

Dead, Raised, Ascended in Him

By Shawn Reynolds

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Colossians 3:1-3

Preached on: Sunday, April 8, 2012

Grace Particular Baptist Church

5725 Imperial Lakes Blvd

Mulberry, FL 33860

Website: www.graceparticularbaptist.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/graceparticular

Let us begin in prayer.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, how excellent is thy name this morning, Lord. I pray that thou would come and fill our souls with thy goodness and thy love. Awaken us, Lord, from our deadness. Show us, oh Lord, show thy people this morning that thou art risen. Lord, may you be a present reality in our life today and, Lord, may you reveal all that thou art to thy children, what thou hast done, what you are for us each day of our lives. And, Lord, may you be glorified. I ask, Lord, thy anointing upon this message that thou would bring it forth in thy power with thy clarity and for thy name. And, Lord, that you are glorified. May you, Lord, send thy Spirit now to awaken us and to open our hearts and to give us an understanding of these realities, Lord, with whether they be in us or not and, Lord, may you testify to the souls of thy people this day that thou are the one true and living God. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

This morning I would like to go straight to our text which will be in Colossians three, the first three verses, where the apostle Paul he wrote a lot in all of his letters, he wrote about the resurrection of Christ. And, you know, when he was put on trial, he went before one Felix. He went before Festus. And he went before Agrippa. He was put on trial for his belief in the resurrection. He was told that a lot of learning had made him mad from the things that he would testify that Christ was dead and rose from the dead and he lived for his people. And for that Paul was put through much persecution of mouth. And then one would say he would almost be a Christian for what Paul said. You almost persuaded me to be a Christian.

This morning my prayer for you as we come to this passage, as we examine, Lord willing, if the Lord is pleased this morning to send his power to your soul, to examine your life in light of these three verses. We begin this morning in chapter three verse one.

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. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.¹

¹ Colossians 3:1-3.

In these three very short verses Paul has three essential realities for the child of God. And that is the question before us this morning. He begins this section with, “If ye...” It is almost like an examination. And there is three things in here that are real realities to the child of God. The death, the resurrection and the ascension of Christ are all found in these three verses. Today so many people will flock into the churches to hear the greatest story every told. And it will be a moving experience. I have sat through many of those in my life. I have seen people walk up and down aisles carrying crosses. I have been to sunrise services where there is three crosses put up and when the sun... and they are very moving experiences. And they can be emotional experiences and they are for many people today and many people will be just like Agrippa and say, “You have almost persuaded me to believe,” or even go as far as saying, “Yes, I believe in this historical event.”

But is that belief the belief of a child of God? Because at the end of the day, or not even at the end of the day at the end of the message emotion only takes you so far, because emotion will run out. But for the child of God, as Paul writes here, there are three realities. They are realities in the life of the child of God and it is not just today where the world has said today we will worship and we will pronounce the resurrection of Christ and then next week we will go back on to whatever it is that we are getting to. But in the child of God’s life, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ and the ascension of Christ is a reality in every day. And there is a reason for that. And that is what I hope we will examine this morning in light of these three verses.

So I am not going to start in the order of the verses, but we are going to start in the way that it falls out in God’s providence which would be with them. And that is verse three.

“For ye are dead.”²

What a statement Paul makes. Paul, writing to the believers here said:

“For ye are dead.”³

I wonder how many of us this morning as we got up if we had any thoughts that he is not here, he is risen and then our thoughts maybe went to, I am risen with Christ. Have you ever thought that you are dead with Christ? Have you ever stopped to think about what Paul means here?

“For ye are dead.”⁴

We shrink away from that term. We curl up when we hear that term. We are scared of that term.

“For ye are dead.”⁵

² Colossians 3:3.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Death scares us. Death is in our carnal minds it is a finality. But as you will see today it is actually the beginning. And Paul says:

“For ye are dead.”⁶

What is he talking about? What are we dead to? And that is the examination this morning. What are you dead to? Are you dead to anything?

Well, the first place we will look—and I am just going to read these. As I said, I have printed out a lot of them here. It is in Galatians 6:14. Paul says this:

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”⁷

Paul says a remarkable statement. He said, “Because my glory is only in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, if I am to glory I glory in the Lord and my glory as I look, as the Lord has opened the heavens it is in the cross.” Why in this piece of wood/ What is so important about this piece of wood that we will get to in just a moment? But Paul is not exalting the piece of wood. He is exalting the work that Christ did on the cross his death. And in his death Christ that day died to all the world. It was finished with the world. It is finished was one of those things. When Christ said, “It is finished,”⁸ that was his ... he was done dealing with the world’s persecutions, with the world’s allurements, with everything that was in the world. Can you say the same this morning? Are you dead to the world?

Paul said, “I am dead to the world. I have ... by whom the world is crucified unto me. When I see my Savior, when the heavens are opened unto me, I see him on the cross and the Lord impresses upon me his death. And what is that meaning to me?”

It means that I am dead to the world. I am dead to the pull of the world. I am dead to the allurements of the world. I am dead to all of the shiny things in the world. I am dead to the world having dominion over me. And we say, “Well, wait a minute. We stumble so much with the things in this world.” True, we do. Because we are fallen man, because we do have this old man that is carried around with us, because we do have this warfare. But are you dead to the world? Is it something that you... the things in this world that you have to have? Do you... is your whole life wrapped up in the things of this world, the events in this world, the goings on in this world? Are your feet so clutched in this world that you can’t live without it?

And isn’t that one of the things that makes us so scared about death as we are passing from this world? And that is a scary thing. It is a scary thing to our flesh. Here are things

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Galatians 6:14.

⁸ John 19:30.

we don't want to leave behind. There are people we don't want to leave behind. There are things in this world we believe that we are put here to do. And we don't want to leave them behind either.

But Paul said, "In the cross I glory, because I see that my Lord was crucified and because he was crucified, the world is crucified unto me."

And that is our first reality of:

"For ye are dead."⁹

Is it a reality to you? Are you dead to this world? Has this world got its hooks in you so much that when the world reacts you are shaken? You are so shaken because your foundation is this world and it is not Jesus Christ. And Christ being crucified to this world and crucified as he was, going first which we will see later, as the first fruit. When Christ all he did for his children, his children will come after and experience also. That is the first question this morning. Are we dead to the world?

For Paul to say this:

"For ye are dead."¹⁰

Can you identify with it? Is it a present reality that you are dead? We all walk around and have pulses and have life in this world. That is not what we are talking about. We are not talking about the physical things. We are not talking about the historical event today. We are not talking about what everyone will get together to exalt today. We are talking about Christ. We are talking about what he has done for his people. And is it a present reality to you that you have been weaned and deadened to this world?

So that is our first question.

But then Paul said in Romans 7:9:

"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."¹¹

Paul spoke about this death then. Well, we know that he is writing now. So we know it wasn't a physical death, then. What did Paul die to that day? What was he talking about when the Lord's holiness of his commandment came and said, "Thou are the man who has sinned"? Have you ever died this way? Have you ever died in the holiness of Christ as it has been impressed upon your soul that you can't keep the law? Have you ever been dead to the law that way and dead to the burden of sin that way? Because that is a

⁹ Colossians 3:3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Romans 7:9.

huge burden. When the law reveals your sin, it is a huge burden. But Paul says here in Colossians:

“For ye are dead.”¹²

And not only are ye dead, your life is hid with Christ in God. The life of Christ killed the bondage of sin and death to the child of God. And that is a present reality also to the child of God when the Holy Spirit impresses it upon you.

We walk around so dead sometimes and I mean that. I feel it this morning, just the deadness and I have prayed and I have asked the Lord to make me alive, make me alive, Lord. You get cumbered about with so many things in this life. There are so many things you hear and it just... it weighs on you and it weighs on you. And the only one that can breathe life is Christ, who can breathe life upon your soul and tell you and testify to you what he did on the cross. Because of his death, we have life. Because of his death, do you get this? And your life is hid with Christ in God. That life that is hid with Christ in God is actually hid in his death. That is the beginning.

And all this that we fear about death, our Lord went first. And he conquered that fear and he conquered everything, the sting of death and he conquered the grave and he did all of that for us so that now, we, as we testify in our souls this day, as the Holy Spirit brings it so much power to our soul, the death of Christ can we look up and say, “Yes, Lord, I am dead with you. As you died to sin that day, as you put sin away as far as the east is to the west, is it dead to me that way? And as you fulfilled the law in your perfect obedience, as you went to the cross and you had that perfect obedient life and the bondage of the law and everything was defeated that day, is it defeated for me?”

For Paul this was a reality to him. This is how that sin was revealed to him. I would not have known covetousness if the law hadn't have magnified it and said, “This is what you did wrong.” That is the spirituality of God's holy law.

But I want you to hold your finger there and just turn over to Galatians three for a moment, because this reality hits home even more powerful here starting in verse 10.

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”¹³

That was a curse that God put upon man. If you don't keep the law you are cursed. You are under the curse. You must die.

“The wages of sin is death.”¹⁴

¹² Colossians 3:3.

¹³ Galatians 3:10.

¹⁴ Romans 6:23.

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.¹⁵

That is what the death of Christ was. He was made a curse for you and I if we be in Christ and we are in this death with him. He was made a curse for us.

“...for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”¹⁶

You and I didn't hang there. We did in Christ Jesus. He fulfilled that curse for us. He was made a curse. Is this the death that you live in?

You say, “Oh, I don't want to live in death.”

But, see, the living in death leads to the living in life that we will see in just a moment. It is a hard thing. It is what they call mystical, how we partake in the death of Christ. But it is not just a notional thought in your head. If it is, you don't partake in the death of Christ. It is an emotion. It is a knowledge. It is a thought and it will go away. But the reality for the child of God is the Lord impresses upon him what he is dead to. And he is dead to the law and he is dead to the burden of the law and he is dead to sin and he is dead to the world. And all of this because of Christ's death on the cross.

And I want you to notice if we flip back and go back to our text, Paul cannot separate the death, the resurrection and the ascension of Christ because in the child of God's life it is not separated. It can't be separated. We can't come and talk about the resurrection unless he is resurrected from what? Death.

What are you resurrected from? Because that leads us to our last verse, 2 Timothy 2:11.

“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.”¹⁷

Do you know what that is? That is union. That is resurrection union. That is being dead with Christ and that is being risen with Christ. That is my plea this morning and I pray the Holy Ghost would come with such power now to awaken our slothful souls and make it real to us that, yes, I am dead with him. But only... not only am I dead with him, I will also live with him. I live with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that brings us to our second reality which is right at the beginning of what we read in chapter three.

“If ye then be risen with Christ...”¹⁸

¹⁵ Galatians 3:11-13.

¹⁶ Galatians 3:13.

¹⁷ 2 Timothy 2:11.

¹⁸ Colossians 3:1.

And the second reality Paul speaks about here is the resurrection of Christ. And we got there by being dead with him. But now are we raised with him. And, you know, when I read this verse, the beginning of this verse:

“If ye then be risen with Christ...”¹⁹

There is two things that really stick out to me here. The first is that little word “if.” You know, Satan has a hey day with that little word because when I read it, it is really searching, if. Then I hear this voice telling me, “Well, that is not for you.” See, it says if and as you are examining it you have to see whether it is a reality or not and then I have got somebody in my ear telling me all my sins and why it is not a reality. So there is our first question here in resurrection is:

“If ye then be risen with Christ...”²⁰

But the second part that really speaks to me in this verse is the “with.” It is the union. It is the risen with Christ. We are not risen on our own. The resurrection that we experience today, if we experience he is not here, he is risen, it is not something that you experience in your head by yourself. And if you are, it is an emotion. If you do, it will die down after today and you will go about living your life as many in the world will do today, as sad as that is. But it is a present reality that without him we can do nothing.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:17:

“But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”²¹

That is unity. That is the union we have in Christ in this raising with Christ.

“But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”²²

And then one that we are very familiar with in Ephesians 2:6 Paul said:

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”²³

We will talk more about the seated part later. But the raised us up together shows us the union in the resurrection. The resurrection of Christ is not a story. It is not something we sit down and we read to our children and we read this time of year and say, “Isn’t that great what Christ did?”

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ 1 Corinthians 6:17.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ephesians 2:6.

I hope it is a present reality in your life that your children and the ones who love you and the church of God and the people of God can see that it is a present reality in your life that you are risen in Christ. And that joy that was spoke of last week, what greater joy can you have than to be risen with Christ? We first started with what we were dead to. Being risen with him shows us the life that we have now to walk in. These burdens are lifted from us. These burdens are taken away.

But, you know, Paul talked about something when he spoke about the resurrection. He spoke about this unity with us in Christ in it. But he also spoke about the power. And that is a very deep subject, because the power of it to me is not only was it a physical power to bring Christ out of the grave by the three in one, but today just think about the power of the resurrection today in the child of God's life. Think about God's power in all the deadness that we have in his life and all the attachments we have to this life. And for Christ to bring us away from those attachments and to live in the power of his resurrection is a great power. It is one greater than anything you could ever think or fathom or contemplate in your mind, because the hold of this life and the emotional holds of this life and the sin of this life is such a weight to the child of God that it takes a power greater than any power he has ever seen to break that. And anyone who believes that it is your will to do so it is a very sad, sad place to be and a powerless place to be. Left to ourselves we will stay in the muck and the mire and the reality of this world, because we love it. We are comfortable in it. But for Christ to raise us out of this world shows what he... the power in the new man, the power to reveal to the new man what his life is. And that power is so much higher and so much greater power than what the old man will ever have.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:14:

“And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.”²⁴

Nowhere in this Word will you see that the child of God is told to go raise him up, himself up from dead and to live unto Christ. This word testifies of what Christ has done. That is what... my prayer is the magnification of what Christ did on the cross and what he did in coming forth and defeating death in the day of resurrection and then what the ascension reality is for the child of God.

Are these realities to you today? And then we come to Philippians 3:10.

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.”²⁵

You know, Paul wasn't talking about a head knowledge here. He was talking about a soul knowledge. The deadness that we have from one day to the next and sometimes I had that thought this morning. You know, it is just the... it just blows my mind how I could go to bed at night and pray and have such sweet thoughts of the Lord and wake up on this day, the day that he is risen, he is not here and be so cold and dead and just be lifeless.

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:14.

²⁵ Philippians 3:10.

And the Lord showing me again and again that I am dependent upon him. And I seem to be like a blind person just groping and doing whatever I can to find Christ.

Lord, I need you. I need you to come upon my soul the I may know you and the power of your resurrection. Oh, Lord, I don't want to know it as a historical fact. I know that. I know that you came forth out of the grave. I don't care what man does in their digging or where they say the tomb is. None of that means anything to me. I know that you did. I know that thy Word testifies that you did. I know that. But, Lord, I want to know the power of it. I want to know what that means in my life today. I want to know what it means to be raised from the deadness.

And the Lord is pleased when he is pleased to do that, there is no other joy on earth.

I have sat through four births of my children which was very joyful days to me. Seeing the baptism of two of them. I have heard things come out of their mouths that would testify to me that the Lord has revealed himself to them. I have seen those in this fellowship speak things in the joy of Christ and all of that does great joy to my soul. But, see, I carry around this deadness and I carry around this old man and if the Lord doesn't send his Spirit to wake me up and to revive and keep continually coming to me saying, "This is the power of the resurrection," I will fall right back into the muck and the mire of this world.

Oh, Lord, I want to know the power of your resurrection. That is what Paul said.

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings."²⁶

That is that death again. It goes back to that. I need to have the two together. I need to understand what it meant that Christ died for me. That is being made conformable unto his death.

Do you know what conformable means? Similar and agreeable. I want my soul to be agreeable to the death of Christ, but I also want my life—and this is a hard one. This is what I am saying. You can't get here by yourself. I want my life, my death in this life to be like Christ's death in this life. You won't get there by yourself. The world is too strong. Satan is too strong. That is the power of Christ in the resurrection.

I want to know and experience the death of Christ. I want to know and experience the death that he went through in my soul so I can see what I have been saved from, so I can know the reality and the sinfulness of sin. That is a deep thought, because we don't know the sinfulness of sin down here. We get too... we laugh at it sometimes as just too flippant to us what sin is. But when the Lord shows you the reality of it... People argue this time of year, oh, it is the Jews that killed him. It was Pilate that killed him. Everybody... the Jews wanted Pilate to take the blame. Pilate washed his hands and says that it is not me. Everybody wants to say it is not me. But the child of God, the present

²⁶ Ibid.

reality is that it is me. It is my sin that he was made sin. It is my burden of the sin that he took for me and he stood in my place as a perfect substitute, perfect meaning I could never do it.

That is the present reality of the death of Christ. And then to know the power of the resurrection is not to be so burdened down that my sin put him there, but to have the joy of the resurrection is the power of the resurrection to know that Christ put that away, too. He put my burden that I feel for that sin and nailed it to the tree. And that is where the joy is.

Lord, I want to know you more and the power of this resurrection. I just don't want to know it today and tomorrow it be gone. I don't want it to be an emotional thing. I really don't. It is just not enough. It is not enough for my soul.

“If ye then be risen with Christ...”²⁷

That is our... it is a question and a statement all in one. But Paul in this short passage, as I said, he doesn't just speak of death and he doesn't just speak of the resurrection. But he speaks of the present reality of the ascension. We don't talk too much about this one, but it is vastly important to the child of God. And he covers that when he says:

“...seek those things which are above.”²⁸

Above means above this world, above this earth.

“...where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”²⁹

He is sitting. He is reigning. The last time I was in this pulpit we heard about Stephen who saw Christ. It was a present reality that he saw his ascended Lord. And that is so important to the child of God that not only do we see that he had power over death and power over the grave and that he rose from the dead, but where is he? He is ascended into heaven. He sitting at the right hand of the Father and he is reigning and he is sitting there as the perfect shepherd to his sheep. And he is sitting there and this is a present reality in your mind and in your soul today that you are seated there with him? Does that not blow your mind? We can't think of that down here on this earth, because we are so involved in this world. But we are seated together with Christ in heavenly places, seated with him, reigning with him if we be in Christ's death, resurrection and ascension. These are the realities to the child of God.

Revelation 5:10 says... well, in verse nine it talked about the people of God singing a new song. And that new song in verse 10 said:

“And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”³⁰

²⁷ Colossians 3:1.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Now that has a spiritual meaning to me. It means even down here in the muck and mire of this world I can reign. How can I reign with this burden of sin attached to me? How can I reign carrying this old man around with me? I reign in the new man. I reign in Christ Jesus, my ascended Lord who sitteth at the right hand of the Father for me.

Has he impressed that upon your soul today? Is there not joy in that? Is there not joy that Christ is finished? That is why I hear. When I see the ascended Lord I say, "It really is finished. You really did do everything for me." And Stephen, as he looked up into heaven and he saw the Lord reigning and he asked to come home. And one day that will be a present reality to every one of us in here if we be God's children. WE will have the heavens open and we will see our reigning Lord and we will ask to come home.

2 Timothy 2:12 says:

"If we suffer..."³¹

And I might add if we suffer for his name's sake. We do some suffering on this earth for things we do that aren't too bright. That is not what is being talked about here.

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."³²

That is in 2 Timothy two.

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."³³

See, that kind of goes back to that first point, being dead with him.

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."³⁴

What a beautiful reality this passage is for the child of God, what a reality it is to the soul of the child of God to know and to be shown, not just know, to experience the death of Christ, to experience the resurrection of Christ and to experience the ascension. And, you know, it is not just a heavenly thing meaning that we will know more of it in heaven. That is true. And we won't be marred by sin that will in our unbelief and this old man. I tell you that is a hard thing to realize that one day I won't be carrying that around with me. That is one of the things that makes me ready to leave this world. It is a hard thing, because the sinfulness of sin when it is revealed that is a hard thing to carry around. But it is true we don't have to carry that, because our Lord nailed it on the tree. And that is the reality of his resurrection. That is the reality of his death. And then reigning with him. Wow, if we suffer.

³⁰ Revelation 5:10.

³¹ 2 Timothy 2:12.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Colossians 3:3.

And, dear ones, we know that we are going to be called to suffer. We have been suffering a lot lately, suffering many ways. We can suffer spiritually. We can suffer physically. But the Lord says they shall suffer for my name's sake. And that is one of the questions we have for ourselves. Are we suffering for Christ's sake? Are we suffering persecution for Christ's sake? Are we suffering the ridicule of this world for Christ's sake?

The last place I would like to leave you with this morning is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, very familiar for this time of year and let's look at verse 17.

“And if Christ be not raised...”³⁵

This is one of those questions Paul puts forth in logic. This is one of those things that Paul says is a true fact.

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain.”³⁶

It is a vain thing to believe if Christ be not raised. If he didn't raise ... if he is not risen from the dead and if you are not risen with him, you are not a conqueror.

...ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ.³⁷

You know, when you read that at first you say, “Hope in Christ. That is a good thing.” But, you know, as I said and I started this morning, many will go today and participate in things. They will mark this day. And there will be high emotional times. There will be tears flowing. There will be people putting their hands in the air. Then they will go home. Then they will go back to their life and it won't be a reality to them.

But for the child of God it is a reality every day as the Lord brings it. He impresses upon his children that he is faithful to do so, that we are dead, risen and ascended with him.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.³⁸

It is a blessed thing to see Christ risen. It is a blessed thing to see that he died for me, for you. And it is a blessed thing to see him reign. Christ now is risen from the dead. He went first and all that he went first in he will bring his children through. He will bring you

³⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:17.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:17-19.

³⁸ 1 Corinthians 16:19-20.

through his death. He will bring you through his resurrection and he will bring you to see that he is reigning in heaven now and that you are seated with him.

May the Lord be pleased to add his blessing.

Dear heavenly Father and most gracious and holy Lord, add thy blessing for thy name's sake, for thy glory and thy glory alone. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.