

Called to Seek the Things Above

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Bible Text: Colossians 3:1-4
Preached on: Sunday, July 23, 2023

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The scripture reading this evening is from Colossians 2 and 3. We begin at Colossians 2:20 and read through the end of chapter 3. And the text is the first four verses of chapter 3. Colossians 2:20,

20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship [self-made religion], and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh [that is, they are of no value in stopping the indulgences of the flesh].

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 5 Mortify therefore [put to death] your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies [compassion], kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word

of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. 18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

So far we read God's holy and infallible word.

The text is the first four verses of chapter 3.

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, a few weeks ago, a young couple gave a slideshow of pictures of their recent honeymoon trip to Alaska and I was privileged to sit in on that slideshow and see all the interesting things that they had seen on their trip. And in the course of giving this slideshow, the young couple explained how they had booked a stay at a lodge where there was a viewing platform where you had a beautiful view of Denali way off in the distance. And if you don't know, Denali is a beautiful mountain peak. It's the highest mountain in North America and if you would measure it from base to peak, it's actually the tallest mountain in the world. Not the highest, but from base to peak, it's the tallest mountain in the world. And this young couple was saying how in the morning when they came out to that viewing platform to look at the mountain, they weren't sure which mountain they were to look at. It was a cloudy morning with a little bit of fog, and they saw mountains way in the distance, but they weren't sure which mountain was that famous Mount Denali. And then, after a few hours, they came back to the viewing platform and by this time, the clouds had cleared away, the fog had lifted, and they had a clear view into the distance, and with the clouds cleared away, it suddenly became very obvious what mountain they were supposed to be looking for because there, way in the distance, in the desolate, rugged terrain of Alaska, standing prominently above all the other mountains in the area, was one single mountain peak high in the skies. And this young couple told us how it's actually quite rare to see this mountain peak of Denali from such a distance because of the cloud cover in the area.

Well, I share that story with you because in a certain sense, that's exactly what the Apostle Paul is doing here in the book of Colossians. You see, these Colossians were in spiritual danger. They were in danger of falling into strange religious practices, strange Jewish philosophies. They were in danger of starting to worship angels. They were in danger of starting to follow man-made laws as part of their worship. And they were in danger of thinking that just by going through the outward motions and by abstaining from certain foods, touch not, taste not, handle not, that they were somehow meriting more righteousness with God. And as a result of all these things, these saints at Colossae were even in danger of becoming very earthly-minded, and in fact, they were in danger of starting to indulge themselves in the lusts of the flesh and beginning to lead wicked lives. And what Paul does in this letter is basically this. He says, "No, saints at Colossae, your skies are getting too clouded. There's a kind of spiritual fog that is descending upon your minds. Let me clear away the clouds and dissipate the fog and give you a clear vision again of just which mountain you are supposed to be looking for. Let me give you a clear vision again of who Jesus Christ is." And that's really chapters 1 and 2 of the book. Jesus Christ is the preeminent one. He is the one who is far above all principalities and angels. He's the one who created the angels. He's the firstborn of every creature. He is before all things and by him all things consist. Don't worship angels. Worship Jesus. In addition, Jesus is the one who has redeemed you from all your sins. In his righteousness, you are presented before God as unblameable and irreprovable. You are complete in the righteousness of Jesus. Don't seek your righteousness through the works of the law. Look to Christ. See his glory. See his glory as the head of the church. And this is where the comparison falls short, but the idea is this: he is the Denali. He is your all-in-all. Raise your eyes above the cloud and the fog of earthly philosophies and see Jesus as the one and only and all-sufficient Savior and when you see his glory, you'll see just how vain and foolish all these earthly philosophies are that are tempting you.

That's chapters 1 and 2 of the book and now here in chapter 3, Paul says, "Seeing who Christ is and seeing who you are in Christ as members of his church, as members of his body, don't live anymore for the things here below. Don't set your gaze on the things on the earth, but seek the things above. Set your affection on things above. Raise your gaze to where Christ is on the right hand of God." And that's what chapters 3 and 4 are all about. Typical of Paul's letters, there's the first half, which is doctrinal, teaching them who Christ is, who they are in Christ, and then the second half of the letter applying that to how they must now live and that's where chapter 3 starts off; that's the break in this letter between the first half and the second half.

Well, beloved, how encouraging it is that this is the desire God has put in the hearts of our young people, so that even on this occasion of confession of faith, this is what our young people want to hear. "Preach on this passage, pastor, because that's what I want to hear again, how I am to seek the things above and not the things below." And in our day, when there's so much temptation from the world around us and our sinful natures gravitate towards the things here below, this is a very encouraging thing to hear and it's a good word that we all need to hear again. So we look at this passage, we take as our theme, "Call to Seek the Things Above," and we look at this theme under three points.

First, we look at the calling itself; second, we look at the reason for this calling; and then third, the encouragement related to this calling.

Two times in the text, the Apostle Paul gives us the calling to seek the things which are above. In verse 1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." And again, verse 2, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." And we should understand that verse 2 is simply an explanation, an expansion on what was said in verse 1. These callings are the same. Paul writes seek those things which are above, and the word to seek here has really the idea of striving for something, aiming for something, having a desire for something and then searching it out. It has the idea of making an effort to acquire it. I think of the parable that Jesus gives in Matthew 13. Remember that merchant man who's seeking goodly pearls? He's searching for something and when he finds it, he goes and he sells all that he has to buy that pearl. He's seeking that pearl and to seek that means that you lend every faculty you possess to attain that object of your desire so that you are not satisfied until you are in possession of that object.

Seek. In verse 2, Paul goes on and writes, "Set your affection on things above." Literally, what Paul is talking about there is not our emotions, but our minds and our thoughts. Set your thoughts on things above so that those things occupy your mind, so that they consume your thoughts, so that what follows from that, they become your passion. You desire them and you devote your life and your effort to possessing and enjoying and keeping those things so that these are the things you are living for. Set your affection on things which are above.

Well, we need to ask what are these things which are above that we are to seek for? Well, they are the things which are above. They are the things which are found in heaven, and they are the things which are of a heavenly character and quality. And based on the whole letter, what Paul has in mind here are the things that have to do with Jesus Christ. That's why he says "where Christ Jesus is on the right hand of God." Jesus is the one who has ascended into heaven. He's seated at the right hand of God the Father. He is the one who is above. Seek him, and what Paul has in mind then are the heavenly blessings, the spiritual blessings that are found in Jesus Christ. What Paul has in mind are the spiritual values that Christ has in his own heart. What Paul has in mind are the blessings that Jesus purchased for us through his own death on the cross, and the things that he also imparts to us by his Holy Spirit from the right hand of the throne of God.

If we want to get more specific, what Paul has in mind are the specific graces that he goes on to mention later on in this very chapter. Jump down to verse 12. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, as those who are holy and beloved in Jesus Christ, put on bowels of mercies, compassion, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." Those are things which are above. It's like what James says, that wisdom which is from above, not the wisdom which descends from below, but the wisdom which is from above. These are the spiritual graces that are stored up in Jesus Christ at God's right hand. Verse 14, "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." Seek these things, seek love, seek a heart that is truly loving God and loving the neighbor. Verse 16,

seek this, that the word of God might dwell in you richly in all wisdom, so that you are ruled and governed in all your thoughts and actions by the word of God, the word of Christ. Seek this, that whatever you do in word or deed, you're doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. That's what we are to seek. That's what we are to set our minds on, living out of Christ, valuing what he values and living accordingly. All of that is included in seeking the things which are above.

Seek a holy life or as he continues to say, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." That's what Christ, your Lord, values. This is fit in the Lord. "Husbands, love your wives and don't be bitter against them. Don't be resentful towards them. Don't give them the evil eye. Love them." That's what Christ values. "Children, obey your parents in all things. This is what is well-pleasing to Christ." Seek those things which are above. Strive after these things. Let these be what consume your thoughts, so that this is what you are concerned about in your life. In whatever you do, do it unto the Lord. Do what honors Christ in your life. Bring forth the fruits of the Spirit to the honor and praise of Christ, the preeminent one, the head of the church, the firstborn of every creature, God himself in the flesh.

Seek these things and then to make it perfectly clear what he means, Paul goes on and says, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." And that involves a few things. Obviously, it means don't seek after things that are wicked. Don't seek after sin. Don't make provision for the flesh. Don't seek after the ways of the world. That's obvious. And then also, don't even seek things that might be good and lawful in themselves, but you're seeking them for their own sake. Don't seek the things that are earthly in the sense that these are the things you're ultimately living for.

Now, what Paul is not saying here is that we should practice world flight, that we should go to a monastery or simply live an ascetic life, we can't enjoy the things of the earth. No, we live in the world. Christ hasn't taken us out of the world. We still live, we still work, we get married, we have our homes, we have our food and drink, but don't seek these things for their own sakes, but so use these things and handle these things so that they are pressed into the service of those things which are heavenly, those things which are above. Don't get married just because you want to get married. That is seeking the things which are below. Get married because this is going to be what you use to serve the Lord. Set together as husband and wife, you assist each other in all things that pertain to this life and the life to come. Don't work diligently at your job just to make good money, but work diligently because this is the station that my Lord has given me and I'm serving him. Don't do your devotion simply to check it off your list but do devotions because you're seeking to know Jesus more intimately; you want to grow more in your relationship with God, your Father and your Savior, and you want to serve him more faithfully. Seek the things which are above.

Now, we need to apply this and we need to make this personal to our own lives right here and right now, today. Are you seeking the things which are above? Am I? I can ask the question what are you living for? What are you here for? What fills your thoughts? Yes, we have our plans, we have our responsibilities at work, our duties in the home, we have

things that occupy our minds, but even then, what's the underlying approach you have towards all these things? We could ask what occupies your mind when your mind is free to wander? What occupies your mind when you're sitting back in the La-Z-Boy? Or maybe you're at work thinking about what you're going to do tonight. Maybe you're seeking to catch that TV show that's full of smut and unclean jokes. And maybe even as you work through the day, you're looking forward to that. That's on your mind, "I get to watch my show tonight. That's going to indulge my sinful flesh." Maybe you're setting your affection on that hunting trip with your buddies, where you will not only be hunting, but you'll be able to get a little tipsy and a little drunk with your friends, and maybe you'll even be able to make your annual pilgrimage to the strip club that you and your friends like to visit. Maybe you're setting your mind on that week of vacation coming up, where you hope to touch down in a foreign land and get baked for a week with your friends on vacation. I put it that way because that's what the people of the world are thinking about. That's what's on their minds. That's what they look forward to. Maybe their mind is on reaching out to their buddies again, hoping that they can share some explicit pictures of their girlfriends because they like these things. These things occupy their minds.

Beloved, quite clearly, that's setting your mind on things below and I put it that way because that's what the saints at Colossae were struggling with also in their own way, in their own generation. Look at verse 5. Paul has it on his mind, verse 5. What's the first thing he addresses? The things that are of the world, the things that the world values. What are these things that the saints themselves must have been struggling with? Verse 5, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," which are upon the earth, "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence," and you see Cupid love, evil love, "and covetousness, which is idolatry." Concupiscence really means lust, a wicked kind of love that the world calls love. All these words here in verse 5 can be applied to sexual immorality and indulging in a luxuriant, indulgent lifestyle. The Colossians were in danger of relapsing into paganism with its gross sensuality and verse 6 says, "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." And so we need to examine ourselves, am I living an earthly style of life or am I living a heavenly style of life?

Philippians 3 actually says some very strong language. You turn back a few pages, Philippians 3:18 and 19, it says that these people are the enemies of the cross. Philippians 3:18, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." Now you ask, what makes them the enemies of the cross of Jesus Christ? Verse 19 explains, "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." They're setting their mind, their affections on earthly things, and they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

And this is something for Meghan also and this is something asked at the time of making confession of faith before the elders: how is your devotional life? Do you care to be in God's word? Who are your friends? Are they godly friends? Are you a godly friend to them? Are you putting all earthly pursuits, like your education, your dating, your work, not only under the pursuit of doing the Lord's will, but all these earthly pursuits, are you

striving to unite them into the service of the pursuit of serving God? How important for young people, when they have the world before them, opportunity awaits, and the world is saying so strongly, seek these things which are below, and God's word comes to us and says, seek the things which are above. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Well, we confess the only way this is possible is by the grace of God. Our flesh resists this calling, and the fact is, without Jesus Christ, this activity of seeking these things is impossible. The only possibility for doing this, heeding this call to seek the things above, is if we are in Jesus Christ and we are strengthened by his word and Spirit. But now this is the beautiful thing, this is what also what makes us rich for confession of faith: as members of the body of Christ, as members of his church, we are in Jesus Christ, and we are strengthened by his word and Spirit and this is not only the possibility for doing these things, but this is also the reason for doing these things. The reason. We might ask, why? Why seek the things which are above? Why set our affection on things above? And the reason, the explanation that Paul gives is found in verse 3, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." In fact, Paul mentions it already in verse 1, "If ye then be risen with Christ." If you go back to chapter 2, Paul mentions it a few times in chapter 2. We began our scripture reading at chapter 2, verse 20, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ." Go back further, verse 13, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened," made alive, raised, "together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." And notice that in all of those verses, there's that same language, with Christ, with Christ, with Christ. You are with Christ. Christ is the head of the church and we are members of his body. That's what we have here in this text is that fundamental doctrine of union with Jesus. Union with Jesus. We are united to Christ. That's a fundamental doctrine. It's a doctrine that the Apostle Paul emphasizes, but it's a doctrine found throughout all of scripture. John 15. Think of what Jesus says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me," he who is in me, who is with me, "and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." Think of the figure that scripture uses of being members of Christ's body. That's a figure that Paul uses, especially in this letter to the Colossians and in his letter to the Ephesians. Think of the figure of marriage as a one-flesh relationship. We are with Christ. He's the bridegroom, and we are one flesh with him, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. We are united to Christ. We are in Christ. We are with Christ.

Union with Christ. That's what Paul is emphasizing here. In one sense, we were united with Christ even from before the foundation of the world. We were with Christ, we were in Christ in God's eternal decree of election. Ephesians 1:4, "God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world." In another sense, we were also with Christ in his death and resurrection 2,000 years ago legally because he was our head, he was our representative. Legally, he was representing us and so legally we can say when he died, we died. When he made satisfaction for all our sin, it was as if we were making satisfaction for all our sins because we were with him when he was doing that. And when Jesus rose from the dead, legally we also rose from the dead with him. When God declared in Jesus' resurrection that Jesus is worthy of eternal life, God was also saying that you and I, in Christ, are also worthy of eternal life because we were in him, we were

with him. And now, in time, in our actual living, God actually does unite us to Jesus Christ through the bond of faith, that organic living connection so that through that bond of faith, we are actually engrafted into Christ as branches into a vine. We become members of his body, and his life flows to us and through us, and we begin to partake of all the blessings that are stored up in Jesus. And that's what Paul is saying to the saints at Colossae. He says, "You are the elect of God. You are holy and beloved. You are God's people. You are united to Christ. You have died with Christ and you have risen with him." That's the meaning of verse 3, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Young people, children, the meaning there is not this, you are physically dead. You are dead. That's not what he's saying to these Colossians. But the meaning is this, you have died. That's perhaps a better way of saying it. You have died. Spiritually, you have died to sin. Not, you are dead in sin. That's also language that Paul says. That's who we are by nature, dead in sins. But Paul says here, you are dead to sin. You're no longer married to sin. That relationship has been broken. You're no longer the servant of sin but through your spiritual dying to sin, that bond has been broken, dissolved, and now you've been raised to a new life and you're united to another. You're married now to another. You're the servant of another. You're married to Jesus. You've died to sin and you've been raised as members of Christ, as part of his bride. In this life you are married to Jesus. Jesus sits on the throne in your heart. Your life is hid with Christ in God. As verse 4 says, Christ is your life. Through regeneration, you've been taken out of the kingdom of darkness, out of an earthly kingdom, and you've been translated into the kingdom of light, into a heavenly kingdom. Philippians 3, I quoted that earlier, right, they mind earthly things. They're the enemies of God. And then Paul immediately says but our citizenship is in heaven. Our conversation is in heaven. We've been translated out of the kingdom of an earthly kingdom into the heavenly kingdom, the kingdom of Jesus Christ. You have been born from above. You are believers, made believers. You are united to Christ.

"Therefore, if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." That's what Paul says in verse 1, if, "If ye then be risen with Christ." Paul is not saying this is something doubtful. Paul is not saying, "I'm not sure if this really is the case." No, Paul is really saying, "Since this is the case, since you have been risen with Christ, since you now have this heavenly life and you have been made spiritually alive, regenerated, don't live anymore according to the standards and values of the world. Don't live as a slave to your sinful nature. Live according to the standards and values of Jesus Christ. Live as a servant of Christ." And that's what Meghan confessed tonight. She's a child of God. She has died and she has been risen with Christ. She's died to sin and her life is hid with Christ in God and Christ is her life. And so the word that comes to Meghan and the word that she exalts in is this and the word that comes to us is this, what are you doing if you're setting your mind on earthly things? What are you doing? Because this doesn't match your identity. This isn't consistent living at all. That's my joy, but that's also a serious word. You've died and risen with Christ. Why would you have anything to do with earthly things that God hates? And why would you set your affection on earthly things when you've got greater things to set your gaze on and your affection and your thoughts on? You've got heaven. You've got the joy of living to the glory of your Maker. You've

got freedom to live unto him. You're equipped to do it by his Holy Spirit. If the loving kindness of God is more than life to us, which we sing, then why are we still setting our minds on things below? No, but even my marriage, my family, my home, my work, my gift, my education, my gifts, my education, my food and drink, my strength, I press it all into the service of my Lord and King Jesus. I don't stop working. I don't stop getting educated in this world. I don't stop in my calling. But in it all, I seek his will. I seek his pleasure and his glory.

Oh, how important this is, beloved. We must learn not to care about the culture and the culture's idols and its values and its approval. That's what I mean. Don't feel as if you need to keep up with the standards of the world. That's bondage. The standards of beauty, the standards of success, or the standards of happiness. You know, even go through the grocery store, that's what all the magazines in the grocery store aisle are really speaking to you about, encouraging you to do that. "Be more physically beautiful. Lose more weight so that you have that nice beach body. Get that new iPhone with all its gadgetry. That will make you happy." No. For followers of Christ, for believers, what makes us happy is not this new iPhone that's coming out, or even that I've lost a few more pounds, or that my favorite sports team is winning. What makes me happy, the good news I have is this: Jesus Christ is my Lord and my Savior, and he is my complete Redeemer. I have peace with God. I have all things, and all things are for my sake. God is my Father, and he even gives me this privileged position to live for him and he strengthens me and guides me. He even gives me his word to lead me in living in this glorious life that I've been begotten unto. Yeah, that iPhone, whatever phone, I'll use that in the service of my Lord's glory. That's what the iPhone is for. Not for me, for my Lord. Those pounds that I've lost, I can rejoice in that. Taking care of my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. I'm doing this as unto my Master. And this is what I seek after, his will, being a steward of what he's given me for his glory. What a joy! What a heightened raising our lives to a higher, more meaningful purpose. Enough of serving sin. "Lord, give me strength that I may mortify these deeds of the flesh, that I may be done with this uncleanness, and that I may serve Christ, and that I may even be a strong member of the body of Christ, even for the joy and the spiritual happiness of the other members. This is what I have been raised unto. Lord, give me grace to heed this calling." That's what Paul is saying to the Colossians and that's the word God is bringing to us this evening.

Well, with this calling, the apostle gives also great encouragement. First, the encouragement is this, we are reminded again that we are risen with Christ. Remember that you have been begotten again spiritually, and you are given strength to walk in God's ways, and then seeking these things which are above and asking for these things from God. God will certainly graciously give them. This is what he's raised you unto.

Secondly, the encouragement is this, verse 3, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." That means your life is safe in Christ. Our life is safe with Christ in God. This new life that I'm enjoying, seeking the things above, God will preserve that and that life is hid with Christ. No one can take me, snatch me out of my Father's hand. The comfort is also this, Christ sits on the right hand of God. He sits in that position of power and authority. He is my Lord and he will take care of me.

And then third, the encouragement is this, what we find in verse 4, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." And the encouragement there is simply this: you have died with Jesus, you have been raised with Jesus, and when Jesus comes again, you will also be glorified with Jesus. And then, then you will be given the fullness of all these things that you have sought for and that you have set your affection upon. All the fruits of the Spirit, right? Putting on the new man, compassion, kindness, humbleness of mind, love, peace, meekness, longsuffering, all the fruits of the Spirit that you are seeking after and setting your affection on, you will have your heart's desire satisfied when Christ appears in glory. All the deeds of the flesh will be entirely put off once and for all, and living a life perfectly devoted to your Lord Jesus, you will enjoy that life perfectly. That's what he's setting before them in this verse, a word of encouragement. You will not be disappointed. What you are longing for, which is what the child of God longs for, this is Christ in us, what you are longing for, what you are hoping for, hungering and thirsting after, you will certainly receive when Christ appears in glory. You receive it in part already now. Christ hears and answers your prayers, but you will receive it as you desire it in its fullness. You will receive it in fullness.

Meghan, what an encouragement to you. This is your reality, Meghan, as a believer, as you look ahead to the rest of your life. This is our reality as believers who have been raised with Christ. If this is true, then hearken to the calling. You see those mountains in the distance? You see these earthly things that are here below? Oh, they look so beautiful of themselves, so worth pursuing and setting your gaze upon. Oh, may the clouds be dispelled more and more from our minds. May the fog be lifted. And may our gaze be lifted upwards more and more to see the one who is to be capturing our gaze and our awe. Not Denali, that great mountain peak, that captures our awe and admiration, but Jesus, the one who made Mount Denali, the glorious Creator of heaven and earth, our Lord and Redeemer, set your gaze, lift up your gaze, and set your mind upon him. Set your affection upon him. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Amen.

Let us pray.

Our Father, what a reality is ours in Jesus Christ, Thy Son. Give us to know it, to remember our identity and then to live accordingly. Give us that strength to heed, hearken unto this calling to seek the things above. How glorious they are. Give us a greater vision of Christ and his beauty, and cause us to know his values and the joy that is in him, that we might also be encouraged and strengthened to seek these things which are above, day by day. Bless this preaching to our hearts and to our lives, and keep us in this coming week. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.