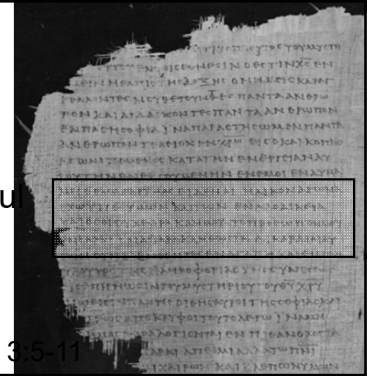


Colossians

Proclaiming the Supremacy of Christ

The Gaze of the Soul (part 2)

Colossians 3:5-11



Review From Last Week

- We are living a NEW life.
 - Buried with Christ, raised with Christ.
 - Seeking and setting our minds on things above.
 - Christ is at the right hand of God.
- We live this new life by faith.
 - Faith is the "Gaze of a Soul upon a saving God!"
- Our lives our HIDDEN with Christ. (yet to be revealed, but kept safe)
- We are going somewhere.
 - Living a life of continual transformation

A Life of Transformation

"We who have died to 'the elements of the world' (3:3; 2:20) and to the power of sin (Rom. 6: 1-6) because of our union with Christ are to 'become' dead to sin in the realities of everyday life. But this 'putting to death' of sin is not only demanded by our incorporation into Christ; it is also empowered and effected by it. Union with Christ, because it puts us in a new relationship to sin and brings us into the sphere of the Spirit's power, will impact the way we live. Ultimately, then, the imperative 'put to death' in this verse must be viewed as a call to respond to, and cooperate with, the transformative power that is already operative within us." — *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)) by Douglas J. Moo

Chapter 3:5-11

- The "Put-Offs"
 - Last week I asked you to consider what should our desires/motivations be in observing these "behavioral lists?"
 - Not legalism, not asceticism. ("...no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh." 2:23)
 - New desires and affections, Christ-ward focus.
 - Desire not to be distracted from our gaze on Christ.
 - Desire to please God.

Colossians 3:5-11

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Exploring Greed as Idolatry

“Idolatry of the heart; it transfers the thoughts, the desires, the affections, the confidence, the expectations and notions of happiness from God our Creator and Lord, to vile, earthly treasures, to golden dust. Avarice makes a man an idolator, because he does for money, all that he ought to do for God.”— Daniel Wilson, from, *Greed as Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* by Brian S. Rosner

Exploring Greed as Idolatry

- Some Modern Illustrations
 - Buying a lottery ticket, entering a sweepstakes.
 - Looking for a promotion at work.
 - Struggling with an addiction.
 - Fear of financial loss or unexpected expense.
 - Anxiety in new situations.
 - Anger toward another person.
- What is my “functional god” in each of these situations?
- How does what is happening serve to take my gaze off of Christ?

How Can We Keep Our Gaze on Christ?

- Understand your propensity to lose your focus.
 - “Bind my wandering heart to Thee.”
- Learn thankfulness as an arresting tool.
- Learn to turn your focus toward God.
 - Psalm 77 example.

Psalm 77, Keeping the Gaze on God

I cry aloud to God,
aloud to God, and he will hear me.
In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;
in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;
my soul refuses to be comforted.
When I remember God, I moan;
when I meditate, my spirit faints.

- Experiencing real protracted trouble.
- No easy distraction can “fix” his problem.

I consider the days of old,
the years long ago.
I said, “Let me remember my song in the night;
let me meditate in my heart.”
Then my spirit made a diligent search:

- A turn to remembering.
- “diligent search”, we get to actively participate in this process.

“Will the Lord spurn forever,
and never again be favorable?
Has his steadfast love forever ceased?
Are his promises at an end for all time?
Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he in anger shut up his compassion?”

- Addresses God in the third person.
- Seemingly rhetorical questions; but do they arise from how it is really feeling?

Then I said, "I will appeal to this,
to the years of the right hand of the
Most High."

I will remember the deeds of the LORD;
yes, I will remember your wonders
of old.

I will ponder all your work,
and meditate on your mighty deeds.

- Active appeal to the history of God's working through history.
- A switch to addressing God in the second person.

Your way, O God, is holy.

What god is great like our God?

You are the God who works wonders;

you have made known your might

among the peoples.

You with your arm redeemed your

people,

the children of Jacob and Joseph.

- Starts with acknowledging God's status and character.
- Remember God's general and specific workings with His people.

When the waters saw you, O God,
when the waters saw you, they were
afraid; indeed, the deep trembled.

The clouds poured out water;

the skies gave forth thunder;

your arrows flashed on every side.

The crash of your thunder was in the
whirlwind;

your lightnings lighted up the world;

- Recalling very tangible and powerful ways that God has worked through history.
- God's power and majesty are put on display for the Psalmist to gaze upon.

Your way was through the sea,

your path through the great waters;

yet your footprints were unseen.

You led your people like a flock

by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

- It may still be a troubled path but God was truly there.
- A very personal image of being led and cared for as a shepherd cares for his sheep.
- Isaiah 26 example

Conclusion

- Living this new life of transformation and renewal.
 - Become what you are...
 - Let the old man who has died with Christ, be dead!
- See the Put-Offs not as achievement list for you to accomplish but as good indicators that Christ is transforming you into His image, slowly and faithfully.
- Next week we will look at the Put-On list.
 - As we look forward to our destination, how do we know and be encouraged that we are on the right track?