

CHRIST, OUR LIFE

The truth found in our study today is the most life-changing truth that ever entered my heart and mind since the day I became a Christian. Earlier in my Christian life, had I realized the truth I am teaching you today, there is no doubt that my backslidings would have been minimal, never major. I want to bring your attention to this wonderful, all encompassing phrase found in Colossians 3:4, "...Christ, who is our life..." Too often we lock this phrase to the next words of this verse: "...shall appear..." and we don't let this great truth spread to us here and now in the present world in which we live. Christ doesn't become my life when He appears - He is my life now! If you are saved, He is your life now! Our work for God cannot dare be separated from our worship to Christ, lest we lose our cutting edge in ministry. With this as our theme let us consider:

I. Heavenly Mindedness (Colossians 3:1)

- A. The pronouncement: *"If ye then be risen with Christ"*
- B. The priority: *"...seek those things which are above"*
- C. The Person: *"...where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God"*

II. Worldly Detachment (Colossians 3:2, 3)

- A. Synchronize: *"Set your affection on things above..."*
- B. Separate: *"...not on things on the earth"*
- C. Synergize; *"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God"*

III. Rapture Readiness (Colossians 3:4)

- A. Determined time: *"When Christ..."*
- B. Divinely driven: *"...who is our life..."*
- C. Deliverance assured: *"...then shall ye also appear with Him in glory"*

A young woman fell in love and married. Soon after the honeymoon, her husband, a drill sergeant in the armed forces, became an over-bearing tyrant. Every day he made her a checklist of things to do. When he came home, it was white glove

inspection. He literally went through the house examining all that pertained to his list. He was "lord of the list." At the supper hour, he discussed what was not done or how what was done should have been done. As they went off to sleep he was still rehashing the list. When he left for the base the next morning, rather than kiss her good-bye for the day, he presented her with a new revised list. When he came home, it was white glove again. This continued day after day. The young wife became an emotional and physical wreck.

One day the sergeant dropped dead of a sudden heart attack. The young widow went to the funeral and sadly felt somewhat relieved and determined. She was determined that she was not going to be married again. Her impression of marriage was far from favorable. Her mind was made up until one day she was overwhelmed with strong feelings that turned into love for a kind man, full of compassion, mercy and patience. She was still apprehensive, because she had expected the previous marriage to be great, but instead was greatly disappointed. Taking the risk, she accepted this kind man's proposal. After the honeymoon, nothing changed, except for the good. This husband presented her with no list. He was a "lord of love." He kissed her good-bye for work every day. When he got home he wrapped her in his arms and told her how much he missed her. Their supper was always peaceful. And their evenings were always pleasant. And this was their existence, a very different one than she had before.

The wife became an immaculate housekeeper. One day she was cleaning in the bedroom and found behind one of the drawers an old list that her first, now deceased, husband had left her. She curiously went down the list and fell over the bed laughing. She was laughing because she was not only doing everything on the list, she was doing more than what was on the list, above and beyond what the first husband required.

This is what Romans 7:1-6 teaches: we were under the law and could never satisfy the law's demands. Christ fulfilled the law for us and we became part of His glorious bride. *"But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter"* (Romans 7:6). What the law could not produce, love now performs! The beauty of "Christ, our life" majors on relationship. When the relationship is present, rules become a blessing, not a burden. *"For to me to live is Christ..."* (Philippians 1:21).

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.