

Colossians 3:1-11

“Maturing in the Faith”

July 31, 2016

I see a continuation of the theme from last week in our text. The theme is that we are encouraged to actively work toward maturing in the faith. When we seek to mature in our faith, we need to understand the separation between Law and Gospel. The Law is directed toward us and the Gospel tells us of God. Therefore when our text tells us to set our hearts and minds on things above, our text is speaking the Law to us. The reason for setting our hearts and minds of things above is that we have been raised with Christ. We were dead in our sin and now we live is Christ. When the Bible tells us that God called us to faith, keeps us in the faith and raises us to eternal life, then it is the Gospel speaking to us and telling us about our God.

Immature faith lives in doubt. We doubt that there is a God. We doubt that our sins are forgiven. We doubt that we are going to heaven. We even doubt that there is a heaven or a hell. Immature faith also lives in fear. We fear God. We fear the presence of God. We fear that God will punish us because of this or that sin. We fear that we won't make it to heaven. Immature faith also lives in worry about this or that or something else. We will never escape the hold of immature faith upon us because we are imperfect people in need of a Savior.

In our text Paul describes those who live in immaturity of their faith. Paul tells us that their focus is upon earthly things like: **sexual immorality, impurity, lust, coveting, greed, anger, rage, malice (or a desire to cause injury or pain to another), slander, and filthy language.** Paul is challenging us to rise above our earthly nature and live in the new person God has created in us through the waters of Baptism. We call this the third use of the Law. In the third use of the Law, we don't live in fear and guilt, but in God's underserved grace and mercy. Instead of allowing fear and guilt to run our lives, we allow the undeserved grace and mercy of God to lead our lives along the path that leads to eternity. I will say this another way. Instead of allowing fear and guilt to run our lives, we allow the Gospel to lead our lives along the path that leads to eternity.

We have a problem in our society. As we drift away from our God, we are allowing ourselves to lie to each other. We are allowing each other not to tell the truth. As we drift away from our God, we are blaming others for the things that go wrong in our lives. As we drift away from our God, we are avoiding the consequences of our weaknesses, failures and outright sins against each other. Therefore rather than allowing other to set aside our weaknesses, failures and outright sin against each other, we are demanding that we are not held accountable for it. Therefore rather than allowing others to forgive us, we are demanding that we are forgiven. Therefore rather than defining our sin as sin, we are demanding

that it be redefined as perfectly alright in each other's eyes, and in God's eyes. Sin is sin. Confess the sin and seek the mercy of God and each other. If some cannot give that mercy, then allow them to face God in their Judgment rather than condemn them for being unmerciful.

Our God asks us to be content in every and all circumstances in life. We are living for God and not the things and people of this world. When we live for God, we can live secure and at peace in this world no matter what we face in this world. When we live for God, our eyes are upon the things of God not the things of this world. Of course there are various degrees of faith maturity. Some of us are more focused upon the things of this world and some are more and more focused upon the things of God. Some of us live in fear and guilt and some of us live in peace, mercy, and contentment no matter what we face in life. Therefore in our text Paul is encouraging us to see Christ and live in His undeserved grace and mercy so that we will be at peace with God and each other. Amen