

I.N.I.

Ascension Day
May 30, 2019
Colossians 3:1-4

In Christ Jesus, who Ascended on high, is sitting at God's right hand and whom we are looking forward to seeing again in glory on the last day, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

What's in your dash? You know that dash that stands between two dates. Duane Riggert's was June 13, 1925---August 14, 2018. That dash between those two dates represents your life here on earth. Everyone who has died has a dash with two dates, one before and one after. For some of us our dash may be quite long, 80, 90, maybe 100 years, for others it may be quite short 20, 30, or 40 years. But whatever the length, what occurs during that dash, between those dates, makes all the difference for our eternal future.

So we ask again:

WHAT'S IN YOUR DASH?

Our text this evening tells us what is in every Christ-believer's dash.

I: We are Dead to sin---Buried with Christ in your Baptism.

In verse 3 Paul writes **FOR YOU DIED**. Now Paul is writing to Colossian Christians who are very much alive. Why does he write **FOR YOU DIED**? Paul is referring back to earlier in this letter when he wrote: **IN HIM YOU WERE ALSO CIRCUMCISED, IN THE PUTTING OFF OF THE SINFUL NATURE, NOT WITH A CIRCUMCISION DONE BY THE HANDS OF MEN BUT WITH THE CIRCUMCISION DONE BY CHRIST, HAVING BEEN BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM.**

When the Holy Spirit brings people to faith in Jesus, they die to their sinful selves and their old earthly way of living. Their guilt filled hearts are buried with Christ in Baptism. This free gift of God in Baptism puts our sinful natures to death, and the Spirit creates a new living nature within us—the New Man, living in Christ. We are dead to sin—to everything that says “self”, or “fear”, or “slavery” or “me, me, me!”

In Romans 6 Paul writes: **OR DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT AS MANY OF US AS WERE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST JESUS WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH?** We are not merely baptized with reference to Jesus, or just united to Him in His death, but Jesus' salvation is our salvation, because we were baptized into His death. By taking our sins upon Himself and paying the full price of their punishment by His suffering and death, Jesus has delivered us not only from guilt and punishment, but also from the power of sin. And since we have become Christ's own by Baptism and have been baptized into His death, we are delivered from the power of death—from its authority and rule over us.

But there is more:

II: We are Alive in Christ---Set your mind on Heavenly Things.

In both Romans and here in Colossians Paul follows with these words: **THEREFORE WE WERE BURIED WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM INTO DEATH, THAT JUST AS CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, EVEN SO WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE and BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, IN WHICH YOU ALSO WERE RAISED WITH HIM THROUGH FAITH IN THE WORKING OF GOD, WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD. AND YOU, BEING DEAD IN YOUR TRESPASSES AND THE UNCIRCUMCISION OF YOUR FLESH, HE HAS MADE ALIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM, HAVING FORGIVEN YOU ALL TRESPASSES.**

Verses 1 and 2 of our text reads: **IF THEN YOU WERE RAISED WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST IS, SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH.**

Even as God regards Jesus' death as if it were every believer's death and credits it to each of us, He also raises each of us from spiritual death to spiritual life, setting us free from the power of sin and giving us peace, joy and forgiveness. Being raised with Christ means we have been made personal sharers in the blessings Jesus has earned for us. Just as Christ was “reborn” through His resurrection we are reborn to new life. Just as Jesus has power over sin, death, Satan and hell we bask in that power, as well as in the power over troubles, worries, problems, temptations and trials in this life.

That is why Paul says **SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE**. With our goal heaven, we are set free from the worldly cares and worries of this life, while still enjoying our lives here on earth. We are not living for this life, but for eternal life. Our values, goals, and decisions ought to reflect this heavenly-

mindfulness. Our real citizenship is in heaven. Nothing on earth has lasting value or is a lasting treasure. Heaven is our home even as we live on this earth!

III: We are Hidden with Christ---Your unseen Glory.

Paul continues: **your life is hidden with Christ in God.** The unbelieving world does not see what we really have and enjoy. Righteousness of Christ! We don't look holy, but we are in Christ. The power of Christ! We don't look like conquerors, but we are in Christ. Children of God! We don't look like God's children, but we are in Christ. Spiritually wealthy! We don't look wealthy, but we are in Christ.

To the world this hidden life in Christ means nothing. Unbelievers may laugh and scorn us Christians for living with our heads in the clouds looking for a redeemer to come and for rejecting the world's standards and values and way of life. They see us believers experiencing the same problems, troubles, trials, suffering and pain as others and ridicule our belief in some unseen Lord and Savior who rules all things. But that unseen glory is still ours and is seen only through faith, **UNTIL**

IV: We are Forever with Christ, enjoying Eternal Glory

WHEN CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE APPEARS, THEN YOU ALSO WILL APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY. When the Ascended Lord returns again as Judge of all the world, what is now hidden from the world will be made visible. We will be glorified and appear in that full-blown glory with Jesus. Unbelievers will try to run away and flee from the Judgment, but we will be welcomed into our heavenly Father's home by our loving Savior. We will have glorified bodies like Christ and will rule with Him forever. What an amazing eternity to look forward to.

So what's in your dash? As a believer in Christ---your sinful flesh was put to death and buried with Christ in your baptism. You renounced Satan and all his ways and died to sin.

You were also made alive in Christ, spiritually reborn and now live on earth with your heart and desires on heaven.

Your unseen glory is hidden in Christ as you go through the day by day troubles, problems, trials and sufferings of life knowing that Christ has Ascended and lives as our Prophet, Priest and King over all things. Therefore we are convinced that **ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THOSE WHO LOVE GOD, TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.**

And when a date is finally placed after our dash, the date of our death, our souls will be taken to live with the Lord in heaven, our bodies will be placed in our graves and we will await the last act of Christ's return when we will be glorified with Him forevermore.

That is what is in every Christian's dash, every Christian's life here on earth while living for heaven. So let's keep busy living for our Ascended Lord Jesus in all that we do, while we await His return, so we can faithfully answer the question: What on earth are you doing, for heaven's sake?

Amen.