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President's Office

January Devotion

“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.

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” (Colossians 3:1-7).

New year. New beginnings. The words of Paul in Colossians 3 definitely speak to us. You have been raised with Christ. Where? Through the gift of faith showered upon you in the waters of Baptism. There, in those waters, you were clothed with Christ Himself, made to be His child, and an heir of the heavenly kingdom. **You are joined to His very death and resurrection for the forgiveness of all your sins.** You are now seated with Him. You can't help but only to look in His direction, to seek His will, to follow in His ways. On account of His work done for you, you will be raised with Him in glory.

But ... and there's always a “but,” right? We are inherit sinners. Sin lurks inside each and every one of us. The devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to devour and destroy us at every turn. Temptations abound. The devil wants you for his own. He wants you in his kingdom. He wants you to doubt, to question everything that Christ has done for you to forgive your sins. He wants you to deny the faith into which you were baptized. He wants you to miss receiving the Lord's Supper. He wants to keep tearing away at the spiritual body armor that you have been clothed with.

New year. New beginnings. If our hearts are set on the things of this world, Scripture tells us that we are to be most pitied. Yet, many of the people of our acquaintance know nothing but the things of this world. They will leave behind a legacy of financial well-being and spiritual ruin to their families. Seldom will they leave their children and grandchildren a legacy of faith in Christ and sacrificial service to the church. Such people give no thought to the things of the kingdom of Christ, the resurrection of the flesh, or the life of the world to come. Such things are passed off as insignificant as long as their 401(k) is fully funded. We Christians should offer up a secret prayer when we see such persons, first asking God that such unbelief might be repented of and that we ourselves would not fall into such misbelief, shame, and vice.

You have been clothed with Christ. Set your mind on things above. I want most of all to pass on the faith of Christ and the hope of the world to come to my children and my grandchildren. There is nothing more important that I can give them. My children often surprise me with the strength of their Christian confession. But I shouldn't be surprised because they have been given Christ at every opportunity both at home, church, and in Bible study. Christ the risen Lord is their Lord. They have a hope that transcends earthly conditions and its life.

Set your minds on Christ. Gather in your local congregations to hear God's Word, receive His grace, offer Him your prayers and thanks, encourage one another, and give joyfully of your first fruits that He has so abundantly blessed you with. Be equipped through the means of grace that He offers to you. **Show God's love to others, help your neighbor in need, and share the Good News of the Christ who has been crucified and raised for all!**

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