**Hidden with Christ in God**

**The Word**

Read together Colossians 3:1-4

**The Big Idea**

We are called to find our lives in Christ and to focus on God’s kingdom realities rather than the treasures and values of worldly kingdoms.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Sunday’s message contrasted pursuing heavenly things with earthly things, and examples were given of each:

Heavenly: unconditional love, grace, patience, sacrifice, gentleness, concern for the family of God, concern for those outside the family of God. Commitment to your church community, friends and family. Giving of our financial resources, living a life of worship and sacrificing for others

Earthly: financial gain, politics, sports, personal appearance, entertainment, and success).

As you consider those two lists in regards to your own life, what stands out to you?

2. On Sunday we discussed living lives that are “hidden in Christ” in the sense that following Jesus leads to a life that remains a mystery and a conundrum to those outside of the faith. When have you recently seen a believer make a Christ-centered decision that would be utterly non-sensical to the world?

3. Take a few minutes in silence to meditate on v. 1: “you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” Imagine your old, ego-driven, selfish self is dead, and the only you is the you that is hidden in Christ. What specifically would change about how you approach your life if you lived in the constant awareness of that reality?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Heaven and Earth

A. The Old Testament is replete with images of “things above/heaven” and “things below/earth” (see Genesis 1:7, Deuteronomy 4:39, Jeremiah 31:37)

B. In Jewish thinking, things of heaven were the things of God and things of this earth were not as God intended.

C. So in urging the Colossians to keep a heavenly perspective, Paul is calling them to make God’s kingdom principles their priority, such as unconditional love, grace, patience, sacrifice, gentleness, concern for the family of God, concern for those outside the family of God. Commitment to your church community, friends and family. Giving of our financial resources, living a life of worship and sacrificing for others

D. This is in contrast to earthly kingdom priorities such as financial gain, politics, sports, personal appearance, entertainment, and success.

E. We remember the phrase, “They are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good,” yet more often than not Christians are actually so earthly minded that they are no heavenly good.

II. Dead to Sin and Alive to Christ

A. For Paul, the gospel of Jesus Christ is about death and new life. We are dead to sin and transgressions and alive to the Kingdom of God.

B. While living in this world we are called to live as if we were standing before the throne of God in heaven, where Christ is seated with all authority.

C. Within this context we would note that the emphasis seems to be on the power of Christ that is manifestly ours as we “walk in Him”

D. Apart from Christ we are slaves to the things below, the sinful ways of the world. In Christ, we are set free to experience the power of His resurrection in living a new life.

III. Hiding with Christ

A. Paul uses the term hidden throughout Colossians (see Col 1:26 and 2:3)

B. The point being made here seems to be that entrance into the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ alone, gives one a perspective that is hidden to others. Those outside of Christ, live according to the things below and cannot fathom the values, morality and priorities of Christ and His Kingdom. Although living in this world our way of life remains a mystery to those outside of Christ.

C. The life of sacrifice, unconditional love, concern for others and all the other qualities of kingdom living stands as a stark contrast to the ways of the world and can often leave the world flummoxed.

IV. Hope

A. The day is coming when the Kingdom of God will no longer remain a hidden mystery. Christ will appear in His glory and there will be a full reckoning.

B. In that day, all of Christ’s own will appear with Him in glory. Hidden in Christ, we will appear with Him and fully realize His Kingdom with Him.