

8th Sunday after Pentecost  
July 31, 2022  
“Christ our life” (Colossians 3:1-4)  
By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today’s text for this 8th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Epistle reading Colossians 3:1-4.

**“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”**

Here ends our text.

I. The vanity of life without Christ

Today’s readings are very self-reflective, aren’t they? They cause us to pause and take a look at our lives and ask the big questions of who we are and what’s life all about? Where is my life at and where is it going?

In the Gospel from Luke 12, a certain man had a bumper crop which caused himself to reflect. **“And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ 18 So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” ’**

Is there anything wrong with taking your ease, enjoying life, and being merry? Of course not. God has given the Christian many blessings to enjoy in life. He wants us to enjoy them as we are good stewards of them. As our Old Testament reading tells us from Ecclesiastes 2:24-25.

**“Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I?”**

But enjoying God's blessings of this transitory life is such a small part of the big picture for the Christian. Paul says in our text, **"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."**

For true enjoyment and happiness in this life does not consist of only possessing many earthly things, but in the possessing of the heavenly thing - eternal life...yes, even now, especially right now.

So our Gospel reading concludes that our souls need to be rich toward God, and if they aren't then they are empty and will spend eternity in emptiness and suffering in hell.

**"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."**

And likewise, the Old Testament reading tells us that if life is only about the here and now, it's pretty burdensome and depressing.

**"For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? 23 For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity."**

What lengths will people go to in order to have riches in this life? I read of a woman who drove 10 hours to buy a lottery ticket here in McAllen because she thought the store was luckier than others. 1 in 300 million are your odds to win the 1.3 billion dollar Megalottery. Not very good. And even if you do win it, how many years will you be able to live with those riches? 50? 60? And will they cause even more misery?

But true riches and happiness are eternal in Christ. What's Christ's is yours, now and for eternity.

## II. The riches of our life united to Christ

**"For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."**

Your life, since the moment that God has called you into His kingdom through faith, is now completely different.

Your life, your true life, that is, is hidden with Christ in God. People can't see your riches and most importantly, they can't steal them from you! Paul told us in Colossians 1:27,

**“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”**

Your life as a Christian is absolutely united with Christ through your baptism as Paul told last week in chapter 2 of Colossians.

**“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”**

**“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,**

Again, do you see the word “some” here? Are there any sins which Jesus has not forgiven? NO! He has forgiven ALL your trespasses!

**14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”**

Together! Christ rose first! And He has made you alive with Him through faith in Him. How? He wiped out what condemned you! He wiped all the requirements of the law ...because He fulfilled the law for you, in your stead! It's done! Once and for all!

So, Christ is my life. Where He is seated in heaven is where I will be one day for eternity.

**“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”**

This is a Christian's way of thinking. The world says, “my life, my way” but the Christian says, “Christ our life”, “Christ my way.”

Maybe you remember Frank Sinatra's famous song, "My Way".

*"And now the end is here  
And so I face that final curtain  
My friend I'll make it clear  
I'll state my case, of which I'm certain  
I've lived a life that's full  
I traveled each and every highway  
And more, much more  
I did it, I did it my way"*

Yes, Frank acknowledges that life is close to ending, but rather there is no optimistic looking forward, only a self-centered looking backward. Such vanity! Really depressing.

And for those who are younger, maybe you remember Bon Jovi's hit in 2000 "It's My Life", where the rock star pays tribute to Frankie.

*"It's my life It's now or never But I ain't gonna live forever  
I just want to live while I'm alive (It's my life)  
My heart is like an open highway  
Like Frankie said, "I did it my way"  
I just want to live while I'm alive  
It's my life"*

Again, a pretty depressing song, if all you have to live for is this life while your alive.

For the Christian, there is no "my life". Christ has claimed me. I am His and He mine. My previous life apart from Christ is dead. So Paul says,

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

Your new life in Christ cannot be self-centered anymore. The Christian daily puts to death the old life and no longer lives in the sinfulness of the old Adam.

**"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry... But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,"**

Our former life is absolutely opposed with our new life in Christ. In daily repentance, we crucify the old “me”, “selfish” way of life and put on the new life in Christ, His righteousness graciously given to me in my baptism.

So Paul says, **“put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,”**

We were created in God’s image, at one time perfect and holy before sin entered into the world. We lost that image, but now in Christ, we are renewed through His forgiveness!

We receive the very body and blood of Christ through which He renews us and gives us complete remission of our sins. This is “Christ our life”. We are united with Him and He feeds us constantly with His treasures of His forgiveness.

Yes, our life is hidden now in Christ. But one day we will no longer walk by faith but see our Lord in the flesh, glorified flesh.

So John tells us in his first epistle in chapter 3.

**“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”**

Until that day, we live life to the fullest, “in Christ”. What is hidden in our hearts we tell the world...that Christ loves all people. Christ died for all people. And He wants His life to give your life meaning. For, **“there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all”**

Christ for all people! In Him, we are complete. He has fully forgiven us and united us with Him! And we look forward to His glorious appearing with our minds set on things above! Christ our life! That is who we are. Amen.

**The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**