

Day 169, Colossians 3

by David Servant

As believers, we should live holy lives, avoiding exclusionary sins and cooperating with Christ to demonstrate our gratitude for what He has done for us.

Scripture: Colossians 3:2-12

Topics: "Holy Living", "Kingdom Exclusion"

Description

David Servant preaches on Paul's letter emphasizing the importance of our response to what God has done for us through Christ. Paul urges believers to set their minds on heavenly things and to consider earthly desires as dead to avoid immorality and greed, which are exclusionary sins. The sermon highlights the seriousness of sins like sexual immorality, greed, anger, lying, and unforgiveness, warning that practicing these sins can lead to exclusion from God's kingdom. Paul stresses the necessity of living holy lives and cooperating with Christ to obediently walk in God's ways.

Transcript

Following the same pattern of his Ephesian letter, Paul also wrote about all that God has done for us through Christ in the first half of this letter. In the second half, he writes of our appropriate response to what God has done. Notice the word "therefore" in 3:1 and 4. God expects something out of us because He has done some things for us.

It is because we have been raised up with Christ that we should "set our minds on things above," and "not on the things that are on earth" (3:2). Those who criticize others for being "so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly good" are usually those who are so earthly-minded that they are no heavenly good. What percentage of your thoughts are heavenly?

And it is because we have died with Christ that we should consider "the members of [our] earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amount to idolatry" (3:5). I'm sure you've noticed how Paul has in his letters repeatedly identified the sins of immorality, impurity and greed as being particularly grievous to God (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5). In fact, Paul often indicates that practicing those sins will exclude one from God's kingdom, and today he warns again that it is because of those very sins that "the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience" (3:6), yet another warning that such sins are exclusionary. Although it is commonly said in Christian circles that "all sins are the same in the eyes of God" because "sin is sin," that is simply not true. All crimes that one might commit are generally grievous to human beings, but all are not equally grievous, as evidenced by the fact

that there are varying punishments for varying crimes. With God it is no different. (Thankfully, sleeping during sermons is not listed anywhere in the New Testament as a sin that will exclude us from heaven!)

All of this is to say that we should avoid like the plague any and every form of sexual immorality and greed. Although sexual immorality is generally frowned upon in most Christian circles (as there is always a steady stream of pastors who are caught in affairs to frown upon), there is hardly a mention of greed from most pulpits, much less even a definition of what might constitute greed in God's eyes. More tragic is the fact that the majority of wealthy Christians who live in the world's wealthiest nations think that greed has nothing to do with what they possess, but is only an attitude of the heart. As long as they don't have "greed in their hearts," they can keep acting as greedy as they want, ignoring the poor while they live in self-indulgence. Help us, Lord!

Today Paul also hones in on other sins that are very grievous to God, and that he, or another New Testament author elsewhere, warns will exclude one from God's kingdom if practiced. For example, Paul specifically names anger (along with similar sins of wrath, malice, slander and abusive speech), lying and unforgiveness (3:8, 9, 13; see Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; Mark 16:15). I'm afraid that multitudes of professing Christians are not aware how important it is to live holy lives. Thankfully, you are not one of them! How many Christians, whose Bibles repeatedly warn of "exclusionary sins," are convinced that they are "safe under grace," to the degree that they would even reject any teacher who intimates that currently-saved people are not guaranteed ultimate salvation apart from holiness?

May I also add that it is obvious that Christ who dwells in us does not live through us without our cooperation; otherwise there would be no need for Paul to admonish his readers to live obediently.

Once again, Paul reminds us that we are "chosen of God" (3:12), as are all who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not "unconditionally chosen," as that very phrase is an oxymoron (all choices are conditional), and the idea that phrase expresses actually describes random selection, or chance. God did not choose you by saying, "Eeny, meeny, miny, moe!"

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