

Colossians 3:1-2

Sunday 8/20/2006

We have a purpose. We believe that when Jesus Christ went back to Heaven, He intended us to finish what He started for Him. That is the way we take it. We have a great time fellowshiping and loving each other and loving the things of life, but we never lose our focus on the real calling that God has called us to do.

I. The Series: What Changed When You Got Saved

We have been coming through a study, and in the last six or seven weeks, we have been focusing on helping you get a better handle on what really transpired inside you the day you got saved. It is absolutely crucial that you learn these things and understand how this thing works. I hope that as we are going week by week, you are putting these in your Bible and getting them down. I hope that every week, when you come to the next Sunday, you have a very good grasp of the one before, so that when we are done with this, this is a no-brainer for you, that it becomes a baseline of your relationship with God.

We talked about the first week, if you remember, out of 2 Corinthians 5:17, and we discussed the fact that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus and all the ramifications of that. Those CDs are available back there if you would like to check out our whole series. The second week, we went over to Matthew 22:37. We talked about when you got saved, the fact that now you have the ability to love God, where before you did not really have that ability. The third week, we went to Ephesians 2:18. We talked about how that when you got saved, your citizenship changed. The week after that, we went into Philippians 3:20, and we talked about how it deals with your conversation change the day you got saved.

Then last week, we entered into one of the, as far as I am concerned, one of the greatest single doctrines in the Bible that is the cause for so many bad teachings today. We went through a couple of those last week, but that is the fact that in Ephesians 2:6, the concept of being in Christ. The Bible says that when you got saved, you are now seated in Christ Jesus in heavenly places. We laid that out and went through it.

Now, today we are going to talk about number 6, and then next week, Lord willing, we will finish it up and we will get into number 7. Then we will go back to some of the other seven series we have been studying through the Word of God.

II. The Book of Colossians and the Laodicean Church

Today we are going to talk about the book of Colossians. I am going to give you a little heads up here on the book of Colossians. It is going to be a while before we get to Colossians as we come through in our little Bible groups, but I want you to understand some of this stuff before you even get there. The book of Colossians is an incredible book.

When I began to study the Bible a number of years ago, I began to see a lot of correlations between things. I began to see that John, in the book of Revelation, when he began to detail out

history, he wrote to seven churches. When I began to see church history, I began to see that when God wanted me to study the history of the church, when God wanted me to understand how time flows from the time of Christ to the rapture of the church, then God broke that period of time, which is about 2,000 years, into seven periods. I found that those seven periods are represented by seven churches. You are going to find when you go through and study it that each one of those churches matches up exactly to the period of history of the church.

Then I began to realize as I got a little bit farther in my Bible that not only did John write to seven churches, but if you stop and lay it out, Paul wrote to seven churches. I began to see that there was a correlation between the churches that John wrote to and the churches that Paul wrote to. In fact, there is such a correlation that they all match up. You will find going through the scriptures that each one of John's churches lines up to one of the churches of Paul. If you really want to get a concept of what is going on in history in those churches, you have to get those two together.

Now, when it comes to the Laodicean church, we know the Laodicean church from the book of Revelation chapter 3. We know that the Laodicean church period is the last period of time before Jesus Christ comes back. In the history of our time, that starts around 1900, maybe a little bit before, and it runs right up to the rapture of the church and then on into the great tribulation and up to the second coming of Christ. We know now from the Bible why things are the way they are in churches today. The Bible says that the hallmark of this period of time in history of this church is going to be an emphasis on the rights of people more than the rights of God.

We know that this church talks about all of the things that the church loses its focus on. The fact he says about this church, that this church thinks it is rich, this church thinks it is better than everybody else, this church thinks it has need of nothing, this church is increased with goods, and yet this church, in reality, the Bible says is poor, blind, naked, and wretched. It gave me the understanding that the way we look at things is not always the way that God looks at things. I think that is the point that I want you to get out of what all I am going to say this morning. We live in the Laodicean church and it is easy for us to kind of get into that mindset that we are really doing what God wants us to do, or we are really not doing too bad when in actuality we are not doing very good at all.

Now the book that lines up to Laodicea is the book of Colossians. The book of Colossians is a great book. Geographically, you are going to find that on a map you had Colossae right here and 11 miles to the south was Laodicea. Eleven miles is probably the distance between here and maybe Lee's Summit in the middle or maybe over in Parkville. It is not very far, maybe here to Blue Springs or Green Valley. It is not very far. In other words, Laodicea was a suburb of Colossae.

When you look at this and you begin to understand it, it brings up a tremendous concept. A lot of people think they are living in Colossae when in actuality it is just a few steps into Laodicea. In other words, many times it is God's people, because we are faced and bombarded with all of the things that we are up against. Many times we think we are living in Philadelphia when in

actuality we are living in Laodicea. That is the thing that I want to focus on today as we look at this sixth thing that changed in your life.

III. The Purpose of Preaching Truth

Let me tell you something. I gave you a fair warning. I told you Thursday night that if you had a better place to go on Sunday morning than come to church, it was probably better. I am a fair guy. Over in the war in Iraq when they are going to lay down a barrage and they are going to bomb the city, or in the Middle East, the Israelis, they drop leaflets and they say, "You better head out because we are going to flatten this place." Well, I gave you the same courtesy. I told you Thursday night, you visitors, I am sorry, you got trapped into this, but everybody else had fair warning because the barrage is going to come in. This thing is going to settle it for a lot of you this morning. Yet at the same time, I am praying that it will help you get out of the place where you are at and maybe get back to where God wants you to be.

That is my job. I do not say anything to hurt anybody. I do not say anything to purposely hurt anybody in any way, shape, or form. My job as a pastor is to preach truth. We are living in a day and age where God's people really do not want to hear the truth. They think they are living one place when in actuality they are living somewhere else. So this is going to be a reality check, and reality is good. Reality is good.

You are going to find that five times, the book of Colossians has four little chapters in it. Five times in four chapters you are going to find the word Laodicea. This book, when I got this book, and I did not get this thing until about 10, 12, 13 years ago, but when I got it, it just revolutionized a lot of things in the Bible for me. You are going to find that in your spiritual growth that is the way it goes. You learn some great truths, you grow for a while, and then suddenly God gives you a missing piece. It is just like it 10 times folds itself and you get a bunch of other pieces and you grow through that process. But when I began to understand how this book lined up to Laodicea, then I began to see that when Paul wrote this book, he wrote it in concert with John writing to the church of Laodicea. When I grasped the sixth concept here and how it impacted my life, found in the book of Colossians, then I understood what I had.

IV. The Theme and Problem in Colossians

Here is what you have here. I am going to give you a little breakdown of Colossians because you have to understand this to get to where we are going. Here is what chapter one does for you. You have heard me say this many, many times. Chapter one is proof positive that what I tell you every week is true. It shows you the basic problem with God's people and God's churches today is they have lost the identity of their personal relationship with Christ.

Do you know what the theme of Colossians is? The theme of Colossians is the fullness of Christ or Christ our fullness. You are going to find in this book where you find the phrase "in Christ" just like you find it in the book of Ephesians. Not as much, but you find it in there. What you have in chapter one is that he defines for you and me what is the real problem we are up against. We have been so long without truth. We have been so long without good biblical Bible

preaching. We have been so long now as a needy people needing the truth and the Word of God that we have lost our perspective of who Christ is.

Let me tell you something. When you lose your perspective, here is how it goes:

- You lose your Bible, you lose truth.
- You lose truth, you lose doctrine.
- You lose your perspective.
- You lose your perspective, you cannot find where Christ is anymore.

That is the problem of the church. The problem is the churches today that we have super and prose. They have a whole bunch of other things that are not found in the Bible and we are thinking that that is really what the Bible is. So in chapter one, we find a redefining of who Christ is. A redefining of who Christ is. It follows the concept in Colossians 2:9 which says,

Colossians 2:9

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

I am going to tell you something. The reason why there are some of God's people out there, and maybe you are sitting in this room today, and you do not know for sure if you are saved or not, or you hope you are saved, or you thought you were one time saved, but you did something wrong and you feel bad about it, and you think like God has departed from you, or you have some misconception of something about God and the church or whatever, and it keeps you from really flourishing the way God wants. You are a victim of this. You are a victim of what we talked about last week and what we are going to talk about today. You really do not understand who Christ is in your life. You do not have a biblical definition of it that really lays it out for you, and in chapter one we see the problem. That is why God's Holy Spirit takes the time in chapter one to redefine who Christ is.

V. Creation vs. Evolution and the Church's Compromise

I will give you an example. We have a big battle going on over in Kansas and other places, and it is over the concept of the Bible versus evolution. In Kansas and other states too, it is not just Kansas, it is other states too, there you have a group of people who are leading that fight versus the Bible and evolution. Here is the problem. If you are a Bible believer, you have to be an idiot as far as the world is concerned. They believe that evolution and science has all the answers. They look at somebody like you and I that believe in creation and believe the Bible, some hayseed back-heel farmer that does not have any education. They laugh at Kansas on the upper levels of Washington around this country because Kansas would entertain the idea of having a debate over evolution. They do that to intimidate us because a lot of God's people get intimidated.

So you know what we do when we get intimidated? We do exactly what the book of Colossians says. We adjust our position. So we come up with a concept called intelligent design. Do you know why we come up with intelligent design? Because we do not want to get laughed at when we say God was a creationist. We do not want to get laughed at because creationist brings us

back to the Bible. Intelligent design has kind of a ringy sting to it. Kind of like it is not, we are not a back-heed seed farmer someplace, that we have got some education, so it is not creation that in six days, I mean a scientist goes bonkers when you try to tell him that this earth has only been here for 6,000 years. He cannot deal with that. So they laugh at you because all the scientists line up on the other side and say it is here for millions and billions and billions and billions and billions and they have not got a clue between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

So somebody who does not know the Bible, somebody who is intimidated by that, they are going to do exactly what they have done and so instead of just sticking with their guns and saying the Bible says in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created." We take a blasé passive stand, take God out of it and we say an intelligent design. That is the way you are going to see it.

Do you know who Harry Rimmer was? Harry Rimmer lived back in the 20s and the 30s and you can find his book online some places. It is called *The Harmony of Scripture and Science* by Harry Rimmer. Harry Rimmer was a born-again, Bible-believing, a chowder God who back in the 20s and the 30s, when evolution was more of a hotbed then than it was today. Do you know what he did? He took on the whole, he wrote a number of books and in his books he stated that he would pay \$50,000. Now back in the 20s and the 30s, that is like \$2 million today. He had a standing offer of \$50,000 for any evolutionist that would debate him and prove the Bible wrong. Do you know in 40 years of his ministry nobody ever collected that \$50,000? Do you know why? Because if you know your Bible, it is uncollectible. He did not worry about intelligent design. He stuck with the old blackback 66 that saved him and he believed he had the truth and that is why he stayed.

It is what you find in Colossians chapter 1, you find a redefining of God as creator. Do you know why? Because the Laodicean church has moved from creator to intelligent design. We want to be slick. We do not want to be laughed at. As far as I am concerned, I want to be laughed at. It is alright, it will not bother me at all because I know a great truth. He who laughs last, laughs best. That is what I am banking on.

VI. The Issues of Laodicea and Our Response

In chapter 2, you know what you find? You find the issues of Laodicea. You find out why we do not know Him and you find out in Colossians 2:8 that God has been replaced in our churches by four things:

1. Philosophy
2. Vain deceit
3. The tradition of men
4. The rudiments of the world

You know what you find down there in Colossians chapter 2? You find a redefining of the great doctrine, the doctrine of spiritual circumcision, which if you know that doctrine is proof positive, you can never lose your salvation if you have been truly saved. You know what you find down there in Colossians 2:4? You find that word, the word beguile. The word that was used in Genesis

3 when the devil came and deceived Eve. She said, "He beguiled me." You find that word beguile. Like you find Paul writing to the church at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 11:3 where he says,

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

That is what the devil has done. He tells you in chapter 2 why the issue, why we do not know Christ anymore. It is because we have been beguiled through philosophy, vain deceit, all the traditions of men and the rudiments of the world.

Then in chapter 3 and 4, two of the greatest chapters in all of the book of the Bible. In chapter 3 and 4, you find out my response as a 20th century, born-again Christian to the Laodicean church age. Chapter 3 is where we are going here in a minute. But you are going to find in chapter 3 and 4, you are going to find how you and I deal with the day and age that we live in called Laodicea and what our response should be to it. That brings us up to chapter 3. There are a number of things in these two chapters, but we are going to focus on the one that is the sixth thing that changed in you the day you got saved.

Let us read it. Colossians 3:1-2.

Colossians 3:1-2

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Let us pray. Father, help us today. We are a needy people. Lord, we thank you for the church that you have given us. We thank you for the Bible that you have given us. Lord, we do not take it lightly. We believe it like they believed it 200 years ago. We preach it like they preached it 200 years ago. We do not change anything in it. We do not change any of our stance. We believe the Bible today is what it was 100 years ago, 200 years ago. We stand in the shadow of the great men like D.L. Moody, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd. We stand in the shadow of the great Waldensians and the Albigenses and the Huguenots who died in the arena preaching this old blood-bought book. That is where we are at today. That is where we stand, Father. We ask you today to raise up in this church men and women, young men, middle-aged men, older men, older women, younger women, whoever, Lord, that will take a stand in these last days to be everything that God wants them to be. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for a sake, we ask it. Amen.

VII. Seek and Set: Love vs. Affection

Now you are going to find in chapter 3 the next thing we are going to look at here. He says this, first of all, he says you seek those things that are above. Then the next thing is you set your affections on those things that are above. I have given you some great concepts that have helped you understand the Bible in a very basic form. Remember I gave you a little thing, faith, fact, and

feeling? I told you how that as a Bible-believing Christian, you have to deal with your emotions. You have to deal with your feelings. Bad things do not happen to you in life. Some things you have to deal with in life. What you do is you follow that little simple formula, faith, fact, and feeling.

- I have faith.
- My faith is in the facts.
- When I know the facts, then the facts dictate my feelings by how I operate and how I respond to it.

See how easy it is?

I gave you another one last week that really dealt with that one. It was called, "saved, sealed, and seated." Remember that one? The day you got saved, the Bible says the Holy Spirit of God came inside you and you got sealed. Then the Bible says that He put you in Christ and right now you are seated at the right hand of God the Father. So it was saved, sealed, and seated. Now here is another one: seek and set. Seek and set.

A couple of weeks ago we talked about in Matthew 22, and really it was number two. We talked about that great concept where it says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, with all of thy mind, and all of thy soul." Today we are going to learn the difference between love and affection. We are going to stop and we are going to take this verse and we are going to show you how that when you got saved, not only did it change inside you your ability now to love God, but your affection changed. I want to talk to you this morning on the difference between love and affection and bring it to a point of reality and help you understand that many of us may think we are living in Philadelphia, but in actuality we are in Laodicea.

When you start to come through your Bible, and like the book of Ephesians, you find a great concept. God's wisdom is unsurpassed and when God wrote the book of Ephesians, it was one of the greatest things they ever taught us to show us that our relationship with Christ as Christians was paralleled by our relationship with husbands and wives. I will tell you why that is because husbands and wives and Christians in the relationship with God have two great things in common, especially today.

Most marriages when they start out, and I am going to speak to this now, we just finished a course last spring on marriage relationship through the Bible and most of you were through that course, but let me just reiterate it to you. Most marriages start out wrong, and they start out wrong because they do not understand the biblical definition of love to begin with. Once you enter into marriage without understanding the Bible concept of love, you will never get to the place where you understand the concept of affection. Love and affection are two different things. If you do not understand that, you are in trouble before you get into it. You are going to find that most marriages have the wrong love so they do not have the right kind of affection.

That is why, I am going to tell you the truth, that is why, you see, there was a time growing up, and some of you older folks like myself, you remember this. When I grew up, hardly anybody ever got a divorce. Now I know there is reason for divorce, and I know that things come up, and

I understand all that, and I am not saying anything about anybody that has been divorced. I am just preaching my sermon here. But when I grew up, hardly anybody, you know who got divorced back then? Movie stars. You know what the big deal was? Liz Taylor, buried five times. I mean, people like that. You never, you never, it just, but today it is rampant. Do you know why it is rampant? Because back then, society in the country still had some basic, we were living in the last days of the old Philadelphia preachers that still held some truth in his country, and this country was still somewhat based on the Word of God. Churches were still preaching powerful messages. The church did not preach anything today. It is gone.

I am going to tell you something. It is you young people. If you get married and do not understand the purpose of marriage from the Bible, the concept of marriage from the Scriptures, about six months after the marriage is into its effect, it is going to be pointless. There is going to be no purpose to it. I hope there is more God had more in marriage than just you have to work, He has to work raising kids and then just, and trying to keep your head above water. Marriage becomes absolutely pointless if you do not understand the concept of Genesis chapter 2 of why God gave marriage in the first place. That is why husbands and wives grow into the lethargic attitude of taking each other for granted. There is no real purpose.

You love that person and you are, you know, you are involved with that person and you think that person, but after you get married, you know what your wife wants to know more about you, husband, than anything else? She wants to know why after you got married, you turned off the charm. Why you and I got, why you got married, why one day she will, and before you got married, oh, it was totally different. You got in the car and she said, and you say, "Where do you want to go?" And she said, "Well, I do not care honey, where do you want to go?" And you say, "Honey, anywhere with you is where I want to be." After you are married, you know what it is? "Well, I do not know, where do you want to go? We are in the car, it is hot." Now what happened? What happened?

You see, if you do not have a purpose in your marriage, it will become pointless very quickly. If you do not have a purpose in your relationship with Christ, it becomes pointless very quickly. You fall into that lethargical attitude about God in your relationship, just like we do in our marriages. As the proverbial thing goes, our honeymoon is over.

When you tell somebody you love them, and we say it all the time, I have given you this verse before, and to me it is one of the absolute most powerful verses in all the Bible. It says more in one little verse than you could dig up in ten chapters. I love this verse. I use it all the time, and I have quoted it a couple of times, a little last couple of weeks, but you have heard me say it all my life, if you have been around me, it is 1 Corinthians 8:3.

1 Corinthians 8:3

But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

Do you know what that verse says? You cannot hide true love. You cannot hide true love. If you really love God, it shows. If you really love God, it shows. Do you know how it shows? It shows not by you saying "I love you," it is because affection is always the true test of what you say to

somebody when I love you. If I love you and do not show you affection, it is just words. We have never learned and understood the difference between love and affection. When it comes to God, you have to seek those things which are above, and when you find them, then you set your affections on them. That is how it works. That is how it works. It will not work any other way. If you really love God, then people know it. Do you know why they know it? By the expression of your affection. I mean, you could say whatever you want to say all your life, but the true test of that real love with God and your spouse and whatever is when you show it through the affection.

VIII. The Principle of Giving and Affection

Do you know why I do not preach on giving? You will never hear a sermon from me on this pulpit about why you ought to give. There are two reasons for that, and I do not know if maybe you have not figured it out yet. In fact, my philosophy is just the opposite to 99.9999% of preachers in the world. They will tell you to give money all you can, and I will say keep all you want to keep. I take just the opposite position.

Now, there are two reasons for that.

5. I do not want to embarrass God. I think it is the most embarrassing thing in the world for a preacher to get up and manipulate his congregation to give money so they can fulfill his spiritual fantasy that he is trying to do. Now, you all live in families. Do you have a budget? Do you have unlimited spending? No, we all have budgets. We have a budget in our home. We stay within that budget. Do you know what? Churches have budgets. Trying to step outside that budget because you want to do some grandiose thing for God and then manipulate the people to pay for it. Dead wrong. Dead wrong. I will never get up here and say the offerings are not cut, but never will. I will just simply say we do not have a nursery next week. We are going to have to cut our service from an hour to 15 minutes. We are going to have to drop Bible study. We are going to have to meet in somebody's home. You see, I am not going to win. Hey, look, here is how I think about it. Simple as this. This is your church. It is not mine. If you get spiritually fed here, I had a preacher one time, a good friend of mine. I have never, I have always wanted to use his illustration, but I never used it. Because I do not preach on giving. But it was one of the greatest illustrations. I was in a conference one time and he used it. I thought it was one of the greatest things I have ever heard. He said, "You know," and he told the people he was preaching. He said, "You know," he said, "I invited a couple in my church out to go out to dinner. We went out with my wife and I took them out to one of the greatest restaurants out there in town. We sat there. We had a great time. We just enjoyed each other's company. We were talking and laughing. It was a great night. Brought the check over, you know, and we sat there. And I leaned over to my couple and I said, 'Now, here is what I want you to do. Now, honey, you go with my wife and go to the restroom. Hang out there for about 10 minutes. And then kind of get lost in the crowd and just kind of slip out and I will meet you in the car in the parking lot.' He says to the guy, 'Now, John, John,' he says, 'what I want you to do,' he says, 'you head over to the men's room. Kind of just kill a little time. And then you walk out and he says, you just head on out there. Do not go out with your wife and my wife, but just go out on your own and make your way

around this side and come back around to the parking lot and meet them there. And what I will do is I will come to the place where I just kind of hang out. I will ask for some directions to someplace and I will walk over here and I will get two or three things going at the same time. And then I will slip out and we will meet over there at the car and we are out of here. And we had a great night. We had a great food and everybody do your part. We are going to be really ahead tonight." And he said, "Do you think those people would come back to church on Sunday?" I love this illustration when he said it. He said, "Do you think those people come back to church on Sunday?" He said, "When I," he says, "they would not talk to me all the way home. And when I drop them off, I have never been back in my church ever again." And he said, "Most of you people hearing me say that tonight, me confessing that story to your story, I knew your story was not true, but he was setting them up." He said, "Telling that story, I can already see your mouth dropping. I can already see some of you sanctimonious people crossing in your arms and say, 'Well, what kind of preacher is this?'" He said, "Let me ask you a question." He said, "All of you in this church," he said, "you come here every Sunday morning. That preacher over there cuts off big slices of sirloin steak, feeds you the best you have ever been fed. Every Sunday morning, half of you walk out of here and never pick up the tab." I like that. It almost makes me want to preach on giving just to use it. This is your church. Close the door. If we are not going, that is why visitors. Not your responsibility. Not your responsibility. The first reason I do not preach on it is because I am not going to sure it costs money to run this place. Sure. I am going to walk in here and she says, "Oh, start your church here. We will give it to you free and we will pay your salary for just being here." Sure. It takes money. Sure. It takes expenses. But you know what? Hey, it is your church. Not mine. Not mine. I will close the doors. We will meet at home. We will meet out in the phone booth someplace. I do not care. I am not into a building, but I am not. I am not going to embarrass God by begging you to do anything. You do not want to give it. Keep it. I am with you, man. My wife quit giving years ago. She heard this message one time and that was it.

6. Now I will tell you the second reason. Now this is really the real reason. You and I, if we do ever give and when you give, it does not need to be because I coerce you. I am not going to get up here and tell you some sad story. I love the TV ad where the guy gets up and he has these pictures of these little children and he says, "If you will just send \$25 a month, you can have this little gal will have food, clothes." And he pulls your heart out. Who would not just say, "\$25 bucks?" Why? We eat that much at McDonald's and just shell it out. Do you know what was found out later on? Nine thousand people had that same little girl's picture. That is making \$2,225,000 a month. But people will sham you. They will get into a situation. They will get way outside the budget and they will want you to pay for it. Uh-uh. No, no, no, no. If you give, you give not because somebody coerces you, not because somebody tells you, I want you to give because you love Him and out of the affection of that love, that is why you do it. If you cannot do it that way, go back, take it out of the offering and put it back in your pocket. That is just the way it has to work.

IX. Affection in Marriage and Spiritual Life

Now guys, I am going to give you a little advice in life. If Paul used the church and Christ, I have never forgotten my wife's anniversary or her birthday. That is why you have kids. You always ask them. "Isn't mom's birthday this month?" Or here is how it works. "Dad, what are you going to do for mom's birthday?" "Now I do not know. What day do you think we should do it on?" Or "Her birthday is the 18th." "Hmm, okay, let us check our calendar." She can play it smart.

You want a reality check, guys, in marriage? I am going to teach you some things about marriage. I learned them the hard way. I will teach you some things. Do not buy her a washing machine on her birthday. Refrigerators are out, not a birthday option. Not. I remember, washing machine was out. Birthday coming up makes sense to me. Did not make sense to her. She does not want a washing machine on her birthday. Do you need a washing machine? Absolutely. Are the clothes not piled up in gigantic mountaintops? Yes, they are. But it is not an option for the birthday. There is something about a washing machine that does not train, unless you can get one from someplace that I do not think will work any way you want to go with it. It is not going to work. She does not want a washing machine giving your...

I will tell you what. My family, birthdays and credits. I am just like you. I do not want you to think for a minute that I am up here some sanctimonious old preacher that lives such a pious life that he does not enjoy life. I do. I like on my birthday, I want some neat stuff. I am not going to lie to you. I get as just excited at Christmas time now as I did when I was seven. Pretty morsel. But I have learned in my life who to get excited about and who not to. My sister used to send us Christmas presents. I get the same thing. We do not do it anymore with my family because it is just so stupid. My sister would send me a bottle of British Sterling cologne every year. They have not made British Sterling since 1970. I am surprised you are laughing. Nobody even... I do not know what she bought a warehouse of it at some point every Sunday. She would send the dogs presents. They get better presents than I got. I got a watch one year that did not even work. What did the dogs get? Helicopters that spun across the floor with their rotors going, making flashing lights. The dogs loved them. I would have rather had a helicopter, give the dog the watch.

My family, you know what we do in that family? We find out what you want because nobody likes to get dumb presents. Nobody. I am telling you guys, when you get married, your wife, find out what she wants. Find out what she wants and then get her what she wants. Do not get creative and think, "Oh, a double-doored freezer would really be nice." It is not going to work. She wants some of them girly things, man. Just deal up, fess up, cowboy up. You have to do it, man.

I will tell you what. You know how it goes. You get up one morning and you flatly forgot it is your wife's birthday. She is up early in the morning and she is all around, you know, early. "Need the coffee. Honey, would you like anything before you go to work?" And you are saying, "What is going on with this?" You look out the door, she looked like June Cleaver walking around there, you know, little thing on there, you know, putting all that stuff on there. And she, it is her birthday. She is expecting that you are going to come out of there with, "Whoa, you know, look at this, honey. Look at I gotcha." Or "Look at this, honey. This is real. Oh, necklace, gold necklace, gold earrings, something, you know." You forgot. You forgot. You will not get there. If

you have not been there yet, you will. I just pray to Miss Bessie, save your marriage. That is all I can tell you.

But she will forget. And you know, and she, you go on to work and you are scratching your head and she is saying, "Hmm, oh, I know, she is going to come. She is going to send me flowers." So you get looking out the window, you know, and she is looking out there and by 11 o'clock, nothing comes. She goes, "Hmm, I know. He knew I wanted that car. You are going to drive that car up this afternoon and he is going to say, 'Oh, I love him. He knows.'" And you are looking and you are out on the porch and you are waiting for that car. Car did not come. 4 o'clock, come home from work. She is saying, "Hmm, I know. He has got the evening planned. He is going to come home, sweep me up in his arms, tell me happy birthday and he is going to whisk me off someplace to a nice romantic place and he is going to be candlelight and some guy with a violin is going to be playing that and he is going to open up this necklace for these earrings and they are going to be beautiful and it is going to be everything I want." He comes home, "Oh, I am tired, man. What a day at work. What do we have to eat tonight? You know what? Ball game is coming on tonight." And you are saying, "Hmm." So now you get to the place where it is 7, 8 o'clock. Ball game is over, 10 o'clock. You are still not even strangely quiet. You still have not figured it out. Here you go to bed and you are getting bad there, you know, and you reach over and turn the light out, dark, quiet. This is what you hear. "Turn the light on." "What was that?" "Oh, I hate when they do it this way. You forgot my birthday."

Now guys, this is the standard operational procedure when we find ourselves in one of these messes. We always respond the same way. "Oh, honey. You know I love you." Now given the scenario I just painted for you, do you think that will work? Well, let me ask you a question. What do you think makes it work with God? You see, true love by itself always has to have the affection that goes with it. Do you know what God wants? God wants you to figure out what He wants you to do and what He wants you to do for Him and then give it to Him and do it. That is what He wants. That is what He wants. That is what He wants. Find out what He wants.

The Bible says in Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." You know what? You give God what is right. You do not give God what is left. You give your spouse what is right. You do not give them what is left. The Bible says if you want to understand this concept, love always has an identity with it and that identity is affection. The Bible says when you and I, talking about God now, when you and I seek those things which are above and then set our affections on them, that is when you have a relationship with God. That is when you get to where God wants you to be.

Hey, you want a good test of this principle? I mean you want to know where your affections are at today? Hey, it is easy, man. It is easy. You see, what we get into is because Colossae and Laodicea were so close together, sometimes the reality of where we are living just does not set in. We think we love God when we really do not love Him. We think we are doing what God wants us to do when we really do not. I am telling you. I am telling you. It is just you understand that anything you do for God, anything you give Him, anything that transpires and takes place has to come out of your heart with Him. Never let anybody manipulate you for anything when it comes to God. It is based on you and your heart attitude and your love for Him and out of that

affection. That is what you do God when you give God everything in your life. Certainly not just your money. But oh, we are such game players.

X. Setting Affections on Things Above

You know what? In the book of Ecclesiastes, the wisest man that ever lived. The wisest man that ever lived. Do you know what he said? He said in Ecclesiastes 1:9, "There is no new thing under the sun." Now let me explain that. What he is saying "under the sun" means on earth. What he is saying is that everything that we think is new, everything that we think is reality, everything that we put all of our energy in, all of our affections in, everything on this earth, all the things that we fall in love with. I know I say this all the time, my wife and family get sick of saying it, but all the things we say we love. "Oh, I love this car. Oh, I love that dress. Oh, I love that house. Oh, I love that this. Oh, I love that that." We get that word love and spread it out all over the place. We love things that do not have the ability to love us back. And the one thing that does have the ability that loves us back, that died for us so we could love Him back. I will get there in a second. Solomon said no new thing under the sun.

That is what God's people do. We set our affections on the things on this earth. I can prove it. All this stuff under the sun is an illusion. It is not real, not true. Somebody said one time that which is called new is not true because that which is true is really not new. I am telling you what is real is not what is under the sun. What is new is not what is under the sun, but what is real and new is what is above the sun. That is where it is at.

You want a good test? This is a good test. Yet I always have to quantify my test. If you have been saved five years or less, do not even worry about taking this test. It takes you five years to figure out what is going on. No, no, no, no. I am talking about those God's people that have been saved a lot longer than that. I am talking about people that men and women, myself included, that needs to have been saved for a long time. We have been in the Word of God. I have been around churches all of our lives. I am telling you, we need a reality check. I am telling you, it is easy to live in the illusion world of Laodicea. Remember that church he said in Revelation 3? They thought that they were rich. They had need of nothing. They had everything going for them. What an actuality. They were blind, poor, wretched, and naked. That is the way a bunch of God's people are. I hope that something is said today will motivate you to the place that you do not stay there anymore. But I am telling you, it starts with seeking those things that are above and then setting your affections on them.

You want a good test? You want a good test? Just name me five things that are above. Close your Bibles. Do not. Close your Bibles. Sit down and just list off five things for me that are above where Christ sits in detail. I mean, do not, you say, "Well, I have to," no, you do not need to use your Bible. You have been saved 10, 15, 20 years and you, hey, just close your Bible and, I mean, hey, you go out on a golf course. Do you have to take a golf manual to know how to play? Do not you know what club to use, whatever hole you are on? Do not you know what a birdie means or a par means or under par? Do not you know what it means to be in the rough? Do not you know what it means when somebody says the greens? I mean, when you are out there and you are out of hole and, I mean, you do not use this, you do not just have one club in your bag,

do you? You know what those clubs are for, do not you? You have to ask somebody, "Well, what do I do with this?" You have to say, "Well, just a minute, I have to look this up." No, you know what those things are. You know what those are. Come on, just give me five. Just give me five. If I were to ask you to explain, stand up and explain the game of golf, could you do it? Oh, I am sure you could. I bet you could say this, you could say that, you can lay it all out. You could talk about the philosophy. Come on, just give me five. I am not mad at you. Just give me five.

How about football? I mean, the Chiefs game is coming up here a little bit. Could you explain it? I am a guy that, I do not know anything about football. I watch that stuff and I love the way they talk, but I do not know what it means. But I bet you could explain a nickel defense. To me, it is a defense that is not worth a plug nickel. I do not know. I bet you know when on what play do you blitz and when you do not. I bet you know what an I formation means. I bet you know what they say, "Well, they went into the shotgun." Oh man, that is great. Four guys, shotgun. The guy running the ball. Bam, bam, bam. He did not make it to the goal line. I do not think that is what it means. I wish it did. Make it more exciting. You know what those things mean. You know what play you do in third down and goal. You know what you do. You know what it means when somebody says, "Well, that West Coast offense." You know what it means when somebody says, "I will just play in Marty ball." Why? I bet you if I had you come up here, you could talk about and wax. With all the authority on the rules of football, the basics of football, all the concepts of football. Come on, just give me five, five things. Close your Bible. Stand up and tell me five things that are above in detail.

I mean, baseball is the same way. I like going to base. Hey, I want you to know I am not some pious guy up here. I like these things. I love these things. I am looking forward to going to the Royals game. I am not up here saying you should not do these. Do not misunderstand me. Do not put words in my mouth. I mean, I am with you. I want to go to the Royals game. I want to do this. I want to go all those places. I do not know what any of it means. I just like being with you. And maybe I do not worry about catching a pop. I have seen guys take their gloves because somebody is going to pop one up and they are going to catch it. I am looking for the guy that launches the hot dog. Forget the ball. I watch what I am going for. I do not know anything about it. I am not fighting it. I still do not know why when you go to the ballgame, all the empires are named out. Somebody says, "How many RBIs?" To me, that is really big ice cream. I do not know. But some of you do not need a who's who in baseball or football or whatever.

I mean, come on. Do not some of you guys, when you go hunting in the fall, you would not even think. You would not even think. You would not even think about hiring a guy to go hunting or fishing. I went over to Walmart the other day to see what I did not have. And I was strolling down there in the porch section and I walked into the fishing department. Man, I mean to tell you, they have got more lures than you know what to do with. I am looking at them. Bee bopper, red bopper, hot bopper, Rapala. I mean, this one over here, this one over here. I love reading in the porch paper about the fishing location. These guys know where to go to catch the big ones at what time of day and what bait to use. Whatever happened to just worm? Now we have radar that finds them in the water.

Now, I have never been much of a fisherman. For to me, no excitement. Fishing with me and hand grenades, I could get into. That is exciting. Sitting there waiting for a bobber to go down, sitting there waiting for somebody to pull on the line, I just have not got that kind of patience. I am not fighting it. But I am telling you what, you have guys out there and they will tell you at Hillsdale, the crappie are biting south of the dam, in the flowway, in the spillway, on jigs and poppies and this and that. And then over here, catfish are biting on stink bait, whatever that is. And it is down here and they are below the dam. And I am thinking to myself, "Wow, there are guys out there that know all about that." Can't you give me just five?

I will bet if somebody said, "Are you going deer hunting this fall?" "Yeah, I am." Do you know what you do? You go out there long before the season opens. You are looking around, looking for rub marks on them trees. And you are looking for deer signs, antlers. You are looking for this. You are looking for that. And you are reading a sign, getting it all ready. Waiting to get that thing all worked out so you get out there and you get the prize buck. Do the same thing at turkey season.

Now I have to tell you. I have to tell you. I mean, I remember that kid, first deer I ever shot. I was shaking so bad from buck fever. I never tell anybody this, but I actually shot the one behind the one that was the front I was aiming at. I got one. What are you laughing at? You have never even been there. I mean, I know the adrenaline rush. Boy, I know. I will tell you what. You can say what you want to say. Nothing will get your heart going faster than hunting turkeys. I am not kidding you. You ever hunted turkeys, Dan? Tell you what. You give up basketball and you will be a turkey hunter. If you are in it for the rush, I will tell you. I will tell you. I know what some of you think. You think I am some pious gas bag preacher that never has any fun, never does anything, and I am whacking on all your favorite things. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. I know the adrenaline rush. I know the feeling. I know the feeling. I had nothing like being out in the woods before dawn, crisp air in the spring. Hear the little owls. Ooh, ooh. Ooh, ooh, ooh. That was, you know, and everything out there. You know, and you are sneaking. You are all camo-ed up. I mean, you have got camouflage. You look like a big tree, man. You have got camouflage. You know what? That is like going and buying a suit. I like to buy a camouflage outfit. "Well, what kind? We have tree moss. We have red moss. We have blue moss. We have this pattern." It means you have to pick, but your camo has got to match. You dress out that thing. You get something over your face, shotgun camouflage, and you sneak down through there, boy, very quietly, and you move down, and you have already scouted it, and you found out where they are pawing them holes in this thing to get the acorns underneath, and you move down there, and you find your spot with kind of on a ridge, and you have got maybe one ridge over in a flat place up here, and you have got good cover, and you sit down, and just before, just when that light, oh, and you are excited, and you know you are really camouflage-good because you hear a snort. You hear a snort and a whoo, and you kind of look over to your left, and there is a deer right for the wall, six feet from you. He cannot even see you. You are camo-ed good. Man, you are sitting down there, and just before dawn, here is what you do. It took me two years to do this, swabbed two of them. Swabbing it was not a problem. No, I want you to know I am not some, I do not know how else to do it, I am not some dumb, pious, gas-bag preacher that does not have fun in life. I have been there. Here is what you want. Oh! Oh! Now, what you want to hear back is, somewhere about

100 yards away, wah! At that point, you are frozen in time. No, I am not kidding you. You are frozen in time because you have visions of a gigantic turkey, 40, 50 pounds, walking around there.

Now, I have got to tell you this, turkey hunting is about sex. Now, I always felt a little bad about this. It is mating season in the spring. The turkey, male turkey, called a gobbler, called a tom, he wants to get with a female because he wants to make little turkeys. The hen, she wants to get with tom to make little turkeys too. Now, but just like most women, tom has to impress her. So, hey, I have heard him gobble. Now, when you get the first one in, you do not do it a lot because they are pretty smart. And female turkeys are a lot dumber than male turkeys, much like life. I have stood there and had a female walk right up past me and look at me. Tom will never do that. I was watching two male turkeys walk across the lake bed, across the shore. They were 400 yards away from me. I was up in the woods, up a tree, sitting down, and I stood up to get a better look and they saw me and ran up into the woods. That is how good they see. Unbelievable. So, you cannot move. So, I got the gobble back. And then, what you really want to hear, and you can hear this because they are big when he flies down off the roost. You hear them wings flapping air and you know he hit the ground and you know he is coming. Now, you do not want to be too like, here I am. You have got to kind of play it and let him come into you. And so, at that point, when he starts moving in, he is gobbling all the way. But the thing you do not want to do, you do not want another hen to get between you and him. But he does not want another gobbler to get between you and him either. So, you play it. Now is when you get, now, as far as, I have listened to a thousand turkey tapes, a thousand turkey records, and I am telling you, it has nothing to do with anything, but you have got to sound really sexy on the call. And this is, you do not, you know, this is what you do now. They call these, they call these putts. And they call these putts. He will go crazy. And now, he is closer. And then, oh, you are straight, you cannot move. Your shotgun is down, your safety is off. And you are ready to go. And I mean, you are sweating profusely. I mean, every bone in your body is aching. And your eyeballs are focused on everything. You are looking for that first glimpse, and he is really railing. And you have got this in your mouth, and you just keep purting and putting, just a little bit. And then you give him one of these really sexy ones, and he is really getting crazy. And he goes nuts, man. And he starts, and then you see him. And there he is, there he is. He is coming, and you are just like here. And you are waiting. And he is too far out because you have got a shotgun. And he is moving closer. And he is moving closer, and he is moving closer, and he is doing the dance. He is doing what they do down at Funkytown and Raytown on Saturday night. I hate to get you. You see him coming in, he has got his wings out. He wants to impress this hen. He does not know this hen is a Remington 870. And he has got his wings out, his tail drooped down, and he is doing, same thing you guys do on Saturday night. He is prancing around, you know, "Look at me. Oh, I am the best turkey in the woods." Mm-hmm, see. And she is, in the male then, the female's voice, and you just stay, just freeze. And then, every once in a while, you have got to keep in mind, the whole concept here is, he is thinking, "I want to get with a female hen." The hen should be thinking, "I want to get with him, Tom." Now, that is the deal you are working here. You have got to make that reality happen. Sometimes, you know, you can purr-putt, do all the things you want to do, that really try to entice him, but he will see something he does not like. And he will hang up just outside of shotgun range. And you want to get him to be convinced that you are a hen that is

waiting for him over here, and you just stopped at Victoria's Secret the night before, and here you are. When that happens, and they will not come in, an old turkey hunter taught me this call, a hundred years ago. When they will not come in, and they hang up, and you have drawn everything to entice them, except hold up a sign. Here is the call you have got to make. You have got to get down, cup your hand over your mouth, wait till he is looking right towards you, but not move, and then you give him the call that will bring him in every time when it hangs up. "Hey, stupid, I am over here!"

See, I am into those things. I love them. When I used to hunt turkeys, brother, nothing like it. I was in it all the time. Heart pounding, I mean, mouth dry, got the shakes, adrenaline rush, but I am telling you, my affections are not in any of those things. You can do those things. Nothing wrong with any of these things. But please, do not know more about them than when the Bible says, "Set your affections, seek and set on things above." That is where our affections need to be. I am telling you, do you know what is real? Do you know what is new? Do you know what is above? Come on, if you cannot give me five, just give me four. Give me three, give me two, just give me one.

I mean, last week I talked to you about Colossians 3:1, and it talked about being in Christ. That is one of them right there. He says, "If seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth," you know what is new? Hey, there are 12 things in your Bible that are new. 12. 12 things in your Bible that the Bible says are new and above that you and I ought to set our affections on. 12 of them. How about New Jerusalem? Could you close your Bible? How many references in the Bible are New Jerusalem? What are they? Where are they at? Can you give me a definitive chapter on it? What is the shape? What is the size? What is in the dimension? Why are there 12 foundations on a location where the body of Christ is going to be that is named after the 12 apostles? Why is that? Do you know? Set your affections on things above. How about New Heavens and the New Earth? How about the New Birth? Bible says in Psalms 40:3, "a new song." Do you know what that song is? I mean, let me tell you something. Boy, when the country western awards were on television, we are glued to it. When American Idol is on, we run out and buy the CD of the winner. We know everything about that. We know all those things. Bible talks about a new covenant. Do you even know how many covenants there are in the Bible? Do you know why the new covenant is better than all the rest? Do you know where the new covenant is explained in the Bible? I mean, close your Bible and tell me. Where have you set your affections on things above where Christ sitteth? Or the things that are earth?

You know what Jesus said one time in Matthew 16 that described the Pharisees? He said to them, and they were having a little discussion. We have a little phrase we talk about, and probably some of you older people have heard it. It says, "Red sky at night, sailors delight, red sky in morning, sailors take warning." It is out of the Bible in Matthew 16. They are having a discussion, and Jesus said, "You guys can discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the times that which you live in." Boy, is that ever a true statement today. I mean, how about the throne of God? It is up there. How about Christ Himself? How about the Word of God itself? You see, when the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 8:3, "If any man love God, the same is known of

him." It says it all. If any man love God, it is known, because he has sought those things which are above, and then he set his affections on them.

Do not get me wrong, man. Hey, I love all those things. I have been there. I have hunted deer. I have hunted turkey. I have fished. I have done them all. I like watching this. I like watching that. I am not against any of it. But do not have your affections. Do not know more about that. Then you know about this. Because that is what is wrong with the Laodicean Church. That is what is wrong with God's people. They think they have a reality. When in actuality, it is an illusion, because reality is seeking those things and setting your affections.

I will tell you, Matthew 16:23, when Jesus talked to Peter, you know what he said?

Matthew 16:23

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Imagine that. Prince of the Apostles. Peter. Prince of the Apostles. Peter. The guy that wrote 1 and 2 Peter. Jesus saying to him, "Peter, you are an offense unto me." You ever read the rest of the verse? "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those things that be of men." You see, when you get in that position that you love the thing, and I am saying it again, there is nothing wrong with enjoying life. But when you love those things, when you seek those things, when you set your affections over them more than you do God, you become an offense to God Almighty. As a Christian. Oh, you can talk about love and God all you want, but by the way, your affections will be somewhere else.

I am going to tell you something. Loving the things of God that He loves is not just loving Him, but manifesting that love through your affection. We talk about John 3:16. "For God so loved the world." Hey, that verse means absolutely nothing. It says God so loved the world. So what if God would not have manifested that love by the rest of the verse and sending His Son? You see, it is one thing to love God, but God's affection for you was manifested in the death of His Son coming down to earth. It has got to be the same back to Him. This is why James in James 2:17, some of God's people never figured out. It says faith without works is dead. Do you know why? Because you can say you love Him, but if you do not have the affection, your life in Christ is dead as far as relationship with God.

We live in a 20th and a 21st century Christianity that teaches Laodicea that teaches that you can love God. It purports the idea that you as a child of God can love God. You can go to church. You can talk about love God. You can sing all the songs. You can do all the things. You can give all your money. You can do everything that they tell you to do. But the bottom line is, my friend, you cannot love God without your and put your affection somewhere else. That is what we teach him today. You love God by what you do, not by what you are. You love God by what you give, not by what you are. You do not love God by what you do. You love God by what took place inside you the day you got saved. You give your life to Him. And then you seek those things that are above and you set your affections on Him. Everything else in life you want to do falls in under that. You bet you all go to a ballgame. You bet you all come watch somebody play. You bet

you all go do this. You bet you I will. But it will not be any of those things that I love more than I love what is up there seated by the right hand of God. That is the key. Faith, fact, feeling, saved, sealed, seated. Now, seek those things and then set your affections. That is where it is at.

The thing that changed about you, the next thing that changed about you the day you got saved is that now that we seek those things which are above, we learn. We understand that everything under the sun is an illusion. It is not true. We seek those things that are above where it is new, New Jerusalem, new heavens, new earth, new name written down in glory. All of those things. That is where our affections are. That you have got to do in the Laodicean church age. My friend, if you do not, you will walk through life with one foot in the world and one foot in God and operate under the illusion that you think that you have got a relationship with Him.

Remember, remember Laodicea was only 11 miles south of Colossae. Only 11 miles. Just a suburb. Just a suburb. I am telling you what, when you drive out to Lee's Summit or Blue Springs or whatever, if you miss the sign, if you miss the sign to the corporation limit that says you are now in Blue Springs, you do not know where you are at. You still may be thinking you are in Kansas City or Independence. When in actuality, you are already in Blue Springs. Let me tell you something. If you do not see the signs that tell you when you are leaving one to the other, you think you are living in Colossae when, in truth of the matter is, you are living in Laodicea. It is just that simple. Seeking those things and then setting your affections on those things which are above.

Hey, I like them. I told you that little Turkish story so you would not think I was some pious gasbag that just stood up here with racking on, railing on everything you like to do. I like to do it too. I do not understand it all, but I enjoy it. Brother, nobody likes getting out in the woods better than me or doing this or playing softball, whatever we did. That is not the point. The point is, you have got to understand. The day I got saved, there are more important things in this life than that. I do not ever want to do anything in life and know anything in life better than I know what is up there because that is where my affection has to be. That is what we have to do. That is the only thing. That is what the book of Colossians is about. It is showing you why this church is in a mess, how it got in a mess. In three and four, oh, I wish I had time to preach the rest of them. But Colossians 3:1 is the beginning. You start to seek and then you set your affections on things above.

Every head bowed, every eye closed.