



## Week of February 11, 2019: Colossians 3:1-11

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”

### Discussion Questions Set #1

In sermon, I spent time presenting an analogy to help frame Paul’s words to the Colossian church. In essence, I urged us to imagine, after being set and prepared for a wonderful solo vacation in London, we found ourselves suddenly transported to the centre of a Bavarian forest. No immediate path exists at our feet, but a distant ranger’s station is visible. Sometimes, I think the disorientation that one might feel in that circumstance is similar to what we feel once we come to faith in Christ. We look at the life we’ve built – with all that this entails – and suddenly, our new found faith makes much of it either out of place or unnecessary.

1. Have you ever experienced a time in life when God’s done something in you that has left you feeling spiritually disoriented? What did you do in this circumstance?
2. Paul urges the Colossian church to set their sights on heavenly things – where Christ is – rather than on earthly things. Why do you think this is important for the follower of Christ to do? To borrow from our analogy, what happens if we focus on the trees and the forest floor rather than on the ranger’s tower?
3. What do you think it means to practically “set your hearts on things above”? What does this actually look like in practice in our lives?

### Discussion Questions Set #2

“Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24).

“[Jesus] died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again ... therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:14-17)

Paul mentions in our passage that “you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God”. We must recognize that this is a present tense statement; though there is a future component to it. Paul presents new life in Christ as a “transformation now – the new is here” sort of reality.

1. What difference might it make for us to acknowledge that, by faith in Christ, transformation has occurred now; that we are not simply waiting for some future transformation to happen? How might this change the way you face tomorrow?
2. If, as our passage suggests, our lives are now hidden with Christ in God, how important does this make our focus on Jesus in life? Why is this so?
3. Why do you think we sometimes fail to live like transformation has occurred now? Why do we live like the “old is here, the new is coming” rather than the “old has gone, the new is here”?



### Discussion Questions Set #3

In our passage, Paul emphatically urges us to “put to death” things like “sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed ... anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language”.

1. Think of your life in general terms: are you a “put to death” sort of person or are you a “permit to disappear through misuse” sort of person? How does this impact the tension between your old life in sin and your new life in Christ?
2. Why do you think Paul uses the phrase “put to death” rather than a phrase like “set aside” to describe our attitude toward such things?
3. The Greek words translated as “put to death” mean to “deprive of power or destroy the strength of”. What might happen if we fail to put to death such behaviours, but hope that through misuse they might disappear? What might happen if we fail to “destroy the strength” of such behaviours?