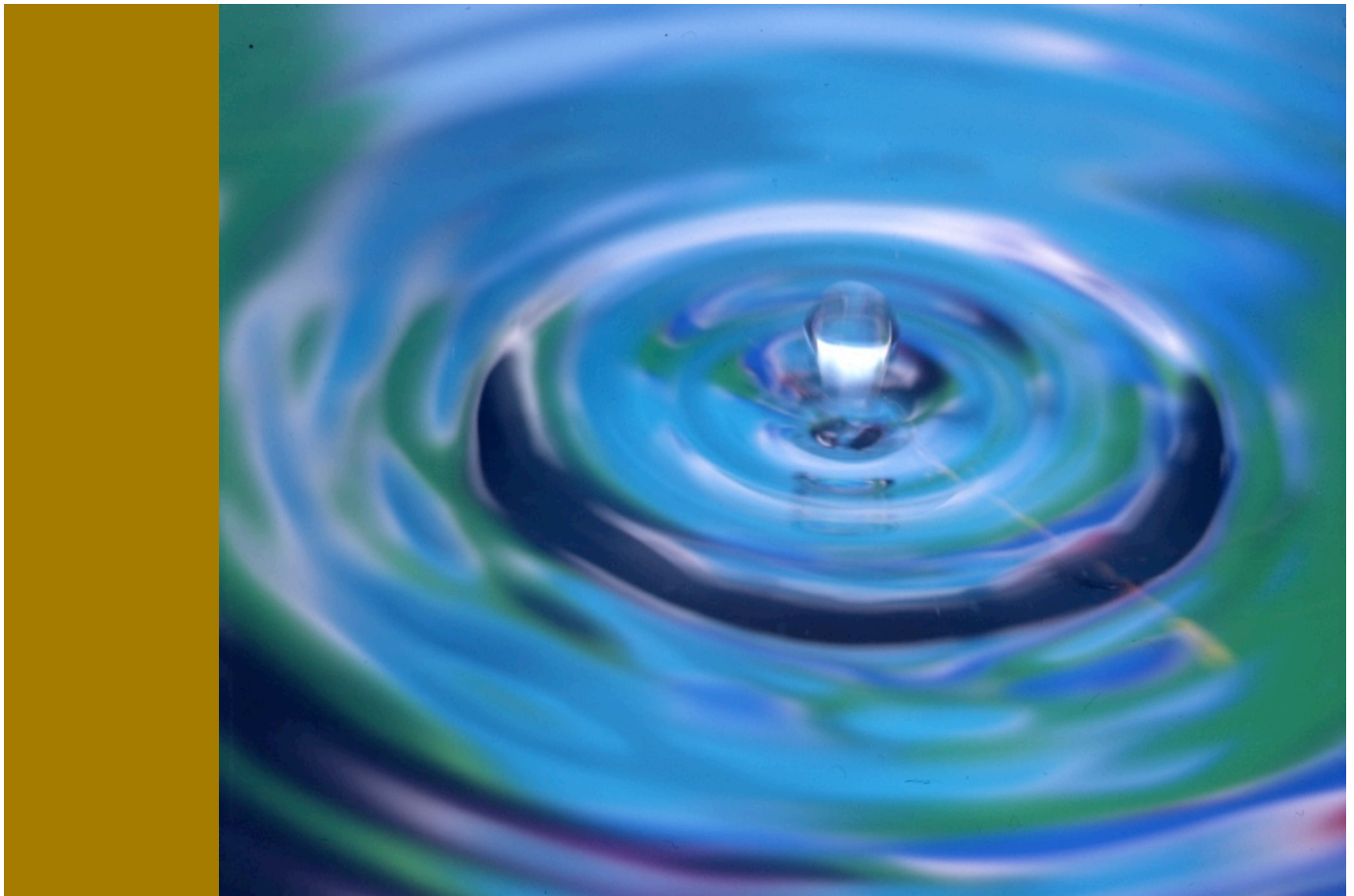


CITY CHURCH-EASTSIDE WEEKLY WORSHIP GUIDE

March 7, 2010



Series: A New Allegiance New Character for a New People

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

Recently a personal consultant stated that on average people spend more time researching an automobile purchase than they do developing a life plan. Yet, in a recent survey where people were asked “if you could ask a Supreme Being just one question what would it be?” the number one answer was “why am I here on earth?” We live in a culture that questions purpose and consistently throughout Colossians Paul has taught us that if anything other than God shapes our purpose, we simply won’t be satisfied. Colossians 3:1-11 specifically shows us that our design, under the lordship of Christ, is to produce a character of life. So how do we do that?

We do that first by “setting our hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God”. Being drawn into the heavenly throne room of God

does not call us to escape the realities of the material world, but like the rippling effect of a rock in water we receive the transforming influence of Christ rather than the gods of this world. Moreover, the reality is that by design we are creatures of robust affections and Christianity does not advocate a denial of our longings. Rather, God is a rapturous lover who seeks to know us and satisfy our deepest longings. Spiritual transformation takes place when we forsake our old loves and embrace all that God offers. The dynamic is similar to the first time you fell in love and thought the world could end! And then you broke up or they broke your heart and in time you experienced a love that made that first love pale in comparison. You now say to yourself, “I wouldn’t want to go back to that old love because of what I now know.” These old loves are not soon forgotten though. In fact they crop up constantly as idols or functional saviors,

those worldly gods that we believe we can’t live without. God our great lover longs for us to abandon the old loves who whisper empty promises in our ear. Transformation occurs when we come to see sin, not as merely getting caught in a wrong, but as infidelity to a holy and loving God. Paul concludes this section of Colossians making practical application of these truths in the area of sexuality and truthfulness. Linking sexual immorality to idolatry, Paul sheds light on our tendency to give ourselves to another or a screen when our marriage partner or situation does not meet our needs. We lie because we’re afraid to be discovered and we attempt to be something we’re not. But when our hearts and minds are set upon Christ above, the results can be radically different. We see Christ as the answer to our deepest needs and thus sidestep our proclivity to use others. It’s his work that enables us to be fully loved by the Father leaving behind the counterfeit self.

Sermon Application

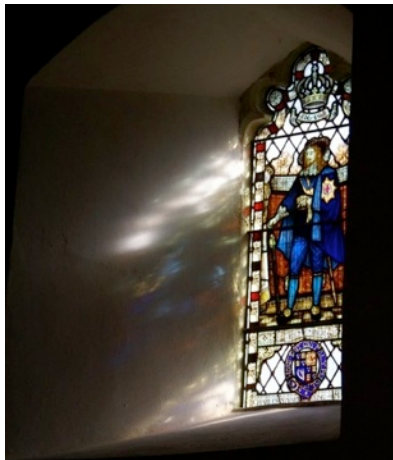
The questions and thoughts below can be used for further reflection this week. Seek to use a journal or discuss with a friend. Most of all use this to consider how the gospel of Christ can be transforming. Enjoy!

Application Questions: Colossians 3:1-11

1. Recently a personal consultant stated that generally people spend more time researching a car purchase than establishing a life plan and yet according to a CNN survey more than anything people want to know “why am I here on earth”. Why do you believe this discrepancy exists in our society today?
1. Profoundly “when you try to shape your life, you find that in the end, it shapes you”. How have you recently seen this to be true in your own life or in the life of others?
2. Religious and irreligious thought treat the affections and desires of the heart differently. How do you find this to be true and how does a gospel-orientation differ?
3. Share about a time of crisis or challenge where you’ve come to recognize an idol in your life. (Perhaps define idol here). How would you describe your relationship to this functional savior?
4. Sally left the church years ago tired of being told about breaking the rules and the resultant wrath of God. How has the wrath of God been inappropriately set forth in her situation? What is the basis for God’s wrath and how does it display his love?
5. What is the relationship between sexuality and intimacy? How do sexuality and intimacy malfunction when disconnected from a marital relationship? How does the work of Christ impact our sexual needs?

“Why end a list of sexual sins with an economic sin? Because sexual sin is fundamentally a matter of covetousness, an insatiable, self-gratifying greed that has the control and consumption of the other person as its ultimate desire. Sexual sin is sin not because it is sexual but because it is invariably covetousness. It replaces the pleasure and sexual enjoyment of two people in a loving relationship with a self-centered gratification of sexual longings that can never be fulfilled apart from commitment. Such sin breaks the back of trust that is at the heart of community.”

Brian Walsh & Sylvia Keesmet



The Lenten Journey: Fasting

Christ’s journey into the wilderness brought him into an encounter with Satan, the evil one who was present in the Garden and the source of man’s original temptation. Matthew tells us that “the tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” The reply of Christ contains similar phrases to Deuteronomy 8:3, a passage that refers to the Israelite wilderness journey of the Exodus. Throughout their journey the Israelites faced the question, “will you trust God or will you trust in the things of this world?” Many if not most of the original Israelite sojourners lost their lives because they choose the later. The question of trust in God was initially announced in the Garden, but echoes in the great halls of redemptive history. Adam, the Israelites, and even the people of God today fail to believe that God’s leadership and provision are adequate. The Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible summarizes Christ’s unique response:

“In Deuteronomy 8:3 this phrase (“living by bread alone, but...”) refers to God’s word of direction in the wilderness and his provision of manna. Unlike Israel, Jesus did not abandon his trust in God’s provision. Although Jesus had the power of the Holy Spirit in full measure, he replied to each of Satan’s temptations with a reference to Scripture. The power of the Spirit is God’s Word and even Jesus relied on Scripture for strength in his spiritual struggle.”

Often fasting is viewed as an act whereby we abstain from food in order to please God or improve our standing before Him. But, if the gospel tells us that God is already completely pleased with us because of the work of Christ, what’s the point in fasting? There are many appropriate answers to this question in the context of the gospel, but ultimately fasting provides us the opportunity to reflect on that epic question of redemptive history “will we trust God or will we trust in the things of this world?” Fasting is an opportunity to proactively reject the things of this world and make the physical statement that God is enough to satisfy the deepest cravings of our soul. Fasting provides the unique intersection of physically making a lordship proclamation, spending time in prayer with God, and meditating on his truths considering them more worthy than the voices of this world. For more information about fasting visit these links: [Guide 1](#), [Guide 2](#), Blessings on your journey!