

The Glory of His Name (Colossians 3:17-4:1)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (March 30, 2014)

Introduction

1. The duty section before us (Col. 3:18—4:6) needs some explanation before we continue to take it apart.
 - a. In reviewing last Sunday's message, I realized I neglected to discuss the nature of duty.
 - b. If that piece is missing, we are in danger of misunderstanding the text and misapplying it to life.
2. Verse-by-verse exposition, although the best way to preach the Bible, has one particular danger.
 - a. In focusing on the words of a particular verse, we may lose its connection to the central purpose of the writer.
 - b. We must always ask, "What does the verse contribute to the author's main theme—the reason that he wrote what he wrote?"
3. This section (3:18—4:6) contains specific duties that believers are to attend to with diligence.
 - a. They are *duties*, but beware of the trap.
 - b. We are inclined to think wrongly about duty because we get caught up in the mere performance of and reason for our doing it.

I. Duty: Right and Wrong

1. Wrong thinking about duty
 - a. We live in a culture that teaches us that success in duty shapes *who we are*. It is "me"-centered.
 - b. Transferring this philosophy to our faith. As believers we ought to want to please the Lord. If we do right, He is pleased and will love us. If we fail, He is displeased and will punish us.
 - c. Example: a wife's duty to submit to her husband
2. The error of duty for duty's sake
 - a. Duty for duty's sake is nothing but *legalism*.
 - 1) Colossians 2:20 addresses the legalism issue.
 - 2) If we can be right with God and maintain that relationship through duty-faith, there is no need for Christ.
 - b. What does the gospel teach us about duty?
 - 1) First, duties should inform us of *who* the Lord is.
 - 2) Second, duties inform us of our own weakness.
 - c. The Lord is *holy*, demanding the *perfection* that He is. He is *jealous*, settling for no less than perfection in His creatures. I am weak and failing; why does He want me to obey directives that are impossible for me to do? The simple answer is *for the glory of Jesus*.

II. His Name, His Glory

1. The purpose of the gospel of salvation: *to reveal the greatness of Jesus Christ*
"Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather and deliver us from among the nations, that [purpose clause] we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise" (1 Chron. 16:35).

- a. Does He save us so that we may be successful and admired? No, what He does is *for Him to be admired*.
- b. It is “Christ in you” that is the “hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). Because of Him, we are *complete in Him*.
- c. Christ is our life, a new life hidden in Him (Col. 3:3, 4).
 - 1) Jesus does not help us live our old life better. Jesus is not interested in reforming the old man; He put it to death (Col. 3:3).
 - 2) The Lord does not need our *service per se*.
 - a) We can contribute nothing to His kingdom.
 - b) Our service to Him is to know Him (Phil. 3:8, 10), worship Him (John 4:38; Heb. 1:6), and submit to His will for us (Eph. 5:24).
 - 3) He is to live out *His life* through our new life.
 - a) He lives in us by His Spirit to transform us little by little (Phil. 3:21).
 - b) The process of that transformation: “*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.*” (2 Cor. 3:18).
- 2. The power of the gospel of salvation: beholding His glory by fixing our minds on things above (3:1, 2)
 - a. In this way we realize our total dependence upon Him.
 - 1) “*Without [Christ] [I] can do nothing,*” but “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens [enables] me*” (John 15:5; Phil. 4:13).
 - 2) The glory of the gospel is that “*we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us*” (2 Cor. 4:7).
 - b. By seeing His power alive and at work in us, our response is thankfulness and praise. Solomon encouraged Israel, “*Save us, O God of our salvation . . . that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.*”
 - c. We are not to focus on performing duties through our weak and faltering efforts but to rejoice in His power to transform our lives in those duties (Rom. 15:13).
 - 1) The Lord is not seeking my often-grudging submission. He is after my joy (John 15:11). Seeking Him in everything brings me fullness of joy. Doing all things in His name is an awesome experience of overwhelming satisfaction.
 - 2) This pursuit begins with an honest and humble confession of my utter inability coupled with a firm, confident trust in His ability (Phil. 9:8).
 - “*Christ is all*” (Col. 3:11).