

SETTING OUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE – LESSON TWO

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

Introduction

The great evangelist was right, *“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 ...”* Possibly this is why we find, in **Revelation 7:17** that *“God shall wipe all tears from their eyes ...”*

A FEW PROBING QUESTIONS:

- Can these tears that God will wipe away be tears of remorse and regret for what we could have done and should have done, but didn't?
- Can we honestly say that we have sacrificed enough, prayed enough, loved enough, sweated or labored enough?
- Can it be possible that many of the redeemed of God will look back upon their lives here and see that they wasted what God had entrusted into their care?
- Can we honestly say that we are living a life that is truly pleasing to God and bringing glory to His beloved Son?

READ COLOSSIANS 3:1-3 & HEBREWS 11:13-16

The apostle Paul wrote, *“If ye then be risen with Christ (saved), seek those things which are above (eternal), where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection (your love and devotion) on things above (eternal things), not on the things of this earth” (Colossians 3:2)*. Not being of this world means we should be *“dead”* to all of its attractions, allurements, and ambitions. In other words, we should *“set our affection on things above.”* Yes, we live in the world, we are sent to the world as missionaries and ambassadors, but we are dead to the things of this world. The apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, makes it clear that for those of us who profess to be saved (*“risen with Christ”*), must *“seek those things which are above.”*

- This command, to *“seek those things which are above,”* as found in **Colossians 3**, is not an **option** for the true believer, this is an **obligation**.

And, this will not happen unless we first *“set [our] affection on things above.”* The word *“set,”* according to *Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language* means *“To fix; to place; as the heart of affections; to fix firmly!”*

It is interesting to note that Webster's not only gives the definition but they refer to this verse. In other words, to set our affections on things above means *to be firmly fixed or focused on things above* [that which is heavenly], not on things which are below [earthly].

WHY SHOULD WE SET OUR AFFECTION ON THINGS ABOVE?

(THESE FIRST TWO POINTS ARE A REVIEW OF LAST WEEK)

(1) OUR LORD JESUS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS WORLD WAS NOT OUR HOME AND THAT WE SHOULD INVEST INTO ETERNITY

Our Lord Jesus said, “*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight ...*” (John 18:36). Not only is Christ’s kingdom not of this world, but His subjects (that’s you and me) are not of this world.

John 17:14-18 (KJV),¹⁴ I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.¹⁵ I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.¹⁷ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.¹⁸ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Matthew 6:19-21 (KJV),¹⁹ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

(2) EVEN A CASUAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE, AS WELL AS CHURCH HISTORY (ESPECIALLY PRIOR TO CONSTANTINE) REVEALS THAT THE EARLY CHURCH AND OUR SPIRITUAL FOREFATHERS WERE A PEOPLE WHO RECOGNIZED THAT THIS WORLD WAS NOT THEIR HOME.

THE LAST TWO POINTS IS NEW MATERIAL

(3) ONE OF THE GREAT TRAGEDIES IN THE CHURCHES TODAY, ESPECIALLY THE CHURCHES OF AMERICA IS OUR LACK OF AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE.

The twenty-first century churches, especially those in the West (the United States, Canada and Europe) have lost the concept of eternity and the capability and desire to live in light of eternity. In his book *Whatever Happened to Heaven* Dave Hunt writes:

Unfortunately, too many persons—even dedicated Christians—find such a topic (eternity) of only minor interest because they consider it to be largely irrelevant to the challenges of this present life. ... Nothing is more important in shaping how life on earth is lived and what is accomplished both for time and eternity than a person’s attitude about the life to come.

(4) OUR PERSPECTIVE, WHETHER TEMPORAL OR ETERNAL, WILL DETERMINE HOW WE LIVE.

Nothing will change the way we live more that our perspective on life and eternity. What we believe determines how we behave. We see this so clearly in **2 Corinthians 5:6-20**. Paul was inspired to live right and tell others of Jesus because he understood that he had an eternal home with Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:6**) and that there was an eternal hell for those who were lost without Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:11**) and because of this he saw himself as an ambassador of Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:20**).