

Being a Christian in Today's World

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In Paul's letter to the saints at Colossae and Laodicea, he explains that everything we need as humans is found in Christ. Some people were saying that Christ was not enough to fulfill human needs. Paul warned believers against listening to the empty philosophy of their day.

"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority" (Col. 2:6-10).

We live in a much different world than these saints. Yet, we confront a similar cultural message. Our society teaches us to seek fulfillment away from Christ. To live a meaningful life, we are to pursue education, careers, and wealth. Each of these has a purpose; however, they cannot accomplish for us what Christ alone has already accomplished.

In the third chapter of Colossians, Paul teaches how Christians are to interact in the world and among themselves. Faith in Christ will give us direction, peace, and stability. The lessons Paul teaches are fundamental to being a Christian in today's world.

Lessons from Colossians 3

1). Christians have an identity. Today, the world teaches us to look within ourselves to find our identity. Many do not know who they are. They aimlessly wander through life. Others are burdened by the pressure of finding their identity. No matter what they do, they cannot live up to society's expectations of them. They feel lost and defeated.

Paul explains how Christians know who they are. With an identity in Christ as His child, they have direction and purpose. They live in Christ and for Christ. As they go through the struggles of life, they live in the hope of the return of Christ.

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:1-4).

2). Christians are disciplined. The philosophy of our society promotes a warped form of freedom. Our culture advocates for a world without rules, boundaries, and restrictions. Truth enslaves us from becoming our real, authentic selves. Sadly, many people have believed this philosophy.

This lie has cost people dearly. There is a wake of destruction behind people who have rejected truth and boundaries. Paul explains how the moral and ethical foundations established by the Gospel lead to peace, productivity, and fulfillment. Christ seeks to protect us from the pain, rot, and brokenness of sin.

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col. 3:5-10)

3). Christians are united. Our society has been divided for a long time. Today, our leaders use division as a tactic to gain and maintain power. Every issue is crafted into a wedge issue. Our problems are promoted, but never any solutions. With little thought, we easily get swept away into choosing sides.

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians, he explains how Christians are to be united. This is not an easy goal. Recognizing the challenge of unity, he mentions specific qualities that must be cultivated in the hearts of Christians and churches for them to become one. By becoming united, we become salt and light in the world. We declare to a divisive world of the wholeness available in Christ.

“Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful” (Col. 3:11-15).

4). Christians worship. Our society has been crumbling religiously. The “religious unaffiliated/nones” increase every year. A general lack of affiliation is a bigger problem in our society. People are increasingly isolated. The lack of communal engagement contributes to loneliness and depression. In this climate, churches have an important role in helping change this trend.

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians, he explains how Christians worship. They gather and praise the Creator for what He has done for them through Christ. Worship calls the lonely to a relationship with God through Christ. Worship calls the isolated to join the family of God. Worship calls the poor in spirit to be enriched by the blessings of God’s love.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col. 3:16).

Conclusion

Becoming a Christian changes everything. Faith in Christ is to form our decision-making. Day by day, bit by bit, our lives are enriched through Christ. This is how Christians cultivate the good seed of the new world to come.

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17).