

# Happy New Year!!

## Colossians 3:1-4

2020 is here. As we stand here at the beginning of a New Year it is a good time to reflect on the year that is ending and look forward to the year that has begun. It is also a good time for God's people to take inventory of their walk with the Lord. We need to examine ourselves and see where we have been, where we are and where the Lord wants us to be. This passage gives us the challenge to do just that.

Joyce and I have been doing spring cleaning since Thanksgiving. There is a lot of clutter in our house and we want to simplify things. There are things that we no longer need and some things that just need to be relocated. In the process of our cleanup we uncovered a few things that caused us to take a walk down memory lane. As we cleaned there were some things that were retained, some things that were released and some things that were remembered.

As I read these verses, I find that they challenge me to do the same thing. As we look at our lives in the light of these verses, we are challenged to retain some things, to release others and to remember the rest. I want to share with you the challenges that these verses contain. I want us to see that God has a plan for our life, He wants certain things from our life, and that He has the right to demand these things from our life. Notice the challenges contained in "An old challenge for a new year."

## Some things must be Retained

Colossians 3:1-2a *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above..."*

As we cleaned, we found several items that we did not throw away, but we kept them as they might be of use to us. In a spiritual sense, Paul is telling us that there are a couple of precious spiritual possessions we would do well to hang on to.

Paul tells us that we are **“risen with Christ”**. The word “if” is not a statement of possibility, it’s a declaration of a spiritual reality. Paul is saying **“...Since you have risen with Christ...”** – Paul is discussing our spiritual position. When Jesus died on Calvary, every person who would ever place their faith in Him must also die – die to sin.

Because I have died with Christ I have also been liberated from the power of sin in my life (Romans 6:14). There is a sense in which every child of God is dead! They are dead to sin, (Colossians 2:20).

In this verse, Paul reminds us that we have also been raised up with Jesus. When He died, when He rose from the dead, He gave hope to every sinner who would by faith obey the gospel and become alive in Christ. We must never forget that we are dead to sin and alive to a new life in Jesus! This knowledge will help us live close to the glory of God.

Since we have been raised to a new life in Jesus, we are told to seek those things which are above. The verb **“seek”** is in the Present Tense – Imperative Mode. In other words, we are told to **continually be seeking those things which are above**. The second verse builds on that thought by telling us to set our affections on things above not on things on the earth. The word “affections” refers to the mind. We are told here to focus our thoughts on heavenly things, not earthly things. We are to set our minds on the things of God and on the things that bring glory to Him. A quick look at some of the verses following this verse gives a little insight into what Paul is talking about here. We are to pursue:

- A. A deeper knowledge of Jesus, (Colossians 3:10)
- B. A clean, holy life, (Colossians 3:5-9)
- C. Godly virtues, (Colossians 3:12-17)
- D. Holiness in our domestic life, (Colossians 3:18-21)
- E. Holiness in our social life, (Colossians 3:22-4:1)
- F. An effective prayer life – (Colossians 4:2)
- G. A fruitful witness – (Colossians 4:3-6)

In other words, we are to live like Jesus lived, (1 John 2:6). We are to live by the fruit of the Spirit in our daily life, (Gal. 5:22-23). We are challenged to live our lives with spiritual values and not the values of the world. As we give our attention to these spiritual and heavenly things, we are enabled to live a heavenly, holy, God-honoring life in this world.

We are to allow a heavenly perspective to govern our earthly walk! Every decision, every activity, every plan, and purpose are to be considered in the light of eternity. Everything is to be laid out before the Lord and considered not from an earthly, sensual perspective, but from the viewpoint of Heaven.

## **Some things must be Released**

Col. 3:2 *“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

As we cleaned, we found several items that just had to go. We didn't have room for some of it and some of the stuff was just plain trash. It had to go. Several bags of stuff that we no longer needed went to Goodwill. While we retained some stuff, other things had to be released.

This is also true in our spiritual lives. Some things must be let go. There are some things that try to attach to our lives that are just plain trash. These things need to be kicked to the curb. Other things simply don't have a place in our lives and those things need to be let go.

Paul tells us in verse 2 that we are to focus our thoughts on Heavenly things. While we do that, we are to avoid getting caught up in all the things in this world that would swamp our minds and hinder our walk. Uncluttering our minds brings peace. Joyce and I spent 11 days in a wonderful resort in FL. For us there was not a lot of things that we enjoyed doing so we spent a lot of time talking and resting. We talked of life and of God. At the end of our stay we were renewed. Not much outside interference in our day to day had proven to be overwhelmingly relaxing. I could not remember the last time I had felt so refreshed. This came from not being distracted by all the hustle/bustle of daily living. If we allow the mind to focus on the world – we lose our focus on God.

Here in Colossians Paul mentions some dangerous distractions that would hinder our walk if they we allow them to. Avoid All These!!

False Doctrine Colossians 2:8

Philosophies

Vain Deceit

Traditions of Men

The Rudiments of the World.

If you listen to certain high-profile preachers in our day you hear the very things Paul warned the Colossians about being taught in pulpits across the world. We are to avoid false doctrine at all costs.

## **Some things must be Remembered**

Colossians 3:3-4 ***“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”***

As we cleaned, we opened various boxes. There were several things inside that didn't matter and they were discarded. As we dug deeper, we discovered some things that caused a trip down memory lane. We found several of my college degrees. It was a good opportunity for us to stop and remember the blessings of the Lord. These last two verses of our text serve as reminders of some important spiritual truths today. We need to consider them before we leave these things behind.

We are reminded again that we have died to sin and to the influence of this world, (Colossians 3:3a). One of the surest ways for the child of God to enjoy spiritual victory in his or her life is for that person to understand that they are crucified with Christ, (Galatians 2:20). If we can get a grip on that truth, we would grow deeper in the things of the Lord.

When we were obeyed the gospel, we were given a new life in Jesus, Colossians 3:3b. This new life imparts to us the “divine nature”, according to 2 Peter. 1:4.

Paul closes this paragraph by reminding us that this world is not the best there is, Colossians 3:4. We may have to deny our flesh down here, but it will be worth it all - over there. We might have to battle Satan here, but we will enjoy victory there. When Jesus comes to bring us Home, our faith in Him will be vindicated and we will be glorified with Him.

Right now, every Christian battles the world, the flesh, and the devil. Each of these enemies does everything they can to hinder us and to cause us to fail. One day, these battles will be over. This flesh will be changed and remade in His image, 1 Corinthians 15:53-54. We will leave this world with its sin, its evil, its devil and we will go to the land of perfection to bask in the glory of our Redeemer forever, Rev. 21:4.

Right now, I have a dream. I dream of a day when I will go home. I dream of a day when I will see the Lord Jesus. One day that dream will become a reality and I will be in His presence. That is what we need to remember as we fight the good fight of faith.

## **Conclusion**

That's a lot to take in, isn't it? But, as we begin this New Year, we need to take a good, hard look at our lives and at our walk with the Lord.

A. Are there things in your life that need to be Retained? Does your focus need to be adjusted?

B. Are there things in your life that need to be Released? Do you need to lay down some of the things mentioned in this message?

C. Are there things in your life that need to be Remembered? Do you need to go down memory lane and nail a few things down today?

D. If there are needs and the Lord has spoken to your heart then you need to come to Him and be saved.

E. Whatever the needs may be today you should listen to the voice of the Lord and do what He is telling you to do. Let's seek to make 2020 the best year of our lives for the glory of God!