

Place: Lurgan Baptist 3:2:2013

COMPLETE IN HIM

Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

8. THIS IS YOUR LIFE

A number of years ago there was a television programme entitled “**This is your Life.**” It was based on the 1952 American show of the same name. Do you remember it ? It was hosted by Emanon Andrews from 1955 until 1964 and then from 1969 until his death in 1987 when he was 64 years of age. Michael Aspel then took up the role of host until the show ended in 2003. It returned in 2007 as a one off special presented by Trevor McDonald, which to date was its most recent airing. Do you recall that on the show they would have a visiting celebrity or maybe not someone famous, but their life would be just given right there on the television program and unexpected guests and family members and friends from the past would be brought together, and during the show the people would really have a reliving of their life. Well if you’re a born-again Christian this these verses could well be entitled, “***This Is Your Life,***” for in these four verses we’re given the past, the present, and the future of every born-again child of God.

For example in (3:1) we see our past: you were raised with Christ. In (3:3) we see our present: you are hidden

with Christ. And then in (3:4) we see our future: you shall one day appear with Jesus Christ. My there is it, past, present, and future, everything you have and everything you are in the Lord Jesus Christ is set before you there. Now did you notice that everything revolves around the Lord Jesus Christ ? Do you see what Paul says in (3:4) ? “ *When Christ who is our life,*” Christ does not merely give life He is life. Paul says, “ *I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.* ” (Gal 2:20) Everything revolves around Christ.

My is this not exactly what happens when a person becomes a Christian ? Someone said “***life is what you are alive to.***” For instance you and your family go down to the shopping centre and your little boy is walking with you and you come to a toy store. And that little fellow becomes alive because he is interested in Star Wars. His world revolves around that. You go a little further and your teenage daughter sees Hollinger’s store and suddenly she becomes alive because of the perfume and the style.

Life is what you are alive to. Then you go a little further and Mum sees that boutique and she can’t wait to get in there and try on the style because she has lost seven pounds in weight. Life is what you are alive to. For you men it may be football, rugby or golf. You see, life is what you are alive to. Sometimes we say of folks, “ *Business is his life, sport is his life.* ” Now what you mean by that is, that this man’s whole life revolves around the realm of sports. Well, you see when you come to know Christ as your Saviour you ought to be able to say,

“ *For to me to live is Christ,* ” (Phil 1:21) or “ *When Christ who is our life,* ” (3:4) Now that’s what this paragraph is all about. This section moves from the doctrinal to the practical, applying the truth. The word “ *then,* ” in (3:1) builds on what Paul has previously said. He has spoken about our union with Christ. He says, we have “ *Died with Christ,* ” (2:20) we are “ *Buried with Christ,* ” (2:12) we are “ *Quickened with Christ,* ” (2:13) we are “ *Raised with Christ,* ” (3:1) we are “ *Hid with Christ,* ” (3:3) and we shall “ *Appear with Christ,* ” (3:4) Do you see how comprehensive it all is ? From the grave to the glory all the way “ *with Christ.* ” My “ **This is your Life.** ” Well, what kind of life is it ?

(1) THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A HOLY LIFE

Now the root meaning of the word translated “ *holy,* ” is different. A holy person is not an odd person but a different person. You know, a lot of believers are interested in *heaven* but they are not interested in holiness. They are interested in *health*, but not in holiness, they are interested in *happiness* but not in holiness. But what God wants for us more than anything else is to be holy. Now in the present context this touches on,

(a) OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST:

Look if you will at (3:1) “ *If,* ” better translated “ *Since,* ” Paul is saying that because of our relationship with Jesus Christ, having been identified with Jesus Christ, we have been resurrected, we have, we are risen

with Jesus Christ. Now what I want to do here is to just put together several phrases that occur right here and back in the second chapter. I want you to notice, these in your Bible. Notice,

- 1. We Died with Christ:** (3:3 2:20)
- 2. We were Buried with Christ:** (2:12)
- 3. We were Quickened with Christ:** (2:13)
- 4. We were Raised with Christ:** (3:1)

Now all of this touches on the doctrine of identification. Do you know what substitution is ? *Substitution means Christ died for us. Identification means we died with Christ.* Now that’s positionally, not literally but positionally. In other words two thousand years ago the Bible says when Jesus Christ died we died in Him. We were identified with Him in His death, in His burial and in His resurrection. Do you recall how Paul puts it in (Rom Ch 6) ? “ *Know ye not that so many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised from up from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life.* ” (Rom 6:3-4)

John MacArthur says, “ *When a person puts their trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation, they spiritually participate with the Lord in His crucifixion and His victory over sin and death. The believer’s old self is dead, having been crucified with Christ. The believer’s new man has the privilege of the indwelling Christ empowering him and living through him.* ”

**Jesus died and we died with Him,
Buried in His grave we lay,
One in Him in resurrection,
Soon with Him, in Heaven's bright day.
Death and judgment are behind us,
Grace and glory are before;
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,
There exhausted all their power**

Now this doesn't mean that we cannot sin, it means we do not have to sin. It means that sin no longer has to have dominion, authority, power over you. We died with Jesus Christ. I heard about two sisters who had been known to live quite an immoral life and went to wild parties and all these kinds of things and the two sisters got saved. So shortly thereafter they were sent a written invitation to a wild party. So the two sisters sent back and said, "*We're sorry we cannot come because we recently died.*" Now that's pretty good isn't it? What they were simply saying was, "*Volume 1 of my life has closed I am not living in Volume 2?*" My is this not the path to holiness? To realize who we are. That because we are united with Christ in such a way, that, whatever He did, we are regarded by God the Father as having done also. (2:12)

(b) OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHRIST:

For on account of this union with a living Christ we are called upon to do two things;

1. We are to Seek:

The term, "*seek*," was used in the days of the text to speak of a man's quest in life. It was his goal, his ambition and his priority. How conclusive are the words of John Calvin, who said, "*We seek those things which are above, when in heart and spirit, we are truly sojourners in this world, and not bound to it.*" On 1st September 1, 1985, Robert Ballard discovered the hull of the great "**Titanic**," 350 miles off the coast of Newfoundland and lying at a depth of two miles on the ocean floor. This is what he said about his quest for the sunken ship,

My first direct view of the "Titanic," lasted for less than two minutes, but the stark sight of her immense black hull towering above the ocean floor will remain forever ingrained in my mind. My life long dream was to find the great ship, and during the past 13 years the quest for her has dominated my life. I lived day and night for something that was hidden in the depths.

My as Christians, God doesn't ask us to live for what is beneath us, but what is before us. We are not to look to those things that are around us, but to those things that are above us. What are "*those things which are above?*" Well,

Our Saviour is there: (Eph. 1:21-23)
Our Heavenly Home is there: (John 14:1-3)
Our Rewards are there: (2 Cor. 5:10)
Our Departed Loved Ones are there:
Our Hearts Should be there: (Col. 3:2)

My To be preoccupied with "*things above*," is to be

preoccupied with the One who reigns there, His purposes, His plans, His provisions, and His power. It is to view the things, people and events of this world through His eyes and with an eternal perspective. But how do we “*seek those things which are above* ?” Well,

2. We are to Set:

A literal translation of (3:2) reads “ *Habitually set your mind your attention on things above not on things on the earth.* ” Now, you see, there are only two levels of existence, there are only two ways to live life. You can either live your life from the viewpoint of things above or you live your life from the viewpoint of things below. Now the unsaved person just spends his time dwelling on earthly things. Do you recall how describes this person in Philippians ? He says they “ *mind earthly things.* ” (3:19) What it means is the only world they know, the only world they think about is this world below, the things of the earth. People get very involved in **prosperity** and they want to make all the money they can make, that’s a big deal with people, making money, prosperity. Or maybe **pleasure**. Just have a good time. Live it up. Or perhaps its **position** and **power**, excel in life, become big, become **prominent** in life. My is this you ? Are you just living for the things of this world ? Are you “ *mind earthly things* ? ” Or are you setting your mind on the things of God ?

You see, what you think ultimately determines how you behave. That’s why it’s very important to be careful what you put in your mind. The Bible says, “ *As a man*

thinketh in his heart so is he. ” (Prov 23:7) That’s why it’s very important the books you read, and the television you watch, and the kinds of things you allow yourself to hear musically. All of that is so important because “ *as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.* ” My do you set your mind according to the Word of God ? I once heard of a pilot who was flying an airplane when he heard a disturbing noise. He was flying over the ocean, and when he heard the noise he realized that a rat had somehow gotten aboard the aircraft. The rat was gnawing away at some wires that led to the cockpit. It was a single engine plane and the pilot knew that this could do great damage to his plane, and could even cause it to crash. The tragedy was that the pilot could not leave the controls to go back and take care of the rat. Then, he thought of an amazing idea. He put on his oxygen mask and just went straight up, climbing into the atmosphere. Eventually, the plane got so high up that the rat ran out of oxygen, and died.

My do you want to know how to kill the “ *rats*, ” that hinder you spiritually ? “ *Set your mind on things above,* ” Fill your mind with the “ *things of God,* ” “ *the Word of God,* ” and the “ *Christ of God,* ” and you will kill the rat of worry, the rat of jealousy, the rat of bitterness, the rat of criticism, and the rat of lust. Of Robert Murray McCheyne the godly nineteenth century Scottish pastor and evangelist a friend once said,

“ *The man of whom I speak seemed to have got to the full height and to have entered into the secret places of the holiness of God.* ” When McCheyne preached the gospel,

“ You could see strong men hard and stern melt as wax before the fire. Their breasts would swell and heave as they would burst and the whole place became a place of weepers. ” McCheyne learned to live in the heavenlies so that he could reach souls on earth. (1)

(2) THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A HIDDEN LIFE

Do you see what Paul says in (3:3) ? Or *“ your life has been and remains hidden with Christ. ”* The tense of the verb there refers to something that took place in past time with abiding results. Your life has been and remains hidden with Christ. Now what does Paul mean ? I think he is talking here,

(a) ABOUT OUR SECURITY:

For *“ Hidden in Christ, ”* means security. The eminent Greek scholar Dr. A. T. Robertson says *“ So here we are in Christ who is in God, and no burglar not even Satan himself can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. ”* My do you see how secure you are ? Your life has been hidden and it remains hidden with Christ, what security. We are not only secure, we are doubly-secure in the Lord Jesus. The door that seals my salvation has been given a double lock. First, Paul says, it has been hidden with Christ, and, second, it has been hidden in God. I believe you would agree that is a safe, and a secure place to be. Who then, will say that our life once hid can be lost ? I mean the Son and the Father are pledged to my security. Do you recall the words of the Lord Jesus ? *“ And I give unto them eternal life and they shall never*

perish neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. ”
(Jn 10:28-29) Now you know we’re security conscious aren’t we ? The kind of world we live in you need to be security conscious. Some of you have alarms systems for your house, and some of you have alarms for your cars, and every now and then you hear the alarm system go off in this building. Indeed people are security conscious when it comes to the matter of death. They want to take every possible measure to secure themselves from the danger of death. Dr. Jerry Vines tells the story of a wealthy Texan one time, grabbed himself like that, looked to his wife and said, *“ I think I’m having a heart attack. Quick, girl, go buy me a hospital. ”* But do you know something ? No man can retain his spirit in the hour of death. My there is not a doctor on the earth who can guarantee to preserve you from death, did you know that ? But when you come to the Lord Jesus you’ve got security, your life is hidden with Christ in God.

That’s double security isn’t it ? I mean you’ve heard of double jeopardy haven’t you ? Well this is double security. We’re in the hand of Christ, we’re in the hand of the Father, we are hidden with Christ in God. Now tell me do you think you’ll be lost again along the way ? The famous **“ Sanci, ”** diamond was sent from a French nobleman to Henry the 4th. The messenger who carried the diamond was ambushed by thieves and left for dead, but they could not find the diamond. When the authorities found the body they opened the abdomen to find that the messenger had hidden the diamond in his stomach. Do

you something ? We are so hidden in Christ that no robber shall ever touch us here. My “ *your life is hid with Christ in God,* ” that means the devil would have to get through Christ and through God to get to you. I’d say you’re in pretty good shape. What safety. What security.

**Rejoice, believer, in the Lord,
Who makes your cause His own
The hope that’s built upon His Word
Can ne’er be overthrown.**

**Though many foes beset your road,
And feeble is your arm
Your life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm**

(b) ABOUT OUR SUFFICIENCY:

“ *And your life is hid with Christ in God,* ” (3:3) Do you see the Person He is ? Do you recall that back in (Ch 2) Paul says of Christ, “ *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* ” (2:3) My Jesus Christ is God and in Him are hid or stored all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And so if you’re hidden with Christ you’re where all the treasures are. My isn’t that something ? You see, you have hidden resources the world knows nothing about. But not only the Person He is, do you see the Position He Occupies: “ *Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.* ” (3:1) Sure because of His session at the Father’s right hand He is the fountain of blessing for His people. Indeed He says, “ *If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it.* ” (Jn 14:14) Now listen

Christians have tragedies just like unsaved people have. Christians have hard times on their jobs and sometimes lose their jobs just like the unsaved do. Christians have problems with their children. Christians have the loss of loved ones, Christians have health problems, but, you see, the difference is that Christians have Christ and He is sufficient. And my the day we got saved when we got the Lord Jesus we got it all. He is all we need because He meets every need and we are complete in Him. (1) (2)

(3) THE CHRISTIAN IS A HOPEFUL LIFE

Did you catch that in (3:4) ? By the way, do you see the centrality of Christ in this paragraph ?

1. With Christ: (3:1)
2. Where Christ: (3:1)
3. With Christ: (3:3)
4. When Christ: (3:4)
5. With Christ: (3:4)

But do you see,

(a) THE CERTAINTY HERE:

“ *Christ shall appear,* ” Jesus Christ is coming again. The sinner can dread it, the liberal can doubt it, the atheist can deny it and the infidel can dispute it but Jesus Christ is coming again. “ *Christ shall appear,* ” do you believe it ? I heard about a little boy who had a kite and the kite had flown so high that it had gone completely out of sight and he just held on to the string and maintained

that he had a kite. He was holding on tightly and looking up into the sky and a man came by and said to him, “ *Son, what do you have there ?* ” He said, “ *Oh, I’ve got a kite.* ” The man said, “ *what makes you think you’ve got a kite up there in the sky ?* ” And the little boy said, “ *Well, I will tell you Sir, I can’t see it, but I can feel the pull.* ” My you mark it down. It may be today, it may tomorrow, it may be next week, it may be next year, but Jesus Christ is coming again.

(b) THE CLARITY HERE:

“ *Christ shall appear,* ” it means to “ *make manifest what has been hidden.* ” Now, Jesus Christ for the most part is hidden from view today isn’t He ? This old world, they don’t know who the Lord Jesus is, He is hidden from their view, but, one of these days the Bible says “ *every eye shall see Him.* ” (Rev 1:7) There will be an unveiling of Jesus Christ. (a) (b)

(c) THE COMPANY HERE:

“ *Ye shall also appear with him,* ” Pastor Mullan used to say, “ *If the unsaved really knew that Christians are the aristocracy of heaven, they would tip their hats at us.* ” Well, one day when He appears we will be revealed with Him. My the church is going to have a front row seat. Zechariah says, “ *The Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Thee.* ” (Zech 14:5) The word “ *appear,* ” means, “ *to make visible what is invisible.* ” That is, when Christ returns, the real position of the believer, which has been hidden from the world, will be made known.

My is this not the goal of every Christian ? It is not a grave in a cemetery, but, it is the future glory of the Son of God. John says, “ *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* ” (1 Jn 3:2)

My **This is Your Life.** (1) (2) (3)

Major Ian Thomas puts it like this,

To be in Christ, that is Redemption; but, for Christ to be in us, that is Sanctification. To be in Christ, that makes you fit for Heaven; but, for Christ to be in you, that makes you fit for Earth. To be in Christ, that changes your destination; but, for Christ to be in you, that changes your destiny. The one makes Heaven your home, the other makes this world His workshop.

Paul says “ *Christ is our life,* ” his life was certainly centered on Christ, is yours ?

**Jesus is all the world to me
My life, my joy, my all
He is my strength from day to day
Without Him I would fall**

