

Risen Life

by John Ridley

The sermon encourages listeners to seek the things above, including Christ, the house of God, the robe of righteousness, the crown of life, and the kingdom of God, rather than on earthly things.

Duration: 50:06

Scripture: Luke 14:12-14, Colossians 2:12-13, Colossians 3:1-4

Topics: "Spiritual Priorities", "Heavenly Focus"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a mind set on things above, rather than being consumed by worldly desires. He uses a story of men searching for treasure in the gutter to illustrate how many people are searching for satisfaction and happiness in the wrong places. The preacher encourages listeners to focus on spiritual work and seek the things that concern the currency of heaven. He also references the story of Jesus instructing his disciples to render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, highlighting the need to prioritize the things of God.

Transcript

Chapter 2, verse 12. Chapter, with just two verses from the preceding chapter, verses 12 and 13. And after the 13th verse of the second chapter, then comes with me to the first verse of the third chapter.

Now, Martians 2, verse 12. Buried with him in baptism, that is with Christ in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins in uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection, or mind, on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, or shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory. Mortify, that means put to death, put to death sentence on these things. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, which may well mean sexual sin, and covetousness, which is my God afraid.

For which things take the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience, in the which ye also walked sometime when ye lived in them, but now ye also put off all these. Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth, lying on one to another, seeing that ye put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all.

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, vows or hearts of mercies, kindness, that's a nice word, I like that, kindness, humbleness of mind, most essential, meekness, very rare, long-suffering, rarer still, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. If any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye, and above or over all these things, put on love, charity or love, which is the bond of perfectness or the perfect bond of union. And let the peace of God rule or umpire in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful, or be ever more thankful, is a beautiful rendering there.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord, and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. May God bless to us those wonderful words of life from his precious book. Will you turn to a sweet hymn, a beautiful hymn, 189.

Father we thank thee that thou hast given the word, the Lord gave the word, great the company of those that published it, and as we speak to publish thy word this morning, with a special emphasis to thine own people, will thou be pleased to accompany the word with the life-giving elements of thy spirit, that the word may be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and grant to thy servants who are worshipping the open ear, the open heart, the receptive spirit, and may they receive with meekness the engrossed word which is able to save their souls. Hide the messenger, O Lord, so insufficient and so conscious of its own defects, but grant that the message, perfect and pure from thine own heart, may reach through with mighty impact to every listening soul this morning. We ask it through our risen and exalted Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Amen. I am hopeful if the Lord tarry and spares to finish my ministry tomorrow afternoon on a burst of victory, and I would urge you if you can possibly wait to wait for that message, because not often preached on the theme which I have, we are in a great conflict, a deadly, darkening conflict with the powers of darkness. And you would be wise if you possibly can, of course, to wait to hear what victory is and how victory can be obtained in our Lord's own way.

Now keep that in mind, breathe, and pray about it. Would you open your Bibles to the third chapter of Paul's epistle to the Colossians and listen to me reading the first four verses according to that new amplified translation, which may make one or two things a little clearer. I don't use new versions much, but only just to clarify a point here and there.

You follow in the author's eyes for the first four verses, will you? And then I'll read from the amplified New Testament. If then you have been raised with Christ to a new life, thus sharing his resurrection from the dead, aim at and seek the rich eternal treasures that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. And set your minds and keep them set on what is above, the higher things, not on the things that are on the earth.

For, as far as this world is concerned, you have died, and your new real life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in the splendor of his glory. That's nice, isn't it? It gives us some light, perhaps a little more illumination on those first four verses.

You have noticed in the paper, I have no doubt, that General Douglas MacArthur is in a very low condition. Lord, I know he may have passed the border, but he is suffering severely at the age of eighty-four. And in one of our local papers down south a few days ago, it mentioned that Douglas MacArthur, one of the greatest soldiers and generals in American history, had stated a time ago he desired to live as long as it was possible to attain to the ideals he had.

He didn't tell us, or the paper didn't tell us what his ideals were, but he wanted to attain to his ideals. And I want to speak to you this morning on the ideals of the risen or the resurrected life. Here they are for you in the first four verses of Colossians 3. Just glance back to two verses that I read in Colossians 2. Remember where you came from.

In verse 13, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your heart, or happy quitting. That was your old death. You were dead in trespasses and sins.

Your burial, you'll notice, buried in verse 12, buried with him in baptism. And then your resurrection, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God to have raised him from the dead and come down to the next birth, quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. And then, very grandly, the great apostle presents to you the ideals.

If ye then be risen with Christ, if you claim to be a risen, resurrected soul, born again and quickened of the spirits and units of life, the ideals are very precious to you. And the verse is the ideal search. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Or, as that Amplified Version gives it, aim at and seek rich, eternal treasures that are above, at the right hand of God. Yes, that's the search. And it is a search all the days of your Christian life.

You're searching upward, searching upward. Do they hold on to appropriate, to experience the things which are above? In all circumstances, all conditions, all conflicts of life, the risen soul, the risen one, seeks the things which are above, not the things below. When I was a boy at school, I remember our teacher told us a little story one day.

She didn't tell it as an illustration in this way, but I've used it as such. She said, you know children, there was once a man in the city here, I think it was Sydney, who in a dark night struck a match and began to search along a gutter and round the corner of the gutter in the very fore part of the city. And almost immediately, a loungee on the opposite corner slouched across and said, what are you looking for, mate? Oh, he said, a sovereign.

In those days, the pound note was not about. We had a gold ring, a sovereign. His Majesty then, His Majesty's portrait on one side.

Oh, he said, looking for a sovereign, I have to say. And he got to work on the other end of the gutter. And in a few moments, children, the teacher said, there were about five lounging men, all searching hard in the gutter and on the pavement.

And they only searched for about three or kept on lighting matches all the time. Where did you drop it ever? He said, I didn't drop it at all. I'm only looking for a sovereign.

That's what a lot of people are doing, you know. They're searching down in the gutters of the life, gutters of the world, the muck of a poor foreign world. They're searching for treasure, searching for satisfaction, searching for the things that satisfy and delight and make them happy.

That's what they're searching for, happiness really, joy. And here the Apostle said, don't do it below, seek the things above. And how beautifully he illustrated that in his wonderful ministry.

I've only time to quote a few of the incidents. You remember how poor sinful woman came to a well near Saika in Samaria, and she wanted the water below. She was searching down into the well for water.

And Jesus didn't give her that water from below. He lifted up her thoughts slowly but surely until he said to her, whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.

You drink of those fountains above. And she began that day to drink of living water from the fountain of living water, our Lord Jesus Christ himself. And then you'll remember on another occasion, I'm back in Luke's Gospel, the twelfth chapter, and said to our Lord, Master, speak to my brother that he divides the inheritance with me.

Jesus said, man, who made me a judge over you? Take heed, he said to the people, take heed and beware of covetousness. And then he lifted their thoughts up. If you read that whole passage, he told the story of a rich fool who got everything and thought he had satisfaction for life and died that night.

And then he went higher and he said, see ye first the kingdom of God, since the treasure above. And then you'll remember in the same book of Luke, the fourteenth chapter, that our Lord was invited to a feast by a Pharisee and he noticed that he had a great number of his own class there, rich people, and people that could repay him well. And he said to this Pharisee, when you make a feast again, don't ask the rich.

They'll repay you for it. Ask the poor, the lame, the lame, the blind. They cannot repay thee.

But look up, look up, thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Think high, search high. And then you'll know a little later, somewhat considerably later, they said to him, Master, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or no? Caesar said, probably a penny.

And they gave him a penny, a Roman penny, and he said, whose image and superscription is that? Caesar's, they said. Well, render to Caesar, he said, the things that are Caesar's. Look up, render to God the things that are God's.

Seek the things that concern the currency of heaven. And then again, you might remember, that on one occasion our Lord sent out seventy disciples and gave them power over unclean spirits and great instructions as how to work as evangelists. And they came back rejoicing.

Oh, they said, Master, it's wonderful. Even the unclean spirits, the demons, were subject unto us through thy name. That's a very real danger, you would-be evangelists, and to an old evangelist too.

We do like to tell the story of great victories. It's not wrong if it's told in a humble way. It can be very dangerous if it's told in a self-praising manner.

Because our Lord almost instantly, after passing on a mark about the falling of Satan from heaven, he said, notwithstanding that the spirits were subject unto you, rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Think high. It's a greater thing to have your name on the road book of glory than it is to have power over the demons of hell.

If we could really enjoy salvation, if we could really enjoy the fact that our names were in heaven, we'd be happy even when we don't see results. And I'm preaching it myself pretty solidly there, my dear friends, because I am expected whenever I go by certain pastors and friends to have a weeping. And sometimes it hasn't come to the weeping hour.

Then I've got to rejoice. If they don't receive Christ, I have. My name is written in heaven.

Ultimately, you must love Christ for his self-love and not for his bliss. That's the last thing, said Samuel Rutherford, of a true believer's life. Well, you say, Mr. Ridley, that's not an easy search, you know.

No, it isn't, I agree with you, friends. It's just an easy search to seek the things which are above, but I'll give you the secret now of the search. If you are humble enough to take it, I try to take it, imperfectly at times, but I do try to take it.

At least I can speak honestly here. Verse 2, will you? In the authorized version, set your attention on things above, not, not, not on things on the earth. I wish you'd take that to heart.

Listen, in the amplified, set your mind, and keep them set on what is above, the higher things. Not on the things that are on the earth. Now, that's the great secret of the search.

What are the things above, you say? Well, first and foremost, our resurrected Lord Jesus, who once walked this world, and talked to neighbours and nuns, and died and was buried, and rose again. The man Christ Jesus, love him, love him, set your mind on him above every human love in the world. I don't mind whether you've just fallen in love, you must love Christ more than that dear girl or dear man, because he is the one above the great lover.

And then I remind you that the house of, all house of, all house not made with hands, I pray for thee while dwelling within these borderlands. I don't know, beautiful soul, I'll keep saying, oh don't you sing beautifully, won't you touch me, and go out to seek the things of God. Did you ever think what a wonderful thing that Jesus Christ hath prepared a place in the many mansions for you? Set your affections, set your mind on the many mansions, and not so much on the beautiful home, and carpets, and cars, and amenities of a well-flavoured state, and country like Australia.

Set your mind on. And then again you'll bear with me that the robe of righteousness in its visible form, that is white linen. See, white linen, that robe is divine.

Ah, there's a robe for me, a covering, all perfectly white. They shall walk with me in white amongst the world. May I ask you, and particularly emphasise to the men as well as to the ladies, you can waste a lot of time on the fashion of this world, you can set your mind so much on keeping touch with the fashion of this world, Oh, may I ask you to set your mind more upon the clothes that you will wear than what you wear now.

Set your mind on the beauty of holiness. Do you know what they said of Jonathan Edwards' daughter, whose name later became Esther Burr, and she died early? They said Esther, to Esther, the beauty of

holiness was the all of beauty. How many of the sisters could say I am an exceptional and pure one.

When I stand before the throne, dressed in beauty not my own, when I see thee as thou art, love thee with unfailling heart, then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how much I own. Look up also, because there's something else above, it glitters and flashes before the eyes of some. I discovered its beauty in the war of World War I, and there is a crown prepared for them that love him.

The Christians, they said, in the distance shine, like a bright beacon glittering above him, and whispers, and whispers mine. Have you set your mind on winning the crown? Oh, isn't it wonderful? Do you know Mr. So-and-so has just received the MBA, and fell in love with so-and-so, decorations in the green, oh, dear friends, military crosses and Victoria Crosses, when you think of a crown, CDs that LCH has bought back, oh, so-and-so, when you think of a crown, I will give him the crown of life. That's worth winning, isn't it? Set your mind on the crown that's above.

Or have I agreed with you to set your mind on these things, and not, not on the kings of the earth? I think there's one other here that you could set your mind upon. There's a kingdom. It will have to come with the king.

Set your mind on the kingdom that is above. A dear friend wrote to me after our wild days of World War I, he'd gone through the YMCA, and was a leader in the YMCA, and he wrote over the seas from England to me, and he said, John, I'm going back to the ministry, and I'm going back to the work of the only worthwhile kingdom. He's entertained so much, he's done so much in social work, he suddenly was jerked out of the kingdom in its grand centre, spiritual work.

How can I do it, priest, do you say? I don't know how to keep my mind on all these things, but I'll give you a little hint. Look on the roadway, rough as it may be after the rain, and think of a narrow lane that leads to light. Look on that rock at the side of the road if you go down and think, rock of age, a threat for me, let me hide myself in thee.

Look at that grand gum tree stretched up there in the midst of those smaller trees, and think he hung upon a tree for me. And if I am true to him, the trees of the Lord are full of spiritual light. Yes? Look upon the glittering lights of Brisbane from one of your lovely hills, and as you say, what a delightful sight, just lift your eyes, see those twinkling in the milky way, see Venus in her excellent glory.

Watch those stars a while, and then, watch those stars a while, and then think, they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the sun forever and ever, and the lights will go out below. Yes, these lights will fade. Yes, the idea of looking at things corporally, that's what the poet Blake said, I see things corporally.

He said, what do you mean, said a man, see things corporally? Why, when you see the rising of the sun, I see us grown, high and lifted up, and the train of the Lord filling the temple. That's the way to get your mind on things. There's a certain hymn you too hardly ever sing, but in the early days of my evangelism, we used to sing it with great gusto.

It's a lovely hymn. It came from the Chicago Exhibition, a way back in the days of Moody and Sankey, and at the great Chicago Exhibition, there was a fountain stretching out in the middle of the Exhibition, and people used to like to meet there at the fountain, and it became a slogan, I'll meet you at the fountain. Yes, meet at the fountain, such and such a time.

And Mr. Sankey tells us that Paul did a bliss whose mind was always set on things above, said Sankey, caught hold of that slogan, and he wrote that lovely hymn we used to revel in. Will you meet me at the fountain when I reach the glory land? Will you meet me at the fountain shall I clap your friendly hand? Other friends will bid me welcome, other kindly voices cheer. Will you meet me at the fountain? Will you meet me, meet me there? Yes, I'll meet you at the fountain.

How we used to sing it in those early days of revival, in those missions, but it dies out. I'll tell you why. Heavenly minded listeners know.

You'll be a social star. You'll be a person doing a lot in the front of men. Then you're the man.

You do something practical. There'll be a great awakening one day, and when we see him as he is, it's the lovers that will have the great welcome at the fountain. Will you meet me, meet me there? Dear Philip Paul, Paul Philip Bliss, he took hold of anything he could and swirled it into a hymn.

His mind, said Sankey, was set, set on things of our own. Well, those are the few hints, if you will take them, on the secret of the service. And then, come to the security of the risen one, the security of the risen one.

Here you'll find it in the authorised, ye are dead, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. And in the amplified, for as far as this world is concerned, as far as this world is concerned, would that the Lord would underline that to us, you have died, and your new real life is hid with Christ. That's ideal security, brother.

When Jesus Christ was on the cross, Pilate submitted the priests to have their desire that the legs of the free sufferers might be broken, so that they could die instantly. Roman soldiers came along with their spears and they smashed the legs of one priest and smashed the legs of the other priest. But they agonized by fire.

But when they came to Jesus, he was dead already, by bright knowledge made. What was his security? Death. Death secured him against the smashing or the breaking of a bone.

Death is a remarkable security. It didn't hurt Oliver Cromwell, one of the greatest characters of English history. It didn't hurt Oliver Cromwell that when that voluptuous king, Charles II, came back again, he had the body of the great Puritan dug up and his head chopped off and stuck up there to be a laughing stock of his crowd.

It didn't hurt the great protector, whose bust had Jesus, who did more for England than England has ever recognized, and gave to her tolerance of worship. In a day when you were almost forced to worship according to the ideals of the House of Stuart, that didn't hurt, no. I remember standing once in the East Salient with my adjutant, while we buried three bodies.

It was evening time, a horrible time. The roar of guns was in the distance and we had to hurry through the burial service. There was no chaplain.

A few words were said in the prayer and we were holding our steel helmets over our heads lest a splash of fractional would come upon them and as they dropped, the bodies of those poor fellows in their graves just tied with the blankets. I thought in those days if you boys would believe us, if you really are Christians, you're far better off than we are, going forward to something worse in this titanic struggle, death is the

cure. You and I, in Christ, are in, and in Christ, with Him involved.

For Christ is perfect. Fail we may, stumble we may, poor we may be, no one knows, in the meat of a day, you're more than I do, but believe me if you're hid with Christ in God securely for all time, and as the old negro once said, yes, my brethren, he said, here is a beautiful manuscript, hid with Christ in God. Do you see that big barrel there? He showed them a big barrel.

Now he said, I take up this smaller barrel, and I pump it in, now I take up this little barrel, then you see I bang it, and I stamp it, hid with Christ in God. You've got it, brother, you've got it, said the negro, you've got it, haven't you? Yes, I've got it all right, a good illustration, hid with Christ, all Christ, our God. No need to say, to decide, he's mine.

He belongs to me. I've covered him, he's mine. Yes, I know, father, failed many times, and that's just the purity.

Now you've got that clearly, haven't you? The fourth point, we must come to the close. You've got there, the ideal search, the secret of the search, which is, what? A mind set on things above. You've got that, lad, you've got a mind set on things above, you've got that, my young brother, a mind set on things above, far more than set on the things above.

Oh, you say, Mr. Good, it's all right for an old man like you to speak, but I'm young and full of life, so was I when I became a Christian, and I soon, before I passed my twenties, was full of the longing to reach souls. Because, you see, I was taught under a great sinner who never pandered to us and said, oh well, you must have your fill of pleasure and your fill of enjoyment in this world, who kept before us the glories of heaven, and told us we were pilgrims passing through from long before down to here. Just in closing, there is a secret in gaining some measure of the risen life in Christ, and if you'll turn, please, in just a brief epilogue to the message, the book of Romans, the book of Romans, the sixth chapter, and at the sixth chapter you've got two attitudes that are taught by Catech teaching, tremendously so.

We've not been able at this Easter time to dwell over much on the Catech teaching, because you must dwell on the great facts of the crucifixion. This is Catech teaching, as I often heard it in earlier conventions. Verse eleven, Romans six, Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unperceived, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word reckon literally means count as true. Count as true that you're dead indeed unperceived. Count that as true.

Count as true that you're alive unto God through Jesus Christ the Lord. That's the reckoning. Will you reckon that? We say, couldn't Mr. Ridley, because I fail so often.

Never mind, question, that you're dead indeed unperceived. Your real self is dead indeed unperceived. And alive unto Christ the Lord.

If you're not rebellious to the Lord, if you're not holding Jesus Christ with an invisible arm and saying, keep out of the way and let me have my own body and vanity. If you're not doing that, which is honestly seeking to get the real blessing of the Spirit, you've got to reckon that. Reckon that God does count upon us.

And then, let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body. Don't let sin just control your directions and everything. Don't let sin overrule the word of God and the truth of God, that you could abide in the lust

thereof.

Neither yield ye your members, but members may just be hands or feet or eyes or ears. Our ears can listen to nasty stories and to gossip about a good man or woman of God. Our ears can listen to anything that's a spite, a fuss, a discourse, will sometimes think that so-and-so who was doing so well, given a good dose of guilt.

Do not fail to tell others the ears are not yielding to the Lord, nor perhaps the hands. One wonders if the heart is sometimes. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves as those that are alive.

Resurrected from the dead in Christ, and your members hands, feet, eyes, ears, mind, ears up your nose. ...of righteousness, instruments. It means really to others that you reckon yourself under the death sentence of the cross.

So you often come to life in the poorness of your battling. ...and reverently to the Lord, without whom you would have sold your hands, your ears, your sons, without his disposal. Just as when in that most critical moment, 1918, Marshal Post took over the three armies, France, Britain, America, and General Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the American Army, said to Marshal Post, Here we are, folks.

And they had the best men, the biggest, I don't say the best, the biggest army, just the most magnificent of them. He said, Here we are. Infantry, artillery, aviation, everything.

Take us and use us as you will. ...to Marshal Post, he had a conflict from the hands of the American command. That's what the great saints of God have ever come to in full and mad surrender.

I give myself to thee, thine evermore, thine only, thine utterly, ...to breathe. Forget the rain a moment, dear friends, as we're about to bow in prayer, and I'll forget the rain if possible. Remember to breathe.

And as we bow, think, as I'm following thee, I say, the Lord help thee. The ideal servant, the ideal infant, our children, our gracious, loving son, give grace to thy dear servant, bowed in prayer, that they may rejoice in the security of being hidden, the hidden ones of God, hidden with Christ in God, anticipating the hour of that blessed appearing, supported by the hope that when he appears they also will be with him, to live and reign with Christ a thousand years, and to be with him forever. Oh, that thy word will own our hearts today, through Jesus Christ, our exalted Redeemer.

Amen.

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