

MONDAY, MARCH 19

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

There is some familiar language in this passage that reminds us of Jesus's words from the Lord's Prayer as he instructed his disciples to pray for the Father's will on earth as it is in heaven. But let's be honest: it is a whole lot easier to praise God, thank God, and even to ask for forgiveness than it is to imagine a world where heaven is truly present. Just a quick look at the news gives us a reminder that we have a long way to go for earth to be anything like heaven.

Into this mess is where the reality of Christ makes a stunning entrance. His life becomes our life. His identity becomes our identity. What's more, his resurrection becomes our resurrection. The prayer for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven isn't a petition to God; it's a command for us as the Holy Spirit works in our lives, renewing and restoring us in Christ.

Paul grabs onto this hope as he gives us the instruction to "set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." Imagine Paul as he writes these words: his old life was filled with misplaced religiosity that filled his heart with anger. He fears that the recipients of this letter will have the same experience. They are tempted to find their new life in being more religious, but the holiness Paul talks about isn't what we do or don't do; holiness is what has been done in our lives as a result of Christ.

When Paul experienced the loving kindness of Christ, he no longer held the coats of executioners, nodding in agreement, but began to implore others to live lives defined by patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control. Paul experienced a life-after-death experience where his life found new meaning and a new spiritual, moral, and ethical compass.

This change in Paul's life brings hope to us. It is possible for us to change also as we trust in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. When we identify with Christ, we can see ourselves as resurrected people where heaven is present in and through us as our feet continue to touch this earth.

What will you do differently today as a result of the acceptance of the reality of your resurrection relationship with Jesus Christ?