

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*

<sup>2</sup> *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

<sup>3</sup> *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

<sup>4</sup> *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

### YOU ARE HIDDEN IN CHRIST

- I. This determines your priorities
- II. This determines your destiny

Dear Worshipers of the resurrected Christ,

Is the celebration of the resurrection just a mind game for us? We sing the songs. We pray the prayers. We carry the symbol of the butterfly and wear the empty cross. We decorate the sanctuary with white lilies and other flowers. Traditionally Easter is the time to wear new spring clothes. But ....

But what happens tomorrow? Is it back to work as usual? Grind out the 40 to 60 hour weeks in the hopes of getting ahead in what someone has called the ‘rat race’ of our society?

The Words of our text are found in the greater context of the Apostle Paul encouraging the believers at Colosse to live in their resurrection faith. *I Know that my Redeemer Lives* is meant to mean more to you than a song to be sung once a year. The Apostle was burning with the desire to point believers to Christ. Listen to his encouragement. *My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine sounding arguments.*

That was chapter 2. Here he begins chapter 3 with these words. *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.* Paul is not referring to your bodily resurrection on the last great Day when he says you have been ‘raised with Christ.’ He is referring to the fact that when the Holy Spirit put faith in Jesus Christ into your heart, He joined you so closely with your Savior that you are one with Him in His death and one with Him in His resurrection to life. Were you there when they crucified your Lord? You can say, “Yes, I was there in Christ. He died my death to sin”. So also, by faith you have been raised from the grave in Christ. The life you now live you live by faith in the Son of God.

Your day to day living should not be separated from the life you live in the flesh. As a matter of fact, this new spiritual life empowers your earthly living. It gives direction to your life. It gives meaning and purpose to what you do throughout the day. It is what marks you as a Christian.

Paul says first, *set your heart on things above.* The point is that you now know that you are not going to hang around this planet forever. Just as the children of Israel were not going to stay in the wilderness forever, they had their focus on the Promised Land and the Lord delivered on His promise. Just so, we are pilgrims here and heaven is our home. Heaven is **where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.**

Christ is with us now. **Never will I leave you or forsake you**, is His continuing promise to us every day. Our oneness with Christ is not a visible reality here on earth. This is especially the case because of sinful nature is still in full view. But when we are raised to life again and join the congregation of the church triumphant, the unity we have with Jesus will be visible - hidden now, but revealed then.

This is what the second part of the text says. <sup>3</sup> *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.* <sup>4</sup> *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.* This is what Easter means. It is a glorious trumpeting of the truth that Jesus is the Victor. The job has been done. The proof is in the resurrection. The announcement to you is – believe and live. *Whoever lives and believes shall never die.* Jesus told Martha.

This truth is now hidden with Christ. You confess that you are a believer which makes you a member of the invisible church, the Holy Christian Church. This church is made up of only those people who truly believe. We take each other at our word that we are confessing what we truly believe.

Outwardly we still have the appearance of the old nature. The old Adam in us still drags us down. When we take an honest inventory we have to confess with the Apostle that we have done those things that we know are contrary to the will of God and we have left undone those things we should have done. You remember the statement. **What I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do.** Paul's question he then raises: **Who will rescue me from this body of death?** He boldly confesses, **Thanks be to God (who gives us the victory) through our Lord Jesus Christ.** There it is. The answer is hidden in our relationship with Jesus.

Here is where the rubber of our confession of the resurrected Christ meets the road of our day to day living. The load of our guilt, the shame of our disobedience, the just judgment against any and every infraction of God's law is all unloaded through a repentant heart and a conscious faith in Jesus our Redeemer. And to have this kind of heart and mind is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

The unbeliever will not be able to understand this because it is hidden in Christ. The unbeliever operates under the thinking of the unregenerate mind which tells him he is the one who did the sinning and he is one who will have to make amends for his sins. That is what his thinking will be if there is any spirituality left in him at all. But he will never be able do what he knows must be done. He will never be able to do enough to satisfy his conscience and there is nothing that he can do to earn God's favor. He cannot regain the righteousness that has been lost. He cannot purge himself and make himself pure. He must finally ask the same question Paul did. "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" But without Christ there is no answer.

At the close of this service we will sing "I know that my Redeemer lives." In this hymn we proclaim what Christ's resurrection has accomplished for us. Jesus lives to comfort us. He lives to bless us with His love. He lives to grant us rich supply. He lives to guide us, to feed our hungry souls, to plead our case above, to silence all our fears, to wipe away our tears, to calm our troubled heart, to grant us daily breath, to conquer death, to prepare our mansion and to bring us safely there.

All of these things are ours because of that hidden connection we have with Jesus – the faith connection. **Our lives are now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, appears, then we also will appear with him in glory.** When Christ appears is when that which is hidden will be open for everyone to see and it will be glorious. This celebration of the resurrection is not a mind game, is it? It is a sincere rejoicing in the benefits and blessings we have in our Jesus. Amen