



PART 5: ABOVE THE LINE LIVING

Colossians | 9.14.25

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Amen, in good times and in bad in life and in death, in chaos or at peace, in despair or wherever it is, we have one name who doesn't change, and he is the anthem of our soul. He is the song of our soul. Amen, come on. Let's give Jesus one more Thanksgiving of praise. Say, Amen, amen, amen, you may be seated today in his presence. It is so good to gather to worship, to sing, to celebrate His goodness and His Kingdom. I want to welcome you online and here in this room, as we gather to worship Jesus, to learn about him, to offer our hearts, our emotions as complicated as they might be, as whatever condition we may find ourselves in, we gather under his name. Today, I wanna invite you to open up your Bibles to Colossians. Chapter Three didn't Caleb Willis do a great job last weekend teaching us all of chapter two of Colossians. Today, in Colossians three, we come to a major pivot in the book, where we are recognizing in view of who Jesus is, how do we now live and how do we see ourselves? And that's what we're going to jump into today and next week, as we wrap up the series, there was a man in Pennsylvania who, in 1989 went to a flea market and for \$4 he purchased a painting and brought it home, but he didn't really care for the painting. He just liked the frame. So he came home, took the painting out, just to keep the frame, and lo and behold, he discovered within the frame one of the earliest copies of the Declaration of Independence. It had been preserved for 200 years within the frame. Now you may be thinking, How in the world can a man get a hold of the copy of the Declaration of Independence? Isn't that at a museum somewhere, did Nicolas Cage steal it yet again? Well, when the Declaration of Independence was written, they made a lot of copies of it pretty immediately, because they needed to circulate this document to all the colonies. And so they using printing press and all of that, they made copies. And this copy he found in the frame was one of the original copies that was sent to colonies to inform people of our independence. Well, this man sold, of course, the copy of this document, and he purchased it for \$4 but he sold it for \$2.4 million. Yep. And then a few years later, it was resold for over \$8.1 million. I know some of you are Googling right now the nearest flea market to me, where can I buy all the frames I possibly can get my hand on the original owner only saw what was on the surface. He saw what was visible to the naked eye, and determined this object was worth only \$4 but all along there was something invisible to the human eye. All along there was something in it that was far more valuable, and what was visible was only worth \$4 but what was invisible. Unseen was worth over \$8 million and I'm just here to tell you that there is a you that you see and there is a you that you don't see. There is a you you can touch and feel and recognize, and sometimes when we see the we or the you on the outside, it feels a little flawed. It's got some blemish. You carry regrets, and you got all kinds of things you wish you could take back, but you can't, and you don't feel like you're worth a whole lot. And the you that you see may only feel like it's worth \$4 but can I just tell you there's a you that you cannot see. There is an invisible you that you cannot see with your human eyes, and that you is worth far more than you put all the money in the world together. Couldn't match it. It's precious. It's incredible. And today, Paul is going to help us see the you that you cannot see with human eyes, but the you that God sees. And he's not just going to help us see that side of you. He's going to point us to how we live our life here, from that perspective, from that view. So Colossians three begins with an invitation to an all out pursuit, to seek and discern the things above that we cannot see with our human eyes. And so Paul says in verse one. So if you have been raised with Christ, do. Seek the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. Paul uses two phrases to invite us into this pursuit of seeking what you cannot see with your human eyes. He says, Seek the things above. Somebody say above, above, and second of all, Set your minds on things where above. The word seek, in the Greek, it speaks of a passionate desire. It is you setting your affections, delight and heart on things you cannot see the things above. That's why some of your translations will literally say, set your heart on things above. It is setting your affection, your passion, your delight in the things that are above. But not only are we called to set our heart on things above, we're told to set your mind on things above. Put your intellect, put your willpower, put your

full mind, your understanding, to see and experience the things above. If you've ever run a marathon or done something crazy like that, the moment you sign up for it, what do you do? You set your heart and mind on it, and when you do everything changes. What you eat is different. Your Workouts are different, your sleep schedule may be different. Why? Because you've set your mind and heart on something, and now your body follows suit. Here's what Paul is saying when you seek out what is unseen, the things above. Your whole life changes. Here's the motivations. Why Paul would say, for us to seek these things above. Next verse says, For you die. How about that for an encouraging Sunday morning sermon, you're already dead. You die. This is speaking to your past, your old self has been crucified with Christ, that you is dead and buried, but in your current life, and your now life, your current reality, your this life, is hidden with Christ in God. That's why it's invisible, because who you truly are, your real life is hidden with Christ in God. Now what about the future? If our past has been crucified, if our current life is hidden with Christ, well, then the future is this. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. That's the moment your life is no longer hidden or misunderstood or beyond the veil. That's the moment where what's hidden is revealed, and when the King of Kings returns in glory, guess who's right next to him? You and I. Isn't that beautiful? Isn't that encouraging? Your past life is crucified, your current life hidden with Christ, and your future self will appear with Jesus in all of his glory. So in the meantime, what are we invited to do? Seek the things above with all your heart. Set your mind not on earthly things, because this is temporary. It's fading. Set your mind and heart on things above. It's worth it. It is so worth it. This whole idea of above and below, it's a notion we find across the scriptures, as if there are two realms of existence. There is life above and life below, notice how Paul described this reality in Second Corinthians, four, verse 18, for we do not focus or see or fix our eyes on what is seen, but on what is what unseen for. What is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. There's a world you see and a world you don't see, and the world you see is temporary, it's fleeting, it fades, but the world you don't see is eternal. Now I want to illustrate this reality. And if you've been at entry for some time, maybe a long time, you would know this. You will recognize this. It's been a core teaching of this church to help us understand who we are. Dan stone, in his book, The rest of the gospel beautifully calls us living above the line, above the line reality. So here's what he's talking about. Here's how we illustrate this. Let's just say there is a line. I know it's super profound and deep, there's just a line. Okay, there's a line, but it marks the difference between two realms of existence, life above the line and life below the line. We saw in Second Corinthians is that life above the line is unseen,

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but life below the line is seen. You can see it with your visible eye. You experience life below the line through your five senses, touch and taste and smell and hear and see. Sometimes that feels really real, but that's not the ultimate reality. Life above the line is the ultimate reality. And here's the deal. You cannot touch, feel, sense, all of that without human senses. You know how you see that you see it through faith. Faith is the sense by which we tap into the unseen world. And Hebrews says you cannot please God without what without faith, being able to see what is unseen for faith is the certainty of the unseen world, our hope in what we cannot see. So above the line is unseen. Beneath the line is what we can see. Above the line is that which is eternal, but beneath the line is that which is temporary. Everything below the line has a start date and an end date. Things expire beneath the line, people are born, they live a life and they die. It's temporary. That's why you reach for something, and you think this is what will fulfill you, and then it's gone. Just when you seem to get a hold of it, it seems fleeting and it has evaporated. But there is life above the line, which is not temporary. It is eternal. There's no past, present, future in eternity. It just is what people call the eternal Now. It just is above the line. The reality is I am beneath the line. The reality is, I am becoming beneath the line. We are growing. We are in process. We go through discipleship and growth beneath the line. God is at work in us. He is making us more and more like him. He is changing our attitudes and behavior. He is at work in us, beneath the line, but above the line. From God's perspective, you are already complete. You're already perfect, you're already righteous and holy. And what's remarkable is, if you're a Christian, you live simultaneously above the line and beyond and beneath the line. Both of these are part of your current reality, but here's what's true beneath the line. Under the line, there's sadness, there's grief, it's pain, there's disappointment. That people get cancer, people get married, and that marriage doesn't work out. You're laid off, have a strange relationships. You think this will fulfill you, and you pursue everything beneath the line. And you realize the seeing things are actually temporary things, and life is always changing. And if you live only for what's under the line or beneath the line, life is futile. Life is meaningless. Life is hard, like we saw this week, injustices and shootings and devastation. But there is a different world that we must see, that the total sum of our life is not just what's described under the line, but there is a life above the line we are invited into and seeing the things above, seeking that which is above, setting your mind on that which is above. That actually gives meaning to life below the line, that gives purpose to this life, that gives freedom and hope to this life below the line. The reality is it's God who made both of these worlds. In fact, I want to just take a moment and give you the whole story of the world and of your life in just a few minutes. Hang in with me. For instance, here's when I went began, before we came into the picture. God

always existed above the line. God in perfect unity, in the triune self of God, Father, Son and Spirit, they existed eternally in perfect harmony with one another. But then God decided, let's create something. Let's build something below the line. And so Genesis says, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He went to work, and he built something so beautiful, underneath the line, beyond the line, but the world was beautiful. It was good, but it was lacking something the world lacked. Those who would bear the very image of God. So God decided to make man and woman, Adam and Eve, and when God created men and women, they lived in perfect harmony. Adam and Eve lived in perfect love relationship with one another and with God. Nothing was missing, nothing was broken. It was right and it was beautiful. It, but sin entered the story, and sin brought brokenness and estrangement and evil. Sin disrupted this horizontal relationship with one another, and certainly our relationship with God. And every generation since Adam and Eve seems to have gone further and further away from the life God designed us a life above the line in perfect harmony and unity with him. But the good news is that God had a plan, and the plan of God, for all eternity was to send the second person of the Trinity, the son from being above the line to being below the line. So in the incarnation of Jesus, God enters our world. He enters our story. The one who is eternal takes on a temporal body. The one who has been unseen now is seen. The Great I Am becomes a part of our becoming. Jesus was born as a baby. He had to grow physically, emotionally, mentally. He had to learn stuff. He had needs. He got hungry. He got thirsty. Why? Because God, while staying above the line, God became one of us, but he never stopped being God. He was always the I Am. He was an above the line deity. That's why, when Jesus is questioned about his identity in John eight, verse 58 Jesus said, Before Abraham, was I? I am, I am, always the I Am, even on earth, he remained the I Am, but he stepped below the line for us to save us, to reconcile us. And how did that happen? It happened on a cross where Jesus would die through a Roman execution, a brutal death we deserved, because that was the only way for our sins to be forgiven and for us to get back in right relationship with God and one another, for us to find peace. So the Prince of Peace gave us life voluntarily, but because he was always the great I AM, the always above the line God death wasn't the end of the story. He defeated death, sin and the grave, and he rose victoriously and ascended to the Father and sat at the right hand of God. And as Jesus sat there, he kept his promise to His disciples where he sat there, when I go away, I'm going to send another advocate, somebody else from above the line is going to come down and be with you. And so the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, he now was sent by Jesus to live inside of us, and now He indwells the believer. And because the Spirit of God indwells you and I, we no longer are limited to just life beneath the line, or below the line. We can live a life above the line. If Jesus was the first human, the first deity, the first person to live both of these realities. Now every Christian has been invited. Though we currently live below the line. We can experience above the line realities. There is a back and forth. There is a co existence of beyond the line, or beneath the line and above the line. This is because God indwells you, and you are hidden with Christ, seated at the right hand of the Father, dwelling in the heavenly places right now, even now. So your ultimate reality is now what's below the line. It is who you are above the line. This is the you you may not have seen, but this is the you you must see, because this changes how we live, how we love, how we interact with the world and with one another, just from Colossians. Let me give you a few reminders of this reality of who we are above the line, while still living here beneath the line, below the line. Colossians, one began like this, where Paul addresses the church and says to the saints in Christ at Colossae, saints is our above the line. Reality to be holy in Christ, saints in Christ, but Colossae is our below the line. Reality, we live in temporal cities and sit in actual chairs like this. But Colossae isn't our permanent ultimate location. Our location is where in Christ hidden with Christ. So your ultimate reality is not that you're a sinner who has just barely been saved by grace,

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because sin is not who you are who. You are is the blood bought saint who is in Christ right now. Saints in Christ, living in Colossians. Paul goes on verse 21 of Colossians, one once you are alienated and hostile in your minds as expressed in your evil actions, that was our below the line. Experience before Jesus, hostile to God, evil in all he did, but something happened. But now I love that, but now don't you, but now he has reconciled you by his physical body. God became below the line, took on a body, and He reconciled us through to Himself through His death to present you holy, faultless and blameless before him. I know below the line you're looking around. You're like man, I got plenty of faults, lots of blemishes, and you may not even be able to see or feel this reality that God says is true of you, that because of Jesus, you are holy and faultless and free from accusation, and if you feel that dissonance, here's what I want you to know. You are not what you feel about you. You are what God says about you. Amen. You are not what you feel about you. You are what he says about you, holy, faultless and without blame. Why? Because you're in Christ, hidden forever in him. Colossians, 210 goes on to say, and you have been filled by Him who is the head over every ruler and authority, you have been filled to the brim with Jesus, which means your above aligned reality is your complete not waiting for a spouse to complete you, not waiting for a child to complete you, not waiting for retirement to complete you. You're not waiting for that next degree or that next promotion to

complete you. In Jesus, you have already been filled, lacking nothing whole and complete in Jesus. Notice verse, verse 12 that we'll see in Colossians, three says, Therefore, as God's Chosen Ones, holy and dearly loved. That's who you are, chosen, holy and dearly loved. There are some days I feel lovable, and other days I feel a little detestable, but on your best day and on your worst day, when you got it all together or you can't do anything right, you're above the line reality. You're chosen. Can't be unchosen. You're holy, and you were dearly loved. The Father loves you just as He loves the Son. Let that sink in what I want you to know today is that you are not a \$4 version of you. You are not cheap, easily thrown away, bought and sold. There was a permanent purchase because of the spotless, most precious blood of Jesus, and this blood of Jesus Redeems you and changes their address from hostility and alienation, and he makes you one with Him, changes you to be holy, faultless and blame. So don't you dare look at yourself as worth just \$4 you are precious in the eyes of God Amen. Isn't that who you are today? That's who you are. I know you might think to yourself, but why don't I feel it below the line? If I know that's true of me, why do I not experience this reality? Why do I struggle with some things? Why do I feel the need to keep growing? And here's the deal. The writer of Hebrews tells us, chapter 10, verse 14, by one offering He meaning Jesus has perfected forever. Those who are what being sanctified perfected forever is that above the line or below the line? Quiz, above we are perfected forever in the eyes of God, in our ultimate reality, we have already been perfected. But in this life here below the line, what's happening? We are being sanctified. We are being sanctified. There are still things that God is working. There are still habits He's removing. There's still growth that's happening. And we live between these two realities. Above the line, I'm perfect. Below the line, I'm being sanctified. You know what that is? That's spiritual growth, that's discipleship. You. Yes, in fact, I will say it like this spiritual growth is becoming below the line, who you already are above the line. That's what it is. You're not trying to become someone you're not. You're recognizing who you already are above the line, and you're setting your heart on it, your desire, your affection, your delight, and you're setting your mind on it, and it changes everything. And the more you realize who you already are. Above the line, you have power to become below the line. What is already true of you, and what happens is the Holy Spirit begins to reveal into your mind and your heart, that's not who you are. You are not your addiction. You are holy. You are not your past. You are life as hidden in Christ. You are not your sin. You are righteous in him. You are not what your ex says about you, what your boss says about you, even what your kids must tell you some things on your worst day. That's not who you are. You are what he says about you. You are what he thinks of you. This is the unseen you. You must recognize through faith, discipleship, spiritual growth. It's becoming in our below the line experience more and more of who we are already above the line. So those truths travel the distance, cross the line into our heart, into our attitudes, into our body, and we live from that point of view. What it means is we become in our practice who we already are in our position, we live out in our behavior, what is already true of our identity before God and those two things coalesce and come into agreement. Here's why this matters for you to know. And I heard it described like this here and from other leaders saying, I just love this illustration. Just imagine that you're standing in a hallway between two rooms, and one room is incredibly clean. It's pristine. No kids live there. No toddlers live there. Things are not just hidden behind the cabinet like we sometimes do at our house. Things are just right. Everything is orderly and neat and pristine. But then there's the other room, and you know what room I'm talking about. And in that room, all kinds of trash and mess are all over the place. You can't even see the floor. There are soda cans and chips and all kinds of stuff on the floor. It is completely in disarray. As you stand between these two rooms, you realize I got some trash in my pocket, I need to throw away. I forgot to throw this away. So where am I going to dispose this trash? Which room are you going to throw it in? The clean room or the dirty room? Tell me dirty room. Why it's already dirty. It's already a mess. I'm not going to mess up a clean room. I'm going to throw this into the dirty room. God sees you not as the dirty room, but as the clean room. And some of you, yet though see yourself as the dirty room and not the clean room. Therefore when you're tempted by sin, you think to yourself, I'm already dirty. Why don't I just toss one more? Why not one more? Click, one too many bottles, another nasty email that I know is in my flesh, because I'm already a sinner. It's my nature that's below the line, thinking

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that is not who you are. So when you realize this above the line, reality is I'm actually holy, I'm righteous, I'm perfect in Jesus, then sin becomes insanity. Sin becomes a foreign object in a clean room. You recognize because I am holy, because I'm righteous in Jesus, I can't tolerate sin. I can't let it just creep around in my heart. No, it's no longer fitting to me. I have a new nature in Christ, one that loves him and is holy and righteous, therefore sin no longer belongs. It is a foreign object. In fact, that's exactly where Paul goes in this next verse, look at verse five. Therefore, what's it? Therefore, because you've been raised with Christ, your life is hidden in Christ, and one day you will appear with Christ. Because of that, therefore, put to death. Not just put to bed, but put to death. Put to death what belongs to your earthly nature, this old you that's already dead, here was what it says, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil. Desire and greed, which is idolatry, because of these,

God's wrath is coming upon the disobedient and you once, you once walked in these things when you were living in them, but now put away all the following, anger, wrath, malice, slander and filthy language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another. Why? Since you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self and again, you are being renewed, being sanctified, being renewed below the line in knowledge according to what above the line, according to the knowledge of your Creator, in image of your Creator. And in Christ, there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian slave and free, but Christ is all and he is in all. Paul is saying, because you've been raised, because you are new, because you are appearing soon with Christ in glory, put to death, what no longer belongs to Jesus, what no longer belongs to your earthly old nature. You can call these vices, and they are, but if you think about it, every one of these things on the list is relationally destructive. It's not just personal vices. They are relationally destructive. They're not what we want in the world, sexual immorality leads to broken homes and families greed and evil desires lead to taking advantage of others. The events of this week are rooted in anger, wrath, malice and slander. It's offense that seeks revenge, falsehood. Even a world that rejects Christ has a sense that these things cannot be accepted, but we cannot put to death these things without the therefore, without Jesus doing a deep work in our heart and in our soul. And I was studying this Text this Week, verse 11, the part about Jew and Gentile and Greek and Scythian barbarian slaves like that, seemed like a weird placement in this text. Like, why would you go through all these personal vices and then talk about this unity of community? And I realized, no, no, that's the very purpose. Why put it there? Because these vices are not just personal sinful things. They are community destroyers, the anger we feel, the offense we carry, the bitterness, the lying, the anger. It is a very assault on the kind of community that Jesus came to build. He came to tear down the wall of hostility. But these vices, they put them back up. They create tribalism, and they create prejudice, and they create hatred for one another, and it prevents the very kind of church and community Jesus came to birth and sustain. That's why it is good for the church and for the world to follow Jesus and put to death the things that do not believe belong to his way. So if we are to put to death those things, then how are we to live? Paul gives us another version of the fruit of the Spirit, because all of these things happen by Him and through Him. Notice what it says in verse 12, therefore again, raised, seated with him, put into death. The other things as God's Chosen Ones, holy and beloved, put on you got a wardrobe changed, put on these things. What are they? Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. We're not always going to get it right, and when we get it wrong, what do we do? We bear with one another, forgiving one another. If anyone has a grievance against another, how, just as the Lord has forgiven you. This is a season where offense is high, but the call to the church just to forgive, as Jesus has forgiven you, so you're also to forgive, and above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And in a world that lacks peace, Paul says, when you do this, let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts and be thankful. The invitation is to trade out hatred and put on love, to trade out offense and to put on forgiveness, to trade out hostility and division and to put on unity. In compassion, humility, gentleness, patience. This is what life in Christ, hidden in him, alive in him, risen with him, looks like the early church. By the late first century and the early second century, they took this imagery of putting off and putting on. They made it a ritual at baptism. It's when followers of Jesus were baptized publicly. They actually changed out of their old garment. They were immersed in the water, and they put on a white, beautiful baptismal garment, and it symbolized for them, resurrection, life, purity and newness. And some people wore this for a week to let everyone know they put on something new. If you've been in church for a little while, you might have heard the name St Augustine. St Augustine was a fourth century church father. But before St Augustine became a Christian, he was ruled in bondage of sexual sin and immorality. In fact, he wrote a book called The Confessions, where he talked about his sin, struggle in the bondage to sin, especially the sexual sin that he was in before he surrendered his life to Jesus. But the story goes that after St Augustine gave his life to Jesus, he came back to his hometown and was walking on the streets of his hometown, and a lady who was previously a mistress of his came to St Augustine and called him and said, Augustine, it is I. But Augustine replied, Yes, but it is no longer I. It is no longer I, because we've been crucified with Christ, no longer I who lives but Christ, who lives in us and through us, no longer the old. You. Something new and beautiful and profound has happened. It is new life in Christ. So we put to death Everything belongs to the old self, and we put on what is true of us in our new self. I think it's amazing that Paul, as he ends this section,

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this is how he closes it, and he says this in verse 16, and we're going to do exactly what he says, Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing in one another. How, through psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts and whatever you do, in word and in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, the Father through him. I think it's fitting that Paul says the way that this will dwell deeply in your heart, that these realities take deep roots in your soul. It's not just speak about them, but to sing about them, to go to God with spiritual songs and hymns and music in your heart giving thanks. That's how you set your heart on him. That's

how you remind your mind of who he is. And when we sing, something beautiful happens, that veil between heaven and earth gets a little thin, and that line between above and below gets a little thin, and the truth of who he is, and the truth of who we are begins to emerge in our soul. And these truths must be too precious to merely speak about they must be sung about. Our soul must get in sync with the rhythm of who we are. So would you stand on your feet today and we're going to worship Jesus. We're going to remind our soul of the you that you cannot see, of the life hidden with Christ when it invite our prayer team forward today, because there are some of you who are saying, Man, I didn't know that life above the line was possible. I didn't know God became one of us, and today is the day of your salvation. I want you to wait no longer, come to Jesus, receive and confess your sins, give your life and experience life above the line. There are others of you who still feel in bondage to the lies below the line, and your soul is not yet free, and today, your eyes are becoming open to the real you, and in prayer, you are being reminded of your worth, of the power of the Spirit that causes you to put to death, to put off and to put on, live in this new reality. Let's sing and let our heart and our mind be reminded of. We are in Jesus. Let's pray. Let's worship you.