

A New Beginning

Col. 3:1-4

Introduction:

1. The passage we have just read connects with the one in 2:12-14. It speaks of those who have been buried with Christ in baptism as having been raised up through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead.
2. Previously dead in transgressions God has made us alive with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.
3. Being raised up with Christ in baptism marks a radical transition for Christians. Before baptism they are dead. In baptism they are made alive by faith in the working of God. The debt of sin has been taken out of the way.
4. Christians have died to asceticism and to the decrees of the world that have the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.
5. Having set their minds on things above they are dead to deeds associated with the old self. They are now alive to do deeds associated with the new self.

Discussion:

- I. Not only does Paul see baptism as a radical transition point, he sees it as a reason NOT to sin (Col. 3:5-11).
 - A. Having been raised up with Christ we are to consider our body as dead to immorality, impurity, etc.
 - B. Paul has used a similar line of reasoning in Rom 6:1ff. Since we have died with Christ in baptism we cannot go on sinning.
 - C. Baptism as a death involves a death to sinning.
 1. "You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (3:3).
 2. Christians are dead to "immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed, which is equivalent to idolatry."
 3. The wrath of God comes upon those who walk and live in such practices. The Colossians had once walked and lived in such practices.
 4. And that it is not only these particular practices, but others like them. For some are enumerated further in verses 8ff: "anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices."
 - D. Putting on the new self involves a renewal to the image of the one who created us. And this renewal involves changed relationships so that worldly status is eliminated (11). Cf. Gal. 3:26-28.
- II. Baptism as a radical transition point involves putting on good things (Col. 1:12-17).
 - A. It involves being chosen of God.
 1. This seems to me to be an emphasis on God's initiatory action. He chose us first, rather than us seeking Him. He sought us.
 2. He chose us to be separated apart to Him. As a husband selects a wife for himself, He has chosen us.
 - B. This means a changed heart.
 1. "A heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." This heart is in contrast with the one described in verse 8.

2. Additionally . . .
 - a. Love is to be put on which results in unity. Contra. verse 8.
 - b. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.
 - c. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.
- C. Baptism for the Colossians was not an insignificant event.
 1. It was a death to life experience.
 2. Behaviors were powerfully transformed.
 3. It was a transition brought about by God (Col. 2:12). He raised them from the dead. And now everything that they did was in the name of Christ and in thanksgiving to God (3:17).

Conclusion:

1. Have you been raised up with Christ? It is not about you giving yourself life or raising yourself from the dead, but about God raising you from the dead.
2. He makes alive. He forgives transgressions. He cancels out the debt.
3. Having been raised up with Christ are you seeking the things above? Have you died and is there evidence in your behavior that your life is hidden with Christ in God?
4. Do you consider the members of your body as dead to the things that you once lived in?
5. Are you in the process of putting on those deeds that evidence the life that God gives?