

Fix your minds on heaven

Colossians 3:1-4

One of the biggest challenges I've had in the early months of 2013 is a reminder that focus is all-important in our walk as Christian people. Someone once said that in the Christian faith, it's important to keep the main thing, the main thing. But what as God's people is the main thing that we should keep as the main thing?

Here it is in Colossians 3. *You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God.* These words are the culmination of our reflection this Easter Sunday. It's where our journey ends. I'll give you a brief summary of where we have gone this evening in the words of a fourth century Syrian Christian called Ephrem

*From the height, the Strong One came down to us.
And from within the womb, Hope came to us.
From the grave, Life rose for us.
And at the right hand, the King sat for us.
Blessed is his greatness.*

*From the height He came down as the Lord
And from inside the womb He went out as a slave.
And death kneeled before Him in Sheol.
And by his resurrection, life worshipped him.
Blessed is His victory.*

And His victory is our victory as the people of Christ. Because of His death on the cross, He took us from death and has brought us to life as we have put our faith and trust in Him. Now we have a whole eternity stretching out before us and we have the call to keep the main thing the main thing which is the person we follow: the risen and glorified Lord Jesus Christ.

We are asked to do two things in this respect:

- *set your hearts on the things that are in heaven*
- *keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth*

Two things we must do. What are the implications.

Set your hearts. What does Paul mean?

It actually means seek, actively pursue things that are in heaven. What are the priorities of heaven for our lives. It's the will of the One who sits on the throne, the One in whom we have pledged our allegiance. He comes first. His will is paramount. He has given us life.

Then verse 2 *Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth.* It's one thing to pursue something. What happens when we get it? We need to stay fixed. The trouble is that the draw and drag of the world is great. We may pursue Jesus, but the world always tries to drag us back.

These verses are all about our desire to seek something and then hold on to it because of its intrinsic value. It is remarkable how much time we spend to achieve goals we really

see worthwhile or what we want. It's what drives ambition in people.

It's amazing the sorts of thing in this world we fix on and hang on to because they are important – family, friendships. Then there's hobbies. I often walk the dogs at night down the seafront. It's remarkable how many sea anglers there are this time of year. I'll stay five or ten minutes in the cold weather before the dogs go back to the car because it's so cold. But those anglers will stay out all night. Why? Don't they have homes to go to? They pursue angling and they have fixed their minds on it.

We are called to be like that about Jesus. Why? Because He's worth it. He's given us life, because He's risen. Yes, we may have other things that interest us or which take up our time, but are we shaped around what our real goal is: the only thing that remains when we are gone and that's heaven.

But what about all those important things in life that we must deal with? What about all those issues in our lives that worry us and maybe keeping us from thinking about our faith too hard from time to time? There is an old saying "they are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good". Surely if we are focussed on heaven we will cease to become relevant to the world all of us are still in.

Let's look at the two other verses. *3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory!*

Firstly we are already dead to the world. When we decided to follow Jesus we died. We died to the world and now the spiritual life is in Christ. May still be in the world, but we are already citizens of heaven. We are part of the new order. Paul uses the word "hidden in Christ with God". We are part of Him. In heavenly terms, He is part of us and we are part of Him. We live because He lives.

That's how organic our relationship is which is why we should seek and hang on to heavenly things, because we are no longer part of the world. His future is our future. When He appears – returns – we will be there and we will reign with Him. Heaven is a promise of glory with our Saviour. That's why our focus should be there.

And being heavenly minded so we're no earthly good? I'd argue that if our mind is not fixed on Jesus, then we're no earthly good. We'll be focussing on things that don't last. But when we are fixed on Him, we find ourselves moving in His will. When God's people start to act like who they are, we are very earthly good, because the product is changed lives, ours and those we touch.

This Easter as we have focused on Jesus, the risen Lord who we follow, let's start to pursue that risen life in Christ. Let's seek it and as we understand and focus on it, may we remain fixed on Him – that we will bring Him glory, until He comes and throughout eternity.

3:1 You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. 2 Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory!

A Better Resurrection

By Christina Rossetti

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
 My heart within me like a stone
Is numb'd too much for hopes or fears;
 Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimm'd with grief
 No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
 O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
 My harvest dwindled to a husk:
Truly my life is void and brief
 And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
 No bud nor greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall—the sap of Spring;
 O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
 A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
 Or cordial in the searching cold;
Cast in the fire the perish'd thing;
 Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him, my King:
 O Jesus, drink of me.