

SETTING OUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE – ADDITIONAL MATERIAL COLOSSIANS 3:1-3; HEBREWS 11:13-16; 1 PETER 2:5-11

“FIVE MINUTES INSIDE OF ETERNITY I BELIEVE EVERYONE OF US WILL WISH THAT WE HAD SACRIFICED MORE, PRAYED MORE, LOVED MORE, SWEATED MORE, WEPT MORE ...”

-LEONARD RAVENHILL

A WORD TO THE TEACHER:

This series of Sunday school lessons has as its primary objective to help students and teachers alike to have a more eternal perspective on life. In other words: *“to inspire each of us to desire and dedicate ourselves to **“SET OUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE”** (Colossians 3:1-3) or to live in the light of eternity.* The passage in **Colossians 3:1-3** is the springboard for the entire series. Concerning this passage, the great Bible commentator Matthew Henry wrote:

*Upon the wings of affection the heart soars upwards. Things on earth are here set in opposition to things above. Heaven and earth are contrary one to the other, and **THE PREVELANCE OF OUR AFFECTION TO ONE WILL PROPORTIONATELY WEAKEN OUR AFFECTION TO THE OTHER.***

As teachers, as well as students, it would be helpful if we would dedicate ourselves to memorize and meditate upon **Colossians 3:1-3; Philippians 3:7-14; Hebrews 11:13-16; 1 Peter 2:5-11** and **Matthew 6:19-24, 33**, over the next six weeks. The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit writes, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (**Philippians 3:14**). Concerning this passage, Matthew Henry wrote:

*Heaven is the prize of the high calling; what we aim at in all that we do, and what will reward all of our pains. ... **THIS WAS THE THING WHEREIN ALL GOOD CHRISTIANS AGREED, TO MAKE CHRIST ALL IN ALL, AND TO SET THEIR HEARTS UPON ANOTHER WORLD.***

Our great desire over the next few weeks is to come to a clear understanding that this world is not our home; we are simply passing through as strangers, pilgrims and ambassadors (**1 Peter 2:5-11; 2 Corinthians 5:20**) for from a heavenly kingdom. In **2 Corinthians 5:20**, we are referred to as ambassadors. According to the *Webster’s American Dictionary of the English Language*, an ambassador is *“a minister of the highest rank employed by one prince [His name is Jesus] or a state [it is called heaven], to manage the public concerns of his own prince or state, and representing the power of his sovereign.”*

While we will give you a lesson each week, you may feel free to tailor the SS lesson towards your class. You may feel free to add material or subtract material from your personal lesson. If you would like this material emailed to you, in order to make a fill in the blank lesson for your class send me an email @ johnnye@pacifcbaptist.com and let me know. **If you read the passages, meditate on the truths, and then break it down to “bite-size pieces” for your class, you and your students will get something that can and will enrich (and possibly change) your life.**

SOMETHING TO PONDER:

When foreigners desire to become citizens of the United States of America, they are required to take the following oath:

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.

The United States, like most governments, will not allow those who wish to become citizens to straddle the fence. Naturalized citizens can't claim that their loyalty and allegiance belong to the United States if they retain allegiance to some foreign government. Our government won't allow it. Our government wasn't undivided loyalty from any who would apply for citizenship.

So it shouldn't come as any surprise that Jesus the King requires similar loyalty from those who apply for citizenship in HIS kingdom (unless of course, you are an American Christian, we are the exception to the rule). In fact, He demanded an even greater degree of loyalty. Notice His words in **Matthew 10:37-39**, "*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*"

How about the words of our Lord in **Luke 14:26-33**, "*If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*"²⁷ *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*"²⁸ *For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?*"²⁹ *Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,*"³⁰ *Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*"³¹ *Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?*"³² *Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.*"³³ *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Or how about **Matthew 12:30**, "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad."*

That's what I call a radical call to service! The United States does not require that its citizens "forsake all," but Jesus did. In the kingdom of Christ, where He is Lord, there can be no divided loyalties. Our Lord was fairly straightforward and to the point, when mustering up citizens for His kingdom and soldiers for His army: "*And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*" (**Luke 9:62**).

Our Lord Jesus requires (obligation, not an option) of His subjects the same level of loyalty, love and commitment that fervent patriots give their countries during a time of war – if not higher. Unlike earthly kingdoms, as citizens of heaven, we are in a continuous state of war (**Ephesians 6:12; Matthew 10:34-36**). Let's change this oath up just a bit:

*I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution of heaven (the Holy Bible) and the laws of my beloved Lord Jesus Christ against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear **true faith** (not that watered-down faith) and allegiance to the same; that I will bear spiritual arms on behalf of the my Lord's kingdom when required by His holy law; that I will perform work of kingdom national importance under the direction of spiritual leadership when required by His holy law; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.*
