

In part three of our series, The Born Supremacy, Peter Rasmussen shared a message based on Colossians 3:1-4 about living Kingdom down, not culture up.

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” Colossians 3:1-4. To many, this Scripture encourages an excessive ‘heavenly mindedness’ - as in it draws our focus away from our present reality here on earth. Clearly, that is not the point of this scripture. This is a message about Kingdom influence.

Many of us live in an in-between place... “When I first came to Christ I was so alive... I used to be so passionate about God... I’m waiting to be fully alive... I’m holding on for a better life... The return of Christ will sort out all this mess...

The problem with this is that we cannot influence what we don’t engage with. The scripture indicates a present tense in the original text that we often miss in the English: *You are ‘now’ seated in Christ.* In other words, this is not about being with Christ someday; we are actually spiritually in Him right now! *“And the life I NOW live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* Galatians 2:20b. Or as Irenaeus put it: “The glory of God is man fully alive”.

The most fundamental change to us being seated with Christ is our perspective. We don’t get to remove ourselves from reality, but our reality is changed by our heavenly perspective. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy - the more we see heaven, the more of heaven we get to see.

Three words to ground our heavenly view in earthly impact:

1. RESPONSIBILITY

“The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the people of Dan, according to their clans. And the territory of its inheritance included Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir-shemesh, Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, Elon, Timnah, Ekron, Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, Jehud, Bene-berak, Gath-rimmon, and Me-jarkon and Rakkon with the territory over against Joppa. When the territory of the people of Dan was lost to them, the people of Dan went up and fought against Leshem, and after capturing it and striking it with the sword they took possession of it and settled in it, calling Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their ancestor. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the people of Dan, according to their clans—these cities with their villages.” Joshua 19:40-48. This speaks of the difficulty of the tribe of Dan. They felt it was too difficult to take the territory that God had laid out for them, so they did their own thing and ended up moving from the frying pan into the fire! The territory they conquered was on the ‘Kings Highway’, and they ended up being

plundered by every army that invaded Israel. Their decision endangered the whole nation and impacted future generations.

Our heavenly sight produces responsibility in us. We have to take responsibility and act now - we cannot leave it for future generations.

2. INFLUENCE

In Judges 13-16 we read the story of Samson which starts like this: *“And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.”* (Judges 13:1)... and continues with an introduction to Samson shortly thereafter: *“for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.”* Judges 1:5. For Samson to be a Nazirite meant that he could not cut his hair, he could not partake of fermented grape juice, and he could not have contact with a dead body. Nazirites were to be visual examples of God’s grace. But what did Samson do? He killed a lion with his bare hands, he got drunk, and he had a haircut.

We are the “Nazirites” of today - the visual of God’s grace to the world around us. But if our heavenly sight goes, so does our uniqueness (our witness) and therefore our “Naziriteness” (our influence). We become like everyone else, and no one wants to become like us. *“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.”* Matthew 5:13.

3. PRESENCE

In 1 Samuel 2:12 we are given an introduction to the sons of Eli - Hophni and Phinehas: *“Eli’s sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD.”* Hophni and Phinehas took the Ark of the Covenant out to battle against the Philistines. *“So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.”* 1 Samuel 4: 4. The Israelites were defeated, and the enemy captured the Ark of Covenant: *So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.”* 1 Samuel 4:10-11.

We cannot be found to be using God’s presence like a lucky charm. When we are seated in Him, then His presence is not a momentary thing but a daily reality. He is with us. *“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* Matthew 28:20b. Heavenly perspective comes when we have a clear view that He is with us.

In summary, we have to have heavenly sight, take responsibility for what God has said to us and influence the culture in which we live.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Icebreaker: (Choose one question)

- Describe your past week in weather terms. (Was it stormy, cloudy, foggy, mostly sunny or a combination?)
- What colour best describes your past week and why?

Questions for Groups: (Choose two or three)

1. Read Colossians 3:1-3. What is the danger of having a mind that is set on the things on earth?
2. What is a current situation in your life where you are being challenged with the choice to set your mind on earthly things or to set your mind on things above?
3. What does it mean to set our hearts and mind on Christ and things above? And when do you find it difficult to stay focused on heavenly things? What can we do to help maintain our focus?
4. Read Colossians 3:12-15. In these verses, Paul gives us an idea of what a Christ-centred life looks like: compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, forgiving & loving. Which word on that list challenges you the most? And why?
5. When something dies (including our sinful nature), pain is usually involved. How can having a “Colossians 3 Perspective” help make these kinds of hard choices?
6. What would it mean for you to make Christ your all? Is there anything in your life that you need to re-prioritise or ‘put to death’ so that Christ can be your all?

PRAYER POINT

Take some time to pray for one another, asking the God to re-shift your focus to “things above” as you walk into the rest of your week.

ACTION POINT

Read Colossians chapter 3:1-17. Write down three things you learned (that you didn't previously know). Write down three questions the passage raised that you'll think about over the next week. Put to action any instructions the Holy Spirit impresses upon your heart as you read and interact with chapter 3.