

The 17th Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, September 15, 2024

“The 12 Keys to Spiritual Maturity ~

Key #2: Having a Spiritual Mind”

Colossians 3:1-11

When our minds are in neutral, do we find ourselves drifting into thoughts about the _____ things of everyday life: our to-do list, the fears we have for our children, our next vacation, the weekly grocery list, the newest Marvel movie, the argument we had with our boss at work? Or do they drift to _____ things?

“So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth...” (Colossians 3:1-2)

Paul is concerned here, and indeed, in many other places in the NT, with the development of our _____ mind.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

It’s because of this propensity to live according to our _____, that Paul calls for a total _____ in our reading this morning. He wants us to understand that if we’re going to live a Christian life that is mature and glorifying to God, it’s vitally important for us to have what we might call a correct _____.

This has nothing to do with intellect or intelligence. It has nothing to do with whether we have a university degree. It’s not about our IQ, but rather the disposition of our mind to focus on the _____ things—the “things that are above.”

Paul is writing this letter to the Colossians because they were being pressured by false teachers to believe a form of _____ known as Gnosticism, which argued that in addition to the gospel that Paul had preached to them, they also needed to obtain a _____ knowledge—a knowledge that as yet they did not possess—in order for them to reach the next stage in their spiritual development.

We have all the _____ we need; there’s nothing more that needs to be learned, nothing more to be added to the finished work of Jesus on the cross on our behalf. Our salvation has been secured by Jesus, and the

righteousness of God has been _____ to us by faith in God’s grace alone. There’s nothing more we need to do other than believe, receive, and _____ in that grace and knowledge.

Paul isn’t interested in any kind of spiritual _____—in Christ we’re all one, he says in verse 11, and he wants every Christian to realize what they already are in and what they already have in Christ.

#1. The _____ of spiritual maturity.

Paul is exhorting the Colossians to do certain things because they’re motivated by certain things that are true about them. They’ve been raised with Christ and they’ve died with Christ. To put it another way, they’ve died and have been raised to newness of life.

In fact, Paul builds his entire understanding of sanctification on this truth.

Paul isn’t issuing a call to consecration here Paul isn’t asking them to become something that as yet they’re not; rather, he wants them to realize what they already are. And in doing so, he’s repeating something that he alluded to earlier in Colossians 2:12-13, “...when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses...”

“By no means! How can we who have died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Rom 6:2-4)

Willful continuation in sin with the expectation of more grace is _____ because we’ve died to sin; it no longer has the same _____ over us.

“Our old self was crucified with Christ.” (Romans 6:6)

One _____ for mature, godly living is realizing the wonder of what has happened to us in Christ. When it finally dawns on us, “Can this really be true of me?” everything _____.

How do you view yourself?

Do you see yourself as having died to sin and being raised to new life in Christ, seated with Him in the heavenly places?

#2. The _____ of spiritual maturity.

seek = *zeteo* =

It has to do with what we desire and seek after with our _____.

set = *phroneo* =

It has to do with what we think in our _____.

The kind of focus that Paul is calling us to here—the kind of focus necessary for spiritual growth and maturity—requires us to _____ both our heart—our desires—and our mind—our thoughts.

One _____ of where we're at spiritually is to ask ourselves these questions:

What is my chief aim in life?

For what do I really live?

What controls the way I prioritize my life?

The answers to these questions will tell us where our focus _____—where our heart and mind is at. If we've died with Christ and have been raised to this new life, then our thoughts and desires should be focussed on _____ who is above and who is our all in all.

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:21)

Will you live for this world or the world to come?

WHY LAYING UP TREASURES ON EARTH IS WRONG

- It's just plain _____! We can't take our _____ with us into the world to come.
- It's _____ of the spiritual life and maturity, for the energy that keeps us focussed on “earthly things” will _____ us from drawing the energy that comes from seeking those things which are “above.”
- Trying to serve two masters is not only _____, but it will ultimately _____ us.

Concentration and focus on things above will keep us from establishing wrong _____ with things below.

The gospel is clear over and over again that following Jesus involves _____ of the most painful kind, and we must be prepared to deny ourselves everything for the sake of the _____ of God. This kind of determined insistence on spiritual mindedness is _____ at in our current culture just as it's always been.

Such a mind-set has been the one most _____ in changing this world for the better, and those whose hearts were most sensitive to earthly concerns and abuses were invariably of a _____ frame of mind.

Where is your heart and mind focussed?

Are you preoccupied more with earthly things or heavenly things?

#3. The _____ of spiritual maturity.

- We must engage in a _____ of our minds on the Lord Jesus Christ as He's revealed in Scripture.

Paul scoured the Hebrew Scriptures in search of Jesus, and discovered that everything he read untimely _____ to Him, and was foreshadowing, building up to, and _____ in His birth, life, death, and resurrection.

As He meditated on God's Word, Paul got to _____ Jesus better.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Colossians 3:16)

The most basic way to grow in grace and maturity is to _____ the Word of God, and to find in it, and on every page, God's _____ for sin and ruin in the gift of His Son, Jesus, for our _____.

- We need to understand that what goes in our mind _____ our whole life.

If we fully understand who God is and what He's done for us; if we fully understand the riches of God's _____, and who we are in Him—ransomed, healed restored, forgiven—God's masterpiece, His best work, His adopted sons and daughters and joint heirs with Christ; if our value, worth, and _____ is found in Him and in Him alone, we will _____ differently.

If we fail to understand this, Jesus will _____ into the background in our life and we won't _____ and mature.

What are you feeding on?

What role does Scripture play in your everyday life?

And how do you see yourself?

Is your identity in Christ and in Him alone?

†

“The Christian is called to be in the world but not of the world, and this requires a heavenly perspective on earthly matters.” (John Stott)

Where does your mind go when you're not thinking about anything in particular? What is your heart and mind focussed on?