

The Preeminence
& All-Sufficiency
of Jesus
Christ

A Brief Exposition of Colossians

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Holy Spirit that is able to put the old man to death (Rom. 8:13²²⁵). Inward union with God is the true Christian life (John 17:3).

3:1 – 4:6. SECOND PART OF THE EPISTLE. DIRECT EXHORTATIONS REGARDING THE PRACTICAL ISSUES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, FOUNDED ON THEIR UNION WITH THE RISEN CHRIST.

As Paul often does in his letters, in Colossians he shares deep theological truth in the first half of the letter, and then he connects that theology to daily life in the second half of the letter.

In the first half of Colossians, Paul declares the theological preeminence and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God. He is above all. He is the Creator of all. Therefore, we should worship and serve Him only. We should not be led astray by false teachings that promote other objects of worship or that lower Christ's position. Moreover, Jesus Christ is all-sufficient. His death and resurrection delivered us from sin, Satan, self and the world. We need no other religious practice outside of union with Him to be saved or to go deeper in holiness and Christian maturity. Therefore, we reject all forms of external regulations and observances as paths to greater holiness. We reject all legalistic, ritualistic and ascetic approaches to holiness since the law was nailed to the cross – it was abolished in Jesus' death. Jesus is preeminent and all-sufficient. That was the central point of the first half of Colossians.

Now, Paul applies that preeminence and all-sufficiency to our daily lives. He takes the theological truths of chapters 1 and 2 and connects them to our daily lives, demonstrating that there is only one path to daily spiritual victory and maturity: union with Jesus Christ. There is only one path to holiness: union with Jesus (1:27; 2:10).

Paul thus sets forth the true path to holiness and spiritual maturity: union with Christ. Christ is preeminent and all-sufficient. We need no path to spiritual maturity and holiness other than union with Him. This daily union with Him will result in lives characterized by Christian virtues and relationships.

²²⁵ *For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, (Rom 8:13)*

3:1-4. TRANSITION TO THE NEW SUBJECT AND THE GROUND OF THE COMING EXHORTATIONS.

3:1 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*

you have been raised with Christ. Progression from having died with Christ to this world (2:20). You have also been raised in union with Him to a new life (Rom. 6:4²²⁶).

set your hearts on things above. In your daily lives, reckon yourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11-13²²⁷; Matt. 6:33²²⁸). The practical consequences of the believer's union with Christ.

where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Cf. Eph. 2:6.²²⁹ Since you are with Him your life will be involved in Him. This is a spiritual reality that should change your life.

at the right hand of God. Our home with Christ is not merely in the heavenly places but is in the highest position there – at God's right hand!

This is how you achieve experiential holiness as a Christian: through daily union and communion with Christ. Paul sets forth the all-sufficiency of Christ with regard to the experiences of our daily lives and our pursuit of victory and maturity – it is all in Him!

2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

²²⁶ *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Rom. 6:4)*

²²⁷ *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. (Rom 6:11-13)*

²²⁸ *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matt. 6:33)*

²²⁹ *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, (Eph. 2:6)*