

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE FINISH OUR LOOK AT COL. 3:1-4.

▶▶ As we observed last time, ~ Paul's second purpose for writing this letter ~ was most likely twofold.

▷▷ 1st, ~ to instruct believers about godly living.

▷▷ And 2nd, ~ to combat the false way of living ~ that the false teachers taught.

AND, ~ AS WE KNOW, ~ COL. 3:1-4 ~ BEGINS THIS SECTION COVERING PAUL'S SECOND purpose for writing.

▶▶ And deals with ~ the believer's proper focus of attention.

PAUL SHOWS US ~ THAT OUR PROPER FOCUS OF ATTENTION ~ has two aspects to it.

▶▶ 1st, ~ we are to look upward. ⇨⇨ Last time.

▷▷ seek the things that are above . . . Set your minds on things that are above, ~ not on things that are on earth.

▷▷ Again, ~ to summarize this, ~ Paul is calling believers ~ to live, ~ to shape our thinking, ~ attitudes, ~ reactions, ~ etc. ~ ¶¶

↪↪ and ~ to view all of life and this world and the things in it ~ according ~ to a biblical worldview. ¶¶ 1/16

▶▶ And 2nd, ~ we are to look forward. ⇔⇔ Today

▷▷ When Christ who is your life appears, ~ then you also will appear with him in glory.

▶▶ This ~ is the believer's proper focus of attention: ~~ upward and forward.

PAUL GIVES FIVE REASONS ~ believers must have the proper focus of attention.

▷▷ 1. Raised with Christ ✓. ⇔⇔ 2. Jesus is in heaven ✓. ⇔⇔ 3. We have died. ⇔⇔ 4. Lives our hidden. ⇔⇔ And 5. Jesus is our life.

NOW, ~ PAUL MIXES THIS ALL TOGETHER.

▶▶ He doesn't list the aspects of our proper focus of attention ~ and then the reasons.

▶▶ And we didn't separate it out either. ⇔⇔ Flow of the passage.

AS WE SAID, ~ TODAY WE'LL LOOK AT ~ the final three reasons for the proper focus ~ ↴↴

▶▶ and the second aspect ~ of the proper focus of our attention.

▶▶ Not on mountain top

▶▶ Also, ~ hard to understand

IN VERSE 3a, ~ PAUL GIVES US THE THIRD REASON BELIEVERS ARE TO HAVE THE proper focus of attention.

FOR YOU HAVE DIED. ↴↴ 2/16

▶▶ We talked about this back in Col. 2:12a.

▷▷ Where Paul says, ~ having been buried ~ [death implied] ~ ¶¶

↳↳ with him in baptism ~ [Holy Spirit] ~ ¶¶

→→ [That work ~ whereby the Spirit of God places the believer into union with Christ], ~ ¶¶

→→ in which you were also raised with him.

▶▶ Fuller picture in Rom. 6.

▷▷ And we talked about being dead to sin.

SINCE PAUL BRINGS IT UP HERE IN COL. 3:3a, ~ IT SEEMS THE LORD WANTS US TO continue to talk about it.

▶▶ We have died, ~ Paul says.

▷▷ I.e., ~ we've died to sin.

▶▶ Now, ~ basically, ~ I would suggest, ~ this has the same meanings as being freed from sin, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ which we talked about in Rom. 6

▶▶ Both phrases tell us the same things.

WE NOTED 2 THINGS THAT THIS MEANT. ¶¶ 3/16

1st, ~ "DIED TO SIN" OR "FREED FROM SIN" ~ MEANS ~ WE HAVE BEEN FREED FROM THE consequences of sin.

▶▶ In Rom. 8:1, ~ he says, ~ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ~ [i.e., ~ those who belong to Christ Jesus].

↳↳ "no condemnation" is emphasized in the Greek text.

▶▶ The point Paul is making here, ~ is that ~ condemnation ~ is, ~ in every sense, ~ out of the question ~ "for those ~ who belong ~ to Christ Jesus."

▷▷ "for those ~ who belong ~ to Christ Jesus." ~ is a very important statement.

↳↳ If don't belong, ~ under condemnation.

↳↳ Jn. 3:18.

→→ Whoever believes in him ~ is ~ not condemned, ~ but whoever does not believe ~ is condemned already, ~ because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

2nd, ~ AND WE'RE GOING TO SPEND A GOOD DEAL OF TIME ON THIS, ~ SINCE IT'S SO important.

▶▶ 2nd, ~ "died to sin" or "freed from sin" ~ means ~ being freed ~ from sin's dominance.

▶▶ As we've discussed, ~ we still have our sinful nature.

▷▷ But, ~ we don't have to obey it.

↳↳ We no longer need to be controlled by our sin nature. 📖 4/16

▷▷Romans 6:17 (NIV) teaches that ~ ¶¶

↳↳though you used to be slaves to sin, ~ you have come to obey from your heart ~ the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.

▶▶Before we were saved, ~ we were slaves to sin.

▷▷After being saved, ~ we have new Master, ~ Jesus.

▷▷Sin continues to exist, ~ but we are no longer dominated by it.

▶▶As God's people, ~ we have the Holy Spirit ~ indwelling and empowering us.

▷▷He empowers us ~ to live victoriously over sin.

▷▷Just like we once followed the desires of our sinful nature, ~ ¶¶

↳↳those who belong to Jesus ~ now follow the Holy Spirit.

▶▶Furthermore, ~ those who have been born again ~ have received a new nature.

▷▷Whereas the old nature drew us toward sin, ~~ the new nature draws us toward holiness.

▷▷Ezek. 36:26 again.

↳↳And I will give you a new heart, ~ and a new spirit I will put within you. ~~ ¶¶

→→And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh ~~ [i.e., ~ a tender, ~ responsive heart]." ¶¶ 5/16

▷▷ This happens ~ when we accept Jesus as Savior and Lord.

▷▷ At that moment, ~ God, ~ by His immeasurably great power, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ removes our sin-hardened hearts, ~ gives us "a new heart," ~ and puts "a new spirit within" us.

▷▷ "a new heart" and "a new spirit," ~ which by instinct ~ wish ~ to please, ~ to live for, ~ and to serve God.

▶▶ Additionally, ~ in Ezek. 36:27 (NIV), ~ God says, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ And I will put my Spirit in you ~ and move you ~ to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

▶▶ Perhaps put this way, ~ our new nature, ~ in conjunction with God the Holy Spirit ~ draws us toward holiness.

▶▶ Sin and our sinful nature, ~ no longer wields the power over us they once did.

▷▷ Their stranglehold over us ~ has been broken.

▷▷ Freedom from ~ and death to ~ sin ~ allows us ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to offer ourselves as willing servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, ~ who continues to work in us to make us more like Him.

▷▷ Paul writes in Rom. 6:19b (NIV), ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves ~ to impurity ~ and to ever-increasing wickedness, ~ so now ~ offer yourselves ~ as slaves to righteousness ~ leading to holiness. ¶¶ 6/16

NOW, ~ ONCE AGAIN, ~ WE SHOULD MENTION ~ THAT BEING DEAD TO SIN ~ does not mean we will be sinless.

▶▶ We will never ~ reach sinless perfection in this life.

▷▷ In Rom. 7, ~ Paul made it clear ~ that he continued to struggle with temptation and sin.

▷▷ Rom. 7:19-20. ⇔⇔ For I do not do the good I want, ~~ but the evil I do not want ~ is what I keep on doing. ~~ Now ~ if I do ~ what I do not want, ~ it is no longer I who do it, ~ but sin ~ that dwells within me.

▶▶ Because we live in a fallen world ~ and still have our sinful nature, ~ we will still occasionally sin.

▷▷ But, ~ those who follow Christ, ~ who belong to him, ~ do not ~ make sin ~ a lifestyle choice.

▶▶ John makes this very clear ~ in 1 Jn. 3:9.

▷▷ No one born of God ~ makes a practice of sinning, ~~ for God's seed abides in him; ~~ and he cannot keep on sinning, ~~ because ~ he has been born of God.

▷▷ Pay careful attention to John's wording. "practice"

↳↳ John ~ is not ~ describing ~ occasional sin. ⇔⇔ Describing lifestyle.

↳↳ No one ~ born of God ~ continues living ~ a sinful lifestyle.

↳↳ Put simply, ~ the hearts of genuine Christians, ~ those who are ~ truly ~ children of God, ~ have been so transformed ~ ↴↴

→→ that ~ they cannot live ~ in a pattern of continual sin. ↴↴ 7/16

▶▶ Also, ~ as we noted before, ~ the NT ~ makes it abundantly clear ~ that we ~ are to be growing ~ in holiness.

▶▶ And recall Paul's emphatic answer to two erroneous conclusions someone might make.

▷▷ Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

↳↳ Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?

▷▷ Remember Paul's answer?

↳↳ You should never conclude such a thing! ~ God forbid ~ that you should think so!
~~ No way!

OK, ~ LET'S GET OUR BEARINGS.

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN SAYING ~ IS WITHIN THE CONTEXT ~ OF THE THIRD REASON ~ believers ~ are to have the proper focus of attention.

▶▶ "For you have died," ~ Paul says in Col. 3:3a.

▶▶ Since we have died to sin, ~ we need to have the proper focus of attention.

▷▷ Upward and forward.

IN VERSE 3b, ~ PAUL GIVES US THE FOURTH REASON BELIEVERS ARE TO HAVE THE proper focus of attention.

AND YOUR LIFE IS HIDDEN WITH CHRIST IN GOD. ↴↴ 8/16

▶▶ First of all, ~ this suggests safety. ⇨⇨ Believers are safe ~ in everlasting arms.

▶▶ Snatch ⇨⇨ We ~ are being protected ~ by the power of God ~ through faith for ~ a salvation ready to be revealed ~ in the last time.

▶▶ Deut. 33:27, ~ The eternal God ~ is your dwelling place, ~ and underneath ~ are the everlasting arms. ⇨⇨ Protected from all enemies.

BUT THERE'S MORE.

▶▶ Remember context: ~ Paul is contrasting things above with things below, ~ as we know.

▶▶ We have been raised to new spiritual life.

▷▷ And Paul is saying ~ that our new spiritual life ~ does not belong ~ to the sphere ~ of the earthly and physical.

▷▷ But that it belongs, ~ in a very real and profound sense, ~ to the invisible spiritual realm, ~ to which Christ belongs.

▶▶ How this works ~ may be incomprehensible to us.

▷▷ But the fact remains. ⇨⇨ Our true life ~ is not earthly ~ but heavenly.

▶▶ And that is why ~ we are to have the proper focus of attention.

▷▷ We don't belong here anymore.

▷▷ Any other focus of attention ~ is foreign to us now.

▷▷ Now march ~ to the beat ~ of a different drummer. ⇨⇨ Reflect in lives. ↴ 9/16

FURTHERMORE, ~ THE BELIEVER'S NEW SPIRITUAL LIFE, ~ along with all its future implications, ~ is with God above.

▶▶Presently, ~ the splendor of that life is unknown to the world. ⇨⇨ Hidden with Christ

▶▶But a Day is coming ~ when the children of God ~ will share ~ in the glory of the Messiah.

▷▷As Paul points out in [verse 4](#).

↳↳When Christ ~ who is your life ~ appears, ~ then ~ you also will ~ appear with him in glory.

↳↳When Jesus returns ~ and is revealed to the whole world, ~ we, ~ believers ~ will share in his glory.

▶▶And what is hidden ~ will be revealed.

▷▷Paul tells us in Rom. ~ that [the creation waits in eager expectation ~ for the children of God to be revealed](#).

▶▶In the meantime, ~ the revealing of our life ~ awaits the revealing of Christ. ~ 1 Jn. 3:2

▷▷The apostle John writes, ~ [Beloved, ~ we are God's children now, ~ and what we will be ~ has not yet appeared; ~ but ~ we know ~ that when he appears ~ we shall be like him, ~ because we shall see him as he is](#).

▷▷How? ⇨⇨ Not gods.

↳↳We will become like Jesus in the sense of receiving a resurrected, ~ glorified body when He appears.

↳↳In addition, ~ we will become like Jesus in holiness. ⇩⇩ 10/16

IN VERSE 4a, ~ PAUL GIVES US THE FINAL REASON BELIEVERS ARE TO HAVE THE proper focus of attention.

WHEN CHRIST WHO IS YOUR LIFE.

▶▶ Jesus is our life. ~ This is very hard to understand.

BUT I HAVE ~ FOUR ~ SUGGESTIONS ~ OF WHAT IT COULD REFER TO.

▶▶ Before we get into those, ~ we should say that "life" in this context ~ refers ~ to eternal life.

▶▶ Ok, ~ now 4 suggestions as to what Jesus is our life may refer to.

1st, ~ JESUS ACHIEVED ETERNAL LIFE FOR US.

▶▶ 1 Jn. 4:9. ⇨⇨ In this ~ the love of God was made manifest among us, ~ that God ~ sent his only Son into the world, ~ so that ~ we might live ~ through him.

▶▶ I.e., ~ God showed how much he loved us ~ by sending ~ his one and only Son ~ into the world ~ so that ~ we might have eternal life ~ through him.

▷▷ We could not have had eternal life ~ without ~ the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

NEXT, ~ JESUS ~ IS THE SOURCE ~ OF OUR ETERNAL LIFE.

▶▶ Jn. 10:27-28a. ⇨⇨ My sheep hear my voice, ~ and I know them, ~ and they follow me. ~ I give them ~ eternal life.

FURTHERMORE, ~ JESUS' LIFE ON EARTH ~ IS THE MODEL FOR OUR LIVES. ↴↴ 11/16

▶▶E.g., ~ in [Phil. 2](#), ~ Paul calls on us to have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ~ I.e., ~ we are to have ~ a Christ-like attitude.

▶▶And in the case of suffering unjustly, ~ Peter tells us that Jesus set the example for us.

▷▷Peter tells us ~ that when Jesus suffered unjustly, ~ ¶¶

↳↳He committed no sin, ~ neither was deceit found in his mouth. ~ When he was reviled, ~ he did not revile in return; when he suffered, ~ he did not threaten, ~ but continued entrusting himself ~ to him who judges justly.

AND IN ADDITION, ~ JESUS GIVES OUR LIVES ~ MEANING AND PURPOSE.

▶▶My . . . , ~ just think how our lives would be ~ without Jesus.

MY FELLOW BELIEVERS, ~ KNOWING ALL OF THIS, ~ ¶¶

▶▶how could we ever ~ put the focus of our attention ~ on anything ~ other than ~ upward ~ to where Jesus is ~ and forward ~ to our glorious eternal future.

AND TO ~ OUR GLORIOUS ETERNAL FUTURE ~ WE NOW TURN OUR ATTENTION.

IN VERSE 4b, ~ PAUL EXPLAINS THE SECOND ASPECT OF THE BELIEVER'S PROPER focus of attention.

FORWARD, ~ TO OUR GLORIOUS ETERNAL FUTURE.

▶▶then you also will appear with him in glory, ~ Paul says.

▶▶My . . . , ~ after this life, ~ we have a wonderful unending future ahead of us. ¶¶ 12/16

BELIEVERS SHOULD BE LIKE THE HEROES OF THE FAITH IN HEB. 11.

▶▶ And spend our lives looking forward to our heavenly city.

▷▷ As the author of Hebrews says, ~ For here ~ we have no lasting city, ~ but we seek ~ the city that is to come.

▶▶ This world is not our home.

▷▷ Peter, ~ in his first epistle, ~ says that ~ we are "foreigners and temporary residents" here.

▷▷ Our citizenship is in heaven.

WE SHOULD NOT BE SO TIED TO EARTHLY THINGS ~~ THAT WE FORGET ~ our homeland and glorious eternal future.

▶▶ We should not be ~ content in ~ or attached to ~ this world.

▶▶ Because, ~ all that ~ we are ~ and have here ~ is temporary.

▷▷ As Paul tells us in 2 Cor., ~ For what is seen ~ is temporary, ~~ but what is unseen ~ is eternal.

CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE KNOWN AS FUTURE-ORIENTED PEOPLE.

▶▶ We should not love our present home, ~ things, ~ etc. ~~ so much that ~ 77

▷▷ we lose sight ~ of the wonderful unending future ahead of us. 77 13/16

NOW, ~ LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR GLORIOUS ETERNAL FUTURE ~ DOES NOT MEAN ~ we check out of life.

▶▶I suggest that this is what it does mean.

▶▶We live our lives in a normal manner, ~ except for one thing.

▶▶Our perspective on life and this world ~ is future-oriented.

▷▷We learn to hold things very loosely.

▷▷Deep within us ~ there develops ~ a longing ~ for our home and future there.

▷▷We keep one eye, ~ so to speak, ~ focused on our lives here, ~ but the other one ~ focused beyond the horizon.

▷▷We will be invested ~ in witnessing to a needy world.

↪↪But we will take frequent glances ~ toward a promised community still to come.

▷▷We will go on building things in this life.

↪↪But we will never forget ~ that Jesus ~ 77

→→is building ~ something far more beautiful and breathtaking for us, ~ than we could never imagine, ~ even in our wildest dreams.

THIS, ~ I BELIEVE, ~ IS THE KIND OF THING PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT.

▶▶When he points out ~ that the second aspect of the proper focus of our attention ~ is to be looking forward to our glorious eternal future. 11 14/16

AND WE SHOULD MENTION HERE ~ ONE BIG BENEFICIAL RESULT ~ THAT COMES FROM having a future-oriented mindset.

▶▶It can get us through the darkest of days.

▶▶Peter, ~ in his first epistle, ~ points this out ~ when he says that our trials are temporary.

▷▷1 Pet. 1:6. ⇨⇨ In this you rejoice, ~ though now for a little while, ~ if necessary, ~ you have been grieved by various trials.

▶▶The phrase "in this" points back to what Peter said ~ in verses 3-5.

▷▷So Peter is saying here ~ 77

⇨⇨that God's absolutely certain promise that we will be raised from the dead, ~ that we will receive our resurrection bodies, ~ 77

→→that we will receive our inheritance, ~ and that ~ we will live forever with Jesus, ~ causes us to "greatly rejoice."

▷▷Though now for a little while, ~ Peter says, ~ if necessary, ~ we have been grieved by various trials.

▷▷Fuller treatment in 1 Peter series.

▶▶Here I want to focus on the phrase "for a little while."

▷▷Peter is pointing out ~ that our trials and sufferings in this life are temporary.

▷▷Trials & suffering of this life will last only until death or Jesus' return. 11 15/16

▶▶Christians are able to rejoice despite our outward circumstances, ~ 77

▷▷because we know that our sufferings are only "for a little while," ~ and that we have a glorious eternal future waiting for us.

▷▷At the end of things, ~ there is for us a magnificent eternal future.

▷▷At the end of things, ~ there is for us everlasting life and joy with our Savior.

▷▷For believers, ~ persecutions, ~ troubles, ~ sufferings ~ and afflictions ~ are not the end.

↪↪Beyond these, ~ there lies eternal glory.

↪↪And in the sure, ~ certain, ~ and real hope of that glory, ~ Christians can endure anything that this world throws at us.

▶▶It seems to be one of the basic facts of life ~ that a person can endure anything ~ so long as they have something to look forward to.

▷▷And those who belong to Jesus ~ have more to look forward to ~ than anybody.

▶▶A future-oriented mindset ~ can get us through ~ even the darkest of days.

CONCLUSION.

MY . . . , ~ ~ LET'S KEEP LOOKING ~ UPWARD ~ AND FORWARD.

LET'S PRAY 16/16