There is a story that the great evangelist D.L.Moody no once told…

That he was waking down a dark street in Chicago when a drunken woman stumbled out of an alleyway, and stood toe to toe with him…

Able to realize who he was, she proceeded to point her boney little finger at Him… and said “Moody! I’m one of your converts!

To which Moody replied, “you must be…, you’re certainly not one of the Lords!”

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Which raises a valid question that God has been leading me to answer since Easter, two Sundays ago.

What happens to a life that has been redeemed by the Lord?

How does one die with Christ and rise again as a “born again” believer?

For me it started by getting alone with God, on my back patio…

God had spoken to me by His Spirit, through my pastor, who was delivering God’s Word.

I was convinced, not by man, but by God and His Word that my life was not going to be as blessed as God wanted it to be, apart from a saved & entirely sanctified relationship with Jesus Christ.

I was convinced, not by man, but by God and His Word that I was also going to miss out on the unimaginable/eternal blessings of Heaven.

So, I humbled myself, prayed, and asked Jesus to come into my heart.

I had no idea what that meant or what God had planned for my life that was about to be “Risen with Christ”.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Another story is told of a man standing on a street corner, holding up his Bible and preaching the “Good News” that “Jesus Saves!”

Just then someone in the crowd piped up and shouted; “Oh be quiet, the Bible’s not true... go home… you’re all wet.

Just then the belligerent man felt a tug on his coat. He looked down and saw a little girl… she said to him; “mister that man is my daddy. He used to be a drunk and he used to come home and hit my mother.

She added… It was “Jesus and the Bible that changed my daddy!

If it’s not true, please don’t tell my daddy.”

The greatest proof to an unbelieving world that Jesus has risen, is when

they can see that Christ has risen in you.

1 Corinthians 1:18

Man uses many words to try and discredit God & His Word, but the one thing they can never disprove is the change that has occurred in you as a result of being a “born again”, “sanctified wholly”, “Risen with Christ” “Child of the King”.

They can deny God, but they can’t deny the brand new you!

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

After receiving Christ in March of 1994, Dee, myself, and our two daughters followed the the Lord in one of the first acts of obedience that a believer should… The sacrament of Water Baptism.

Some believe Baptism saves souls… it doesn’t save, Jesus saves! Acts 2:38

We don’t get baptized to be saved… We follow Christ in baptism because we are saved. And He fills us with His Spirit and we rise with Him.

Matthew 3:15 - Christ’s baptism was to “fulfill all righteousness”.

* Christ set the example for all who would follow Him.
* The example was that He had made a decision to (die) to the life He had lived up to that point…
* And at the age of 30, He “rose up” out of the water, and began His “New Life” to fulfill His God given call to ministry or which He had been sent.
* To be the promised Messiah of not just Israel, but the world.

His ministry lasted a short 3-1/2 years… leading Him to a brutal death on the cross… But also to His Resurrection from the tomb on the third day.

Baptism is not just a metaphor for the death & burial of our old self… but also for HOPE and New Life!! An “outward sign that an inward change has taken place”.

That one has “received” the GRACE of God in Christ and is now committing their “new life” to living responsibly by that GRACE to follow the “risen Savior” and making Jesus Lord of their life.

We know that He is living, whatever men may say…

We see His hand of mercy…

We hear His voice of cheer…

And just the time we need Him, He’s always near!

He still “touches” people…

Please open or turn on your Bibles with me to Colossians 3.

Today we’re going to spend a little time looking at Paul’s explanation of what being “Risen with Christ” looks like.

If you have read Paul’s testimony of his conversion to Christ in Acts 9 before, you will have a much richer & fuller understanding of this passage.

V1 - Therefore/Since (referring to the freedom from human rules that he wrote about in Eph 2), you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Think about that or a minute Christian… when was the last time you considered that you have been “Risen with Christ”?

* Before Paul was “Risen with Christ”
* He was a religious zealot & extremist.
* Focused on keeping the religious Laws & traditions of Judaism below.
* He believed he was serving God by arresting, imprisoning and even killing people for their faith In Jesus.

Paul was AWAKEN by Christ to the truth… and Risen with Christ himself…

So what he is telling the believers in Colosse… is what has happened to him…

Focus on Christ above:

You were dead in sin, but now you are alive!

Bought & paid for by the precious blood Jesus Christ… that has the “power to cancel sin and set the prisoner (of sin) free!” As Wesley expressed in his song (O’ for a Thousand Tongues to Sing)…

* Jesus has unlocked the cell… of every prisoner to sin.
* Everyone has been given a “free will” to choose to be Risen with Christ.
* To walk away a free man/women and set their heart on (live for) the things above, rather than things below.
* Psalm 121:1 - Above is where our help comes from!

Help in finding life’s purpose, meaning, guidance & direction.

* Philippians 3:20 - Above is where our citizenship and our forever Home are!

V2-3 “Set your minds (affections) on things above, not on earthly things.

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

It makes sense… Amen?

Paul is saying that the life of the believer is (wrapped up/intertwined) in Christ (like this sand).

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Our life is a reflection of what we believe and treasure most.

Our Facebook, twitter, instagram, snap chat & other accounts reflect it…

The faithful believer has a positive relationship with God, that reflects spiritual pursuits that are pleasing to God.

Before I came to faith in Christ, Classic Rock & Roll was my life!!

I have to say that music was one of my biggest concerns when I was “Risen with Christ”.

Then Hallelujah!! I discovered that there is tons of great Christian music out there (in every genre) waiting to be discovered.

Instead of singing songs about someone else’s life… or experiences…

I mostly sing music that focuses on praising and worshipping the One Who died to set me free! Who has a place prepared for me in Glory!

Paul encourages believers to set their minds (affections) on things above, because that is where eternal life, joy, peace, and blessing are.

If COVID-19 has taught us anything… it’s that life here is very temporary and uncertain. Which should give us more reason to focus on what is eternal above.

When one focuses on things below they are much more willing to disregard God’s Word to try and protect what is below.

As Paul did in his former life…

But when one focuses on what is above, they are much less willing to disregard God’s Word, which actually protects what they have below, better than they could on their own… apart from God’s Word.

V4“When Christ, who is your life appears (this is the key right here), then you also will appear with him in glory.

Is Christ your life? If so, you have great things to look forward to which keeps a real and living hope alive in you!

We know that Jesus is going to come again… as he said with "the clouds of heaven...and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).

Revelation 1:7 "Behold, He comes...every eye shall see Him"

Acts 1:10-11 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky?

This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Oh my… How important it is that we be able to say, "Christ who is my life."

That my life be so completely wrapped up and centered in Christ that He is my life.

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Because the believers life is hidden/intertwined with Christ, we bring Him with us everywhere we go, to participate in whatever it is we are doing.

He hears every conversation… and every thought we have before it becomes conversation…

And when you’re focused above and do all that you do to build God’s kingdom, THE MOST AMAZING THINGS HAPPEN WHEREVER YOU GO!

Because you brought the “Spirit of Christ… the Spirit of the Living God” with you!

I love the clarification and definition of Paul’s writing.

It is crystal clear…, so the believer can know and be assured of the blessing and JOY of their Salvation.

Colossians 3:5-6 “Put to death (mortify), therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming to the children of disobedience”:

Paul would add; “and don’t let anyone tell you any different!”

Don't let ungodly people deceive you… You cannot live after your flesh and inherit the kingdom of God.

It is because of these sinful desires of the flesh that Jesus had to come… and sacrifice Himself for us.

So if you think a person, place or thing might pull you back into your “old/dead life”… STAY AS FAR AWAY FROM IT/THEM AS POSSIBLE!!

John said, "If a man says he loves God and yet hates his brother, he is a liar" (John 4:20).

John says if you claim to have “Risen with Christ” but live contrary to the Spirit and the Word of God, you are lying to yourself.

And honesty and truthfulness are two of the most basic changes that the Holy Spirit makes in every life “Risen with Christ”!

If a person says he abides in Christ then he ought to be walking as Christ walked. In other words, it's not what you say that really matters; it's how you're walking that counts.

* So, are you walking according to the Spirit?
* Have you renounced these “hidden” sinful things of the world?
* Have you put to death the deeds of your flesh?

He says, "Look, the wrath of God is coming upon the earth because of these things. Don't presume upon the grace of God."

The children of Israel made many tragic mistakes thinking, "Well, we are God's chosen people, and we can live like the nations around us."

If you’ve read any of the Old Testament you would know that you can't. You must “RISE” and live as God's people, by putting to death the things that pull at the desires of your flesh and pull you away from obedience to God’s Word.

V7-10 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator:

Followers of Jesus should be walking as Jesus walked. He is our example; He is the image into which the Spirit of God is seeking to conform our lives. Therefore, put off the old life, and put on the new.

V11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

There are no distinctions in Jesus Christ, religious, ethnic, economic, gender or whatever; Christ is in everything. He is all, and He is in all. There is no favored and special class of people; we are all one.

V12-14 Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, (having taken off your former way) clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity..

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

So, not only are we to just take off the old works of our flesh, we are to put on Jesus Christ, living after His example.

Who’s example does your life reflect most? A parent, friend, movie character… or the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ?

When we are “Risen with Christ” we become more and more like the Savior whom we follow.

V15 – “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.”

So, we're called to thanksgiving; we're called to the peace of God.

Let us bow our heads and close our eyes together.

My prayer today is that God, the Holy Spirit has used this message to encourage you in your faith if you are already living a Christ-centered lifestyle.

To also encourage those who are more at the beginning of their “Risen Life” with Christ…, to continue… and not to grow weary or give up on their “Risen Life”!

To Persevere, because there is never any value in going back to what Christ saved you from.

My prayer is also that the Spirit has revealed some of the benefits of being “Risen with Christ” and that His Holy Spirit would use this message to draw people into a “born again” relationship with Jesus today…

before time is up, the end of life comes or the Son of God returns.

If you need a “Risen with Christ” relationship today; Please repeat this prayer of Salvation with me…

Dear Heavenly Father,

* I know I have fallen short.
* Please forgive my sin.
* Thank you for Jesus.
* I need to be “Risen with Him”.
* Help me to follow His example.
* Help me to set my heart & mind
* On things above.
* Help me to die to my old desires.

In Jesus name! Amen