

THE HEAVENLY-MINDED
Colossians 3:1-4

Intro: Perhaps as you saw my subject for this evening you were reminded of the expression, "He is so heavenly-minded that he is of no earthly good."

Have you ever really known anyone like that--who is too heavenly-minded?

I have known some very heavenly-minded people, but I am sure that they would be the first to say that they were not heavenly-minded enough.

But I have also discovered this: That the more heavenly-minded a person is, the more useful he is here on earth. There may be a false heavenly-mindedness, but I have reference to what Paul was exhorting the Colossian believers to do here--true heavenly-mindedness!

Let us examine these verses and see what we can learn tonight.

First, let us take the word, "seek." What does this mean?

Well, it means to look for something, and to find it, and to take it! It suggests that it is not around where anyone can see it, and so we have to look for it like we would go over some treasure.

The second verb which appears in verse 2 is this: "Set your affection on things above."

This is a verb which speaks of using your mind, of thinking. The object of thinking is to understand. And, when it comes to the things of God, again, as with the first verb, it means to will that you might have it.

So both of these verbs indicate that there is something which we need to be looking for and thinking about until we really come into the possession of it.

Now add to that information the fact that these are imperatives, they are commands, which means that if you are not doing this you are sinning against the Lord and His Word. But also these are present tense verbs which means that you and I are to be doing this today and tomorrow and Tuesday and right on through our lives. You never get over seeking the things above, nor should you ever stop thinking about the things which are above.

But let us go a step further.

Paul was talking about seeking the things where Christ is, and

that must mean heaven.

Let me prove that. See Hebrews 9:24.

For Christ is not entered into the holy places
made with hands,
which are the figures of the true;
but into heaven itself,
now to appear in the presence of God for us.

So, according to what Paul said, we must be seeking whatever awaits us in heaven, we must learn to desire it, and lay hold of it now as a present reality.

But where will this search take us? How can we find out about the things which are above?

There is just one answer to those questions: THEY ARE FOUND IN THE WORD.

So this means that every day I must be searching the Word to find out what is in heaven, and then I must seek to lay hold of it, to make it my own.

"But," you may say, "that is such a big job. Where can I find someone to help me?"

And we have the answer for that, too.

When the Lord Jesus was here on earth He said that He was going to send the Holy Spirit to abide with His people, and that one thing He would do would be to guide us into all truth. See John 16:13.

So we have no excuse. There are no books to buy. No tuition to pay. You do not have to seek for a teacher because you have the very best in the Holy Spirit. And, as you know, He is with you twenty-four hours of every day.

Note some parallel passages: 2 Cor. 4:17, 18.
Heb. 11:1.
Rom. 8:24, 25.

Now there are things in heaven which we cannot fully possess until we get there, but we are to know what they are, and to look forward to the full realization of what they are with keen anticipation.

What are some of the things that Paul had in mind?

I can only introduce this subject to you because it is so vast that both ignorance and time prohibit me from speaking exhaustively about it. But let us see what we can find just in this Epistle to the Colossians.

First of all is . . .

I. CHRIST.

— We are risen with Him, seated with Him, and we need to be seeking Him and thinking about Him so that the things of Christ can become a greater reality to us.

How much do you think about the Lord? How greatly do you long to with Him and to see Him as He is? We all fail in this, don't we?

To seek the things above where Christ is means that you want to learn of Him, and that you want to be like the things that you learn.

Do you love the Lord so much that you really believe, as Paul did, that to depart and to be with Christ would be far better? See Phil. 1:23.

We are all going to be with the Lord in one of two ways:

- 1) Either by death,
- 2) Or by the rapture when He comes. Everybody who believes the Word believes in the rapture. Cf. 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

But we are to seeking the Lord.

Cf. our memory verse for today: Psa. 27:4. Is that just a verse to you, or do you really mean it?

Oh, how wonderful it is going to be to see Christ and to be with Him forever! But you see, the Lord wants us to begin now to anticipate what that is going to mean. We need to be reading the Word to learn more and more of Him.

Look at Col. 2:6, 7, 8, and ff. Notice what Paul said about Christ.

Next is . . .

II. GOD. When you think of Christ and seek Him you will also find God.

What is meant we speak of our heavenly Father as God? We have in mind, power, authority, sovereignty.

— And notice that the Lord Jesus is at His right hand.

To set our affection on those things above means that we enter into the enjoyment of the sovereignty of His power. Seeking undoubtedly means praying. Oh, how little we know

in reality of the marvelous attributes of our God!

Let me mention two more things which appear in our text.

III. OUR HOPE. Cf. Col. 1:3-5, esp. v. 5.

It is interesting to see how Paul spoke of this. Peter did the same thing--speaking of our inheritance. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:3-9.

What awaits us when we get to Heaven?

We will see the Lord. We will see God. But just as amazing as these are, perhaps the one thing that is even greater will be that we will be like the Lord!

Now, if I am seeking those things which are above, it will not only mean that I am looking forward to being like the Lord then, but it means that I will want to be like Him now!

We are coming to a very wonderful verse at the end of 2 Cor. 3--verse 18. And it speaks of the present experience of our future hope. This is setting our affection on things above.

One more point . . .

IV. OUR MINISTRY. Cf. Col. 1:27-29.

Let me speak to you as your pastor.

If I am seeking those things which are above, it is going to show up in my ministry, in my desires for my ministry, and in the purpose that I have in ministering to you week by week.

If I am seeking the things of earth, then I am going to be concerned about my position, about my popularity, about my possessions--and on and on. But if I keep in mind heaven and Christ and God, and the fact that we are all going to be there some day, then there is one thing more than anything else that is going to be of concern with me--and that is what you are going to be like when you get there. Paul not only sought spiritual maturity for himself, but he sought it for the people who were under his spiritual care.

Concl: It is probably true that the whole of the spiritual life is summed up in the words of Paul in these verses. Let us pray that they may be more descriptive of the way we live day after day.