

Colossians 3:1-4 “Think About Eternity”

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

One of the greatest public servants in the history of England was William Gladstone who served as the British Prime Minister four times during the latter half of the 19th Century.

A) Gladstone was a committed Christian who always attended church. He also taught a Sunday School class throughout his adult life.

B) No excuses – if the Prime minister of England can teach Sunday School – so can you! – Right

C) Shortly before he died, Gladstone gave a speech in which he told about being visited by an ambitious young man who sought his advice about life.

1) The lad told the elder statesman that he admired him more than anyone living and wanted to seek his advice regarding his career

Gladstone asked. “What do you hope to do when you graduate from college?”

The young man replied, “I hope to attend law school, sir, just as you did.”- Noble goal – then what?

“I hope to practice law and make a good name for myself defending the poor and the outcasts of society, just as you did.” Gladstone. replied

“That’s a noble purpose,” “Then what?”

“Well, sir, I hope one day to stand for Parliament and become a servant of the people, even as you did.”

“That too is a noble hope. What then?”

“I would hope to be able to serve in the Parliament with great distinction, evidencing integrity and a concern for justice — even as you did.”

“What then?” asked Gladstone.

“I would hope to serve the government as Prime Minister with the same vigor, dedication, vision, and integrity as you did.”

“And what then?” asked Gladstone.

“I would hope to retire with honors and write my memoirs — even as you are presently doing — so that others could learn from my mistakes and triumphs.”

“All of that is very noble,” said Gladstone, “and then what?”

The young man thought for a moment. “Well, sir, I suppose I will then die.”

“That’s correct,” said Gladstone. “And then what?” □

The young man looked puzzled. “Well, sir,” “I’ve never given that any thought.”

A) This was Gladstone’s response: “Young man,” “the only advice I have for you is for you to go home, read your Bible, and think about eternity.”

B) Think about eternity! That is good advice.

C) Paul’s heart in our passage - If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above...² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Easier said than done!

A) Hard to be Eternally minded – Why is that so Hard? Few reasons

B) #1 We live in a world that is so daily.

C) Everyday is filled with Constant challenges, tons of distractions and responsibilities.

1) Hard to see beyond what is right in front of us! -Nearsighted – Can’t see things at a distance.

D) Live on this Proverbial treadmill of life – Running – but not sure why

1) Searching for satisfaction – but not sure where to find it.

Some of you are old enough to remember that show Candid Camera

A) Before YouTube, before Funny videos was Candid Camera –

B) Some of you might recall an old Candid Camera episode, where an a guy is on a busy sidewalk and begins looking at the ground. (Actor)

1) He walks around a bit and continues to look down. People are passing by him and a few give him strange looks.

C) After a couple minutes, he decides to get down on his hands and knees and begins feeling around with his hands.

1) People begin to slow down and watch what he's doing.

D) Finally, one person stops and starts looking at the ground. Then another one begins searching the sidewalk.

After a few minutes, the camera shows about a dozen people looking down, some on their hands and knees!

A) At that point, the actor, who got all this started in the first place, quietly gets up and walks away.

AND No one else notices that he has left.

B) They're so intent in their search that they never even bothered to ask what it was they were looking for.

This is a good picture of how many people live in our society today.

A) They're searching for something because they know there's got to be more to this life.

B) But, they'll never find it if they don't know what it is that they're looking for!

C) Life becomes this daily grind – trying to keep our head above water

D) Even as believers we can get sucked into that mentality – Distracts us

So it is hard to be eternally minded because #1 We live in a world that is so daily.

#2 There is so much wickedness around us!

A) Everyday we turn on the news – mobile news app – BAD NEWS –

B) Fighting in the middle East – Fighting in our Govt. – ISIS – Ebola – wickedness is growing
1) Sometimes it can feel like the WICKED ARE PROSPERING

C) **Asaph's Problem:** Wrote Psalm 73:2
**“my feet had almost stumbled;
My steps had nearly slipped.
For I was envious of the boastful,
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”**

C) Asaph saw the wicked prospering – bugged him. – Almost lost his faith.

D) Has that ever happened to you? Surely it has. I think it has happened to all of us from time to time.

It's the end of the month, and the bills are due.

A) **You're sitting DOWN to pay your bills**

B) Suddenly, you reach that minimum balance you must maintain in order to pay the daily needs of the new month — food, gasoline, clothing, repairs, etc.

1) **But you still have a stack of bills to pay!**

C) You sigh in exasperation, wondering when you will ever be able to catch up with what you owe.

1) As you sit there staring dejectedly at your meager balance, you begin to think about a friend of yours at work.

He is a vain and profane man, with a mouth like a sewer.

A) He could care less about God. He is unfaithful to his wife. He ignores his children.

B) He is consumed with sports and making money. Yet, he never seems to have a worry.

C) He lives in a beautiful house, drives a nice car, goes to all the games

D) Your heart begins to fill with envy and anger.

E) You feel like saying to the Lord, “Lord, I don't get it - I serve You faithfully, and all I ever seem to get in return is trouble. - That guy at work is a complete reprobate, but everything seems easy for him!”

You start to question God!

A) Am I spinning my wheels with You? Is my tithe a waste of my money? Is my faithfulness of no concern to You?

B) **Ever gone down that road – even a little bit?** –

1) That is what Asaph was doing – complaining to God – doubting God – questioning God

1) Completely lost his eternal perspective – (Come back to Asaph later)

So we can lose our eternal Perspective because

#1 Life is so daily

#2 The wickedness all around us

#3 We have the wrong view of Eternity and Heaven in general

A) Heaven: Some picture Clouds – Harps – Long worship service – and Feast!

Eat and not get fat – AWESOME – but is that it?

B) In regards to heaven the Bible is sort of vague – Passages in Revelation – hard to understand

C) **Passage in 2 Corinthians Paul said – so grand Inexpressible - that human words – don't do it justice**

1) Stupendous – awesome radical - Sick

D) That really doesn't help us – **Hard for us to picture:**

My wife and I just spent 8 days in Maui – I get asked to speak – fly – Frequent flyer miles – every few yrs

A) **Maui – 4-5 times in 28 yrs of marriage.** – Napili Shores – modest priced simple condos -

B) **Ocean view** - Searched found – cheaper – booked

1) The wise words of Eddie Hill – **Something seems to good to be true IT PROBABLY IS!**

C) **I ADMIT – I WAS WORRIED** - But It was true – Amazing! – Better than the pictures

1) Heaven is going to be the same way – Better than we can imagine

D) **Until we get there – still hard to comprehend**

1) Young people struggle with this one – BIG TIME!

Not tangible.

E) We live in a world that is so tangible it is hard to focus on that which **is intangible**

1) Easy to think – I am sacrificing a lot here living for Jesus – I HOPE IT IS WORTH IT

So how can we who are living in this wicked world – living with all our daily challenges, responsibilities and distractions – be more eternally minded? –

A) **THAT IS THE MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION!**

B) Jon Courson is the most heavenly minded person I have ever met.

1) **I asked him once – what his secret was:** His response. - Aside from Jesus – there are 3 people there I really love and am looking forward to seeing.

C) His Dad, His first wife – Terry – Daughter Jessy – Ok great so the secret is – have people you love die - **CLOSE BIBLES GO HOME**

1) **Seriously what is the answer?**

Comes down to 2 things - #1 Right Perspective! - #2 Right pursuits

A) **#1 Right perspective** - Notice three important things that Paul tells us in these four verses

B) **1st Jesus is on the throne:** V.1 Sitting at the right hand of the Father

C) That is the answer to the wickedness in the world – Jesus is on the throne!

D) Given man a free will and right now he is letting things play out to a certain degree –

1) **Mankind goes deeper into his wickedness and rebellion**

But one day – Jesus is going to intervene big time – BIG WAY

A) Make things right – Make all things new – but right now He is on the throne

B) Nothing comes into your life that doesn't first pass through his will and Knowledge.

C) **SO 1st - Jesus is on the throne:**

2nd Your life is Hidden in Him!

A) Paul says since you have been raised – (Ch.2 Died with Christ – buried in Baptism

B) ALSO RAISED -Made Alive – Resurrection

C) All the fullness of God is in Jesus and YOU ARE COMPLETE in HIM

1) In Christ there is a fullness and His fullness has passed into our emptiness

We who were dead have been made alive!!!

A) Your life is Hidden in Him! = Secure and Protected.

B) The idea that you place something valuable to you in a special place – A SAFE OR A SECRET BOX

C) **THIS IS WHO YOU ARE IN JESUS –**

1) YOU ARE COMPLETE – SPECIAL – VALUABLE & PROTECTED!

D) Switchfoot – **YOU WERE MADE TO LIVE FOR SO MUCH MORE!!!** - Have we lost ourselves

1) Have you forgotten Who you are!

E) Big idea in the book of Colossians – **BE WHO YOU ARE – NOT WHO YOU WERE!**

RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

1st Jesus is on the throne:

2nd Your life is Hidden in Him!

3rd Your future is bright in Him! When Christ *who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

Here is what we need to realize

A) Believer – you die – Heaven – absent body – present with the Lord!

But heaven is NOT THE END OF THE STORY!

B) If you -Believe Pretrib rapture: Rapture today – 7yrs heaven

1) Return with Christ

C) Mid trib – 31/2 yrs suffer here – first part of trib – 31/2 yrs in heaven.

1) **Not a lot of comfort in that!**

D) Post trib – **Reverse Bungee cord** – Zing – don't even make it to heaven – turn around – right back

Heaven is not the END OF THE STORY – Revelation – describes scene – We return with Jesus – 2nd coming – Sets up rule and reign on the earth

A) We are helping him!

B) **WE HAVE Responsibilities and roles to play** in the Kingdom of Jesus – awesome!

1) Heaven is going to be awesome – But eternity is about – Working with Jesus in His kingdom

C) **WHAT we do here – and how we serve here are going to play a part in our roles in ETERNITY!**

THINK OF IT THIS WAY

A) This life is the Prelude – Prelude sets up the book and tells you about the book

B) This life – setting up the real story about what we are going to be doing in eternity.

C) We get so caught up in the here and now – when in reality – **this life is a short walk in the park compared to eternity**

1) Need to stay focused on the there and then!

D) WE need to keep that in perspective- Jesus is coming back – and we will be with Him

1) **RED TAGS / GREEN TAGS -**

Right perspective and #2 Right Pursuits: Seek & Set

A) *Seek those things which are above!* Set your mind on the things above not on the things of the earth.

B) The words seek and set are in the **present continual sense = Make it a habit / above/ not earth**

➤ Seek is an active word – means to pursue.

C) It actually describes **“having an urgency and a desire and an ambition- that motivates you toward something**

C) Athlete pursuing His goal! – Priority

D) Jesus gives some insight into this when he addressed his disciples – concerning daily Distractions

Matthew 6:31-33 - "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

A) The convicting WORD in V.33 is the word **FIRST** – if He just said Seek the kingdom of God – that is easy.

B) Seeking His kingdom becomes one **of the many pursuits that make up my life.**

C) **But When Jesus says: Seek First – that is altogether different**

1) That means Seeking His Kingdom is the priority

D) It means all the other things in my life, responsibilities and relationships all are connected and revolve around THAT COMMAND!

1) Switchfoot – **WE WERE MEANT TO LIVE FOR SO MUCH MORE!**

Seeking first His kingdom and Setting my mind on the things above **doesn't mean:**

A) I spend the day thinking about what the heavenly throne room will be like or the streets of gold,

B) It means I set my mind on the heart of God, the perspective of God, the priorities of God, the passions of God.

C) **The Command Set your mind could be translated:**

Reprogram the way you think

D) A few years ago – **My son – turned a PC into a Mac** – literally reprogrammed the way it thought

1) Knowing Who Jesus is – Who You are in Him – YOUR FUTURE

E) **Reprogram the way you think about life** and approach life.

1) Change your way of thinking – affects what you are pursuing

How do we do that? Reprogram our thinking

A) **1st Daily Devos** – See this is what we learn from Asaph – Asaph said I almost lost my way when I looked at all the wickedness.

B) **Until I went into the house of the Lord Psalm 73:17** –

1) The house of the Lord in the OT was synonymous with the presence of God

C) **What gets me focused each day?** – Time with Jesus

1) **Meditate** – write it down, put in my iPad, connected to my phone – come back to it throughout the day.

D) I constantly need to be reminded – His Promises and His Presence

Romans 8:5 **For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit**

E) Apple products - Sort of like an iOS update – Keeps things working the way they are suppose to

2nd We need to be investing in Eternity! Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

A) That last Phrase is very enlightening - *where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

B) **Your treasure is attached to where you are invested!**

C) **Stocks** – Pay attention – Some people hire someone to pay attention for them

1) They are invested – occupies a certain degree of their thinking – energy – priority

D) **Some team:** Chargers/ Raiders – Sundays after church **of course** is about Football - Drop \$50 on a Jersey even more on a game

1)What are you telling us – I am invested in the Chargers/ Raiders

So How do we invest in the Kingdom? Same way – Time energy through Serving in a ministry & investing my resources – **Giving tithe**

A) Tithing is not God’s way of raising funds – it is His way of raising Kids

B)He is a giver – wants us to be givers

1)When I Tithe – What I am saying is I want to have **a part in what is important you**

C)When we give to the local church we are telling God –

1)I want to be passionate about what You are passionate about

D)God is most passionate about His Bride the Church – **and the salvation of lost souls!**

Someone put it this way: *“Life is what you are alive to.”* What you are alive to is often seen in what you are investing in.

1)Time, Energy and resources

3rd Pay attention to Prophecy – Matthew 24:42-44

⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

In Joseph’s Stowel’s book “eternity” he tells the story about a home for kids who have down syndrome, he writes

IN Union Grove, Wisconsin there is a home that ministers to many people afflicted with Down’s syndrome.

Problem – smudges on the windows

Any given day – any corridor in that building

looking up to see if Jesus might not be coming back right then to take them home and make them whole.”