

Resurrection Life, Resurrection Hope

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[0 : 00] My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

A special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here, and we're glad that you're here, not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it, which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say to us in his word.

We are once again taking a break from our series in the Gospel of Mark for Easter, and we're continuing from last week in the book of Colossians as we're looking at the resurrection and Jesus as our king and what that means for us.

You'll remember from last week that the book of Colossians is actually a letter written by the Apostle Paul to the city of Colossae, which is in modern-day Turkey. And Paul writes it in the 60s AD from prison against false teachings that are going on in the church.

[1 : 09] Now, if you were with us last week in Colossians chapter 2, you'll remember that we talked about the difference between being spiritually dead versus spiritually alive. And you remember we saw Jesus triumphing over the powers and the authorities, that he brought an end to their rule, their dominion.

And so we talked about the spiritual resurrection, and I told you this story about the seminary professor who would take his students out to a graveyard, a cemetery, and he would say, preach to these tombstones.

And he would tell them that's the same as preaching to someone who isn't saved. They've not been brought to spiritual life. They need God's power at work in their lives. You'll remember spiritual death is when we can't respond to God.

We can't hear God. We can't love God. Spiritual life is when we're able to thank God for his gifts. We're growing in joy and love. We're able to repent of our sin. And you'll remember we talked to this spiritual life.

It only comes through Christ's resurrection. So I told you about the payload, that it's a rocket that takes up the satellite. It's the airplane that takes up the passengers. It is Christ's resurrection, his rising, that raises us as well.

[2 : 23] And so that's what we talked about last week from Colossians chapter 2. This week we're continuing talking about the resurrection with some new questions. Question 1, how do we live now in light of that fact?

How does that affect our day-to-day lives Monday through Sunday? And what is it that we look forward to? What is it that hasn't happened that will happen because of Jesus' resurrection? And so we're going to look at two things. This is already written in your worship guide on page 7, which is resurrection life and resurrection hope. It's with that that I invite you to turn with me now in God's word.

You can turn in your Bibles. You can turn on your phone. You can turn in your worship guide. No matter where you turn, remember that this is God's word. And God tells us that his word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, which means that he has not left us to stumble alone in the dark, but instead he's given us his word to show us the way to go.

And so that's why we read now Colossians 3, starting at verse 1. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

[4 : 02] Our Father in heaven, we praise you and thank you that Jesus has risen from the dead, that our life is hidden with him, that you have transferred us from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of your beloved son.

We ask that you would speak once again by your word, that you would show us your grace and your truth, and most of all, you'd show us Jesus. You'd cast a spotlight on him that we'd see how beautiful and glorious he is.

We ask these things in his mighty name. Amen. Last week, as I mentioned just a second ago, we talked about this issue of being raised from spiritual death to spiritual life.

Paul here continues that to tell us that it is more than that. It is not just that we've gone from death to life. It's actually that we've been transferred from one kingdom, one citizenship into another kingdom, another citizenship.

In fact, he says this in Colossians chapter 1, verse 13. He says that he's delivered us from the domain of darkness, and he's transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son.

[5 : 15] And in fact, that's what's happening here in verses 1 and 3. Verse 1, if you have been raised with Christ, he's saying you've been raised with Christ, you've been brought into this new kingdom. You have a new citizenship.

You belong to a new reality. And then the opposite of that is also true. Verse 3, for you have died. It is not just that you've been raised to a new reality, but that your old citizenship is completely gone. You no longer belong to that world or that realm anymore. In other words, you now, because of Christ's resurrection, look to heaven, not to earth.

You look to heaven, not to earth. And that's what he's saying in verse 2 when he says, set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. Verse 3, he tells us, heaven is your place.

Your life is hidden with Christ in God. And so, in short, he's saying you have new life in one sense.

[6 : 23] And you've died in another sense. You are alive to heaven right now, and you are dead to earth. You're alive to heaven. You're dead to earth.

Now, that's actually, in some ways, more confusing than it is helpful, because when we hear the word earth today as Christians, or worldliness, we might think, oh, that means anything in the material creation is somehow worthless, and all I should be doing now is just reading my Bible and praying.

But, in fact, we need to use Paul's own definition of what it means to be earthly or worldly. When he talks about having died and not being with the things that are of the earth, he's talking about the world as it's dominated by sin.

And we know that because he goes on in the next verse, in verse five, he says, put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, and then he lists a bunch of sins, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil, desire, and covetousness.

So, when we talk about being worldly or earthly, we're not talking about someone who cares about things that happen in everyday life. We're not saying you need to exit reality or society.

[7 : 28] We're not saying it's wrong to think about what you're gonna eat next, right, or what you're gonna wear. What we are saying is you have died to the world, to the earth, in as much as it is the realm of sin and evil and wickedness.

That's what it means that you are no longer on earth, but in heaven. I provided you on verse seven of your worship guide, in fact, a definition of worldliness or earthliness.

It's a system of values in any given age which has at its center our fallen human perspective, which displaces God and his truth from the world, makes sin look normal and righteousness seem strange.

That's what it means when we talk about something that's worldly. It's displaced God and his truth from the world. And then Paul later goes on in Colossians and gives us a definition of what it means to be heavenly minded.

This same chapter, verses 12 through 17, he says it's compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, love, thankfulness, love for God's word, and singing, doing everything in Jesus' name, giving all thanks to God.

[8 : 38] I want you to think about it like this. Some of you, it's true that you were not born in the United States. Your home country is somewhere else.

Others of us, that's not true, but we can imagine what that's like. That if you are from another place, what do you do? You often focus on the traditions and the values of that place.

Even as you're away, you're thinking about your home country, right? You're reading in the news what it is that's going on in the country you came from. When you have a chance, what kind of dishes are you cooking?

You are cooking the food that you grew up with, the recipes that are from your place. You are doing whatever you can, even though you're not there, to bring that place into the present.

You continue to live as if that other country is your home. Why? Because in a sense, you actually belong there, right?

[9 : 38] That's actually your place. That's where your citizenship is. That is where you are most comfortable. Paul is saying this when he says, be heavenly minded. Look towards heaven as the place where you actually are from.

Your citizenship is actually in the kingdom of God. Your culture is actually the culture of the kingdom of God. The recipes that you cook are recipes from the kingdom of God.

This is where you truly belong. Act like it. This is where your citizenship is. Act like it.

You have died, verse three, in the sense that sin no longer has power. It no longer has jurisdiction over you. Sin is not your home. You are sinful. Your earthly passport was taken away.

You don't belong to that place anymore. And you were given a different passport. You were given a heavenly passport. So yes, you may fall into the practices and the patterns of this world, but that's not where you belong.

[10 : 48] You may fall into the country of sin and its practices, but that's not your home. Remember where you actually belong. You are living out the kingdom of God.

That's what he's saying in verses one and two. If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above. In other words, set your gaze, your focus on God and his kingdom.

Verse two, set your minds on things that are above. That is the north star that determines and guides everything else.

Why? Because that's where you belong. Why do you belong there? Because Jesus rose from the dead.

Because of Christ's resurrection, you have been raised with him. You belong to a new place and a new kingdom.

[11 : 54] Seek those things. Set your mind on those things. Why do you seek first his kingdom and his righteousness? Because you belong to that kingdom.

Why did we pray earlier this morning, your kingdom come, your will be done? Because that's where your true citizenship is. If you're a non-Christian, maybe you have questions or doubts or objections to Christianity, I hope that you feel this tension, that you feel the tension of belonging to the earth, which is to say, you know that we live in a world filled with systems of evil.

And in fact, if you're completely honest, if you press into that, you recognize that the problems in the world are not simply problems that are out there. They're also problems that are in here.

As I've told you before, the quote from Alexander Solzhenitsyn who says, the line between good and evil cuts through the center of every human heart. And so maybe you've come to terms or you're wrestling with this question of, I know that I am part of the problem.

I know I must change. And I cannot change myself. What do you do with that? Well, Paul tells us here, and he told us in chapter two, you need to be brought from spiritual death to spiritual life.

[13 : 21] You need to be brought from one kingdom to another kingdom. You need to be transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of the beloved son. Well, how does that happen?

You can't do it by yourself. No one has ever resuscitated themselves. No one has ever brought themselves from death to life.

This is by the power of God. And that is the only power that's able to do it. So I'm just gonna leave you with that tension.

That's the tension that I hope that you feel if you're not following after Christ. If you look with me on page eight of your worship guide, you'll see this from a beginner's guide to America set by Roya Hakakian, who is an immigrant to the United States.

She says, people who are not homesick set their clocks to the standard time of their own region.

But in exile, when homesickness is at a peak and every thought chases the next in a loop of regret,

the hours pass according to the standard time of the displaced.

[14 : 35] Here the body may slouch towards east, west, north, or south, but the heart is ever fixed homeward to the city you just left. Christian, your heart should be always fixed homeward, not to the city you've left, but the city to which you are going.

You do not set your clock to the time of this world. You set your clock to the time of the kingdom of God because Jesus has risen from the dead.

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is. That is your true home.

Paul doesn't just give a command, though. He doesn't just tell us to seek the things that are above or set our minds on things that are above. He also provides us with confidence and hope.

They live this resurrection life. They are embracing the kingdom of God because of their resurrection hope. It is not just that they are spiritually alive, but they have a glorious future as well.

[15 : 58] That's what Paul tells them when he says that their life, verse 3, is hidden with Christ in God. Now, hidden could mean all sorts of things, right? It has a wide range of meaning.

What it means here is clarified by the rest of the text. It's hidden in verse 3, but what happens in verse 4? When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

So your life is hidden in Christ in the sense that it is concealed. It cannot be seen. In other words, there are things that are true about you as a Christian that are not visible to the naked eye.

There's a present reality, verse 3, you're hidden. There's this future transformation that you're going to appear. There's a glory that you have now as a Christian and an even greater glory that you will have in the future and it cannot be seen and it is invisible.

Now, that may sound a little bit strange and pie in the sky, so I want you to think about it this way.

There's a Puritan named Richard Sibbes who lived the 1500s and 1600s and he was an Anglican theologian and he gives us this example of two plots of ground.

[17 : 29] One plot of ground is actually a garden. The other plot is just a common field. Okay, so you've got the garden, you've got the common field. Can you tell the difference between the two in the winter?

No. In the winter they look exactly the same. But what does the garden have that the common field does not? The garden has the seeds.

There's something hidden there, right? There's power and potential. There's life that's lying under the surface. What is going to happen eventually? Well, the winter's not going to last forever, right? There's going to come a time we're kind of feeling it right now where things begin to warm up. The sun is going to shine. What's going to happen to that garden? All sorts of life is going to become visible, right?

It's going to spring up. In the past it looked like those two plots of ground were the same. Now we see they were not. When Christ, the sun, returns in his second coming, there will be a glory that is true of you that will be visible for all to see.

[18 : 44] When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. There is something hidden under the ground, Christian, in your life that is true in part now and will be true in full one day, which is that you will be glorious and glorified.

Your body will be free from all sickness and sin and disease and brokenness. That is the hope that we have because of Christ's resurrection.

Paul tells us in other places that he's the first fruits. First fruits are what appear at the very beginning of a harvest and they show what the rest of the harvest is going to look like. We know what our future will be because Christ as the first fruits has already shown us.

We know that we will rise from the dead with glorified bodies because Jesus already has. We can be confident of going from spiritual death to spiritual life because we are raised with him.

Christian, when Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. So set your mind on the things above.

[20 : 06] That is where your true glory lies. Remember your true country. Remember your hope.

Remember the glory that is to come. Remember who you are. Become who you already are.

You are already a citizen. You have already been raised from death to life. Paul is saying this has already happened.

Act like it. Live into it. Embrace that. Seek the things that are above. Set your mind on the things that are above. This, by the way, is the beauty of the gospel.

The beauty is that the citizenship comes before the behavior. The raising to spiritual life happens by God's power.

[21 : 07] He doesn't say, start acting like you're a citizen of the kingdom of God, and then I'll figure out later whether you're good enough to belong. No, he's saying, you are a citizen.

Now act in accordance with that truth. Line yourself up with that reality. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

If you're not a Christian, I want to remind you of an inconvenient truth, which is that your life here is a life of rot and decay.

It's not anything new or earth shattering for me to say that, but it's something we spend a lot of time and energy distracting ourselves from.

Money and exercise and fitness and power cannot save you from the fact that this world lacks glory. Cannot save you from the fact that this world is characterized by decay.

[22 : 16] by deterioration. And no matter what, your existence here will come to an end. Whether it comes to an end in an instant or the lights slowly dim.

And the Bible tells us it actually only gets worse after death if we're not hidden in Christ. If that glory is not planted, is not hidden in the soil of the garden.

That we all experience some of God's goodness here, whether we believe in him or not. Matthew chapter 5 says, he makes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. There will come a time when we are separated from God and his goodness.

There is only one path to glory. There is only one way to be set free from sin and sickness and disease and it is this that your life is hidden with Christ.

He is the only one who can protect, preserve, who can raise. the glory that we all long for as humans and the injustice that we grieve.

[23 : 38] There is only one way out and it's in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There's a man named Mirhan Karimi Nasiri who spent 11 years straight in the Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris.

He was a Iranian exile and he was a student in Paris and in 1998 France decided they were going to kick him out. He had lost his Belgian refugee documents and no country was willing to take him. No one would give him any papers. At one point Belgium said, we'll reissue you your papers but you have to come here in person to get them. But without any papers he couldn't leave the airport. So for 11 years this man was trapped literally a man without a country. In September of 1999 the chief medical officer at the airport finally was able to procure this man an international travel card and a French residency permit and so he had everything he needed to finally leave the airport. Only one problem. He didn't want to. The chief medical officer said this he needs to be looked after to be coaxed back into the outside world but we will not force him to leave.

[25 : 15] Brothers and sisters if you are hidden in Christ your citizenship is in heaven. It is time to leave the airport.

Because Jesus has risen from the dead you have a new life you belong to him and so do this verse one seek the things that are above verse two set your mind on things that are above because verse three you have 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.

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven we thank you for our great hope. The hope of the future that when you appear we will appear with you and the hope of the present that you have delivered us from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of your beloved son.

We ask that you would help us to live that reality out more and more day after day week after week. We thank you that we don't have to earn this citizenship but it's given to us.

And we ask all of these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.