

Growing to Maturity:
The Message of Colossians" #9

**Self-Help Religion
vs. New Life in Christ**
Col. 3:1-4

--CEFC 9/13/20; 4/27/03

Topic: Christian Living

I've never liked the term "religion."

In my mind the word conjures up a burdensome regimen of rules and rituals.
If you are religious, you are obligated to do certain things, religiously—
 you have to go to church,
 you have to read your Bible,
 you have to pray,
 and you have to put something in the offering plate.
Or in some contexts, you have to go to mass,
 enter the confessional,
 and pray the rosary regularly
 or fast during Ramadan.

Being religious often comes with certain taboos—
 like no profanity, no drunkenness, no sex outside of marriage,
 or even no dancing or nothing other than PG movies.

Being religious is all about trying to be "good" in certain visible and outward ways.

And it can be a hard slog.
 Religion is all about self-discipline,
 resulting in self-improvement
 in a self-made righteousness.

Religion takes a lot of effort to make yourself a better person—

 That's why, in the bookstore, religious books are often found in the self-help section. /

And it is that legalistic conception of religion—religion as rules--

 that the Apostle Paul seems to be warning against
 in his letter to the Christians of Colossae.

He is concerned that that they not be led away by "**fine-sounding arguments**"
 and be taken captive "**through hollow and deceptive philosophy.**"

There seemed to be some who wanted them to become quite religious—

 with great concern about their participation
 in certain religious festivals and keeping Sabbath days.

They were requiring that the Colossian Christians submit to certain rules—

 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"?

 These religious rules, Paul says,
 "**indeed have an appearance of wisdom,**

**with their self-imposed worship, their false humility
and their harsh treatment of the body,
but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.”**

Such religion is worthless.

Just commanding people to “be good” won’t work, Paul is saying.

Why is that?

Rules depend entirely on human effort,

and rules have a way of simply feeding our cancerous disease--

for by obeying rules, we just become more proud of our own achievements

and more critical of others who fail.

It must, because in legalistic religion our relationship with God

depends on our own ability to justify ourselves—

and we often do that at the expense of others.

Do you see the problem?

Rules can't root out the greed and the covetousness and the lust and the deceitfulness

that already pervades our hearts.

Outward remedies can't reach the inward source.

Legalism is simply an attempt to dress up an old, sick man in new clothes.

It doesn't get to the root of the problem.

Such religion is worthless,

simply because our problem is far worse than we imagine.

The problem, you see, is not outside us, but within us.

And that rebellious nature can even be stirred up by the rules,

which are a threat to our own self-rule.

I like the story of the newly initiated monk,

who was seeking to flee from the temptations of the world

by joining the ascetic life of a monastery.

His brother monks take him to his bare room,

and after they leave,

he looks around and finds a sign that says,

"Whatever you do, do not open the curtain on the window on the far wall."

Within ten minutes, he finds the temptation too great,

and he opens the curtain,

to discover his brother monks all staring back at him through the window.

I once visited a men's restroom in a restaurant in Pasadena, CA,

which posted a sign "Do not press the red button."

What do you think happens when you press the red button?

The lights go off—replaced by disco lights and music.

I learned that by experience.
People outside laughed every time they heard it!

Sin is far more deeply engrained in us than we think—
Changing our environment
and even outwardly obeying rules can never root it out of us.

Even if we are forgiven from the guilt of sin,
we still need to deal with sin's corruption within our souls.

That's why in the redeeming work of the gospel,
God must not only forgive our actions,
he must also restore our nature.

You see, our greatest need according to the Bible is a **new heart**—
for the heart as the center of our affections—
the heart is the seat of our motivations,
those inner reasons for choosing the things that we do.

We think we are rational creatures—
no, we are driven, not by our minds, but by our hearts.
Thomas Cranmer in the 16th century put it something like this:
"the heart desires, the will decides, and then the mind defends"

Isn't that what Jesus said—
Only a good tree can bear good fruit.
We need some outside power to change our hearts!

And that's exactly what the gospel promises us.
The gospel is not self-help religion--
it is the good news that God has done for us
what we could never do for ourselves.

The gospel is the message of God's saving work in Jesus Christ—
not only granting us forgiveness for all the ways we have offended him,
but also changing us from the inside—
empowering us to live in a new way that pleases him.

In fact, the gospel is about restoring us into the human beings were originally created to be.

The gospel is the good news that God sent his Son into the world
to live the life that we are all created to live, but never could.

Though Jesus never deserved to die,
he died on a cross,
giving his life as a perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sin.

But that was not the end of it—
on the third day, God raised him from the dead,
and exalted him to the highest place of authority at his right hand,
from which he will one day come to be glorified on earth.

From there he sent his Spirit to bring his risen life into our lives here and now.

This is earth-shattering news.

You see, the resurrection of Jesus was not just an isolated event--

just a means of demonstrating who Jesus really was.

No, his resurrection was the first fruits, the down payment, the initial manifestation,

of the new age to come--

the age of the kingdom of God in which the powerful rule of God

will make itself known on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus has gone where we will go,

and because **he** has gone there,

we as his followers now experience here and now

something of the power of his being there.

By faith, we are joined to him--

and in our union with Christ, we are a part of his family—his brothers and sisters.

I suppose there is some analogy to the experience of some of our Sudanese refugees.

South Sudan has been filled with the violence of war for a long time,

and many have been desperate to escape to safety and a new life.

Sometimes one member of a family has been able to go ahead of the rest.

The husband, say, makes it to America and attains refugee status—

and ultimately American citizenship,

and because he is here

the rest of the family back home now has assurance

that they will one day follow.

More than that, because he is here,

he can begin to send back to the rest of the family

some money he is now able to earn

to see them through until that day.

That's what Jesus has done--

He is our elder brother—who has gone before us into that heavenly glory.

He is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

And he has sent his Spirit to be with us,

as a taste of the future glory that will be ours with him,

empowering us to live in a new way,

even while we are still in this earthly existence.

In the meantime, we are to begin the process of preparing ourselves to live with him.

Just as those family members back in Sudan might start working on their English

or start developing their driving skills,

so that they will fit in when they get here,

so Jesus wants us to become the kind of people who will fit in

when we get to that new heavenly world to come.

We are to begin the process of moral transformation now

so that we will not be misfits in a place
where everyone shares the very holiness of God.

Now, this is just an analogy, and it has its limits—

America is certainly NOT heaven,
and the values of America fall far short of heavenly values,
and there is much in Sudanese culture to be admired,
and we here in America can learn much from it.

But the general point still stands.

As Christians, our citizenship is now in heaven—that's our true home—
for Christ our brother, our head—
he is already there—
and that's where we look for our identity
and our desired way of life.

You see, our **salvation** is not just a matter of getting our ticket to the promised land--
though that is the first and most important step.

Our salvation is the whole process of preparing ourselves
to live in that new world,
and then finally being fully acclimated to it when we get there.

And that transformation is what this letter to the Colossians is all about.

Remember what Paul said back in 1:28--

**"We proclaim Christ,
admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present everyone perfectly mature in Christ."**

And again in 2:6--

**"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord,
continue to live your life in him,
rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught,
and overflowing with thankfulness."**

In this letter Paul is urging these believers to grow to maturity in Christ,

which means becoming more like Christ,
being transformed so that they will be ready to join him
when he comes again to bring us into that heavenly glory.\

To quote C.S. Lewis:

"God is going to take the feeblest and the filthiest of us
and turn us into dazzling, radiant, immortal creatures
pulsating with all the energy and joy and wisdom and love
that we could possibly imagine.

He's going to turn us into bright stainless mirrors
that reflect back his character perfectly."¹

¹Cited in Clements, *Masterplan*, p. 138.

Our sanctification, then, is the process in which
God begins polishing our dirty mirrors right now,
so that we can begin to reflect his image more clearly.

And our passage this morning is pivotal in Paul's letter as he speaks about this process..

In this letter Paul will move from his declarations about the gospel of Christ –
what God has graciously done for us in Christ—
which is the focus of the first two chapters,
to the new way of life that this gospel demands—
what we are now to do and be in response to God's grace,
which will occupy the final two chapters.

What God has done for us
comes before what we are called to do in response.

It is imperative that we get this transition right—

The order of things is critical.

It's the difference between self-help religion
and gospel holiness.

Paul uses three contrasts in our passage to make his point—

First, the contrast between Death and Resurrection,
which I've already touched on.

This is what establishes our new identity.

Then, the contrast between earthly things and things above.

This provides our new perspective.

Finally, the contrast between the present and the future,

which creates a new challenge

as we seek to live out this gospel in this fallen world..

Let me read these verses once again—

**3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ,
set your hearts on things above,
where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.**

**2 Set your minds on things above,
not on earthly things.**

**3 For you died,
and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.**

**4 When Christ,
who is your life, appears,
then you also will appear with him in glory.**

So let me expand a bit on that first contrast—

Here Paul is simply repeating what he has already said earlier in the letter.

Back in 2:20—

**“Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world,
why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules”**

and in 2:12,13—he said, You were **“buried with [Christ] in baptism,
in which you were also raised with him**

**through your faith in the working of God,
who raised him from the dead.**

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh,

God made you alive with Christ.”

Christianity is not moralism, a self-help religion,

a religion that says, “Here are the rules. Now go be good.”

Christianity is nothing less than death and resurrection.

It begins with Jesus’ death and resurrection,

but it includes more than that,

for what Jesus did,

he did for his people.

He died and rose again as our representative,

and turning to him in faith means entering into what he has accomplished for us.

Jesus rose again, and then he sent the Spirit

to enable us to share in the new resurrection life that is his.

That’s the wonderful gift of the gospel—

sharing in the very life of God.

But like Jesus, you can’t be resurrected unless you first die.

John 12:24 **“Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies,**

it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

To be renewed in the new life Jesus gives

we must be like that seed that is put in the ground and dies.

Becoming a Christian, Paul says, is like a death--

When you put your faith in Christ, **“You died”**--Paul says.

In turning to Christ in faith,

you must die to this world and the values that it holds dear.

You must say “no” to your old way of life--

For in trusting in Christ you join Jesus on the cross--

crucifying the self-centered life of sin that held you captive.

Your old allegiances and loyalties that were supreme in your life,

the idols that demanded your worship—they must be renounced.

That is what is meant by repentance.

And there can be no new life without repentance.

Becoming a Christian means dying the old person you once were
and the old way of life you once lived.

We must die with Christ to this world.

This makes sense, when you think about it,
because the crucifixion of Jesus is what the values of this world led to--
for it was the powers of this world,
“**the elemental spiritual forces of this world**”
that condemned Jesus to die.

This world with its pride and self-glory and moral rebellion—
this world stood opposed to the light of Christ—
this world prefers to remain in darkness.

And when you see the crucifixion as the expression of God’s love for us
and when you understand it as the place of God's victory over our sin,
then you are rejecting the values of this world that sent Jesus to the cross.
You are saying, I will no longer play by its rules;
I will no longer put my hope in the rewards that this world offers.
I want the new life that Jesus has come to bring.

When you said "Yes" to Jesus, you died to this world, Paul says.

And when Jesus was raised from the grave, you were raised with him--
his victory becomes your victory,
his destiny becomes your destiny,
and his new life becomes your new life.

Just as we picture it in baptism,
becoming a Christian means dying with Christ, being buried with him--
and then rising with him to a new life.

You become a new person—with a new identity.

There is a lot of talk these days about identity politics—
Every person is identified as a member of some group—
whether it be a racial identity,
or an ethnic identity,
or a sexual or gender identity,

This political identity, they say, is who you are—
and it determines where you fit in the social hierarchy
and it determines your entire view of the world.

But Christians don’t fit in those identity categories—
for our first and primary identity is as a human being in Christ.
In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile,
neither slave nor free,

nor is there male and female,
We are united to him, and we share in his very life.
We died with Christ and we are now raised with him.
That is what now defines us.

You died with Christ,
which means that as a Christian you no longer find your **worth** in this world--
Your self worth, your self-esteem, is not dependent on your popularity at school,
or how much money is in your bank account,
or what sort of insignia is on your uniform.
Your worth as a person isn't dependent on your good looks
or your SAT scores,
or whether your kids are first in their class.

Your worth as a person is found in the fact that you are now loved by God--
As one joined to Christ by faith,
your Father in heaven now says to you,
"You are my beloved son, my beloved daughter--
in you I am well-pleased."

And as a Christian you now find your highest **significance**
not in how high you have risen in the social hierarchy,
or in how many people work for you,
or in the difference you make in this world.

No, your significance comes in what your Father in heaven thinks of you--
for he alone has the eternal perspective—
his values are the values that matter,
and in the end, that's all that will count.

I remember thinking of this theme of **significance**
when I visited Dave and Kathy Lanham—
the missionaries we heard from this morning.
the tiny village of Niamone
in the bush country of Senegal, West Africa.

Dave and Kathy lived in that village for sixteen years--
and outside of that village of about 2000 people of the Baianouk tribe,
very few people were even aware of what they were doing..

But God knew,
he saw them faithfully loving those people in Jesus' name—
learning their language—sharing the gospel of Christ,
creating a written form of that language,
translating the Bible into Baianouk,
and then teaching them how to read.

God knows, and God will remember--

and I'm sure that one day what they have done will prove to be
far more significant than what many of
the movers and shakers in Washington have done--
though they get their names in the papers every day.

And I think of the many unknown and unrecognized ways
believers faithfully and humbly live out their faith in ordinary ways
in their home, in their church, in their neighborhood, and in their work.
Hidden from the world, but honored by God.

Yes, you died with Christ--
you died to the measures of **significance** offered by this world. /

And you also died to the **security** that is offered by this world--
for now--"**your life is hidden with Christ in God**," Paul says.
You are doubly secure—you are "hidden *with* Christ *in* God."

This world offers us the Department of Homeland Security--
They try, I don't doubt that—and I appreciate all that they do.
But what kind of security can they really give us?
Maybe they can help thwart another terrorist attack,
but they can't protect you from a heart attack,
or from cancer.
They can't protect you from getting hit by a car,
not to mention getting infected with corona virus.
The fact is, there is **no** ultimate security in this world.

But look at what the gospel offers us—
our lives are hidden with Christ in God.
Nothing, nothing in this world, can possibly take that away.
We are secure for eternity.

We died and our lives have been raised to new life in Jesus Christ.
Our **significance** is found in him,
our **security** is found in him.
That's who we are--beloved children of our heavenly Father.

That is our new identity—we are men and women, boys and girls, in Christ.

Death and Resurrection—that's the first contrast Paul offers.
The second flows from it—
the contrast between **earthly things** and **things above**.

Because you **died**,
and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

and because you have been **raised with Christ**,
now, “**set your hearts on things above,**
where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
Set your minds on things above,
not on earthly things.”

Seek the things above—

for that’s where Christ is.

He is the conquering lion of the tribe of Judah

he’s the Lamb who has been slain

seated on that glorious, heavenly throne.

We are to set our hearts and minds on the things of Christ—

those supreme and final realities of life—found in Jesus Christ--

the values of Christ,

the character of Christ,

the cross of Christ,

the interests of Christ and his kingdom.

We are to set our hearts and minds on the things Jesus taught us and modeled for us--

--that people are more important than things,

--that service is more important than power,

--that humble obedience to God

is more important than praise from men.

And we are to set our hearts and minds on the things that Jesus **endured** for us—

his blood shed for the forgiveness of sins.

The things of Christ--

Set your **minds** on these things—the things above, Paul says.

The word Paul uses here expresses not merely the activity of the intellect,

but also a movement of the will--

make it your mindset to count these things as your treasures,

the things you set your affections on.

One of the things that we do in worship

is to stir up our affections as we reflect upon these heavenly realities.

In Christ, you've been raised to a new plane of existence.

In Christ, you have tasted of these heavenly realities,

and you know that they are sweet—

they are good and beautiful.

So look up--don't look down.

The things the world has to offer

are now unworthy of the Christian's heart and desire--

they are "beneath" you.

What value can earthly wealth have--

which can be eaten up by inflation

or evaporates in a stock market crash?

What value can earthly wealth have
for one who has such great treasure laid up for eternity?
What is human fame--
which only lasts for a few fleeting minutes—
one moment you are cheered, the next you are booed!
What is such fleeting fame to one who is a child of God?
What is worldly pleasure--
which always leaves you unsatisfied and craving for more?
What worldly pleasure
can match the joy of knowing the unsurpassable love of God?
What is political power--
with all its trials and temptations—its endless quest for more power,
longing for closer and closer access to President?
What is that to having immediate access to the throne of God—
to the King of kings and Lord of Lords--
the sovereign ruler of heaven and earth?

Don't lower yourself, Paul says.

Look up and set your heart and mind on things above.

Look to that Lamb upon the throne.

You have died to this world--

your life is not hidden "in the earth" in some grave.

No, it is hidden with Christ at the right hand of God the Father.

Get your mind out of the gutter--or the graveyard--

don't spend all your time thinking about

coffins and corpses.

--the things that don't really matter,

the things that bring you down.

Look up--look at Christ, and all his riches.

That's the new perspective in life that the gospel gives us. /

Of course, that's why we need the church, the fellowship of other believers

meeting weekly and during the week--

to help us keep our minds and hearts in the right place.

That's why we need to take time to engage daily

in what is called a daily "quiet time"--

when you consciously and deliberately think about the things of God--

when you take a quiet moment to read from the Scriptures

and come to God in prayer.

Every day you need to ask God to put his thoughts in your mind,

to give you his heart,

so that you will value the things he values.

We need to do it every day--

preferably in the mornings when we get out of bed--

before we get caught up in all the hustle-bustle of daily living.

As Paul says in Phil. 4:8—

**"Finally, brothers and sisters,
whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right,
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable --
if anything is excellent or praiseworthy --think about such things."**

These are the things above where Christ is.

But, you may say,--

"All this talk sounds nice, but I can't just walk around with my head in the clouds--
Don't we have to be careful
that we are not so heavenly minded,
that we are no earthly good."

Well, you could say that--

but I doubt if that is a problem that most of us have to contend with.

It's kind of like saying--

"We shouldn't do any exercise because isn't there a danger
that might may start looking like Arnold Schwarzenegger!
We wouldn't want that, would we?--
so I'll just settle back onto the couch, and pass me the potato chips."

But more importantly, this fear of being too heavenly-minded
misses the point of what Paul is saying here altogether.

This contrast between the earthly and the heavenly
is not one between the spiritual and the material--
as if he didn't want to think about things like
doing laundry and taking out the trash.

The earthly and the heavenly are moral categories.

They speak of our old earthly nature, our sinful nature,
which is concerned with its own pleasures,
as opposed to the new nature,
which seeks that which is good and right in the sight of God.

It's the distinction Jesus made in that prayer he taught us--

**"Our Father in heaven, . . .
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."**

And more than that--

Anyone who becomes so heavenly-minded that he is no earthly good
can't be looking into the same heaven that is shown to us in Scripture.
Anyone who looks into that heaven will see a God of compassion and mercy—
a God of righteousness and justice,

and at his right hand he will see Jesus,
with nail prints in his hands and feet,
proclaiming his self-giving love for sinners like you and me.
They will see a Savior who healed the sick
and had compassion on the poor.

No, this world needs *more* people who are heavenly-minded--
for real heavenly-mindedness cannot help but lead
to very down-to-earth love and service for others.

Set your mind on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Don't get me wrong--
this is not easy. No one ever said it was.
And in the rest of this letter Paul has more to tell us about just what this will mean.

And one thing makes it especially difficult--
The challenge we face is suggested by the last verse of our passage--
"your life is now **hidden with Christ in God,**" he says,
and "**When Christ,**
who is your life, appears,
then you also will appear with him in glory."

It is when Christ appears--and only then--
that we will appear with him in glory.
Only then will we be finally rid of the remnants of our sinful nature
which like gravity pulls us down again and again.
Only then will our faith become sight,
And only then will we receive the rich reward of seeing Christ, the Lamb upon the throne,
in all his glory.

Here the contrast Paul presents is between our present experience
and our future destiny.
We have already come to share something of the nature of Christ--
by the Spirit in our hearts, he gives us new life--
he is our life, Paul says.

But are not yet glorified with him.
Our status with Christ is hidden.
It is one we experience by faith.

We've been granted citizenship in that new heavenly world,
but we have not yet taken up our full residency there.

And until then,
to set our hearts and minds on that world,

and to make ourselves fit for that world
will take patience, endurance, sacrifice, and God's gracious power
trusting that he who began a good work in us
will bring it to completion.

So don't give up--

1John 3:2,3--"**Dear friends, now we are children of God,
and what we will be has not yet been made known.
But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he is.
Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.**"

Death and resurrection;
things of earth and things above;
the present and the future.
These gospel gives us a new vision of life.

I remember seeing an interview once with James Irvin,
an astronaut on the Apollo 15 flight to the moon.
He spoke of the changed perspective he got
by looking back at the earth from 250,000 miles away.
The earth looked the size of a golf ball--
and all the events of human life somehow seemed different
from that distance--
all the little things that we human beings fight about
suddenly seemed so insignificant.

My desire is that we see that we have been lifted up by the Lord in just that way.
God is calling us to a new perspective,
a higher calling,
life on a higher plane.

We need to ask ourselves,
are we bogged down in the temporal, the transient, and the trivial--
failing to see the broader picture that God has set before us?

We need to ask ourselves,
are we caught up in the pettiness, in the corruption, in the vain pursuits
that rob us of life's true God-given joys?

We need to ask,
are we consumed by the cares of this world
in our jobs,
in our consumer habits,
in our social status,
in our political loyalties,
or in our personal appearance?

Remember who you are--your new identity in Christ--
you died, and you have been raised to a new and higher plane of life--
The power of that new age
has now invaded our present age.
Your life is now hidden with Christ in God.
And one day that hidden reality will be manifest in all its glory.

Now let's live that way.

Prayer—

We praise you Lord for the new life that is ours in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

John Owen: **“Holiness is nothing but the implanting, writing,
and realizing of the gospel in our souls.”**

Closing Song:

Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

Benediction:

1Ths. 5:23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through.
May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

Growing to Maturity:
The Message of Colossians" #9
Sept. 13, 2020

**Self-Help Religion
vs. New Life in Christ**
Col. 3:1-4

“Religion” often connotes rigorously adhering to rules and observing rituals to make yourself acceptable to God. The gospel is very different. It is the good news of God’s work to save us—not only forgiving our sins but giving us new life.

In our passage this morning, Paul pivots, moving from our new identity in Christ found in the first two chapters to the character of the new life we are to lead in the next two. We will consider Paul’s words by considering the three contrasts he presents--

**I. Our New Identity:
Death/Resurrection**

**II. Our New Perspective:
Earthly Things/Things Above**

**III. Our New Challenge:
The Present/The Future**

*"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ,
set your hearts on things above, where Christ is,
seated at the right hand of God."--Col. 3:1*

Sermon Response:

**Self-Help Religion
vs. New Life in Christ
Col. 3:1-4**

- Re-read Col. 2:16-23. What was wrong with the teaching that Paul opposes in that passage? Why is it incapable of producing true spiritual transformation? What sort of teaching falls into that category today? How is the teaching of Colossians 3 different? What is the difference between legalism and the obedience that flows from the gospel?
- What does it mean to say that "you died" in v. 3? How does becoming a Christian mean dying to this world? Why would someone want to do that? How have you died? To what have you died? How can you affirm that death today?
- What does it mean to be "raised with Christ"? How does his resurrection affect you? How can the power of that work of God be at work in your life? What would such a life "on a higher plane" look like?
- How can you set your mind on things above? What are they? How can you make them the object of your desire?
- Read Rom. 8:18,19; 1 John 3:2; Phil. 3:20,21. What are your expectations about the future? What is this "glory" Paul refers to here? How ought this to motivate you today (cf. 1 John 3:3)?