The Perspective That Changes Everything
Colossians 3:1-11

ETS: Paul told the Christians how to allow Christ to live through them.
ESS: These actions will enable us to live a victorious Christ life.
OSS: I want people to compare what they are doing to what we are supposed to do.
PQ: Are you living with an Eternal Perspective?
UW: Perspective

Intro

A farmer and his son lived on a farm in the countryside. They owned a beautiful horse they cherished deeply. The farmer entered the horse into a village contest and won first prize along with some money.

When his neighbors gathered to congratulate him, they said enviously, "How lucky you are to have such a remarkable horse." To the neighbor's puzzlement, the farmer responded, "Who knows what is good or bad."

Not long after, some thieves heard about the prize-winning horse and stole it during the night. The neighbors came by to express their sympathy for the

farmers loss and again were confused by the farmers calm response—"Who knows what is good or bad."

The next week the spirited horse escaped from the thieves and miraculously returned to the farm—with several other spectacular wild horses. Again, the astounded neighbors commended the farmer on his incredible good fortune, but his reaction was unchanged—"Who knows what is good or bad."

Not long after, the farmer's son fell off one of the horses and broke his leg. Compassionate neighbors again expressed their heartfelt sorrow. "Who knows what is good or bad," repeated the farmer calmly.

A short time later, the King's army passed through town requiring all young and able-bodied men to be drafted into the War, but the farmer's son was passed over due to his badly broken leg.

By this time, the neighbors brought some food and simply came to enjoy a meal with the farmer and his son. They **expressed neither joy nor concern** for the farmer's current circumstances because they knew how he would respond.

Force Perspective Picture

- Two people standing on opposite sides of a building may have different perspectives on the building's size and importance

What is PERSPECTIVE?

- A particular attitude toward or way of regarding something; a point of view.

If you grew up in **Haiti**, you will have a different PERSPECTIVE about some things than an American.

WE

We all have **different perspectives** about…

- **Politics**
- **Culture** in America
- **Capitalism** vs. Socialism
- An **event** that affects us

Those **perspectives** are influenced by our…

- **Experiences**
- **Education**
- **Upbringings**
- **Beliefs**

While we have different PERSPECTIVES, I want to give us a **UNIFIYING PERSPECTIVE.**

- **Without** this perspective,
    - You **will not** have **victory** in your Christian life

- You probably **won't** be able to **enjoy fellowship** with other believers—especially those who were *raised differently*

This **PERPECTIVE**, *while UNIFYING*, is also the perspective WE NEED if we are going to navigate the **post-Christian** world in which we now live.

- I think we can agree that we are in a **post-Christian era**.
  - **Humanistic secularism** is the predominate view of our academic institutions, movies, the arts, and it has subtly infiltrated the church.

So, this **PERSPECTIVE** is one **WE** need to **UNIFY** us, and to help us navigate our secular world.

What is this **Perspective**?

- How do we get this **perspective**?

GOD

The first two chapters of Colossians, Paul has been teaching the **basic foundations** of Christianity. He argued in **Ch. 1**

- **Jesus** is God.
  - Jesus is **Creator**

    - Jesus is the **Sustainer**
- **Through Jesus** we can be **reconciled** to God
    - Because of Jesus' death on the cross for our sins
- The **mystery** that **Christ resides** in every believer
    - Jesus works mightily within us!

He argued in **Ch. 2:**

- **In Jesus** is all the **wealth**, **wisdom**, and **knowledge** of God
    - In Jesus we grow to spiritual maturity
- In **Jesus** we are made **complete**
- **Christians** are **identified** with **Jesus** by God the Father
- There is **nothing** you can **add to or modify** about Christianity
- It is **dangerous** and **futile** to try to live the Christian life apart from Jesus

In Chapter 3, Paul gives some practical **daily application** of what it means to live as a Christian.

- He is going to **illustrate HOW** a Christian lives by allowing Christ to live through him/her.

Paul was writing to **new Christians** who had been **converted largely** from a pagan background. Most of the people in the church in Colossi were **Gentiles**.

- The **pagan religions** of Paul's day said little or nothing about **personal morality**.[1]
  - A worshiper could **bow before an idol**, put his offering on the altar, and go back to live the same old life of sin.
  - What a person believed had **no direct relationship** with how he behaved, and no one would condemn a person for his behavior. [2]

Likewise, there were **Jews** who were in this church as well.

- They had grown up **keeping** the **Old Testament Laws**
  - Furthermore, there were the **man-made traditions** that the **Pharisees** and others insisted they follow.

<u>How can a church composed of people from different **backgrounds** be **unified**?</u>

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[1]Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Col 3:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

[2]Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Col 3:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

We must…

Live with an Eternal Perspective

Colossians 3:1-4 *"So if you have been raised with Christ,* [THEN] seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 (WHY?) For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Paul begins with an "If… then" statement.

- In other words: "**If** you are a believer, a convert to Christ, **then** this is how you are to live."

Paul gives us two **commands**:

1. Seek the things above
2. Set your mind on things above
    - SEEK and SET!

Why should we **seek** the things above and **set** our minds on things above?

- Because you ***are*** **DEAD**!
    - WHEN you heard the Good News, The Gospel of your salvation, HUMBLED yourself, and ASKED Christ to Save *you DIED*!

You **Died** to the…

- **Belief** you can **EARN** your way to God
- **Belief** that you are **GOOD ENOUGH** to get to heaven
- **Belief** that there are **MANY Ways** to God

WHEN you **heard** the Good News, *the Gospel of your salvation*, Paul said in **Colossians 2:20** "You died with Christ."

This is a **RADICAL** Change in **PERSPECTIVE**!

WE are to live as DEAD PEOPLE!

- **Colossians 3:3** "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

Paul said in **Colossians 2:20**, that BELIEVERS have "died with Christ to the elements of this world."

Do you know what a **dead person** is **afraid** of?
NOTHING!

- Does a DEAD Person **live** in **fear**? No!

PROBLEM: You have "Died with Christ" yet you are still PHYSICALLY ALIVE in this world.

- Although we have "Died with Christ," we still have a SIN NATURE.
- Although we have "Died with Christ," we still live in a world that serves the "god of this world" Satan.

Satan, other **fallen ange**ls, and his **demonic hordes**, what Paul calls "principalities and powers of spiritual wickedness" are in '**High places**"

- These principalities and powers work through **media, academia, governments**, and **religion** to draw people away from the one true God!
  - They do it by leading **politicians** to craft policies that encourage the destruction of the nuclear family, the **abortion** of babies, **genocide**, **war**, etc.
  - They do it by working through **academia** to train young people that there is no God and we are the product of time and chance, **humanism** is the answer to humanities problems, **humanistic philosophies**, etc.
  - They do through **media** to promote **pornography**, **violence**, **propaganda**, etc.
  - They do it through **religion** to promote a **work-based system** of salvation, the promotion of **immorality** under the **guise of**

love, the promotion of a "Form of Godliness" rather than true Godliness.

WHEN you watch what is happening, not only in our country, but around the world, it is NOT because a **group huddled** in **Geneva Switzerland** is pulling the strings, but it is the work of "Spiritual forces of wickedness in high places" that are **moving**, **inspiring**, **enticing** many **political**, **corporate,** academic and religious leaders to develop policies, programs, and teachings that appeal to our sin natures, and draw people away from God.

- ALL of this is **coalescing** to the **conclusion** when the "man of sin is revealed" and the "**World**" **follows after him** because they believe he is the Messiah.

PROBLEM: You have "Died with Christ" yet you are still PHYSICALLY ALIVE in a world that is moving at break-neck speed away from God!

- **How** does a BELIEVER, who has "Died with Christ to the elements of this world" PHYSICALLY LIVE in this world?

Live with an Eternal Perspective

HOW do you "Live with an Eternal Perspective?

Paul gives us two **commands**:

Colossians 3:1-2 "*So if you have been raised with Christ,* [THEN] seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

1. **Seek** the things above
2. **Set** your mind on things above
    - SEEK and SET!

What does it mean to "Set your mind on **things above**"?

- Paul tells us in **vs. 2** ***NOT*** to set your mind on "earthly things."

Your mind is set on earthly things IF you are **consumed** with thinking about ….!

- Politics, sports, your hobby, computers, making more money, etc.
    - If your **PERSPECTIVE** is focused only on the **here and now**, your mind is NOT "set on things above"

Yes, we must make a living, **politics** does **affect** us, **sports** are **fun** to watch, and **hobbies** are **good**, but *they must not CONSUME our thoughts*.

- We must **FILTER** everything we see and do through an ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE!

What is the ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE?

The ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE IS KNOWING ….

- You have ETERNAL LIFE because you have "received Christ Jesus as Lord" (**Col. 2:6)**
- "You have been filled by CHRIST, who is the head over every ruler and authority." (Col. 2:10)
- You have been "made you alive with CHRIST" (Col. 2:13)
- You have been **forgiven** of your **sins** (Col. 2:13)
- Your **sin debt** has been **erased** (Col. 2:14)
- You have died with Christ to the elements of this world" (Col. 2:20-21)
    - You don't need to submit to regulations that promote "self-made religion, false humility, and severe treatment of the body" (Col. 2:23)

Living with an ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE means….

- Recognizing that **God's plan** culminating in the **return of Christ** is being accomplished through **politics** and **world events**.
- **Prophesy** is being **fulfilled** in our **lifetimes**.
- God works through all things, including **sickness**, **death**, financial struggles, pain, etc. for the "Good of those who love Him"

- Believing that the "Person who endures to the end will be saved"
- We each have a "race marked out for us" that we need to "run with patience"
- **Not** being **anxious**
- **Being satisfied** with what you have
- An **attitude** of gratitude
- Staying **connected to God** throughout the day in **pray** and **meditating** on His Word.
- "Casting all your care upon Him because He cares for you"
- **NOT getting caught up** in **human tradition** and **empty philosophies**

FILTER life through a HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE!

- CHRIST has "disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; he triumphed over them in him." (Col. 2:15)
- Christ "is seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:3)
- Christ is RETURNING (Col. 3:4)
    - You will "appear with Christ in Glory when He returns" (Col. 3:4)

Remember, "Christ is YOUR LIFE" (**Col. 3:4**)

FILTER life through a HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE!

Living with an eternal perspective will

- **Enable** you to live a **victorious Christ** life.
- **Keep** you from **living** in **FEAR**
- **Keep** your **mind** at **PEACE**
- **Allow** you to see where **God is at work**, despite gloomy circumstances

HOW do you "Live with an Eternal Perspective?

Disconnect the past

Colossians 3:5-9a "Therefore,

- Since "Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (v. 1)
- Since "your life is hidden with Christ in God (v. 3)
- Since you will "appear with him in glory" when He returns (v. 4)

Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. 6 (WHY?) Because of these, God's wrath is coming upon the disobedient, 7 and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. 8 *But now*, put away all the following:

anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, (WHY?) since you have put off the old self with its practices.

Paul lists a lot of things that appeal to our earthly nature: "sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed"

- Then in **vs. 7** he states: "you once walked in these things when you were living in them."

Before Christ, **WE** "walked in these things" WE "lived in these things"

- The message from the "spiritual forces of wickedness in high places" that is sent throughout our media, **academia, politics**, and even in some **religions**, is that "sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed" are good or at least not that harmful.
  - Remember the famous **Gordon Gekko** line from the film Wall Street "Greed, for lack of a better word, is good"
  - Even many **mainline protestant denominations** are redefining what used to be **sexual immorality** *(e.g., any sexual expression outside the covenant of a marriage between a man and woman)* as now **acceptable**.

Remember, this church was birthed in a PRE-CHRISTIAN culture and **before** they came to **know Christ**, "sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed" were **NOT off limits**.

- In the **West**, as we have now moved into a **post-Christian** culture, those things are once again, **not off limits** in the eyes of many unbelievers.
    - WHY? Because they **appeal** to our **flesh**
        - Therefore, we **WANT** them to be **acceptable**!

Paul's Challenge: **Live with an Eternal Perspective by Disconnecting from the Past!**

How do you **Disconnect from the past** when you **still possess** your **SINFUL Nature**?

- When you became a believer, the **Holy Spirit** came to live in you
- You have the **fullness** of Christ in you
- You are **no longer** a slave to sin
    - *BUT, you still have your sinful nature*: You still feel those sinful desires.

How do you **Disconnect from the past** when you still possess your SINFUL Nature?

- **You act:** You make a **conscious decision** to **Disconnect** from the Past.

Colossians 3:5, 8 "Therefore, **put to death** what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry….8 But now, **put away** all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth.

- Put to death (v. 5)
- Put away (v. 8)

How do you "Put to death" (v. 5) and "Put away" (v. 8) these things that appeal to your sinful nature?

- We do it by "taking every thought captive"
  - When the **thought** enters your mind to lust, slander, use profanity, lie, be greedy, etc. you "put it to death."
    - WHY? Because if you **don't kill the thought**, it will lead to **action**!

The **Apostle James** put it this way: "Each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. 15 Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death" (**James 1:14-15**)

- After the thought is born, if it is not "put to death" it will "give birth to sin" and sin will ultimately "give birth to death"
    - Possibly physical death, but *always* spiritual death (I.e., separation from God)

I have found the best way to "take every thought captive" is to *immediately* "Set your mind on things above" by praying!

- You may not want to pray at that moment **but pray**
    - Move your **focus away** from the temptation and put it on Christ!

These are the ACTIONS WE must make!

- Don't pray "God *help me* not be greedy" instead, "God *I choose* to be content with what I have. I will not be greedy."

Living with an Eternal Perspective will ***empower*** you to "put to death" and "Put away" what belongs to your earthly nature."

- <u>WHY?</u> Look at **verse 6**: Because of these, God's wrath is coming upon the disobedient.

Living with an Eternal Perspective means that you **realize** that those who **promote** and **do** those things, **will face God's wrath** unless they repent.

- These things appeal to our **sinful nature** and, to be honest, they can be **fun** and **rewarding** in this life, but God's wrath is coming upon the disobedient.
    - Those who **practice and promote** the things that **appeal** to our **sinful** nature, are **getting their reward NOW**, in this temporary life!

They will pay for their "sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, greed, anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language" for eternity.

- They will have to **give an account** for those things!

Living with an Eternal Perspective means you DO BATTLE with your sinful nature now, knowing you will ENJOY peace for eternity.

- One of heaven's joys will be the **absence** of a **sinful** nature!
    - **No more battles** with our sinful nature.

Jesus said in **Luke 9:23** "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross **daily** and follow Me."

- You cannot make the connection of following Jesus by taking up your own cross, if you are focused on things on the earth!

HOW do you "Live with an Eternal Perspective?

Know Who You Are in Christ

Colossians 3:9-10a " Do not lie to one another, (WHY?) since you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self….

Living with an Eternal Perspective means knowing WHAT you have: NEW CLOTHS!
You are NOT the "Old Self" that "walked in" and "lived in" "sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed"

- That OLD MAN is dead!
    - He DIED when you surrendered your life to Christ!
- When you trusted Christ to save you, "you have put off the old self with its practices." (Col. 3:9)
    - You don't wear the old clothing of the old self
        - These sins no longer define you!
            - Your **slavery** to your sinful nature has been broken.

Your NEW SELF has been….

- **Filled** *by* Christ
- **Baptized** *with* Christ
- **Circumcised** *in* Christ
- **Alive** *with* Christ
- **Died** *with* Christ
- **Raised** *with* Christ
- **Hidden** *with* Christ in God

Living with a Heavenly Perspective means you understand that you are NOT the SAME PERSON you were BEFORE CHRIST!

Because you are a NEW PERSON in Christ….**Colossians 3:10b** …You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator.

- This is your PRESENT reality: You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator."

How are you RENEWED? **Verse 10:** "in knowledge."

- Knowledge of what: God!
  - **Ch. 1:9** Paul stated that he prayed that the Christians would be "filled with the knowledge of God's will."
- **Where** does that **knowledge** come from?
  - **Ch. 2:3** states it comes from "Christ."

- **What** does that **knowledge do**?
  - **Ch. 2:2** states it gives you "assurance." It is "wealth."

What does this **knowledge** from Christ **teach** us?

- **Colossians 3:11** " In Christ, there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all."

What is Paul saying?

- Paul is saying:
  - If you are a **Gentile**, you don't have to **become** a **Jew** to **know** Christ!
  - If you are a **slave**, Christ is in you just as much as He is in the free person
  - If you are **physically uncircumcised**, you have Christ as much as the **physically circumcised** person.
  - If you are what people consider a **Barbarian**, you have Christ just as much as the Refined person.

In other words: **Connect to the Present**

- Celebrate WHO you are in Christ
- Celebrate WHAT you have in Christ

You should also CELEBRATE that your "new self" is undergoing a daily "renewal."

- A **remodeling** job is occurring within your soul.
  - **2 Corinthians 4:16** Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."

WE

An **Eternal Perspective Changes** everything!

- It changes how you **watch the news**
- It **changes** how you **interact** with other **people**
- It **affects** the **decisions** you make
- It **affects** your attitude—especially during difficult times

PQ: Do you have an Eternal Perspective?