

“If Ye Then Be Risen With Christ”...What’s Next?
(Instructions for new believers taken from Colossians 3)

In the book of Hebrews, Paul said that **“He hath forever perfected them that are sanctified.”** We were perfectly justified from everything that was a part of our past life.

Paul said in the fifth chapter of Romans in the first verse:

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This is about a person who has become justified, whereas prior to this he was guilty. He stood guilty before God because of the fact of his way of life, actions, sins, evil doings and ways. Just like we look out at the ungodly world, we see they are guilty before God. One scripture says, **“God is angry with the wicked every day.”**

The wicked are enemies to God. And we can see that in the fifth chapter of Romans again in the tenth verse. Paul said:

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

This lets us see that the word “saved” is used differently than the thought of a person being forgiven of his past sins.

It’s right to say that a person is saved from his past sins. But there’s more than one phase to salvation. The initial phase to salvation is a person being saved from his past sins. But this is talking about something beyond that when he said, **“We shall be saved by his life. For if when we were enemies...”** that means when we were ungodly. If before, when we didn’t know the Lord, we were enemies to God. **“...we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...”** In other words, by Jesus having died for our sins.

We, having faith in his blood, we were forgiven of our past sins. We believed upon him for forgiveness of our sins. We ceased to be enemies to God, because we were reconciled unto God. When our sins were put away, God didn’t look upon us any longer as His enemies. The word “reconcile” means brought back into harmony with God.

“If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God,” that is, when we were in that unsaved condition in the world, and, therefore, were enemies to God, **“we were reconciled to God,”** that is, brought back into harmony with God, **“by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.”**

That lets us see there’s more to salvation than a person just making peace with God. But now let’s go back to the first verse of Romans 5.

“Therefore, being justified by faith...”

And that’s how we come to be in good standing with God, having been sinners in this world in an unsaved condition. We have come to be in good standing with God, because we are justified by faith. We stand justified before God, and He exonerates us. He clears us of all the guilt of our past lives. That is done for us through faith in Jesus Christ.

Then he says, **“we have peace with God,”** we make peace with God in that way, **“through our Lord Jesus Christ.”** But that’s just talking about us receiving the forgiveness of sins. But there’s something on beyond that. There’s the infilling of His spirit.

Receiving the forgiveness of sins is the first part of Peter’s instructions in Acts 2:38, when these asked, saying, **“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”** And Peter said, **“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”**

So the gift of the Holy Ghost came after them repenting and confessing their sins and being forgiven and then being baptized in water. Then they experienced being baptized with the Holy Ghost, or, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. Either one of those expressions refers to the same thing. They are equivalent to each other.

Then this happens, our receiving of the gift of the Holy Ghost, there’s another way of picturing this for us to understand this. This is given us in the third chapter of Colossians.

This is an epistle of Paul the apostle. What a wonderful chapter this is. How many wonderful chapters we do have that were written by the apostle Paul, our apostle, the apostle to the gentiles.

We should be thankful when we read through all of these writings of Paul. We should be thankful to God for what God gave through Paul to us through these letters that he has written.

Colossians 3, this is a wonderful and beautiful chapter for a person to read after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. I hear offers made on television, if somebody accepts Christ or they received the gift of the Holy Spirit, then there are offers made to send a booklet to them and tell them how to get started.

Well, that's good for a person to have something to consider. "What next? I've come to Christ" or "I have decided for Christ. What do I do from this point?"

We've got something that surpasses all of those little booklets and pamphlets. It's right here in the third chapter of Colossians. You want to read something that is of great value? Read these words of the apostle Paul. He tells you what's next or what to do from here or what to do from that point.

Not only that, but this is a good chapter to go back and read from time to time by every child of God to measure themselves by this word of God that's given us through this apostle Paul to see how we are measuring up to these things.

Now, let's start out the chapter at verse 1.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above..."

Another thing that we can say happens to us when we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit is we experience a spiritual resurrection. That is, our souls are made alive unto God.

Every soul has life, but every soul doesn't have God's life. It's not alive unto God. And every child that is born and takes its first breath and then it continues to breathe after that, that child has life. Just like the scripture says, ***"God formed man of the dust of the earth, and then He breathed into his nostrils, and man became a living soul."*** Well, He breathed into his nostrils, it says, the breath of life. We all are breathing the breath of life when we are breathing the air we're breathing.

When a person comes to God, then there is life that is given to the soul that is from Heaven. It's spiritual life. It makes that person alive spiritually, because prior to that, the soul is dead spiritually until a person receives the gift of His spirit. That is pictured here as a resurrection.

When you read, ***"If ye then be risen with Christ,"*** what does it mean to be risen with Christ? It means to have received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I suggest you underline or encircle that phrase, ***"risen with Christ."*** And then mark out the words ***"Holy Ghost"*** or abbreviate that, if you'll remember what you mean by that, capital H, period, capital G, period. In other words, you're meaning by that having received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

That's when a person is risen with Christ. It's not, as somebody says, vicariously when he rose from the dead back there. His rising from the dead was necessary in order for us to have life. But now we can be risen with Christ when we receive of His spirit.

"If ye then be risen with Christ..." That's a miracle that's happened for us. Everybody that's received the gift of the Holy Ghost has had a miracle happen in their life. Wouldn't you call it a miracle if somebody was raised from the dead right here before our eyes? Somebody that was physically dead?

Supposed we'd have a funeral sometime and a person would come up out of the casket, climb out of it and start walking around. Why, we would all be astounded, wouldn't we? What would we term that? We would say, "Well, my, that's a miracle."

Every person that received the gift of the Holy Spirit has had a miracle done for them. Our souls have been made alive unto God. We've risen from the dead state in Adam.

Paul said in I Corinthians 15:22:

"As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

So here we have been made alive unto God.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

In other words, seek the things that are of God, the things that are above the way of life of the people of the world or the kind of a life that we knew before we came to God.

We know there's a difference. Nobody has to tell us that. When we receive His spirit into our hearts – if a person is unsaved and God forgives them and he puts His spirit in them, why, there's no doubt in that person's mind that he's undergone a change or she's undergone a change. There's something marvelous and miraculous that happens when that takes place in a human life.

After that, he said:

“...seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Set your affection and your mind, let your mind be on things which are above and not on things on the earth.

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

That means that old life, that Adamic life, the life that we lived in the world, the old man and his ways, this has been buried by baptism into Christ.

I refer you back to Romans 6, that when he talks about us being baptized into Jesus Christ in the third verse of Romans 6, that is Holy Spirit baptism. That's not water baptism there.

Notice in the fourth verse, he says:

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

In other words, we've become new creatures in Christ, so we walk in newness of life. It's a new life then that we begin to live. It's not like that old life. This is a different kind of a life that we live now and lead.

So he said in verses 5 and 6:

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him.”

When we have that happen to us, we die out to the flesh and its desires, and we, having the Lord in our life, having his spirit, that becomes more important than anything else. So we die out to all of those other things, and that's how a person gets in a condition to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. They want that more than they want anything else.

That's why he says in Romans 6, verse 6:

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

Also notice verse 8:

“If we be dead in Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.”

Now going back to Colossians 3:3, he says:

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Now, connect the first two verses of Romans 6, where he says, ***“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?”*** He said, ***“God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?”***

So, see, that's the same idea here in Colossians 3, ***“For ye are dead.”*** That is, ye are dead to sin.

The old man is crucified. ***“Ye are dead”*** to sin. ***“And your life,”*** that is, that old life, that is dead. If you're dead, there's something about you, there's some part of you or something about you that is dead. What is it? It's the old man that is dead and his ways. Notice Ephesians 4, where he said in the 4th chapter and the 22d, 23d, and 24th verse, he says:

“That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;”
“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;”
“And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

That’s talking about the same thing as in II Corinthians 5:17:

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”

We can see in Ephesians 4:24 he says:

“And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

That’s the new creature that our soul has become when we receive His spirit, the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Here in Colossians 3:3 he says, ***“For ye are dead.”*** That is, the old man is dead. The old man is crucified. ***“And your life,”*** that is, that old life, the life of the old man of the old creature, ***“is hid now with Christ in God.”***

That coincides with Paul saying in Romans 6:4, ***“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.”*** Notice also in Romans 6:3 we ***“were baptized into his death.”*** That’s where the life is hid. It’s hid with Christ in God.

All right. Then he says:

“When Christ, who is our life...”

That is, Christ has given life to our souls, he’s come into our hearts to take over the throne of our heart, and he’s in us as our hope of glory. As Paul mentioned in Colossians 1:27, ***“Christ in you, the hope of glory”*** by virtue of his spirit, by virtue of having received the Holy Spirit.

Go back to chapter 3:4:

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear...”

That is, when he shall appear coming back from heaven, when he comes again:

“...then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

So he says in verse 5:

“Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth...”

That is, mortify the desires of the lusts that are lurking in your members.

“...fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, which is idolatry...”

The word “mortify” means “put to death.” When he says, ***“Mortify, therefore, your members,”*** that means put to death these lusts. They’re dormant there, but they’re lurking in your members, and there could be something that could bring that up again, although the old man has been crucified. There is something that can revive the old ways of the old man.

But here he says, ***“Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.”*** When he speaks of fornication, that’s sexual immorality. That covers several different things, different immoral sexual acts, whatever they are. If it’s contrary to God’s law, then that’s fornication.

Even homosexuality is referred to as fornication in the book of Jude. It shows you that fornication covers different kinds of sexual immorality. Jude 7 says:

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrha and cities round about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh...”

That’s what the people of Sodom and Gomorrha did. Why, they were turned over to a spirit like that. There was the committing of homosexuality. It was a terrible thing in the eyes of God.

And if you go and read those things in the book of Genesis, you’ll see how that was looked upon by God. We’re not to think that that is just like some do that pass that off as an alternate lifestyle and sexual preference, then seek to justify this in that manner.

The scripture says, ***“Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.”*** But, he said, ***“whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”***

He doesn't say that homosexuality or fornication is honorable in all or adultery is honorable in all. But he says marriage is honorable in all. That's found in the 13th chapter of Hebrews. So there is a definite difference that is to be made there.

So that's premarital sex; that's extramarital sex; that's living in with somebody, not married to them; that's somebody getting involved with someone else's husband or someone else's wife. That's homosexuality, whether it's male or female, because that exists in both sexes. And so these things need to be understood and pointed out. And then that's different kinds of perverted sex. All of those things come under the heading of fornication.

"Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth... Uncleaness."

That's impurity, of course, there's other ways that a person can have impurity in their lives. There's things that can affect a person's spirit and their heart, things that can get into a person's heart and their spirit is affected, and that can make them impure.

"Inordinate affection." That's lust. Something that is inordinate is something out of the bounds or it's extreme. It's not well ordered. It's inordinate affection.

"Evil concupiscence" refers to evil or unholy desires.

"Covetousness," that's greed. That's the meaning of the word ***"covetousness."*** It's called greediness in one place in Paul's writings. And he says, ***"which is idolatry."***

A person given over to greed, a spirit of greed, why, that sin is akin and falls under the category of idolatry, because usually it's a love for money. That's what's meant by Hebrews 13 when he says, ***"Let your conversation be without covetousness."*** That is, let your lives be without a love of money. Don't let a love of money take over your life. That's covetousness. That's greed. And so he says, ***"Which is idolatry."***

Because of a love for money, money can become an idol and can become a god to a person. He says that that is evil. That's wrong. We're to mortify those members upon the earth. He says:

"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

God will judge all such as that. We've got it right here in the scriptures. We have it right here in Paul's writings. He says:

"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

Didn't God pour out of his wrath upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? I tell you that he did. Then he said:

"In the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy..."

We're talking about reading a little booklet or a little pamphlet of "What's Next?". I guarantee you that none of them covers all of these things that Paul covers here in this third chapter. This is the best information we have right here. That's superior to any of these little booklets or pamphlets that you might send off for.

"Now you also put off all these: anger, wrath..."

Of course, by ***"wrath,"*** it means losing your temper and going into a rage about something. And:

"...malice, blasphemy..."

Blasphemy is slander, to slander somebody, slander other people.

"...filthy communication out of your mouth."

That is, filthy language, profanity, using curse words and saying or telling stories, telling jokes that are unclean stories and unclean language. We're all to watch our language. Let's all watch ourselves. Just because something is common around us, that doesn't mean that we're to talk the way other people talk.

And be careful what you talk about. There's some things that we're not to talk about openly. I'm compelled to talk about some of these things as plain as I am on account of the condition that have come to exist.

I'm careful about that, because I want to set the right example before you. Whether it's privately or publicly, I have endeavored to set the right kind of example in all of these things which Paul refers to. So, **"Put off all filthy communication out of your mouth."**

That brings him to another thought. Talking about things that come out of your mouth, he says:

"Lie not one to another..."

Stop lying when you come to God and you're going to serve the Lord. You are no longer serving sin, but you're going to serve the Lord. How are you to do when you serve the Lord? He says, **"Stop lying."** Don't be lying anymore. Don't be telling any more lies. Tell the truth.

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds..."

Those kind of deeds belong to the old man. That is not a part of the life of the new man. That's the old man that's coming back to life when a person is lying after having come to God.

And he says in verse 10:

"...And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him..."

You put on the new man now, and this new creation is made and fashioned after him that created him. It's fashioned after Christ. This is the way Christ was when he was here in the flesh. Verse 11:

"...where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."

In other words, don't be blaming it on your nationality by saying, "Well, that's the Indian in me" or "That's the Irish that's coming out in me." Don't blame some action that you know is unseemly or improper or it's wrong or it's out of line on your nationality. The Irishman and the Dutchman is to have been buried in Christ.

I know that there are nationalistic traits with different nationalities. But that's to be buried in Christ. That's what he means when he says, **"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew."** Because Jews and Greeks were different in their actions and their nationalistic traits. They were different from one another. The Jew was to be put to death in Christ. When we were baptized into his death, the Jew was to be baptized into his death. It is the same with the Greek and any other nationality.

Paul continues:

"...but Christ is all and in all."

I might emphasize that Christ is all and in all. Christ is in us as a result of us receiving the gift of his spirit. So this is telling us how to keep Christ in us, help us to be walking pleasing in his sight and keep Christ in us after he's come in to abide. Verse 12:

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy..."

By **"bowels of mercy"** he just means to have a heart for other people, a heart of compassion.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness longsuffering..."

We put on kindness. That is, cease to be unkind. Unkindness is the way of the old man. That's the deeds of the old man. But there's something about the Holy Spirit working in our lives just that causes us to want to be kind to people where before we may have been unkind.

Then **"humbleness of mind."** Let's always keep in mind that because of the way our lives have been in the past or when we were in the world, we're not really and truly worthy to be here, but God showed favor to us.

If we would always keep that in mind, that will help us to have humbleness of mind and not ever get the big head but just know that we're nothing. If we amount to anything, it's because He took nothing and made something out of it. We don't have anything to boast about.

Then **"meekness."** Cause us to be meek in our spirit. **"Longsuffering."** Willing to suffer and bear with other people.

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

Can't we see just as far as we've read in this chapter how valuable these things are to us as children of God? We can see the importance of these things in our lives daily and let this be part of the things that we refer back to.

Go back and read this over and over again and see how we're standing, how we're measuring up. How does our life stack up with these things? A person can depart from the Lord and gradually get away from the Lord and get away from the righteous path and something go dead in his life.

The Lord has given us a new life. We've got to protect that new life and watch over that and take care if we're to stay alive in the Lord.

Paul said in Romans 8:13:

“If you live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, then shall ye live.”

Again he said in Galatians 5:16-17:

“If we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these two are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would.”

You can't go ahead and do the things that the flesh would cause you go do or natural desires would lead you to do. You can't go ahead and still be walking in the Spirit.

He said, ***“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”*** and still be able to walk in the Spirit.

A lot of men have tried that, but it just simply doesn't work. It will not work. You've got to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts in order to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:24)

The word of God helps us to see whether or not we're living the way that we should or whether or not we're doing the right thing.