Colossians 3 Notes Matthew McKellar SWBTS 10/07/19

I. Colossians 3:1-4

-A transition passage that serves as a conclusion to Paul’s polemic against the philosophy of false teachers (2:8-23) and also presents the true alternative to that teaching

-Note contextual links to 2:12-13 and 2:20

-“things above” designates the transcendent heavenly realm at the center of which is the exalted Christ

-“things on earth” points back to 2:20-23 and designates the instruction and practice of the false teachers and points forward to the catalog of vices of 3:5

-verse 1 has three clauses: introductory conditional clause, principal clause with imperative and an adverbial clause of place

-verse 2 has two imperatival clauses

-verses 3-4 provide the basis for earlier exhortations with verse 3 oriented to the past and verse 4 directed to the future

-Since the believer shares in Christ’s resurrection, his aims, ambitions and whole outlook are to be centered in Him, in that place of highest honor where Christ has exalted Him. The ultimate “New Member Orientation”

-In a real sense, the believer has no life of his own. His life is the life of Christ. He is identified with Christ in death and life. His interests must be Christ’s interests.

-keep on seeking (pres. act. imper. v.1)-continual ongoing effort as opposed to the seeking of visionary experiences of false teachers

-the heavenly realm is decidedly Christocentric (Psa. 110:1) and for Paul there could be no going beyond the One in the supreme position in heaven at God’s right hand

-Christ’s current position of supreme authority guarantees our access to God’s presence.

-verse 2 repeats the summons of verse 1 in light of Christ’s supremacy: keep on considering …

-activity of intellect and movement of the will, a mindset

-grounds for considering things above: 1) union with Christ in His death (2:20) and 2) new life hidden in Christ with God

-note the perfect tense of “hidden” (verse 3) in contrast to the preceding aorist “died”

-true Christian existence in Christ alone and with Christ alone (4 times in 3:1-4)

-note contrast between present “hiddenness” and future revelation

-“glory”-heavenly existence where Christ-likeness is shared (1 John 3:2)

-Pursue those things that belong to the heavenly realm where Christ currently reigns.

-two key imperatives: zeteite and phroneite

-key principle: identification with Christ (death, resurrection, life and glory)

-Lack of capacity to exult in the exaltation of Christ reveal’s pride’s putrid presence.

-Seek and “think” heaven.

-Reject an earthbound mindset

-Revel in the inexhaustible power, unrivaled privilege and unparalleled authority of Christ.

-resulting outline:

 Main Idea: Because of your identification with Jesus, let a heavenly mind-set direct your earthly existence.

 1. Pursue the realm above (1)

 \*because of resurrection with Christ

 \*because of location of Christ

 2. Preoccupy yourself with the realm above (2-4)

 \*because of death with Christ

 \*because of present and future identification with Christ

II. Colossians 3:5-11

-O’Brien groups 3:5-4:6 based upon four distinctive “catchwords” of Christian catechesis: put to death 5-11, put on 12-17, be subject 18-1 and watch/pray 4:2-6.

-these verses called the “negative paraenesis” due to put to death (v. 5) and put off (v.8) together with two catalogs of vices

-imperatives: put to death, put off, stop lying (v.9)

-note the emphasis on the realm of the “new self” (v. 11)

-resulting outline

 Main Idea: In light of your intimate identification with Christ, grow increasingly more like Him.

1. Aim for ruthless execution (5-9a)

\*a deadly quartet

\*distinct contribution and discerning conclusion

\*dangers of attitude and speech

II. Acknowledge an enabling renewal (9b-11)

 \*constant renewal internally

 \*putting off the old

 \*radical renewal externally

1. Colossians 3:12-14

-outline

Main Idea: According to the pattern and power of Christ’s love, live a life marked by love and forgiveness.

1. Commit to the command (12)

-five virtues

II. Discern the development (13)

 -bearing with believers in process

 -extending the forgiveness of Christ

III. Put on the ultimate garment (14)

 -the binding “grace”

1. Colossians 3:15-17

-verses depict the “elevated frame of mind which should characterize those who profess to be Christ’s people”

-Main Idea: In light of Christ’s supremacy and sufficiency, cultivate an awareness of His ownership over your life.

I. Let the peace of Christ rule (15)

 -act as umpire

 -link between peace and gratitude

II. Let the word of Christ reside (16)

 -teaching/admonishing with wisdom

 -singing with thankfulness

III. Let the name of Christ regulate (17)

 -whatever you do in word or deed

1. Colossians 3:18-21

 -Heavenly-Minded Home-life

 I. Wives: Commit to voluntary submission (18)

 II. Husbands: Commit to sacrificial love (19)

 III. Children: Commit to respectful obedience (20)

 IV. Parents: Commit to encouraging supervision (21)

VI. Colossians 3:22-4:1

 -Who’s The Boss?

 I. As an employee… (22-25)

 -work submissively

 -work diligently

 -work honestly

 II. As an employer… (1)

 -relate specifically

 -relate ethically

 -relate compassionately

VII. Points to Ponder

-great sources for Colossians: O’Brien, Vaughan, Moule, Maclaren, Harris

-Watch out for the tyranny of the temporary.

-Biblical Christianity engages both head and heart.

-“Colossians has an importance and value out of all proportion to its size. “ (Vaughan)

-Sojourners need shallow tent-pegs.

-We have one job: to make a big deal about Jesus Christ

-Value the weight of eternal things more than the shiny bait of expiring things. (Reinke in *Competing Spectacles)*

-“O God, be Thou exalted over my possessions. Nothing of earth’s treasures shall seem dear unto me if only Thou art glorified in my life. Be Thou exalted over my friendships. I am determined that Thou shalt be above all, though I must stand deserted and alone in the midst of the earth. Be Thou exalted above my comforts. Though it mean the loss of bodily comforts and the carrying of heavy crosses, I shall keep my vow made this day before Thee. Be Thou exalted over my reputation. Make me ambitious to please Thee even if as a result I must sink into obscurity and my name be forgotten as a dream. Rise, O Lord, into Thy proper place of honor, above my ambitions, above my likes and dislikes, above my family, my health and even my life itself. Let me decrease that Thou mayest increase. Let me sink that Thou mayest rise above. Ride forth upon me as Thou didst ride into Jerusalem mounted upon the humble little beast, a colt, the foal of an ass, and let me hear the children cry to Thee, ‘Hosanna in the highest!’” (A. W. Tozer)

-“Rejoice, believer, in the Lord, Who makes your cause his own; The hope that’s founded on his word, Can ne’er be overthrown. Though many foes beset your road, And feeble is your arm, Your life is hid with Christ in God, Beyond the reach of harm.” (John Newton)

-“When Jesus Christ crucified is not proclaimed and lived out in love, the Church is a bored and boring society. There is no power, no challenge, no fire-no change. We make drab what ought to be dramatic.” (Brennan Manning)

-“Like a smartphone screen made blank by the rays of direct sunshine, one day we shall see Christ’s face. On that day, all the vain spectacles in this world of illusions and all the pixelated idols of our age will finally and forever dissolve away in the radiance of his splendor.” (Tony Reinke)