2, verse 6.

He said, if you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, then you are called to walk in Him. Walk in Christ.

And so the question then becomes, well, Paul, what does walking in Christ actually look like? Maybe you've thought that way yourself. And maybe you've asked that same question. You say, well, I know that I have received Christ Jesus as Lord.

I know that I'm a Christian. I know that I believe in Him. But what does it actually look like for me to walk in Christ? Paul answered that in the negative for us.

He told us what not to do in chapter 2. He said, to walk in Christ means to not let anyone take you captive, he said in chapter 2, verse 8. To walk in Christ looks like not letting anyone else pass judgment on you in regards to human tradition and legalism and laws and expectations.

[6:17] In verse 16 of chapter 2. He said, walking in Him looks like not letting anyone disqualify you. He said in verse 18 of chapter 2.

But now as we turn to chapter 3, he turns and he then gives us some positive application. So we're moving from what we must not do to what we must do. What does walking in Him actually look like? And he tells us the Christian walk requires the engagement of your mind. The Christian walk, to walk in Him, requires the engagement of your mind.

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above.

Your minds. Set your minds on things that are above. Not on things that are on the earth. The Bible calls God's people to devote their minds to Him. You think of some Old Testament passages.

[7:23] Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth, but meditate on it day and night, Joshua 1.8 says. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is on the law of the Lord.

And on His law, He meditates, meditates, day and night, Psalm chapter 1 says. Or you go to the New Testament, it's no different. Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of what?

Of your mind, He says in Romans chapter 12. Or in Philippians, He says whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Think, He says. Set your mind on these things. Think, think, think. Engage your mind in thoughts of God. This is the call of a Christian. And I know the objections, right?

Because I've heard them before. I'm just not much of the academic type. I never went to seminary. All of these theological things are just too deep for me.

[8:41] Now listen, not everybody has to have a PhD in theology, but every Christian must devote their minds to the Lord. The pastor theologian, P.T. Forsyth, was often accused of preaching above the congregation's heads.

And you know what his reply often was? Lift up your heads. It's not very pastorally sensitive. But he might be on to something. Church, we are all called to lift up our heads and to devote our minds to the exercise of thinking about God, thinking about His glory, thinking about spiritual truths, thinking about theology.

Now before I became a Christian, I'll confess to you, I was not much of a reader at all. No one would have described me as an academic. I did not care to read a book at all, but I had good models, good examples who put good books into my hands.

And they told me, go and read. Go and learn. Go and think about God. Go think about theology. Go think about the church. Go think about your salvation.

Think about heaven. Think about your identity in Christ. Think about the mission God's given you. Think about holiness. The Christian life requires us to think.

[10:03] I remember hearing one of the leaders in our campus ministry in college say just in an offhand comment one day that one of his life goals was to be a master of the Word of God.

I had never heard anybody talk like that before. Yeah, I knew the Bible was good. I knew it was full of good, helpful tidbits and information for my life, but never had I ever heard anyone express a desire to so fill their minds with God's Word that they are thinking the thoughts of God constantly. I want that for us, church. I want that for me. Paul says, you must fill your mind with the truth. Seek the things that are above with your minds, but not just your minds.

Paul also says this walk with Christ also requires a delight of the heart. It requires a delight of the heart. Look there again to verse 1. Paul gives these two parallel commands here.

One, seek the things that are above, verse 1, and 2, set your minds on the things above, verse 2. So, seek and set your minds. Those two are closely related.

[11:10] They're closely connected, but they're not exactly the same. That word for seek, it has the heart in view. It's the same language that Jesus uses when He says, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

It's not just a mental pursuit. It demands the engagement and the delight of your heart. The NIV translates it well. We were talking about different translations in the Grow Class Hour.

The NIV translates it well here. It says, set your heart on things above. And the KJV actually takes that angle in verse 2 where it says, set your affection, the affections of the heart.

Set your affection on things above, not on things that are of the earth. In other words, church, it is good and it's right to know what's true, but that is not enough.

It's not enough to know the truth. We must also love the truth. It's not enough to know facts about God. We must also love the Lord our God with all of our heart, all of our mind, all of our soul, all of our strength.

[12:12] We have to know about Him in order to love Him. That's a requirement. But simply knowing about Him is not enough. We must love Him. We must set our heart on things above.

Didn't Jesus press this home with the Pharisees? He said, nobody knew the bare facts about the Word of God than the Pharisees. They could honor Him with their lips all day long, but what did Jesus say?

These people honor me with their lips and yet their heart is far from me. The Christian life requires that you set your heart on things above, not just your head.

And the truth of who God is and what Christ has done for us, that's meant to move us in the affections of our heart. I do want to clarify something here that's very important because in our culture today, year 2026, when we hear the engagement of our heart, when we hear setting our heart on things above and seeking God with our heart, we think emotion, don't we?

And we hear heart and we think emotion. I just want to make it clear that is not what Paul is saying here. In fact, I think Paul is likely throwing another subtle jab here at these false teachers in Colossae.

[13:29] They were really emphasizing the priority of having a deep emotional experience in worship. And they said, what was really important for you is that to be spiritually full, you have to have this overwhelming spiritual, emotional experience where you're overcome with emotion and that's how you know you've done something really special.

Do you realize many Christians today think the same thing? They think that in order to have a truly valid religious experience in worship, it must be deeply emotional.

And many churches arrange their gatherings to try and manipulate that emotional response. If they can just get people excited and emotional, well then that is the goal.

We've done it. I've actually heard somebody say, and this is a direct quote, let's get them really excited and then later on they can figure out what they're excited about.

Can I just say that that's completely backwards from the biblical pattern. The biblical pattern is truth that moves the heart. It's truth first as the leader that engages the affections of the heart.

[14:43] It's truth that stirs up love for the Lord. There's a difference between emotions and what the Puritans called the affections of the heart. Do you know this difference?

Sam Storm summed it up well. Let me read this to you. He says, emotions can often be no more than physiologically heightened states of either euphoria or fear that are unrelated to what the mind perceives as true.

Affections, on the other hand, are always the fruit or the effect of what the mind understands and knows. The will or inclination is moved either toward or away from something that is perceived by the mind.

The Christian life must be centered on truth that stirs up the affections of your heart. And so Paul says the Christian walk, church, it requires your mind, it requires the engagement, the affections of your heart.

And lastly, briefly here on this first point, we see that to walk in him requires an intention of your will. I just want to make this plain here before we move on.

[15 : 53] To seek and to set before, that requires some effort, church. And the truth is not one of us naturally drifts towards thoughts of heavenly things.

and not one of us naturally wakes up in the morning feeling warm and eager to pursue heavenly truths. Our minds are foggy, our hearts are naturally cold.

We're filled with thoughts of things we must do. We're filled with worries of this life. We're filled with thoughts about our jobs and our families and our health and our obligations. This is a discipline that will require effort out of you.

And intentionality, you must make an effort to stop thinking about every earthly thing that demands your attention constantly and to set your minds on things above.

You have to intentionally engage your mind with thoughts of Jesus and the finished work of the gospel. If you want to get warm, you have to move closer to the fire.

[16 : 54] If you want to be filled, you have to prepare and eat. If you want to be heavenly, you have to intentionally seek after heavenly things.

My point is, church, the call of Christ is to seek Him with everything you have and everything you are. That's an overwhelming call, isn't it? The demands of Jesus on us are not small and light.

They're not easy. This is a call to offer your entire self up to Him as a living sacrifice. Your mind, your heart, your very will.

So second, we should ask, what is the motivating power behind this work? What is the motivation that God gives us for this task? What's the power behind this whole self-pursuit of heavenly things? Paul tells us the power is in who Christ is, what Christ has done and in the glorious fact that you are united to Christ by faith.

[17 : 59] See how he roots all of this in Christ and what he's done? Why does he tell us to seek things that are above? Why? Why set our minds on heavenly things and not of things that are of the earth?

It's because that is where Christ is. Think of things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. He's seated there.

This is a reminder of the finished work of Christ. Christ is seated because the work of redemption is done. He's earned that seat. And Jesus has fully accomplished the work of salvation.

Paul's reminding us, by the way, this is why you can't add to it with all of your rules and all of your regulations and all of your religion and all of your traditions, all of these burdens that the false teachers in Colossae wanted to add to the finished work of Christ.

He says, no, no, no, no, no. We don't do as those false teachers wanted us to do. We don't labor and work and do all these religious things in order to climb our way closer to God.

[19 : 01] The gospel tells us God has come down to us. We don't need to achieve our salvation. Christ has come and achieved our salvation. We can't add anything to it.

He's in heaven. He sat down. It's done. Jesus doesn't need any help from earth. He's already seated in heaven. That's what the gospel tells us.

It's the finished work of God. The finished work of Christ. Your perfection that you must have to be made right with God. Guess what? Christ has already achieved it by His perfect life.

The burden of debt that you've earned but you can't pay. Guess what? Christ has already paid for it by His sacrificial death. hope of eternal life that we can't ever achieve by our labors.

Guess what? Christ has already risen from the grave. He's done it. He's taken a seat at the right hand of God. Not just any seat. The seat of eternal power and eternal authority at the right hand of the Lord where the Son of Man will reign as King for the rest of eternity.

[20:08] Church, this is why we're called to set our minds on heavenly things. We seek the things that are above because that's where Christ is but not only this.

I want you to see this. We seek the things that are above because that's where we are in Him. I love this church.

We have in these four verses such a beautiful picture of what we call our union with Christ. our union with Christ. If you want something to think about this afternoon, think about your union with Christ.

Do you realize, Christian, that by faith in Jesus, you are spiritually united to the risen Lord Jesus Christ? And this union with Christ, that's at the very heart of your salvation.

The Puritan Thomas Goodwin, he says that it's the ocean into which all other doctrines run. And the Bible uses metaphors for our union because it's just so hard for simple people like us to grasp the depth of it.

[21:17] It says, He is the vine and we are what? The branches. He is the head and we are what? The body. He is the bridegroom and we are the bride.

He is the cornerstone and we are living stones being built up into a spiritual house. This is union language. Our entire existence as God's people, our Christian life together is empowered and motivated by the virtue of our union with the living Lord Jesus Christ.

It's such a precious truth. It's a remedy for every doubt you might have in this world. if you look on earthly things like your own effort, your own religious rule keeping, you may wonder, am I good enough to get into heaven?

But if you look to your union with Christ, you see the perfect life he lived. It's as if you perfectly obeyed. His record of perfect obedience is your record of perfect obedience because you are united to him.

If you look on earthly things like your own lingering sin and your own heart, Christian, your own guilt, your own shame, you may wonder, how can I ever get out from under this burden of guilt and shame for my sin?

[22:42] You ever feel that way? How can I ever be free from the enslaving power of sin over me? But if you lift your eyes and look to your union with Christ, you see Christ has already died to sin once and for all.

He has already paid for sin. He has already destroyed sin's enslaving power. He has already removed God's wrath from me. He has already borne my guilt.

He has already carried my shame. I don't have to bear that anymore because I am united to him by faith. His death is your death, Christian.

You have died, Paul says in verse 3. If you look on earthly things, you may wonder, how can I ever live this Christian life that God calls me to live?

This all in pursuit of the Lord, of heavenly things. How can I offer up all my mind, all of my heart, all of my will, all of my entire self? may may may may may may may may may may!

[23:55] you can see that you are raised to walk in newness of life. You are raised as a new creation in Christ. You can, as Paul calls us to do in Romans 6, reckon yourself, consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

It's almost unfathomably good news. And it's so hard to see right now the full depth of these truths, but church, soon and very soon we will see, Paul says in verse 3, you have died and your life is also hidden with Christ in God.

It is hidden. The real you has not yet appeared. But one day soon and very soon, Christ Jesus will return and our faith will be sight.

And verse 4 says, When Christ, who is your life, appears, you also will appear with him in glory.

That if you look on earthly things, all you will see is this weak earthen vessel that gets sick and gets tired, gets discouraged, gets weary, wrestles with all sorts of sin and temptation.

But when you lift your eyes to heaven and you look to Christ, and when you think on things where Christ is, you see Christ there risen and glorified, raised with a new, glorified, sinless, indestructible, perfected body, never to die again.

[25:35] And 1 John 3, 12 says, When we see him, we will be made like him. We will one day be glorified, perfected, victorious, sinless, made fit for an eternity of joy in the presence of God.

Don't you want to think on these things? Think on things where Christ is. Seek him. Set your heart's affections on him.

Make Christ and his glory the all-consuming desire and pursuit of your life. Because you are united to him, church, this is your life. So third, and finally, I want to close by making this as practical as I can.

I want to give you a method for how. This is the how. Okay? And what are we called to do? We're called to set our minds on Christ. Why? It's because we are united to him.

That's who we are in him. So how? And I have seven very brief suggestions for you. I want to make this as practical as I can so that even this afternoon, you can go home and put it into practice.

[26:45] First, number one, start. Start. Start. Yeah, I understand this whole idea of, of thinking and, and meditating and setting your minds on heavenly things.

That may be new to you. Okay, that's fine. Just start somewhere. That's sometimes the hardest part. Just start. Just think. Just start. Number two, set a time.

Make an appointment. Set a time. Don't just wait for the random cracks in your schedule to appear and, and then try and fill it. Although that is good to do as well. Set a time.

Make an appointment. Put it on your calendar. Set a timer, even, for how long this appointment will last. 10 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, whatever it may be. But set a time and keep your appointments.

Number three, silence all distractions. Because y'all know they're going to come. If you need to go outside, go outside.

[27:47] If you need to leave your phone in another room, I would recommend it. And this is one reason why, by the way, this is a free nugget. This is one reason why I prefer a physical Bible as opposed to a digital Bible on my phone.

Because those distractions come, don't they? It is way too easy. The task here is to set our minds on heavenly things. We need to, as best as we can, set up the guardrails here so that we can focus our mind and our hearts on the Lord.

That's the goal here. So number four, saturate your mind with the truth. Saturate your mind with the truth. And there is no such thing as too much.

Read your Bible. Read your Bible. And come to it daily. And listen to the Word as you ride in your car.

Read good Christian books. If you need recommendations, y'all know I got some for you. Read above your head. Read above your understanding. Read together. Memorize passages of the Word.

[28:55] Memorize verses. Memorize chapters. Memorize entire books. You can do it, church. Fill your mind with the truth. Listen diligently to sound teaching and preaching.

And come not just to be entertained, but to grow and to listen and to learn in your understanding of God's Word. Meditate on the truth. You know, this is the difference between Eastern meditation and Christian meditation.

But the goal of Christian meditation is not to empty your mind of all thoughts. The goal of Christian meditation is to fill your mind with the truth and to think on what's true.

Number five. Number five. Select one thing. Select one thing. If you're like me, I read a passage and I got about a hundred different avenues I could chase here.

Select one truth, one idea. This may be one truth about who God is. Maybe it's one of His attributes. It may be one verse from a passage you're reading. It may be a main idea that summarizes a chapter.

[29:58] It may be a concept that you haven't quite figured out yet. Whatever it is, I want you to select one thing. That's enough. And think about it. Contemplate it.

Toss it all around in your mind. Ask good questions about it. Ask as many questions as you can about it. Pray about it. And then, number six, I want you to savor it.

Savor it. Act as if you were tasting the greatest meal you have ever had placed before you. And you want to enjoy every single bite.

And you want to take note of all the different flavors. You want to eat all of it completely. You want to enjoy that to its fullest degree. That's what you do when you toss this truth around in your mind.

You are seeking to delight in what is true. Not just to know it. You're seeking to savor what is true. You're seeking to feed and nourish and satisfy your soul with a feast from heaven's table.

[31:09] And finally, number seven, share it. Share it. Our evangelism, we pray often that we would be developing here a culture of evangelism.

Our evangelism ought to be the overflow of our delight in God and His truth. So you say to your neighbor, can I just share with you something that's been stirring in my mind today?

Can I share with you something that I've been thinking about? Can I share with you something I'm excited about? God, maybe our evangelism is dry because our hearts are dull and our minds are empty.

It's not just good to share with non-believers. We also pray for a culture of discipleship within the church, don't we? Share with one another. Can you imagine the growth that could happen in this church, spiritual growth, if every member was so saturated with the truth of God and our hearts were so filled with love for heavenly things and then our mouths were open sharing and proclaiming what God is showing us in His Word to one another.

This is how the church builds itself up in love, isn't it? By speaking the truth in love, we grow up into Christ, but we can't give to others what we don't have yet ourselves.

[32 : 35] Church, there is nothing greater that you can set your mind on than thoughts of God and His glory. Amen? One of my favorite little books is Richard Baxter's The Saint's Everlasting Rest.

And in it, he encourages believers to think and to meditate, to contemplate the glory that's ahead of you who know the Lord. And I just want to share a couple of passages from that book as we close. He says, If there be so certain and glorious a rest for the saints, why is there no more earnest seeking after it? One would think if a man did but once hear of such unspeakable glory to be obtained and believed what he heard, he would be transported with the vehemency of his desire after it and would almost forget to eat and drink and would care for nothing else and speak of and inquire after nothing else but how to get this treasure.

And yet people who hear of it daily and profess to believe it as a fundamental article of their faith pay as little mind of it or labor for it as if they had never heard of any such thing at all or did not believe one word that they heard.

So he says, make conscience of daily exercising thy graces in meditation as well as in prayer. Retire into some secret place at a time the most convenient to thyself and laying aside all worldly thoughts with all possible seriousness and reverence, look up towards heaven.

[34 : 15] Remember there is thine everlasting rest. Study its excellency and reality and rise from sense to faith by comparing heavenly with earthly joys and then having pleaded the case reverently with God and seriously with thine own heart now hast pleaded thyself from a clod to a flame from a forgetful sinner and a lover of the world to an ardent lover of God from a fearful coward to a resolved Christian from an unfruitful sadness to a joyful life in a word thou hast pleaded thy heart from earth to heaven from conversing below to walking with God until thou canst lay thy heart to rest as in the bosom of Christ by some such meditation of thy everlasting rest.

Church let us love the Lord our God with all of our mind if then you have been raised with Christ seek the things that are above.

Father we pray would you fill our minds with thoughts of Christ? Would you remove every desire every inclination of the heart every thought that dwells on earthly things and would you replace it with eternal truth?

Father we praise you that Christ has come from heaven to earth Lord to lift us up from earth to heaven and we pray God if there are any here who have not yet put their faith in Christ would you lead them to do so by the power of your grace by your spirit unite them with a risen Christ we pray all this in Jesus name Amen may may may