

# A Victorious Church

## Getting on the Same Page Part 4

### Colossians 2:20-3:13

January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (Sunday Night)

We are going to conclude this series by following up on this morning's sermon. We are going to talk about being a saint, and living a victorious Christian life.

#### Scripture

*“If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,*

*compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”*

He is saying that legalism and works based religion will not work against the indulgence of the flesh.

## **Introduction**

One of my vices is that I am a late night person. Sometimes when I finish studying I stay up late watching night time TV. One of my favorite TV stations is TBS and TNT. I like the edited versions of some movies that I cannot go see at the theater because of the ratings. One night I was watching the edited version of a movie that starred Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell. The name of the movie was *Overboard*. In that movie Goldie Hawn plays the part of a rich, young, spoiled brat. The movie opens and long story short, they have a problem on her yacht. They pull it into port for some repairs, and she decides that while the boat is being repaired she will remodel her closets for her shoes. They call for a local carpenter played by Kurt Russell. His character is the total opposite of hers. He repairs the closet and she is not satisfied so she will not pay him and she tosses his tools overboard. He goes to the side of the boat to save the tools and she pushes him overboard. The boat pulls out into the sea and he thinks he will never see her again. Later that night she realizes she has left a ring up on top of the boat so when she goes up to retrieve it and a wave hits the boat, and she falls overboard and washes ashore. She is taken to a local hospital and they discover that she is suffering from amnesia. She is driving the hospital staff crazy. They put her picture on TV and asks if anyone knows her. Kurt Russell is in a bowling alley when he sees her picture on TV, and you can just tell by the look on his face that he has a thought. He talks to his friends and heads to the hospital and convinces them that he is her husband. He takes her out of the hospital and he loads her up in the back end of his old, beat up pickup truck. The next thing you

know you see Kurt driving away with his coon dog in the passenger seat and her in the back of the truck. He takes her to this home that I promise you would not let your pig live in! Suddenly this rich, young, spoiled brat, who has never worked a day in her life, never even been around dust before, is introduced to this home and to 4 boys that have never seen a bath before. The whole movie plays out with Kurt Russell convincing her that she is his wife and these are her children. The only reason he can do this is because she cannot remember who she is. During the whole movie she is feeling like this is not who she really is. But every time she starts to make a breakthrough, he will show her something to deceive her into believing that she is his wife. He makes a household slave out of her to get back at her for what she did in not paying him for the work.

As I was watching that movie that night, it was if the Spirit of God said these words to me; that is exactly what happened in the life of a Christian. When you do not remember who you are, Satan will come along in your life and make a slave of sin out of you. After the message this morning, I hope you understand why I preached that with such passion. I believe that many people in our churches today are suffering from what I call spiritual amnesia. They do not really know who they are. If you do not know who you are, or you forget who you are, then Satan can come along and deceive you into believing you are an old sinner. He will try to make a slave of sin out of you again.

### **3 Principles for a Saint**

#### **Where I Live**

Now to prevent that from happening tonight, let me share afresh 3 principles that we believe to be true at HBC based on the Word of God. The 1<sup>st</sup> is **1 *where I live always determines who I am spiritually.*** According to 1 Corinthians 15, you (spiritually) live in either 1 of 2 places. You either live in Adam, or in Christ. A person lives in Adam by virtue of their physical birth. When you are born physically, you are spiritually in Adam, and that birth constitutes you as a sinner. Remember this, it is not

your 1<sup>st</sup> sin that causes you to be a sinner, you are not a sinner because you sin. You sin because you are a sinner, this is key. In a grace based church, we differ from a works based church on this point. In a works based church, a person believes that it is your actual sin that you commit after birth that constitutes you as a sinner. Ephesians 2:1-3 teaches that we are a sinner by nature, and by nature children of wrath. This means we have a nature that we inherited from Adam at birth, and that constitutes us as a sinner. That is why I can say with passion, that we are a sin waiting to happen.

Once you have been born again and have received Jesus into your heart as your Lord and Savior, at that moment you are constituted as a saint. Once you have been born again, you move out of Adam and into Christ. You move out of the old subdivision of sin, and you move into the subdivision of the saints. Your 2<sup>nd</sup> birth constitutes you as a saint of God. It is not an act of righteousness that causes you to be a saint; you become a saint at the moment of your 2<sup>nd</sup> birth. This is crucial, because if it was an act of sin that constitutes us as a sinner, then it would be an act of righteousness that would constitute us as a saint. But because you are born a sinner, you are also reborn a saint. So always remember that your birthplace determines where you live. If you have been born again, you live in Christ. Because you live in Christ, you are a saint of God. You are not a saint of God based on anything you have done, but based on what God has done for you in Christ.

### **Where I am Going**

With that thought, remember that <sup>2</sup> ***who I am determines where I am going***. It is bad theology to tell people that if you do bad things the devil is going to get you, or you are going to go to hell. Do you know what this teaches? It teaches that where a person goes is based on what a person does, or does not do. Ultimately, it teaches that if people do bad things that means they are going to go to hell, and that is not true. People do not go to hell because they do bad things. *Who* you are eventually determines

where you are going, not what you *do*. This is crucial; we have to be balanced and consistent in our theology. We have to understand that people do not go to hell because they do or not do something. They go to hell because in their core being, unrepentant people are still sinners, and God casts sinners into hell. So when you die, you who have been born physically only, (you live in Adam, you are a sinner) are going to hell. You are not going to hell because you reject Jesus. That is the biggest misconception we have in the Church. You are going to hell because you are a sinner, and God is just in sending sinners to hell. Now saints go to heaven, but they do not go to heaven because they do good things. Sinners go to hell because they are sinners, and saints go to heaven because they are saints. It is your identity that ultimately determines where you are going.

Paul says if you have identified with Christ, meaning you have died with Him and been raised with Him, we are supposed to set our minds on things above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. We are supposed to know that our life is hidden with God in Christ so that where Christ is, that is where we are, then when He appears we will appear with Him. This is teaching that as a believer, spiritually you are already in heaven, right now. I know what you are thinking...we are right here in Hardin. Think about this, the Bible says that Christ died, was buried, raised, and ascended to heaven. He is right now seated at the right hand of God. We have taught that when we are born again we move out of Adam and into Christ. So if we are in Christ and Christ is physically in heaven, and I am spiritually in Christ right now, then we are spiritually in heaven. This is why I tell people when they come to my funeral not to cry for me. I will not be in a box, I will not be in a place called hell; I will be with my Lord. I have that assurance because when I die on earth, I am only going where I already am right now. Did you get that? That was good folks! If Christ is at the right hand throne of God, and I am in Christ, then I am already in heaven! This is why the Bible wants me to set my focus in heaven where Christ is because that is where I really am. The problem is that physically I am still

here. So where is Christ spiritually? He is in me, so he is right here in Hardin. I am in Christ, that is called salvation, but the Christ in heaven is also in me, that is called sanctification. This brings us to this 3<sup>rd</sup> principle.

## **What I Wear**

3 ***Where I am going determines what I wear.*** You have heard me tell this before. When I was dating my wife, I lived on one side of the county and she had moved to the other side. Because it was long distance, I would have to drive 4 miles up the road to the gas station, roll the window of my car down, and pull the phone into my car to talk to Celisa. Whenever I would ask her out on a date for the weekend, she would always ask where I was going to take her. She never went out with me on a date without me having to tell her where we were going. It took me a little while to figure out that she was asking me that because what she was going to wear depended on where I was going to take her. For example, if I was going to take her to a tractor pull, she did not want to show up with her church clothes on. If I was going to take her to *Devanti's* she wanted to dress appropriately. If it was *McDonald's*, she did not want to be dressed for *Devanti's*. You ladies know that where you are going determines what you are going to wear because you have to be dressed appropriately for where you are going.

What is amazing to me in our passage is that when the Bible talks about setting our minds on things above, and one day when He appears and we are going to appear with Him, that it has practical application right now, because the Bible says we are supposed to put off, and put on. He says we are to put off the deeds of the old man, and put on the deeds of the new man. Paul uses the clothing imagery to describe behavior of a believer. Put off those unbelieving habits, and put on clothes that signify who you are, and where you are going.

Now let us think this through. I live in Christ, which makes me a saint. As a saint I am going to heaven because that is where saints go when they die. Since I am going to heaven what should I wear? I mean when I get up

in the morning and go to work, what should I wear? I am not talking about physical clothes here; Paul is talking about our actions as a believer. Our clothes should say, every day of our life, no matter where we are at, that we are going to heaven. Does your behavior say that? Have you ever been caught in a situation where your behavior might have made someone think you were going to hell? And yet you say you are going to heaven. You see, I think sometimes we forget that we are heaven bound people. If we are not careful, most of us are just surviving in this world and we really do not realize the reality that today we could be in the presence of God.

Therefore, today I should get dressed and my behavior should say to the world that I am going to heaven. Do we realize that the moment of our salvation God clothed us with the righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ? Sin looks fine on a sinner, but I do not think sin looks appropriate on a saint. The reason is because sin, in a sinner's life, is ok because a sinner is going to hell. If I was a sinner, I would grab as much gusto out of this world as I could. Because this is all there is for you if you are a sinner. But Scripture teaches for us who are saints that we are going to live with God forever and ever, and we have been robed in the righteousness of Christ. You are going to heaven. We need, to the best of our ability, to keep our robe clean. When I go certain places I am conscience of what I have on.

You know that for years that the joke here at HBC has been is Bro Ricky a farming preacher, or a preaching farmer? For my whole life I have always switched between farming clothes and preaching clothes. The only distinction between them is that when I have farming clothes on I can get dirty, and when I have preaching clothes I do not. Preachers do not get dirty but farmers do. As a matter of fact I think dirt looks really good on a farmer, but dirt does not look good on a preacher. It is amazing that when I am farming I can go places and get dirty and not even think about the dirt around me. Yet I can have my preaching clothes on and go to that same place, in that same environment, and not get dirty. The reason is because I am conscience of who I am. When I am Ricky the farmer, I just get dirty and do not even think about it. But when I am Ricky the preacher,

with my dress clothes on, in that same environment, I can do the same thing and not get dirty. I remember who I am, and I remember what I am wearing. I know grease would not look good on a suit.

I have an illustration to share. Sometimes God just breaks into my life in a natural way and just illustrates truths He has already taught me. You would never know this about me just being around me. But I am the kind of guy who likes to kill 2 birds with 1 stone when possible. So that means sometimes I have a lot of multiple things going on at the same time. I will never forget when we lived back on old Dexter Road. We had this little bitty house with a shallow well. It was only about 30 feet deep, and 3 feet of water. If you turned the water on and forgot, after about 2 hours, it was not good. It would run the well dry and start sucking sand in the water lines. Celisa and the kids did not like that. Now we had moved, but we still had the farm, and my cousin moved into the house. So I still went to the farm to feed every day. I had this water trough on the farm that I watered the calves in. I had a fence that divided boy and girl calves. I had a barbed wire fence with electricity on both sides, and I had this trough in the middle of that fence. I will never forget one morning I went to the farm to feed, and I turned the water on and went on to do some other things since it took a while to fill the trough. I went about doing what I needed to do and then went home to get ready for a funeral in Benton. I got back home and changed clothes and started to Benton. I drove by the farm on my way, and as I did I had this thought hit me. Did I turn the water off? I could not remember, and I looked at my watch. I knew I could not go to the funeral and get back quick enough if I had left it on. I also knew that I did not have time to go back home and change into my farm clothes, turn off the water, change back into preacher clothes, and get to the funeral. So I pull into the driveway, hoping I had turned the water off, but I had not... I am in a dilemma folks. I have to get to the well, turn the water off, and get back without getting everything that was in that field on me. I just made the decision that I did not think what was in that field would look good on my suit. I opened the gate, looked down at my shoes, grabbed



my pant legs and started tip-toeing my way through, and turned the water off. I tip-toed my way back, and the 1<sup>st</sup> thing I did was to look down and check myself over. There was nothing in that field on me! How did I do it? I remembered who I was, I remembered where I was going, and I remembered what I was wearing, and I decided what was in that field would not look good on me.

What would happen tomorrow when we go to work if we would remember that? Who am I? I am a saint. Where am I going? I am going to heaven. What am I wearing? I am wearing the robe of righteousness of Jesus Christ. I have decided that the sin, that is this community I am in, will not look good on me. So I will walk in this world without getting what is in this world on me. We can do it if we will remember who we are, where we are going, and what we are wearing. Let us let this community see us apart from them, and not brag on us, but want to know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.