

Set Your Affections Above - Part 1

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince emphasizes the importance of setting our affections on heavenly things to live a fulfilling Christian life.

Duration: 22:36

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 12:48, 2 Corinthians 4:17, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Colossians 3:1-2, Hebrews 11:27

Topics: "Affections"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 and highlights the idea that everything in the universe is for the sake of believers. The speaker emphasizes that as God's children, our lives are hidden with Christ in God. The fear of death is discussed as a bondage that the devil uses to hinder believers from being effective. The speaker encourages the audience to conquer the fear of death and find freedom in Christ, emphasizing that Christ is our life. The privilege of hearing and understanding the truth is also highlighted, with the speaker expressing awe at how rapidly truth is being restored to the people of God. The sermon concludes with a personal testimony of Eldridge Cleaver's conversion experience.

Transcript

I want to talk about how to make the best out of life. That sounds good. There's some things involved that don't sound so good, but I would have to say, I really enjoy life more now than I've ever enjoyed life.

I'm somewhat over 60 and I've had a really a good life, an exciting life, an adventurous life. I've lived in many different countries, associated with many different races and kinds of people. I don't think I've ever had a dull life.

It's not always been easy. But I really think it's better now than it ever has been. And I think I can share with you in part what's helping me to have a good life.

I believe it should be that way. Scripture says in the book of Proverbs, the pathway of the righteous is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. So if we're walking in the pathway of righteousness, it should be getting brighter every day.

Not easier, but brighter. I don't believe it's easy to be a Christian these days. I don't find it easy.

I find it challenging and exciting and rewarding. I'm sure that most of you young people, I don't think you can conceive the privilege you have of hearing the truth that you hear. You have no idea what it costs to

get to that truth.

Young people in their teens, converted and baptized in the spirit and becoming members of some committed fellowship, can learn in two years what it took me 30 years to know. And I'm not slow when it comes to learning. You have no idea of how truth is being restored with unbelievable rapidity to the people of God.

How would it be to try and minister to people and know nothing about demons or deliverance. I did that for many years. I went out in the streets of London, pulled in people off the streets and got them saved, baptized in the spirit and never knew how to help them out of their demon problems.

And I can look back, scores of people that could have been helped, that never got where they should have got. Because we didn't understand how to help them. And so on with many other areas of truth.

The areas of submission and commitment, we really didn't know anything about. Even the responsibilities of family life. Really basically we were kind of trained to believe that if you neglected your family and were out preaching every night.

You were really serving God in a very wonderful way. And how many preachers from that time ended up with bruised and injured wives and broken homes. Because they were misled.

So you thank God for the truth that's being made available to you. But remember this, to whom much is given, of him shall much also be required. So you're going to be answerable for what you know.

I'd like to turn to Colossians chapter 3. Read a first few verses. This first verse of Colossians has been in my mind for months. And I've never preached about it till this morning.

Colossians 3 beginning at verse 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Paul says if ye be risen with Christ. He has been teaching them that they are risen with Christ.

He says now if you accept that fact, that you are risen with Christ, act according to it. Don't look for your life on the earthly plane, set your affection on things above. That's the next verse.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. That to me indicates a decision. It's a decision as to where you're going to find your pleasure.

Where you're going to look for happiness. Where you're going to invest your time and your interest. Is it going to be in things on earth or are you going to set your affection on things which are above.

There are the two realms. Verse 3 for ye are dead. Your life is hid with Christ in God.

That's not the most literal translation. The Greek language has two amongst others, two tenses. One is the perfect tense.

One is the historic past. The King James translation has the perfect tense. But the Greek is the historic past.

It says you died. When did you die? Or did you die? When did you die? When Christ died. Romans 6. Our old man was crucified with him.

When he died, that old rebellious nature in me died. That's a historic fact. Not a theory, not theology.

It's a fact of history. Our old man was crucified with Christ. So Paul says you died.

Bear that in mind. And your life is hid with Christ in God. You have a hidden life that the people of this world don't understand.

That word, that passage always reminds me of a quotation that I made this morning. And I'll repeat from Lenin. And I don't normally go around quoting Lenin.

But this says it so, so very, very vividly. Incidentally, let me just say this in parenthesis, talking about Lenin. I had the privilege of hearing Eldridge Cleaver give his testimony in January.

It's a very beautiful testimony. How many of you've heard it? Good. Because it reminded me.

Because the crisis came when he was looking at the shadows on the face of the moon. Sitting there in an apartment in the Riviera, the south of France. Far from God, not having the answer.

And as he looked at the shadows on the face of the moon, they took on the features of men. One was Lenin, another was Marx, another was Castro. Men whom he admired and determined to follow.

And then it turned to the face of Jesus Christ. And he began to sob uncontrollably. And the only thing he could think to do to stop sobbing was to pray.

And he only knew two prayers. One was the Lord's Prayer and the other was the 23rd Psalm. So he repeated them over and over again.

But that was really the turning point in his life. But let me go back to what I was saying about Lenin. Lenin said about Communists.

Communists are dead men on furlough. And that was a kind of gripping statement. And I said to myself, why did he say that? What did he mean by it? And this is how I interpret it.

When you become a Communist, that's your death warrant. Essentially you've chosen to die. You can be sure you will die.

You may die on a street barricade. You may die in a jail. You may die in a swamp in Southeast Asia.

But you're dead. And until you actually do die, you're a dead man on furlough. Well what really grips me about that, is that I really believe that Christians should think that way.

We are dead men on furlough. We're here but we don't belong here. Our life isn't here.

This isn't where our ambitions are. You died and now your life is hid with Christ in God. The Bible says that all men through fear of death are subject to bondage.

I really believe as long as we are afraid to die, the devil has the last word in our lives. Because he's always got a threat that will stop us doing anything effective. You're going to die.

You'll be killed. But when you're dead, what can he do to you? He's got nothing more to frighten you with. It really is true.

Once you have met and conquered the fear of death, you're a free man. And until you have, you're not free. Paul says you died, just face the fact.

Your life is hid with Christ in God. Verse four, when Christ who is our life, shall appear. The three or four beautiful words there.

Christ is our life. Do you know that? My life is Christ. He is my life.

I don't just get life from him. He is my life. Paul said for me to live is Christ.

I think if you're seeking healing, there comes a time when we have to go beyond just claiming it by faith. Or even being anointed by the elders. I know when I lay in the hospital in 1942 to 43 for 12 months.

One of the scriptures that really helped me was Christ is my life. What can conquer Christ in me? When Christ who is our life shall appear, be seen. Then shall we also appear with him in glory.

Meanwhile the world doesn't know who we are. Doesn't know what we are, doesn't understand us. It doesn't recognize us because it didn't recognize him.

But that's all right, because we're living somewhere else. Our life is hid with Christ in God. When you're hid with Christ in God, what can touch you? That nothing can reach you.

Then it goes on verse five, mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth. You, in essence Paul is saying you can't live in two different places at the same time. If your life is in heaven, then you've got to be prepared to die to life on earth.

Now you can get scared about this, but I'm not going to suggest that you go away to a monastery or a convent. I'm not interpreting it that way. Put your life on earth to death and then Paul says, mortify these things.

Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, covetousness which is idolatry. It's really the emphasis is on where you put your affections. What are the things that really move you? What are the things that you really desire? Paul says if you're really desirous of money, money is your God and you're an idolater.

There can be strong desires in us which bind us. For instance, I believe it's right for every child to honor his parents. But I've known children who placed their mother or their grandmother in the place of God and made an idol out of a parent.

I've known parents who made idols out of their children and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator. I remember once some years ago I was in the city and a woman had a child and a boy of about nine or ten in hospital with a kidney problem that the doctors couldn't deal with. She said brother Prince would you come and pray for him? And without really even thinking what I was saying, I said sister have you ever surrendered your son to the Lord? And she became hysterical.

Did you mean he's going to die? I didn't say that. I said have you ever taken your soulish grasp off that child and told God that he belongs to him? There's a kind of way of clinging on to things that destroys them. If you make your child an idol, God has to break that idol.

If you make money your idol, God has to break that idol. So the question is where do we set our affections? What are we deeply committed to? Where is our life? Paul says you died to the life of this world. Your life now is on another plane.

Set your affections there. Let's look at another passage. I'm just going to go through some passages in the New Testament turn to Philippians in the third chapter.

Verse 17 Philippians 3 17 Brethren be followers together of me and mark them which walk so ye have us as ensamples or patterns. For many walk of whom I've told you often and now tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Do you think those people are professing Christians or not? Seems to me obvious from the way Paul speaks.

He's talking about people who claim to be Christian. He says they're not the enemies of Christ but they're the enemies of his cross. Why? What happens at the cross? The death.

And then he describes these people. If you think he's talking about unbelievers, people who make no profession of being Christians, you're free to hold that opinion. But to me it's very clear he isn't.

Many walk of whom I've told you even weeping. Told you many times and tell you now even weeping. They are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

Whose end is destruction. Whose God is their belly. Whose glory is in their shame.

Who mind earthly things. In other words the whole level of their interest is on earth. Their God is their stomach.

Their glory is in their shame. Just look two verses on in that chapter. I think you'll see that's verse 20 and 21.

For our conversation our citizenship Paul says is in heaven. Again where do we belong? Where's our home? Where's our life? In heaven. That's right.

You know if you become a citizen of a nation you're entitled to a passport. And you don't have to have a visa. Do you have your passport? I'm a citizen of three countries.

Isn't that beautiful? I'm a citizen of Britain. I'm a citizen of the United States. And praise God I'm a citizen of heaven.

And I can go to Britain, America or heaven without a visa. All right our citizenship is in heaven. From else also we look for the Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who shall change our vile body. That it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. That's the King James.

But what it says literally and I don't know whether this comes out in the New American Standard. It says who shall change the body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of his glory. So what are we living in now? A body of humiliation.

This body is designed to humiliate us. Why are we humiliated? Because we rebelled against God. So God says you can live in a body that will keep you humble.

You can live on the finest and the fattest food. Which you'll just have to go to the bathroom the same. There's no one who can stop his food from going corrupted.

You can wear the finest clothes but when you run and get hot your body will perspire. And you'll need deodorant. You just can't.

Every, every day this body is telling you you're in a condition of humiliation. It's the result of the fall. You better remember why you're in it.

I'm not saying that the body isn't a glorious piece of mechanism. It is. But nevertheless it's a body of humiliation.

Now if you make your glory out of that which God intended to humiliate you then you're going against God. So when your glory is in your shame and you mind earthly things and your God is your belly. The Bible says your end is destruction.

So we need to know where our affections are set. The Lord Jesus is going to be able to change this body into the likeness of his glorious body. That's wonderful isn't it.

Do you believe that? I believe it literally. I don't know any other way to believe it. I believe it's going to happen.

The Bible says it's going to happen in a moment. In the twinkling of an eye. One moment I look at you and you're the way you are right now.

I blink my eyes and I open them again and you're looking like the Lord Jesus. Just take that long when God's moment comes. But meanwhile remember this is a body of humiliation and don't make it your glory.

All right let's go back to 2nd Corinthians chapter 4. It's rather strange I didn't realize it. But we read part of this chapter the other night. About life and death and it's really along the same line again.

But we'll move on a little further down. I like verse 15. For all things are for your sake.

Did you know that? Did you realize that everything goes on is for your sake. The sun rises for your sake. The stars shine for your sake.

Jet liners fly for your sake. Governments govern for your sake. Fish swim in the sea for your sake.

Birds fly in the air. All for your sakes. Why? Because you're God's children and the whole of his universe centers around you.

All things are for your sake. All right. Verse 16.

For the which cause we faint not. But though our outward man perish. Yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Again what do we have? The outward man, the inward man. The outward man is my physical body. It's perishing.

Whether you like to admit it or not. You may be only 16 years old. But your body has already started to die.

The processes of death are already at work in the body of every person in this room. And there's not one of us has the power to arrest them. We can delay them.

Cannot change them. So our outward man is perishing. The Bible is the most realistic book in the world.

Do you know it is my impression that most people actually never face the fact they're going to die. I really believe the majority of people never come face to face with the plain simple fact. We are going to die.

You're going to die. I'm going to die. Our outward man perishes.

But our inward man is renewed day by day. Because our inward man is in direct personal contact with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our life.

And I get enough life from him every day within. I believe to keep at bay the processes of corruption, sickness and death as long as God wants me alive. That's not forever.

And I don't want to live one moment longer than God wants me to live. So every day my outward man is perishing. My inward man is being renewed.

And I really believe again this is mainly the secret of divine health. It's being renewed from within every day. I believe there's enough resurrection life available to us now to keep our body strong and active as long as God wants us alive.

But the secret of it is not so much being concerned about your body as being related to the Lord. Christ is our life. All right going on verse 17.

For our light affliction which is but for a moment. You do realize that your affliction is light don't you? Or do you? Or did you think it was very heavy? Well compare yourself with Paul. Shipwrecked twice, beaten 39 times, five times.

Twice beaten with rod. Once stoned, left for dead, persecuted wherever he went. And he says our light affliction.

So what have you got to complain about? Our light affliction is momentary. But it's working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Affliction works for us.

Did you know that? It's on our side. With one condition and this is very important. The condition is at the beginning of the next verse.

While as long as we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, temporary, earthly, impermanent. The things which are not seen are eternal, heavenly, spiritual, forever.

See the two worlds. Now how do we look at the things which are not seen? I'll give you the Bible's answer. Keep your finger in second parenthesis.

We come back there for a moment. Turn to Hebrews the 11th chapter. What's the theme of Hebrews chapter 11? Faith, that's right.

Hebrews chapter 11 verse 27. This has become one of my favorite verses. It records the triumphs of faith of many of God's servants in the old covenant.

And in this verse it's talking about Moses. It says by faith he forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king. For he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

See we got the invisible realm. Now how do you see him who is invisible? The answer is by faith. Faith enables us to see that which our eyes cannot see.

And while we look at the things which cannot be seen. Our affliction works for us an exceeding way to glory. But if you take your eyes off the things which cannot be seen.

And you come down to the realm of the temporal. And you get wrapped up in that. Your affliction just afflicts you.

That's all it does. The condition that affliction works for us is that we have our eyes fixed on the things that cannot be seen. I'm going to read that those verses again.

Because that the truth is so real and so practical. Verse 17. For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal way to glory.

Now again it's good to have a few Israelis here. Because Israelis know that the Hebrew word for glory is which is directly related to the word for weight. Kevin did you realize Paul was a Jew? And he was making a Jewish pun when he wrote.

He said it's a weight of glory. Why would you think of glory as being a weight? It is a weight. Few people can bear it.

Says about the Lord Jesus he shall bear the glory. If God put all that glory on you and me it would crush us. But God is preparing a specific weight of glory.

That we'll be able to bear in the resurrection. Not now but in the resurrection. But our affliction is working it for us now.

As long as what? We look not at the things which are seen. But that the things which are not seen. See all through these passages we have the clear-cut distinction between the seen and the unseen.

The temporal the eternal. The earthly and the heavenly. We're going on in chapter 5 of 2nd Corinthians.

2nd Corinthians chapter 5 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved. We have a building of God. A house not made with hands.

Eternal in the heaven. There's the contrast. We've got an earthly tent.

Which is our house. What's the earthly tent? Our body that's right. We live in an earthly tent.

One day it's going to be dissolved. How many of you know that? You really know that body of yours is going to be dissolved. Are you afraid of that? It's really an important question.

It really is. But whether you're afraid of it or not. It's going to happen.

And if your religion doesn't take that into account. It isn't much good to you. Really isn't.

But he said we have another house not made with hands. Eternal in the heaven. A body, a tent, a home.

So even if this one goes. There's another one waiting for us. Then he says for in this we groan.

Earnestly desiring to be closed upon with our house which is from heaven. I think we groan not so much because we're miserable. As because we are aware of the contrast between the best that earth can offer.

And what's awaiting us in heaven. There is a song that Pentecostals used to sing. And not everything Pentecostals did was wrong.

Believe me. And it there's only I remember one line. It says sometimes I grow homesick for heaven.

In fact I remember two lines. Where all the redeemed of all ages sing glory around a white throne. Well I really could say that.

I get homesick for heaven. There are times when heaven is more real to me than earth. Especially when I'm alone.

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