

THE AMBITIONS AND AFFECTIONS OF A CHRISTIAN

BIBLE TEXT : Colossians 2:20-23; 3:1-25

LESSON 411 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:12, 13).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Colossians 2:20-23

²⁰ Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

²¹ (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

²² Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

²³ Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Colossians 3:1-25

¹ If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

³ For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

⁴ When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

⁵ Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

⁶ For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

⁷ In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

⁸ But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Dead with Christ -- Risen with Christ

1. The Christian is dead with Christ to the things of the world, Colossians 2:20-23; 3:3

Romans 6:1-6

¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection:

⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

1 Peter 2:24

²⁴ Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

2. The Christian is risen with Christ to newness of life, Colossians 3:1-4;

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Ephesians 2:1

¹ And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Ephesians 2:5

⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Ephesians 2:6

⁶ And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

II The Old Man -- The New Man

1. The old man with his evil conduct and tempers is to be put off, Colossians 3:5-9;

Ephesians 4:22

²² That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Ephesians 4:25-31

²⁵ Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

²⁶ Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

²⁷ Neither give place to the devil.

²⁸ Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

²⁹ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

out of your mouth.

⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

¹⁰ And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

¹¹ Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

¹² Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

¹³ Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.

¹⁴ And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

¹⁸ Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

¹⁹ Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.

²⁰ Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

²¹ Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.

³⁰ And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

2. The new man in the image of the Creator is to be put on, Colossians 3:10, 11;

Ephesians 4:24

²⁴ And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

3. The new man is to be clothed with Christian graces, Colossians 3:12-15;

Ephesians 4:32

³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

4. The new man is to be nourished by the Word, and Christ is to be the centre of all activity, Colossians 3:16, 17;

Psalms 119:11

¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Psalms 119:97

⁹⁷ O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

Jeremiah 15:16

¹⁶ Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

1 Corinthians 10:31

³¹ Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

III Christian Living

1. Wives are to be submissive; husbands are to be compassionate, Colossians 3:18, 19;

Ephesians 5:22-25

²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Ephesians 5:28-29

²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

1 Peter 3:1-7

¹ Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

² While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear.

³ Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

⁴ But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

⁵ For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

⁶ Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

⁷ Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to

²² Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

²³ And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

²⁴ Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

²⁵ But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

2. Children are to be obedient; parents are to be considerate, Colossians 3:20, 21;

Proverbs 8:32

³² Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed *are they that keep my ways.*

Ephesians 6:1-4

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

² Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

³ That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

⁴ And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

3. Servants are to labour as unto the Lord; masters are to give a fair wage, Colossians 3:22-25;

Colossians 4:1

¹ Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

Ephesians 6:5-9

⁵ Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

⁶ Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

⁷ With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

⁸ Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

⁹ And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

1 Timothy 6:1-2

¹ Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.

² And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

James 5:4

⁴ Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

NOTES:

Risen with Christ

Paul the Apostle wrote to the Colossians about a most glorious spiritual experience. He called it being "risen with Christ." Let us consider briefly why it is necessary to have this spiritual experience, and by what means it is made possible.

In the beginning of time God created man in His own image and placed him upon this earth. Here man walked and talked in fellowship with God, but because of sin, this fellowship was broken and death passed upon all mankind. This was more than physical death, for God said that in the day that Adam would eat of the forbidden fruit he would surely die; and we know in that very day a change came over Adam. He no longer looked for fellowship and communion with God, but rather he hid himself

when God came to the Garden. Death passed upon Adam — spiritual death — and from then on, all the sons of Adam were born in sin. David said, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

But God through His infinite love devised a marvellous plan of redemption by which sinful man could be brought back into the fellowship of God. It took Jesus' death on the cruel cross of Calvary to pay the penalty for sin. Jesus remained in the tomb three days, and then He arose; and Paul tells us that He arose for our justification. When a sinner comes to God through Christ, confessing and forsaking his sins, and believing on Jesus as his Redeemer, a wonderful transaction takes place. That person is born again — a spiritual birth — risen to walk in newness of life, a new creature in Christ, the old things passed away and, behold, all things become new. Paul told the Ephesians, "And you hath he quickened, [made alive] who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1).

What a tremendous price our Lord Jesus paid that we might have this glorious spiritual experience of being "risen with Christ"!

Holy Ambitions and Affections

When a person is saved, all his sins are forgiven. Every wrong deed or malicious act is forgiven so completely that he stands before God as though he had never sinned. No work of righteousness of his own brings this transaction; it is accomplished through faith in the work of Christ at Calvary. But, there are certain positive actions and activities, that a person is admonished to follow in order to keep saved and make Heaven his home. Two words of action that Paul uses are "seek" and "set"; both centre about things above, not things on the earth.

Many may think of ambition and affection as evil things; but these are natural principles in the human soul and become evil only when they are directed to an improper object. The ivy will climb upward if only it can lay hold on some tall object, to which it may adhere, but if no such support lends itself it will creep along the ground. Like it, ambition and affection will mount heavenward if they be fixed on some heavenly thing, but left to themselves they will trail along the earth and may degenerate into the worst of things.

An ambition or affection bounded by the horizons of this present life, its riches, honour, pleasure or power, falls far short of what Paul was admonishing the Colossians to seek. He wanted to lift their eyes far above the transitory things of this present life. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:18). Paul's desire was that the Christian's love for God, for His truth, and for His righteousness would be coupled with a holy ambition for the work of the Lord in labouring for lost souls to win them from the darkness of sin to the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With this holy zeal for God, Paul wanted the Colossians to have "humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering"; for he knew that it was possible to be all out for the Lord and still be humble. A person can be truly humble, never promoting, defending, or avenging himself, and he can at the same time possess holy boldness for the Lord and His cause.

A reason for this holy ambition and affection Paul stated was: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." From this and other Scriptures, we know that our position in glory shall be determined by our Christian character and the work which we have faithfully done

here. An outstanding example of this would be our Lord Jesus Himself. After His resurrection there were the scars of His sacrificial death; and the height of His exaltation in glory is proportioned to the depth of His voluntary humiliation when He was here on earth. (**Philippians 2:8-11** ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ¹¹ And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.) As we approach His likeness here, so shall we obtain a measure of His glory hereafter. What a solemn thought this is and what an influence it ought to be toward seeking those things, which are above and the setting of our affection on things above.

Sanctification

The Christian, having been raised with Christ and proceeding with a holy ambition and affection for the Lord and things above, soon finds there is to be yet a deeper work wrought in the heart. Though all his committed sins and transgressions have been forgiven, there is yet a nature of sin within, a root of sin, which was inherited from Adam. Paul calls this "the old man," and he says he is to be put off "with his deeds."

When we are saved the carnal nature or old man suffers a stunning blow. He is nailed to the cross, made powerless, but he is still not dead. There comes an instant when the old man dies, the heart is sanctified and pure love reigns supreme. The new man is put on, "which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:10); "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). The image of God's sinless creation is restored and Paul then called them "the elect of God, holy and beloved."

John the Beloved saw a revelation of the Bride of Christ and she was "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8). Here Paul calls this adorning, "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another." Then to bind all this together, Paul said to put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. Oh, what glorious adornment!

Nurturing the New Man

Paul does not leave the Colossians without a means of maintaining and strengthening in the faith their spiritual new man. He said: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Line was to be upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. They were never to tire of hearing the Word of God. They were never to grow weary of being admonished in their spiritual warfare, but rather they were to encourage one another by assembling together, by the singing of hymns, and preaching and teaching God's Holy Word.

Christ was to be the very centre of all motivation and action so far as the Christians were concerned, even to every word and deed done in the body. This of course would influence their homes, their conduct between husbands and wives and children. In their secular labour as they worked for their living, they were to work as if they were doing it unto the Lord. After all, the main purpose of their life was to live for the Lord and to see others brought to the saving knowledge of Christ. Because of their

faithfulness in work and labour, and their living for Christ, perhaps their employers would be saved. Paul the Apostle, even as a prisoner, saw fellow prisoners saved and a jailer converted — certainly not because he held hatred and animosity toward them, but because he had a love for every eternity-bound soul.

QUESTIONS

1. What experience was Paul speaking of when he said, “If ye then be risen with Christ”?
2. Name two positive actions that Paul admonished the Colossians to follow.
3. Explain how it is possible to have an ambitious zeal for the Lord and still be meek and humble.
4. What experience was Paul speaking of when he said, “Put off the old man with his deeds”?
5. The “new man” was to bear the image of whom?
6. What were the Colossians urged to do to nourish and sustain the new man?
7. Explain in what way these Christian experiences were to affect each member of the home and the employer-employee relationship.