

SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE



PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24 NIV // JOHN 20:1-18 NIV

MONDAY 4/10/23

PSALM 118:1-2, 14-24 NRSV // 1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! 118:2 Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

COLOSSIANS 3:1-11 NLT // 1 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand.

REFLECTION Last week was Holy Week, ending on Easter Sunday. Those 8 days changed the world as we know it today. It changed because as faith in Christ grew, people turned their backs on a pagan society to a Christ-centered society. This happened through the transformation of one person at a time. These people infiltrated hundreds of countries, resulting in a Western Christian society. The text Colossians 3:1 says, "So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God". Being raised with Christ means you have accepted these following truths: 1. You have submitted your life to the authority of God, your Creator. 2. You have accepted the truth that you have sinned and have caused others to sin against God. 3. You desire to confess your sins and ask God's forgiveness. A common prayer goes like this, "Lord Jesus I confess I am a sinner and ask now for your forgiveness. Please set me free from the bondage of sin. By accepting Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, all our past, present and future sins have been forgiven. Not only that, God grants us the gift of eternal life. An eternal life with Christ is wonderful! The gates of Heaven have been flung open for those in Christ. We have crossed over from death, the curse of sin, to eternal life.

PRAYER: Thank you Lord for being so loving and gentle with me. I know I don't deserve your forgiveness, but that is what makes you such a loving, awesome God. In Jesus Name Amen

TUESDAY 4/11/23

PSALM 118:14-16 // 14 The LORD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. 15 There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the LORD does valiantly; 16 the right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly."

COLOSSIANS 3:1-11 // 2 Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. 3 For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.

REFLECTION The first thing to notice is that the right hand of God is not confined to Heaven, but instead fills the whole world. Heaven and earth are all parts of God's Holy Kingdom. As Christians we live in the current of God's Kingdom, and we look forward to living eternally in the coming Kingdom. Jesus Christ surrounds us now by His power of love; so much so that we may not think there is much distance between us. Christ calls to us to carry our minds upwards to Himself, even as the darkness tries to draw us downwards. For the service of Christ's death has caused our inward hearts to be dead to darkness by not participating in those deeds. The resurrection of Christ has raised up our hearts up towards our heavenly blessings. We can never fully leave behind our current reality with its everyday activities. But we can take moments of meditation to seek things that are above. As we take these steps, our fears are replaced with a heavenly joy,

PRAYER: Upward, I shall keep my eyes upon you and let your holiness fill me and light me up when the darkness creeps in. I shall show your light to others. In Jesus Name Amen

WEDNESDAY 4/12/23

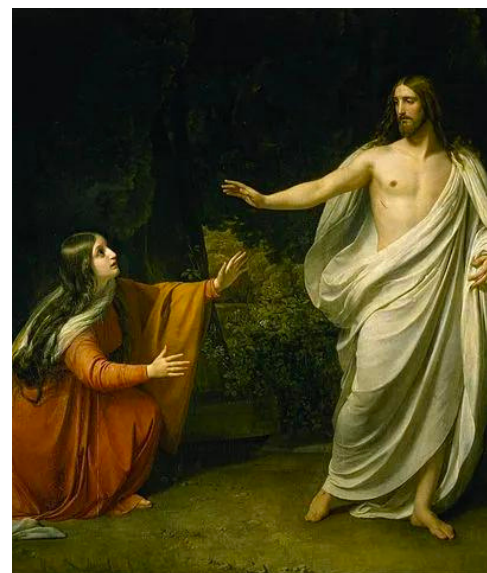
PSALM 118:17 // 18 I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD. 18 The LORD has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death.

COLOSSIANS 3:1-11 // 4 And when Christ, who is your[life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. 5 So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

REFLECTION On Easter morning, God revealed His plan of renewing the lives of His most precious possession. He provides for every human being eternal life through the resurrection of His Son. This truth ought to lift up our minds towards heavenly desires.. Death no longer has a sting. The curse of sin and separation from God's love has been restored. Now, every tongue is invited to confess and bow down to Christ. When Jesus Christ first rose from the grave

His appearance exhibited this new life. What is this new life in Christ like? What does it mean for us today? In Christ's resurrection we obtain an opportunity to have a higher knowledge of life; I dare say a 'new kind of human being'. Before the resurrection, our awkwardness and shameful living by the flesh was our only alternative. When Christ returned from the dead He made us alive in God. Our corrupted nature made us all idolaters who worship the material things of this world. Now as God's chosen people, our aim is to mortify those vices which held us in chains. Now in Christ these earthly vices are vigorously subdued by the heavenly work of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER: I will gladly die to self as you have died for me. I look to you as my heavenly example and see the way to live. You fill my soul with your light and love. In Jesus Name Amen



THURSDAY 4/13/23

PSALM 118:19-21 // 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. 20 This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. 21 I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

COLOSSIANS 3:1-11 // 6 Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.[b] 7 You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. 8 But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 9 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.

REFLECTION Even though this world holds us down, the gates of righteousness are open to us, freeing us to embrace God's eternal grace. The Spirit helps strip away our old nature. We hear a lot about the wrath of God from Old Testament stories. God's threats are designed to show us the punishment for those who deny His love. As for me, God's anger about sin and abuse remind me of when I was against God and when my unbelief prevented God's grace to flow upon me. God would rather we see His wrath upon the villains in this world, than to feel it ourselves. When the promises of God's grace are set before us, we ought to embrace and desire to be surrounded by it. Now is the time to be rid of anger and slanderous living. Now is the time to cease these vices of the flesh. Let's willfully accept God's loving power to extinguished the desire to sin. There is a saying, "put the old man down," which means put off the old vices and be renewed by Christ. We are new people renewed by the Spirit of Christ to have obedience and integrity. Set your mind on being renewed to a new human being.

PRAYER: I lay my excuses at the alter Lord, I know that living in this world has it's vices but I will not let this world control me. You have left me a helper, the Holy Spirit and I will seek him daily. In Jesus Name Amen

FRIDAY 4/14/23

PSALM 118: 22 // The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. 23 This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

COLOSSIANS 3:1-11 // 10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.

FRIDAY 4/14/23 CONTINUED

REFLECTION On Easter, I reflect on my own faith journey. As I began to live with Jesus I heard about this verse; “put on your new nature”. Frankly, I thought it was impossible. When I tried harder and harder to be like Him, I failed and it seemed impossible. My habits were horrible, my mind ran wild and I sinned more than I wanted to believe. 'Putting on' Christ was not only difficult it made me evaluate my character and what made me tick. Everyone who comes to faith in Christ will struggle and have doubts. The only thing I did right was make a promise to myself never to leave Jesus again. In other words, no matter how foolish I behaved, no matter what dumb thing I did, I would not abandon my faith. There were many Sunday mornings I wanted to stay in bed, but then one Monday morning my life changed. I had nothing to do because I was abruptly unemployed. So I made a cup of coffee and sat down to study the Bible. After a few weeks, I found I liked being with Jesus more than being with people. During these early days, my daily readings would send my heart and mind to soar toward heaven. I felt the Spirit enriching my world with wisdom and truth. As I stayed focused and connected, I discovered God's "one way love" (meaning He first loved me). His grace could not be earned, it could only be accepted. God poured out His grace in Jesus Christ just for me. I was overwhelmed to discover this love filled the void in my life. I still believe you cannot love yourself or others until you have first been *truly* loved. It is exactly what every human being is seeking. It changed everything. God was no longer mad at me. God turned from a rule-giver in my life to a loving God pouring out blessing upon blessing. That is what I mean when I say, "let your mind soar to heaven this Easter." God's "one way love" has come for us. Putting on our new nature is really just accepting God's love and knowing He will never take it away.

PRAYER: Let Him love you, don't deny Him, and when you do, you will be overflowing and want to share his love with others. Thank you Lord for being patient with me and pouring your love out on me. In Jesus Name Amen

SATURDAY 4/15/23

PSALM 118:24 This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

COLOSSIANS 3:1-11 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized[d] slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

REFLECTION Some people say Christians are racist, which is not true. Born from above, Christians clearly understand the Bible teaches there is no racism. That is because we who have humbled ourselves before God and accepted Christ are united into one body. No longer is a person a Greek, no longer a Roman, no longer a Sythians, but all are raised up together into one body. As I turn my mind towards Heaven, I am reminded of this powerful truth. The image of God resides in Christ and Christ resides in me. Therefore, in our souls we are engraved into the body of Christ and are now the image of God in the world. When I think about that, it changes everything. It changes my will, my desires, my life and all my relationships. In Christ, our lives are regenerated to be made in the likeness of God. Does that shock you? It does me. The glory of Jesus is in us and it is to shine outward. Adam and Eve were created in the image of God. They sinned and tainted that image. Christ restores that image. So we, in a spiritual context, are now recreated in the image of God. That blows my mind. We are unified by the Holy Spirit, strengthen by the Spirit, held together by the Spirit. When I lift my mind and heart up towards heaven, I soar. I sometimes laugh and dance, and other times I shudder in awe. When Jesus sets us free, we are free indeed. The spiritual righteousness of Christ draws in us and confirms us and that is the power of God's 'one way love'

PRAYER: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us of our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.



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