

‘Where We Live’.

Billy Graham arrived in a small town to preach a sermon. Wanting to post a letter, he asked a young boy where the post office was. When the boy had told him, Billy thanked him and said, ‘If you’ll come to the Church this evening, you can hear me telling everyone how to get to Heaven.’ ‘I don’t think I’ll be there,’ the boy said. ‘You don’t even know your way to the post office.’

It seems to me, a lot of Christians have forgotten where they live. To understand what being a Christian is all about, you have to understand where you really live. In **Colossians 1:13**, Paul wrote “**For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan’s kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.**” Jesus Christ has brought into His kingdom and has given us a place at His banquet table and He says to us, ‘**Please be seated.**’

Let’s have a look at what that means. Paul will start his letters with a few chapters on doctrinal teaching, getting great truths about God and Christ and the church settled. And then he will always say at some point in his letters, “**Therefore**” or “**Since**”. And then he will go on to say now we have the doctrine right, let’s talk about the implications of how we live, in view of what we have learned. You see, you really know what a man believes, by how he behaves.

In the **first two chapters of Colossians** Paul says, “**The Christ we worship is absolutely supreme and sufficient.**” That’s a great truth, but the value of that truth is in direct proportion to your willingness to act on the implications of it. **How do people behave, who absolutely believe in the supremacy of and the sufficiency of Christ?** This passage in Colossians we are going to look at now is going to answer that question.

Colossians 3:1-4 “**Since you have been raised up to be with Christ, you must look for the things that are above, where Christ is, sitting at God’s right hand. Let your thoughts be on things above, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed, and he is your life, you, too, will be revealed with him in glory.**”

Notice there are two phrases here! He says that, “**Christ is seated at the right hand of God**”. That’s not just a throw away phrase. That is a personal attack on the critics in Colossi who have been saying, “**That Christ is just one of many angels or mediators between man and God.**” “**He’s good, but he’s not enough, you need more.**” But Paul is saying, “**Christ sits at the right hand of God and you can’t get a better mediator than that. You can’t get a better intermediary between you and God, than the person that sits at God’s right hand – and that’s Jesus Christ.**”

But then notice the next thing he says, “**And you have been raised with Christ.**” And he has in mind there, not just Jesus’ resurrection but Jesus’ ascension because he says, “**He’s seated at the right hand of God.**” Now, this is important because he has already said back in **chapter 1** “**that Christ lives with you in your world**”. He says, “**Christ is in you the hope of glory**”, in **Colossians 1:27**.

He says something else that’s really important. Not only is he saying, “**Christ is with you in your world**”. Now he is saying, “**You are with Christ in His world**”. That’s really important, he’s saying to the Colossians, “**Don’t forget where you live!**” We must let where we live, determine how we live.

The ethical call of the New Testament is act like who you are in Christ. Sometimes, unintentionally we get it backwards. Unintentionally, we imply if you behave or act in a certain way, then you can be a certain person. What Paul says is, “**you are that person in Christ, so act like it.**” The New Testament never tells you how to live until it tells you where you live.

Let’s be real clear about that, your citizenship is not purchased by your lifestyle. You don’t earn a seat in heaven because of how you live. Your seat in heaven is the gift of God, by His grace, through Jesus Christ. Your citizenship is not purchased by your lifestyle, but your lifestyle should reflect your citizenship.

Let me ask you this, **can people tell by how you live, where you’re from? Does your lifestyle reflect heaven or does it reflect hell?** You see you should walk like people who are already sat down in heaven. Here are **3 principles** that will affect our lifestyle.

The root principle of the whole Christian life is this, ‘**Union with Christ.**’ You are now united in Christ and notice by the way, that Paul sees your union with Christ as a past and accomplished fact.

Notice the past tense verbs he uses in the **first four verses**. He says, **“You died,”** past tense. **“You’ve been raised,”** past tense. **“You are now hidden with Christ,”** past tense. These things have happened, they are accomplished truths about who you are. This is a clear reference to what happened at your baptism. **Colossians 2:12, “When you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”**

Christ is now your home, Christ was buried, you were buried. Christ died, you died. Christ was raised, you’ve been raised. Whatever has happened to Christ has happened to you. Now Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **So where do you live?** He died, you died. He was buried, you were buried. He was raised, you were raised.

He’s seated at the right hand of God, **what does that mean?** We tend to look at our Christian life as a journey towards heaven. But did you know the Bible also says in another sense, **‘we are already there!’** Ephesians 2:3-7 **“All of us used to be just as they are, our lives expressing the evil within us, doing every wicked thing that our passions or our evil thoughts might lead us into. We started out bad, being born with evil natures, and were under God’s anger just like everyone else. But God is so rich in mercy; he loved us so much that even though we were spiritually dead and doomed by our sins, he gave us back our lives again when he raised Christ from the dead--only by his undeserved favour have we ever been saved-- and lifted us up from the grave into glory along with Christ, where we sit with him in the heavenly realms--all because of what Christ Jesus did.”**

Paul is not saying, **‘We will eventually sit with Christ’**, he’s saying, **‘It’s already happened’!** You don’t have to scratch and claw to try to get to heaven. Paul says, **“You’re already there because of the grace of God.”** Now I want you to consider some of the tremendous implications that grow out of the fact that we understand where we really live.

One, for example, **you’re not in Satan’s dominion any more**. Now Satan can shout at you, he can entice you, but he can’t touch you, because you don’t live in the dominion of darkness anymore. You have been **‘transferred to the kingdom of the Son He loves’**. And you are seated next to God in Christ Jesus.

Another incredible implication would be this, **if you’re that near to God, you must have continual access to Him through the blood of Christ**. There’s no place you can be, there’s nothing going on in your life, that you can’t immediately have an audience with God, because you’re seated in Christ at His right hand.

Another implication would be that **you can really rest in Christ**. **Because what does the idea of seated mean?** Well, there weren’t any seats in the Tabernacle, **do you know why?** It was because a priest’s work was never done. There were always offerings to make, there were always sacrifices to give. It says Jesus Christ when He ascended to heaven he sat down, **why?** Because the work of redemption is done. Your redemption is completed, your victory is assured and you can rest in Christ.

Let me tell you what another incredible implication would be, **if you’re seated with Christ now, what’s He seated on?** He’s seated on the throne, **you know what that means don’t you?** It means that you are reigning with Christ and you can take on the very gates of hell itself because Paul said in **Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”**

You see, often we make the mistake of telling new Christians when they come up out of the baptistery we’re going to teach you how to walk. Christianity doesn’t begin with walking, that’s the mistake we make, it starts with sitting. Teach people where they live and they’ll act like it. Physically we are still in this world, but positionally we are already in heaven.

Paul is saying, heaven is yours, but we need to live like where we are from. Because you’re freed in Christ, because you reign with Christ, from now on you need to see this world against the backdrop of another world, to which you have pledged a higher allegiance. When you’re in the presence of God, when you are worshipping and praising God. When the angels of God are in your company, lifting up His name, you are in the real world.

How many times have you heard Christians talk about working or living in the real world, meaning out there? Let me tell you this, the real world is in here, what’s out there is counterfeit, when you go out there you’re not going to the real world, you’re going to the counterfeit world. And just like the counterfeit goods that are seized from market stalls, that world will be burnt up and be gone forever and that will happen when Jesus comes back.

And that's why Paul says **Colossians 3:1+2**, "Listen, you don't live in that counterfeit world anymore. You live up in the heavenlies in the real world. So, set your hearts and set your minds on things above not on earthly things. You need to set your heart and set your mind on the place where you sit."

Have you heard the saying, 'he's so heavenly minded, he's no earthly good?' That's totally wrong! You can't be too heavenly minded, you can never be too pre-occupied with the real world. You can't focus too much on where God and Christ rule. You can't think too much about the kingdom, that is the real kingdom.

Anableps are four-eyed fish that live in the rivers and estuaries from southern Mexico to northern South America. This curious fish has only two eyes, but each is divided in half horizontally; that is, each eye has two separate optical systems, each with its own focal length. The top half is for seeing in the air; the bottom half is for underwater. Anableps can see prey and predators above and below the surface at the same time and increase its opportunities to get meals as well as escape from its enemies.

We need to be spiritual Anableps with "eyes focused on Jesus" as **Hebrews 12:2** says. Whilst at the same time "watching out for Satan", as **1 Peter 5:8** says. **Colossians 3:2+3**, says, "Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Your pre-occupation with where you sit in heaven, should control everything about your walk on earth.

But let's be honest, for a whole lot of us, this earth is such a consuming pre-occupation that we only give the real world an after-thought. Too often our minds are focused on the trivial instead of the eternal, most of it is trivial. Isn't it a fact that most of the things that upset us are actually the denial of desires that really don't ultimately count? We will never switch off from the things of this earth, until we truly and permanently fix our eyes on Jesus and leave them there.

Paul says in **2 Corinthians 4:18** "Because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal." Is the centre of your universe the world or the Son? One day the entire world is going to see what you and I have seen all along. When the brilliant Son appears to all on the day of His return, and Paul says in **Colossians 3:4** "When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory." Our story will end in glory.

The truth is you've already been glorified, it's just that people haven't seen it yet. Paul says in **Romans 8:30**, "And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified." You have already been glorified.

Now you might think, well, nobody can see it. Do you know why? Because they can't see Jesus' glory either. It's impossible apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit for people to see the glory of God in a man on a cross. And since your life is hidden in Christ and they can't see His glory.

You know what? Your life doesn't make sense to them either. Here you are trying to focus on heaven, live by a different pre-occupation, not getting caught up in the worry of the things of the world. And your life makes no sense at all to the world, because you're hidden in Christ and they can't see who He is. Paul says, "Someday that's going to change". There's going to come a day, when the real world is revealed. That day is going to be the revelation of the Son of God.

But you know what else? It's going to be the revelation of the Sons of God. And on that day, who you really are, is finally going to be clear. And knowing how the story ends should help you sit through it right now. What Paul says is, "you have a special place to sit and from where you sit, you can see it all. Don't forget where you live."

We must get out of the world to make a difference in it. It's impossible to live in two worlds at once. There are two realities, one is seen, and one is unseen. You have to decide which one is counterfeit and which one is real. You can't have your identity in both worlds. God doesn't offer dual citizenship. You have to decide where you live and look like it.

The best thing you could do for this world is leave it and then from your seat in the heavenlies, you will finally know how to love it. Remember where you live and please be seated.