

***“Paul’s Letter to the Colossians, Living Above and Beyond This World System
Part 2”***

Review: “Living Above and Beyond This World System:

- ***The Dangers to Our Faith Are Often Subtle, Real and Powerful — Beware!***
- ***Our Defense Against Threats By New-Age Religions Is Sure — Know!***
- ***Only the Reckoning That Counts Makes the Difference in Life — Mortify!***

- ***The Dangers to Our Faith Are Often Subtle, Real and Powerful — Beware!***
 - ***Our Proper Defense Against Spiritual Assaults Therefore Is Active Opposition. Those that do not oppose also teachings will likely fall under its spell in due time sad to say. And there were and are consequences practically as well, because this was not only a philosophy but also a religious system.***

Col. 2:16-19

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

- ***Now the exhortation, perhaps long expected although perhaps not long awaited by these Colossian believers:***

Verses 16 & 17: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”:

- ***The body causing the shadow was the appointed one, the Seed of the Woman, the anointed one, the Christ himself. But he has come, the apostle writes, and that has changed everything for now and therefore those legal demands of the law or those religious systems cannot be more than mere anachronisms if still practiced today.***

Those condemning scriptures were “nailed to his cross” even. So

don't allow anyone to judge you regarding this, as you fail to participate in their rituals. And, by application, we should be encouraged to live our lives independently of those religious systems as they were in Colosse. But the apostle is not finished for he continues:

Verses 18 & 19: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God”:

- *Take special note of his reference to angels and seeing secret things. These few words get directly to the heart of the matter, which was not only to do with a false system of worship but the spiritual errors behind that false religious system.*
- *Many of the even the largest so-called “christian” organizations today are caught up in the same satanic deceptions. Do not be deceived, he writes and exhorts us here for then and also for today, for satan’s techniques have not changed that much. May many who are caught up in these systems take full note here, for this is satan’s religious system, not the true worship of the Lord.*
- *Paul gets directly to the point in verse 20 in these words: “Wherefore if ye be dead [Lit. “If, or rather, since you died”] with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances”, Paul asks the rhetorical question “Why are you [still] subject to such requirements” to make his point even more strongly. And then in asking the question he also provides the sure answer: for “you died with Christ from the rudiments of the world!” Amen. That is the statement of fact that makes the difference.*

Let’s all take this teaching to heart since it is so liberating in the current world in which we live not all that different from the first century world Paul lived in.

- ***Our Defense Against Threats By New-Age Religions Is Sure — Know!***

Col. 3:1-4

1 If [=since] 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.

- ***Several key words are found in Paul's detailed exhortation:***

- ***“Mortify”, “Put off”, “put on”, “dwell” in Christ’s fullness of peace and the word indwelling with thankfulness with all gracefully! Enjoy!***

- ***This is the reckoning that counts!***

- ***Only the Reckoning That Counts Makes the Difference in Life —***

- ***So reckoning is the key to living above and beyond this world system. That is Paul’s teaching and that is one of several truths that have changed my life. For there is such a dramatic difference (and eternally important between focusing our lives on gaining a practical, works-focused kind of righteousness on the one hand, and orienting our thinking on the other hand upon what Christ has already accomplished for us fully.***

In the one case we open up ourselves to the desire of the flesh to fulfill a law (and this encourages the flesh even further according to Paul in Rom. 7) but on the other hand taking God at his word by faith allows ultimately our fruit-bearing as generated and empowered by the spirit of God.

- ***But one might say that depending on this kind of motivation cannot be enough in comparison with what can be produced by our human nature. Witness the amazing things accomplished down through the ages of human history by the largest and most successful (it might seem) so called “christian” organizations with their truly awesome from a world perspective temples and world-wide good works campaigns. Compare that with the mostly invisible works of pastors, teachers, and missionaries with small budgets and little visible fruit, or house church ministries like this one.***

- ***But what does Paul say?***

[READ] Col. 3:5-7

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.

- ***But comparing these verses with what has been written in Romans and Galatians, we see there the hidden truth as to what these special words “Mortify”, “Put off”, “put on”, “dwell” really mean. This is most clearly taught as we have already seen in Romans chapter 6 where Paul uses a different word for the same thing, the word “reckon”:***
- ***But what does Paul say about this in Romans 6 that is so foundational in regard to the living of the Christian life? You remember well also, I trust, what we learned in our study of Galatians 5, since the same teaching is found there in abbreviated form. But in Romans 6 we have details that are so very important in reference to our living under grace and not law. There is the most essential teaching here and it pays spiritually with excellent rewards if we will study that teaching carefully:***

Rom. 6:8-15

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

[So Paul now, as our example of imitation as he imitates Christ, highlights the fact, the truth, here, concerning our position in Christ Jesus seated in the heavenlies! And remember Col. 3:1ff]

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. *[the positive]*

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. *[the negative]*

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: *[another negative]* but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. *[the positive, and now appropriately here when it is so needed due to our human tendency to think of works-righteousness instead of imputed Christ-righteousness ...]*

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

- *Then, verse 14 here is so critically important. Law cannot help defeat the power of the indwelling nature of sin because it can never deal with the root of the problem. But the power of the flesh is effectually thwarted when we reckon as he writes later in the letter:*
- *So the reckoning that counts makes the difference. He writes here in Col. 3, when we reckon *[or “mortify” as he writes now here in this letter]*, that we have already put off, as it were, “the old man with his deeds” through our identification with Christ in his death. Remember, this is how the Lord sees us NOW since we are from his constant perspective, “in him”!*
- *And therefore, having put off the old man, by reckoning on the identity we now have in Christ Jesus, having “mortified the deeds of the body”, the old clothing now taken off by reckoning, we then also need to put on the new, also by reckoning! The clothing analogy is used again here of removing the old so that new clothing may be put on in its place. It is an excellent analogy of the dynamic of living under grace. We will look into this not today,*

Our Outline Today:

- *Only the Reckoning That Counts Makes the Difference in Life — Put Off!*
- *Only the Reckoning That Counts Makes the Difference in Life — Put On!*
- *Only the Reckoning That Counts Makes the Difference in Life — Dwell!*

I. Only the Reckoning That Counts Makes the Difference in Life — Put Off!

- *The reckoning that counts makes the difference. The promise of Col. 3:5 and also Rom. 8:13 is realized, he writes here, when we mortify, or reckon that we have already put off, as it were, “the old man with his deeds” through our identification with Christ in his death. This is how the Lord God and our Lord Jesus see us from*

their heavenly perspective, and that is what counts! In these verses and in the others that speak to the same truths (Gal. 5, Rom. 5-8, and many more), we are taught that the Lord has today, under grace, provided the way for our deliverance from the POWER OF SIN, and that it is through the KNOW-RECKON-YIELD dynamic we have seen last time and now today so clearly revealed here.

As written in Romans 6, Christ now lives in a new way altogether than before his death, burial, and resurrection. He paid the full price for our sins ONCE FOR ALL! Now he lives apart from sin altogether in his new quality of resurrection life. And we are encouraged to do the same.

Consequently we now need to put that to the test, applying it in our daily, moment by moment living and for this Paul here in Colossians uses the clothing analog where we learn how to live in a world of sin but above the ongoing power of that sin in our lives:

[READ] Col. 3:8-9

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

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

- ***So, this is where the rubber meets the road. The identity which we have in Christ Jesus now needs to be by faith applied in the daily affairs of living.***
- ***Having put off, by reckoning on the identity we now have in Christ Jesus, the “mortifying”, we then also need to put it on, also by reckoning! The clothing analogy is used again here of removing the old so that new clothing may be put on in its place. It is a perfect analogy of the dynamic of living under grace according to the apostle Paul and the Spirit of our God who inspired or breathed it out onto the written page for our great and transforming blessing and benefit.***

II. Only the Reckoning That Counts Makes the Difference in Life — Put On!

- ***So we see the whole dynamic of Christian living here unfolded before our very eyes. This is a dynamic situation, moment by moment, as the need expresses itself. It is not all at once and forever the same as so many teach through their perfection***

teachings or second blessings of pentecostals, charismatics, or the perfectionists, none of whom seem to know of these marvelous teachings. They are so caught up on the “experience” side that they do not know of what Christ has actually accomplished in his death, burial, and resurrection.

- *One teacher that shared so powerfully these truths some decades ago and who suffered much persecution as a result, was Miles Stanford in his “Green Letters” series of booklets. His focus there was on the truths we are seeing here revealed about what Christ has already accomplished regarding sin and righteousness and also on the dynamic of living in the spirit and learning practically day by day how to live in the realm of God’s always sufficient grace.*

The next verses make that so clear and also highlight how important it is to have the knowledge that Paul is sharing here:

[READ] Col. 3:10-14

10 And have **put on** the new *man*, which is **[being]** 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.

- *In verse 10 here we see that all important time element. As Christ sees it, all has already been accomplished and it may be incrementally realized in us moment by moment as we reckon upon the truths concerning what he has done and who he is. What we need is only to let him be who he is and not get in the way trying always to accomplish what we can never do. As always, the issue revolves around what God is doing today under grace — and what he is not doing. And this all occurs during the passage of time.*
- *So having put off the old man AND have put on the new man (as the Lord sees it for this is his work entirely), we are now to reckon upon that truth in our own living experience. The normal consequence of our reckoning then is what is written here: “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. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

III. Only the Reckoning That Counts Makes the Difference in Life — Dwell!

[READ] Col. 3:15-17

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.

- ***True Thanksgiving is not just a matter of the words chosen or spoken. True Thanksgiving is Grace Receiving ... the words by the way in the Greek language have the same root word meaning “free” or “undeserved”, so again I repeat it, Thanksgiving is Grace Receiving. This way of stating it highlights the essential connection between the two, between, on the one hand, grace and its reception, and, on the other hand, the giving forth of thanks to Almighty God for his abundant grace poured out always upon us all.***
- ***But the apostle does not stop here, for he continues with the message of the indwelling, the Lord’s work, and then the dwelling, our response to what the Lord is doing in us by grace. Thanksgiving is grace receiving. Right? So, he exhorts, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.***

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.

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.”

- ***Such blessedness indeed.***

Application / Conclusions:

- ***The Lord has already provided every means for our deliverance from the power of sin. The penalty for sin has been already fully paid and now the***

foundation for freedom from the indwelling and outwardly imposed power of sin has been laid. The question now is whether we will enjoy the blessings of the Lord's work or whether we will turn back to law-keeping and fleshly (and demonic) religion. Paul said it well in this well remembered verse:

Rom. 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

- ***So the opportunity is with us throughout this life, as believers living under the fullness of grace, that "since the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ [Tit 2:11-13]***
- ***Amen? Amen.***

NEXT TIME: The Reckoning That Counts Makes All the Difference in Living — Even When It Is Hard!