



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

This is the Life

Preeminent. Christ's Place in the World | Part 11

Tim Badal | March 1, 2015 | Colossians 3:1-4



We are continuing in our series this week studying the book of Colossians, a New Testament book written by the Apostle Paul to a church going through a crisis and struggling to understand the true gospel. We've been investing our time in one particular theme: Preeminence. That is not a word we use very often; however, it is a word that expresses superiority, grandeur and greatness. In the first two chapters, we have learned that Jesus Christ is the Preeminent One because He rules with all authority, He created all things according to the power of His word and because, in Jesus Christ, the fullness of deity dwells bodily. We have been treading through deep waters, learning about Christology (the study of Who Jesus is).

As we open chapter three, it may seem that this study has been merely an exercise of the intellect. While we need to know these truths about Jesus, His preeminence isn't just a fact that affects the world in general; it affects our world as well. If we believe that Christ is the Preeminent One, the Great One and the One Who has no equals, then it should influence the way we live. We are going to see in chapters three and four exactly how Christ's preeminence affects the way that we live. It affects our marriages. It affects our parenting. It changes the way we pray. It changes the way we look at racism and how we judge other people. It will affect our evangelism. Christ's preeminence influences every facet of the Christ-follower's life.

Today we come to a passage that begins to tease out the practical implications of the theology that we've been learning about thus far. We will learn what a life that honors and praises God looks like. What are some of the benefits and blessings that come with a life like this? Here's what the text tells us:

If then 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. For 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.

The month of March has come, but as we look out our windows we see that it's still cold outside and we still have snow on the ground. So I wanted to know where we get the name for the month of March. I looked in the dictionary and it comes from an old Indian phrase that means, "Cold just like January." Many of you really despise this weather. It causes depression and struggle. You're just tired of it. Some of you are even threatening to get up and leave all your possessions and find someplace warm to live.

Some of you are living a life of utter despair. That's your life in a nutshell. Judging by your Facebook posts, you do not look happy. You do not look like you're living the life that God intended. You look miserable. You are tired of the dreary cold. Then someone, one of those people who will remain nameless, posts a picture of how they have left us in our despair and have gone to a better, warmer place. They will post pictures of themselves enjoying the sunshine and we hate them for it. They talk about their trip.

A friend of mine is currently enjoying this experience. Yesterday he posted, "I'm living the life. I'm living the dream." There was a part of me that longed for that kind of life. There is something about posts and pictures like that which say, "All is well. Things are going good." Nothing about them reminds me of below zero wind chills and snow. That is a life free of worry and care, trouble

and pain. When we look at pictures like this, we feel like we're missing out on something, like we're left in the cold. If you are anything like me, you'll be secretly praying for rain on those people.

Let's bring this into the spiritual realm. In the days of the Colossians, there were people who would point to spiritual ideals and say, "There's the life. You're not living the life unless you practice certain traditions and pursue certain knowledge." However, Paul tells us over and over again that what we need in this life is not a change in scenery to fix our problems; we need Jesus Christ. Because of this, believers need to recognize that we already have this life. We don't need anything external. We don't need anything more to create a booster shot of enjoyment for the life we have in Christ.

Chapters three and four will remind us that in Christ, we have all that we need to be all that God has called us to be. Paul brings up a question in chapter three that we have to answer for ourselves. If you are truly a follower of Jesus Christ, are you living the life that God wants you to live? Are there things that keep you from joy? Are there things sabotaging your peace and contentment?

Notice three things from this text. If you want to live the life that Christ promises, you must:

1. Recognize the setbacks that keep you from this life

Just because you call yourself a follower of Jesus Christ doesn't mean you're living the life that He calls you to live. You need to recognize the things that may be hindering you. To do this, you need to learn from the Colossians. By the time we get to chapter three, notice that the false teachers are done with. The heretics have been dealt with. The questions about Jesus are no more. Chapter three begins with a conditional clause that should cause us to stop and ponder where we are. It starts with three words: If, then, you. What am I talking about? Those three words should stop us in our tracks. They should cause us to evaluate our lives. *"If then you have been raised with Christ..."* Are you a follower of Jesus Christ today? Have you been raised with Him?

Some of you have bought into, just as the Colossians did, a kind of thinking that made you believe that you were in Christ, when in fact you were not. This thinking falls between two extremes:

Viewing your relationship as a license to sin

The first type of thinking that we've studied these last two weeks is viewing your relationship with Christ as a license to sin. The first group of false teachers that we studied was the Gnostics. The Gnostics believed that they possessed a superior spiritual knowledge. To them, all flesh was evil and only the spirit was good and useful for God. Because they believed that the flesh was bad, they didn't believe that Christ came in the flesh, but was an illusion of a spirit. Because we sin in the flesh, sin is also an illusion. Sin doesn't keep us from God, but is only an aspect of the physical body. They would say that sin was merely an illusion, therefore you can have a vibrant and healthy relationship with Jesus Christ and sin like crazy. That seems preposterous to us.

Yet, the Apostle John tells us that Gnosticism was also at work in the churches to whom he was writing. In the first letter he writes to the churches, he makes it abundantly clear that we are either in the light or in darkness. You cannot be in both. First John 1:6 says, *"If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."* You can't have fellowship with Christ and your sin. Gnostics believed that because sin was material, the individual couldn't be blamed for it. It was part of the physical flesh. Gnostics taught that to have fellowship with Christ meant that you could live any way that you wanted. Yet, they lived a lie.

There are gnostic undertones in 21st century Christianity. Here's how it plays itself out: There are people who claim the name of Christ who say, "At some point in the past, I made a decision about Jesus. At some point in the past, I was part of a service where I experienced some amazing things and my heart was warmed in a significant way. I prayed a prayer. I came forward at the altar call." However, from that point on, that person has lived with a brazen confidence that no matter what they do, they have their fire insurance. This is why countless surveys say that many people who profess a relationship with Jesus Christ don't have lives to match. These people have bought into the lies of Gnosticism. They believe that they can have a relationship with Jesus and have a relationship with their sin. Paul says, "If then you have been raised with Christ, your life will look very different. It won't look different because of some external experience, but because God is at work in you as you work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Philippines 2:12). He will meet you in that place, in that moment, and empower you to live differently because you have been raised with Christ.

This is the first extreme. Is this what defines you? "I can have Christ and my sin." Or, do you look at your life in Christ the second way?

Viewing your relationship as a set of legal stipulations

Do you view your life in God as a set of legal stipulations? On the other side of the spectrum, there were people who came out of Judaism and still held on to its practices. They had a background in the Old Testament understanding of God and His prophets. They merged this understanding with Christendom. They believed that to be a follower of Jesus Christ, they needed to practice the Old Testament Law. "You can eat this, but not that. You can touch this, but don't touch that. Celebrate this day, not that one. You can practice this, but not that." There were countless lists and fences to ensure that no one broke the Law.

Perhaps today your life in Christ isn't determined by a license to sin, but perhaps you think your life in Christ is determined by what you do and don't do. You compare yourself to those around you. You think that you are a follower of Christ because you are at church, or because you give, or because you serve. You place your personal standard of holiness on everyone around you. If they don't do what you are doing, they aren't spiritual.

These people look at the license-to-sin people and think, "Wow, you've really messed up this whole Christianity thing." Yet, if legalists are honest with themselves, they know that they haven't been living up to God's standard. We put people in boxes that even we wouldn't be comfortable with. We live a life that doesn't delight in following God, but a life that sees obedience as a duty. It becomes drudgery. We obey because we have to and we think that it will accomplish something.

If these two extremes are wrong and won't lead you to a life in Christ, where do you find this life? Paul answers that question in:

Loving and living for the Savior

If you have been raised with Christ, you will look progressively more like Christ in every area of your life. This won't happen because you have to, but because it will become a reality. You are a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Paul reminds us that the Christian life means loving our Savior and living for Him.

Colossians 3:4 says, "*When Christ who is your life...*" Can you say that today? Can you say that Christ is your life? It is easy to "amen" this statement here in church, isn't it? It is really easy to say, "Yes. Jesus is my life. He is my hope of glory." When we're at church, it is easy to agree, but when you get home and turn on the computer, or the television, or when you open that book, is Christ really your life? Or is something else your life? When you spend your money, is Christ your life? In your relationships, is Christ really your life or is something else? When I test myself like that, I realize that I make myself my life, not Christ.

To put this in perspective, we can start following Christ like we live life with our family. I love my family, my wife and my children. I could say, "Because I love them and they love me and we have this unbreakable bond, because I know that I'm safe and secure, then I don't have to work hard at this relationship. I don't have to try to love my wife and my children. I just have to do the bare minimum. Even the bare minimum is up to me. My spouse isn't going to leave me. I can do whatever I want. I'll only do what makes me feel good. They can just come along for the ride." This is how we live when we give sin license in our lives because we know that we are secure in Christ.

On the other hand I could say, "Well, I need to love my family. I don't feel like loving my family, but that's what husbands do. When my spouse needs stuff done, I'm going to do it. I don't want to do it, but I will do it because that's what husbands are supposed to do. When my sons ask me to play with them or engage with them, I'll do it, but only because I'm checking off my list the things I need to do as a father. That's what fathers do. They spend time with their kids. I don't like it. I don't want to be part of their lives, but I'll do it because I have to."

There is a third response. You could say, "Because I see the infinite value of my wife and my children and the blessing they are, even though I want to be selfish, there is no greater thing for me than to love them because they are a gift from God.

That's what Paul is saying here. Once you take your eyes off yourself and put your eyes on your Savior, recognizing what Christ has done and the infinite worth and value of Him, it will change the way you look at life. If then you have been raised with Christ (3:1), are you living the life that Christ has made available and possible for you? Or, are you taking grace for granted? Are you making this relationship a duty and not a delight? Is Jesus your life? You need to ask yourself these questions.

2. Remember the substance of this life

According to Colossians 2:17, anything you do that isn't Christ-centered is merely a shadow of the substance. The shadows can have some value, but they will never have the ability to give you life in Christ. If you are trying to live your life apart from Christ, you are playing around in the shadows when you could have the real deal. The earth and everything that is in it longs to show you through a powerful smoke and mirrors show that they are merely shadows. The life that you long for, the heart that you have for true vibrancy and vitality is only found in Christ. Things in this world are only shadows. Do you want an abundant life? You must have Jesus.

What does Jesus do to make this life possible? Once we get beyond these roadblocks, we need to remember that Jesus is the substance of our life. He is our life. How did He become our life? In Colossians 3:1, Paul says that we have a DNA code as followers of Jesus Christ that is found in the phrase: *"you have been raised with Christ."* Think about this for a moment. As a believer, there isn't much of a difference at a surface level between you and an unbelieving friend. You dress similarly. You mow the lawn the same way. You both paint your houses. You do the laundry the same way. Your lives aren't all that different in the public sphere. How do you know that you are following Christ? How do you know that you have the substance and not the shadow? You know that your life is in Christ because of your:

Identity

Have you identified in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Following Jesus Christ isn't about some external ritual or tradition. It's about being raised with Him. Being raised with Christ implies three things:

1. You acknowledge that you are dead. It implies a knowledge of your death. Paul addresses this a couple of different ways in Colossians. He tells us that we are living in the domain of darkness (Colossians 1:13); we are alienated from God (Colossians 1:21); and now, in Colossians 3:3, we have died. Paul isn't talking about a physical death here. He's talking about a spiritual death (Ephesians 2:5). We are dead in our trespasses and sin, but God has made us alive. To be raised with Christ must by implication mean that you believe that you were dead in your sin. Do you honestly believe this? Do you believe that your sin has caused you to die a spiritual death? The world would not agree with you. When I talk with unbelievers who admit they are not that good, they also think they're not that bad. If I tell them that they are dead in their sin, they don't believe me. They say, "I'm not like Saddam Hussein or Adolf Hitler. I'm not that bad. I don't need Jesus; I just need to fix some things up in my life." So the world tells us that the way to clean ourselves up is through reform school or adopting healthier habits. It means not being as mean to others. However, the Christian believes that there is no amount of reformation that could fix sin. They say, "I am dead as a doornail spiritually and there is nothing good in me before a Holy God." You must recognize that if you are going to be raised with Christ, you must understand first that you are dead.
2. You know Who Christ is. If you are raised, you agree with the Scriptures that Jesus was Messiah and that Jesus truly died for your sins. You don't need a Savior if you're not dead; you would only need to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. However, if you're dead, you need Someone Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). You need a Savior. You need a living Person to come and breathe life into you so that you can have a relationship with God. Being raised with Christ means, "I know I'm dead. I know I need a Savior. Jesus is the One."
3. You no longer live like a dead man. If you say that you have been raised with Christ, you cannot say that you have a license to sin. You cannot live however you want because that's how you lived when you were dead. You have to put sin to death. You can't live that way anymore.

Our identity in Christ needs to make an impact on our every decision. Paul identifies who we were, Who Christ is and what He has done for us. This is our past. Paul then moves to our present security.

Security

How do you know that you will have newness of life? How will you know that Jesus will take care of you? Paul says in Colossians 3:3, *"you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."* One of the reasons why living with Christ is abundant life is because we have security. We have peace. We are safe and sound. Some of you are preparing for the future financially. You may go to an advisor and say, "If I give you my money, will you promise me that when I retire, that money will be there in extra measure?" That person will say, "I think so. Here's the basis for that: if we diversify your accounts and take a long view of the stock market, we

hope that you will come out with more money than what you started with. I will do my very best to make sure that you are secure." However, the financial advisor can't guarantee security.

Jesus guarantees our security. Our life is hidden in Christ. That means that we don't have to fear tribulation or the ups and downs of the stock market. We don't have to fear trials and bad medical reports. We don't have to fear temptations and what will happen if we fall into sin. As the Early Church Fathers said, "We are Christ bearers." Everywhere we go, because we're hidden in Christ, Christ goes with us. It speaks of an intimacy, a closeness, that Christ is with us every step of the way.

American Express used to have this advertising slogan: "We're everywhere you want to be." Here's the problem: I am an American Express card holder and I can't tell you how many times I try to use that card and I'm told, "We do not accept American Express." It sounds good, looks good, but the promise falls on deaf ears.

Here's what Jesus says: "You are hidden with Me. That means I am everywhere you go. I am available to you in every circumstance." How can I know that for sure? How can I trust Jesus and know that He is speaking the truth? Look at what Paul says: "*Your life is hidden with Christ in God.*" That is a massive theological statement. It is huge. We, as followers of Jesus Christ, are as secure in our standing in the family of God as Jesus is in His position in the Trinity. Just as Christ is hidden in God and will forever have a place of authority and oneness with the Father and the Spirit, so we will be secure. We are hidden in Christ in the same way. We don't have to worry about life. We don't have to worry about our circumstances.

What does your relationship with Christ have to do with the middle of your week? With the myriad of details and decisions that you must make? With the events that you have to face on a Tuesday? How do you know that Christ will give you all that you need? How can you know that your life and your family and your work and your relationships and your circumstances are in Christ's capable hands? How do you know that when you put the "Christ card" down, it won't say "declined"?

Paul settles our fear. We have been raised with Christ, Who is seated at the right hand of the Father (Colossians 3:1). Christ is seated in the heavenly realms. "Seated at the right hand" describes a place of authority. Jesus sits at the right hand, not because He's playing musical chairs, but because God the Father has placed Him in a place of authority. If you are hidden in Christ, then the One in Whom you are hidden and Who holds your life in His hands carries all authority. You don't have to worry about rulers and authorities, the devil and sin, and the circumstances of life. You have a God Who loves you and has hidden you in the palm of His hand. No one can snatch us out of that grasp (John 10:22-30). You are in His hand.

Christ is "*seated*" on the throne. That's important. You don't see Jesus frantically running around heaven saying, "Oh dear, what are we going to do?" Jesus isn't wondering what to do with ISIS. He is still seated on His throne as He was before and as He will be forever. No doubt we all have issues that leave us pacing our bedroom floors. "What will I do with this? What will I do about that?" Jesus is not pacing the heavenly floor wondering what He will do. Jesus is with us and He will take care of everything for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). We have a God Who knows the past, the present and the future. He has it all under control. We don't have to worry or fret; we just need to walk with Him.

Past — we're dead and He's taken care of that. Present — we are hidden with Christ, along with all of the circumstances of life. Now there is a future.

Destiny

Colossians 3:4, "*When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*" Words are important. Paul does not use the word "if" here. "[If] *Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*" He says, "when." Acts 17:31 says that there is a day appointed for Christ's return. That day hasn't been changed because of your circumstances. That day hasn't changed because you blew it yesterday. The day is set. God has appointed that day and He says that it will come. Paul now says, "Put your hope in that day. Put your trust in that day. Live today differently because of that day."

You might think, "But life is really hard. It's full of blood, sweat and tears. It is agony! How can the prospect of a future promise help me get through the tyranny of today?" Consider the example of women who have had children. They endure so many struggles throughout pregnancy. Then at the finish line, it really gets difficult. At that moment they may ask the question, "Is this all worth it?" Then the child arrives and the struggles are forgotten. Fairly soon after having our first child, my wife Amanda said, "Let's have another one." My response was, "Why would you want to do that? You went through so much pain and suffering! Think about yourself. I was a witness to how hard it was for you. I struggled with you." Why would she want another one so quickly? Because the end result was worth the present suffering.

The Christian life is hard, but the hope of Christ's return is an impetus for us to say no to the things of the flesh. Why should you say no? Because there is a day coming. God has appointed a day. When He comes, we who are in Him will appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4). There are no words that can express how awesome that day will be. Anything I use to describe it will seem insufficient compared to that moment when we stand and see Jesus Christ face to face in all of His glory. On that day, if you bow the knee to Jesus and you get nothing more than your salvation — meaning that everything else in this temporal world has fallen apart — you will stand and look at Jesus and say, "It was all worth it." When we look at our suffering in that way, putting our sins to death is worth it. Denying pleasures is worth it. Denying popularity is worth it. Not pursuing prestige is worth it. It is all worth it in the end because we have One Who makes everything right.

John Ortberg put it this way in his book, *Faith and Doubt*:

There are things in our world that will always disappoint, but Christ never does. We do not hope that circumstances will have changed when we wake up tomorrow. Rather, as Christians, we have hope in the One Who is in control of those circumstances.

Jesus says that the past is taken care of. The present is taken care of. The future is taken care of. What should we do? As followers of Jesus Christ, should we sit back in our sunny vacation spots and do nothing? No. We must respond.

3. Respond by taking steps toward this life

How do we get there? Christ has done all the work for us. In order to experience it, however, we need to make some conscious decisions. There is a response that must take place. Colossians 3:1 says, "*Seek the things that are above.*" Colossians 3:2 says, "*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*" Christ is our life (Colossians 3:4) and you need to make that true for your own life. How do you do that? Respond by making Jesus preeminent. This life is available through Christ when you:

Stop hanging around the graveyard

If you have been raised from the grave, you are no longer dead but alive. Dead people live one way; living people live a different way. A person who has been born again in Christ sets his gaze toward heaven. Living people set their minds, not on themselves and things of this earth, but on the things of the Lord. You cannot live the way that you used to live. You must put those things to death.

However, sometimes Christians play this game. Though we're alive in Christ, we hang around the places and play the games of the dead. As children, we used to sneak into Zombie movies every Saturday night. These movies were usually black and white. For some reason the generation before us was really into zombies and the zombies of yesteryear were grotesque figures. Their clothes were ratty. If you remember "Night of the Living Dead," you'll remember how they walked weird. They were half alive, half dead. The last thing a kid would say was, "I want to be a zombie! That looks really great." They stammer, they mutter and there's just nothing coherent going on there.

Have you noticed how Hollywood has shifted things? Have you noticed that zombies are the cutest guys and girls out there? They have it all together. They're not stammering. They're not muttering. They're the real deal. They look like they're enjoying life. We have soap operas and books written about these zombies. If you think that a zombie can be pretty, then you lose what Paul is telling you. Paul describes a picture of fullness and completeness in Christ. The last thing you would want to do is look like a crazy zombie. That is idiocy. Why would you want to go from being alive and full in Jesus Christ to the life of a zombie?

Here's what we do. We leave church and feel alive. Then we turn on the TV. We go on the Internet. We go on our phone. We hang around the zombies. We think, "I can still look good. I can still have the life. I can still have some fun. I don't have to treat my wife or my kids in a Christ-like way. I can treat them like a dead person would treat them. I can make their lives brutal and still think that I have good relationships. I can treat my boss with disrespect. I don't have to live in a Christ-like way; I can live like a zombie and still clean myself up for church." If you are alive in Christ, it will change everything about you. One of the things in which you should see change is a disdain for hanging around the graveyard.

Paul uses extreme terminology. We need to kill our sin. We need to put it to death. If you don't kill it, it will kill you. Some of you are playing around the graveyard right now. You need to stop. You've been raised with Christ.

Submit to Christ's rule in all things

Paul says, "...seek the things that are above" (Colossians 3:1). What does that mean? What is above? It is Christ Who is above, seated at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1). The false teachers said that you didn't need to make Christ preeminent; He could be a secondary thing. We all do this if we're not careful. We become our own god and Christ becomes some deodorant that we put on to mask the smell of death. Christ is not a secondary thing. He is our all-in-all. He is the One to Whom all rulers and authorities will bow the knee.

What does it mean to always seek the things that are above? The verb there means keep seeking and when you're done seeking, keep seeking some more. What should you seek? The rule and reign of Christ in your life. Every decision that you make should be funneled through the One seated upon the throne. Young person, when thinking about college, ask God, "What college should I go to?" When you're thinking about getting married, ask God, "Am I ready for marriage? Whom should I marry?" Ask Jesus how you should treat your family and how you should spend your money. Every time a decision needs to be made, funnel it through the authority and lordship of Jesus Christ.

You want to live the life that Christ wants to give you? You need to live it on His terms. This is why Paul says in Colossians 3:17, "*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*" Every decision you make — if you really want this life — has to be made with Christ's authority in mind.

Savor the right things

Finally, Paul leads us from seeking to setting our mind on things above. This is a habitual action. You need to always be setting your mind on heavenly things rather than earthly things. Colossians 3:2 says, "*Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*" The King James Version says, "Set your affections on things that are above." We need to be careful not to let the world define what we need and what we want.

Last year I read an article about the amount of food that we consume. Twenty years ago we consumed only half as much food as we do today. Did you know that? It's crazy. Somewhere in the late '90s, our stomachs went through a metamorphosis and expanded. We needed more food, right? No. Nothing changed physiologically. Advertising started telling us what we needed and wanted. At some point in the burger war, we were content with one patty. This turned into two patties. Then someone introduced the triple-cheeseburger. Then we were glad when we got the quarter-pounder. A couple of weeks ago I was down in Dallas and I saw a billboard for a burger that has five patties. It's the leaning tower of burger. I am all for a burger-induced coma, but what makes us think that we need all of that?

The world tells us that we aren't full until we have all of this. It tells us that we need to be stuffed full. If you are hungry, you will fall for this lie every time. This extends beyond the realm of food. The world will say, "You are the boss. We want to give you what you need. This is what we believe you need. We will fill you up. We will keep filling you up." This is why when you go to the convenience store, the 20 ounce cup is the smallest one there. Twenty years ago, that was the largest size. At my local store they introduced a 72 ounce cup. Why do we need 72 ounces? We don't need it. Our stomachs don't need it. The advertisers say that we need it.

The world isn't merely advertising for physical things. From a spiritual perspective they say, "This is what you need to be whole. This is what you need to be happy. This is what you need to be content." If you are not tasting and seeing that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8), if you aren't setting your affections on Him (Colossians 3:2), you will fall for this every time. Jesus has changed us. He has made us new.

What do we need to do this week?

1. Seek God
2. Set our affections on Him
3. Savor the right things
4. Submit to His rule
5. Stop hanging around the graveyard

In order for that to happen, Christ must be preeminent. What things need to be knocked down for this to happen? Take a moment to ask yourself, "What things are preeminent in my life right now? What things have first place? If I have been raised

with Christ, if He is number one, I need to get rid of some things.” If you don’t prepare yourself for that, next week will be ugly. Unless the Spirit opens your eyes, when God tells you to put things to death, you will fight Him every step of the way.

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