

June 25, 2006

Series: Against the Tide

Sermon: "Living with a Focus"

Scripture:

¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming, ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

-Colossians 3:1-11 (New International Version)

Introduction:

When a country goes to war with itself, it becomes impossible to make progress. Even sometimes after the war is over, reconciliation doesn't happen and progress is thwarted. The same can occur in families, corporations, and denominations. Quite simply, a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Here in this passage, we see described a war going on in our lives- the war between sin and righteousness. Our values and priorities are a battleground.

To win this battle-

I. Set our hearts and minds on the eternal, not the temporary. (vv 3:1-2)

- Material possessions and accomplishments are temporary.

- For our lives to have focus, our head and heart must be moving in the same direction- this requires a conscious decision to direct our lives towards Christ.
- We must abandon seeking our own desires in order to seek God's plan for our life. We MUST let Jesus be the boss of our lives.

II. Three things that stand in the way of living a life that has God's focus in it.

- Hanging on to the past.
 - Whatever you're dealing with today, remind yourself that in fact, this part of your life is already dead. (v.3)
- Mixing our priorities
 - v.4- "Christ is our life" Our priorities, hearts, and principles need to center around Christ and his plan for our life. Those who keep their priorities in order, keep their house in order.
 - To do this, we must ask for two things:
 1. for God to change our heart (Psalm 37:4)
 2. For God to give us the strength to do his will and overcome the temptation we're facing.
- Underestimating the destructive power of sin
 - Sin will take us further than we wanted to go, and keep us longer.
 - Colossians 3 shows us a list of sins to avoid in verses 5, 8-9

Conclusion:

- The effects of living a life that Jesus wants us to are rewards in heaven:
 - Jesus will give us a crown in heaven
 - Jesus will give us an assignment in ministry in heaven