

Being Heavenly Minded

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[0 : 0 0] So one of the greatest virtues you could almost say in our modern society is to be authentic. I'm sure you may have heard that word come up many times. And another way to say you're being authentic is to say you're being your true self, your true self. And hence there is much value today on finding out who you truly are.

You know, a simple search in Google you'll find to be truly happy you must learn to be your true self. You see there's almost an idea that in finding your true self it'll give you freedom. Now this all comes back from different philosophers and from like the 1700s one of them being the man called Jean-Jacques Rousseau which is a very fun name to say. He said or he's famous for saying man is born free and in everywhere and everywhere he is in chains. It's this idea that when you're born you're not bound by anything you have unlimited potential and then as you get older you get more and more constrained by different things you get almost hidden by different things and your true self well it's hard to find. Your true self lights hidden in there and in chains and shackles. Hence we get personality tests loads of them like one of them being the Myers-Briggs one probably being the most famous and I was obsessed with it for ages to be honest. They are really ironic thing about these personality tests. They're there they're meant to show you what a unique and individual person you're meant to be but you can be unique in 16 different ways.

It's really ironic be free to be one of 16 different types of people but is Rousseau right? Do we need to look within ourselves to find our true self and then live that out? Certainly what a lot of people would say today or is it that the or is that our true self the very cause of all our woes? Is our true self our real problem? Because our passage does three things it makes us look up. Paul is asking us to have a different mind a heavenly mind then he makes us look behind at what we were or inside even and shows us that our true self is covered in rags and this is our true problem and finally Paul turns us to show us that we have a new attire something we can be. So the first thing versus one to four heavenly thinking. Now I'm sure you've all heard the saying before that you could be so heavy a person being so heavily minded that they're of no earthly use. Now I haven't yet to meet this person who's so fable heavily minded that they're no earthly use. However I have met many people who are so heavily minded that they're of the most earthly use. One example is a lady from Sterling and my spiritual nanny when I was at university there years ago Fiona McAllister and to this day if there's ever a problem you could tell her and she'd bring it straight to prayer to God. She was so focused on who was above. She was so enamored with Jesus. She was so focused on where she was going that she was one of the most useful servants of God. Our passage then begins. If then, if then you've been raised with Christ set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above not on earthly things. In chapter 2 it explains that the

Colossians were being taken captive by empty philosophers or worldviews. They were feeling the pressure of the culture around them to conform and to accept what these other worldviews had to say except what they believed was valuable or not. But here Paul is saying to value the things that are in heaven not what is on earth. To have different values, a different culture to the worlds. But why should we be different? Why should we be any different? It would be much easier to go with what's popular. It would make our lives much easier because as Paul says you have died. You have died which means we're no longer off this earth. Now maybe when someone has passed away you've heard the saying they're no longer off this world. There's an idea that the things that bound them to this earth they're all removed. But if, if you have been raised with Christ, if you believe in Jesus, if you're a Christian, you have died. You are no longer off the earth. In fact Paul goes on to say your life is hidden with Christ and God. Now this is an amazing line. As a Christian your very life is hidden in God. This idea you could almost say Jesus wraps around us.

We're completely hidden in Him. We're wrapped up in God. In this very instance as you sit right there you're also united with Christ in God's very presence. That's how close we are. That's how united you are as a believer. There's no separation. There's no veil. There's no curtain. We are completely united. We are so wrapped up in Jesus that Paul says when Christ who is your life appears then you also will appear with Him in glory. That is whatever happens to Jesus happens to us too.

[7 : 17] It's like we had a great debt and we bet our lives on that of a gladiator. If the gladiator loses we lose. But if he wins, we win. If he is glorified we are glorified. Thus when Paul says when Christ who is your life appears then you also will appear with Him in glory. It doesn't almost seem fair does it? That we receive some of that glory and honor by simply being united to Him. But that's the truth in this. That's how united we are. If a husband succeeds, his wife succeeds. They're united. And the church is the bride of Christ. So if we're no longer of this earth, this is the premise, this whole argument. If you're raised, if you're with Christ, if you're no longer of this earth, this is how it sets up this whole passage of being heavily minded. This is how it begins the second half of Colossians, the practical side.

If then, if you're no longer of this earth, if we're hidden in Jesus, unfolded in Him, we must as Paul says, put to death what is earthly and new. So we're to be heavily minded because we're no longer of this earth. We died. Our focus should be in heaven. So to put to death what is earthly and new. That's verses 5 to 11. You put off the old self. If all before us is true, if all that what Paul said is true, and we're hidden with Jesus in God, I still think that's mad, hidden with Jesus in God. That seems too much. We're to put to death whatever is earthly in us. How can those who are united with Jesus in such a close way that we get His victories for ourselves were covered by Him, still live like we're not? Now to make this point more clear, what Paul does is he brings us back to our old self, our earthly self. He makes us look inward. He shows us that our true self, I'll keep doing this, true self has been broken by sin, and that sin shows itself in all these ways. Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covensness, anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth, and lying.

He reminds us that that was the way we lived before we met Jesus, before we met Jesus. Imagine if you will, you had your wardrobe and it's filled with all your old clothes. Every one of them with its gersh colors, all the things that you thought were cool back in the day, you know leather, leather wristbands or wooded surfer beads or anything like that, maybe long hair with the dyed red at parts. I'm sure you'll remember all the fashion choices that you thought were, this make me look cool, and I'm sure you would never want anyone to put them back on you right now and walk through the town. I know I definitely wouldn't. What I thought was cool, what I thought was good, what I thought, yeah I'm looking like something.

I turned back down and go, oh dear goodness, burn any evidence that I ever wore that. Oh I really had my hair like that. Oh I really thought I'd look cool. Never want to put that back on, because from this point of view I can see it for what it truly is. And that's just like the way we used to live. When we met Christ we can see the way we truly used to live and see it for what it really is. There's a Japanese saying that every person has three faces. The first you showed of the world, the second face you showed to your close friends and family, and the third face you never showed to anyone, and that is the truest reflection of who you are.

[12 : 09] Well if we honestly look at ourselves in the mirror, as the Japanese say our third face, or as our culture says, the true self, do we see a person who looks out for others ourselves? And if we are honest, even myself, we all say I look out for myself. I look out for myself even when I'm trying not to. Do we see someone who serves others or wants to be served? Do we want to put other other people's name ahead of us? Or even still do we want our names to go ahead? Can we go through that small list which Paul reminded us off and think I'm not like that? Or if we're really sincere, do we not see those things in our hearts?

You see Paul takes us back and shows us the human condition, our true self has been so marred and so corrupted by sin that it's unrecognizable from the glory that God created humanity in. The absolute glory that God created humanity in. We've went so far from that, we're unrecognizable. It's the reason we had had Jesus pay for our sins to die to come to the cross. That our condition wasn't just a wee bit fallen, it wasn't just, well God, we bit of dirt in us, but our condition was we are so marred from our original creation that we needed God to save us. We needed to be saved. We need to be saved, but the cross is also the reason that we can now put those things behind us. The

cross is the very thing that showed us I'm no longer off that. As Paul said, in these you too once walked. When you were living in them, but now you must put them all away.

So put off the old self. Put off the old self. See them for what they truly are. See them for what they truly are. Old clothes you thought were good and cool, but really are the worst things that ever touch you. And whenever you see one of these things raise his head, snipe it, chop it down, kill it no matter how small, as an old preacher said, if you're not killing sin, sin is killing you. So we're to be heavily minded, not earthly minded, because we died, we're no longer off the earth. Secondly, we're to throw off our old self as we've been shown that it's disgusting, it's vile, it leads to death. Our old self, our true self, it's actually the chains that are holding us down. It's the things that are keeping us from being free. But after seeing what our true self is like and burning it, rejecting it, we're no longer left naked like who am I? What am I?

Rather, we're furnished with a new identity. We're furnished with a new identity, and we're to put on the new self. Verses 12 to 17, we're to put on the new self. Now, when I was a boy growing up, I used to dress up as my dad all the time. Any opportunity I got dressed up like my dad. See, my dad was in the army, and this is Northern Ireland during the early 90s, so I saw the army every day. Went to visit my grandparents' army checkpoint. Fortresses of army barks is everywhere. So I idolized my dad. I thought, coolest thing ever. He had to go out in trips all the time, so I'm going to Chinook and lift off. My dad's awesome. So at any church party or any school party, I would take my dad's uniform, whatever I could fit in, which wasn't very much, and I would try to be like my dad by putting on his clothes. Here too, we are commanded to put on Christ. Paul now commands the Colossians to dress up like Christ by acting like him. I'm just going to go through some of the things that he says are things of Christ. These are things Christ had in his life and has still, and we're to copy him. We're to do something that's so counter-cultural. We're not going to be authentic. We're not going to be our true selves. We are going to copy someone.

[17:26] They're going to be the person that I want to become. The first being, compassion. Now, a more literal translation would be as the NASB puts it, put on a heart of compassion. This translation, it shows the the deepness of feeling that new believers, that believers are meant to have, especially in context to one another, to other believers. Think of Joseph being reunited with his family, or David and Jonathan's relationship with each other.

We're to have compassion for each other. A kinship, kindness, obviously opposite to the anger section in in Rath and Malus found in verse 8. Now, the best example of this is found in, obviously, Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan. We are to be kind without seeking gain because our God has been kind to us. Humility, now true kindness can only come when one is truly humble. You can't give away if you're always thinking of getting something back. If you're not humble.

Now, see as Lewis said it best, do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man, he will be what most people call humble. He will not be a sort of greasy smarmy person who is always telling you that, of course, he's nobody. Always love that one. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. And if you do dislike him, it'll be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility. He will not be thinking about himself at all. Humility, as a pastor in America said, is not thinking of yourself less, but thinking less about yourself. When you love someone, you're not thinking about how they think of you, you're only thinking about them.

And when we consider Paul's words as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, why are we even bothered by what other people think when that is how the God of all creation thinks of you? Gentleness and meekness. Now, this is actually a really confusing one for our day and age, I think anyway, because this does not mean weakness, but it's very similar to humility. Is your stance before the one above you? Recognizing who you must obey and submit to. For example, a meek soldier would be a good obedient soldier. The opposite of meekness would be a proud, assertive or presumptuous soldier. Now, meekness is, you could say, is loathed in our culture. Pride and assertiveness, you know, were taught to tell their children to be assertive. We're never told to tell their children to be meek. It even sounds weird hearing it out loud. But pride and assertiveness are elevated to the standard of virtues nowadays.

Jeltiness, meekness, well, they stand in really stark contrast and even opposition to our culture. It makes it very hard to live that way, but meekness and gentleness does not mean limp-rested. It often sounds that, you know, you meet someone, they give you a handshake like a fish. It doesn't mean anything like that. There's even a book my son was given, it's called the meek mouse, or the

meek little mouse in the lion. And we think of a mouse as being meek, because it's weak. We associate meekness with weakness. But meekness rather means that you are unmoving to the higher commander, your good soldier. In the army, if a major or sergeant give a command, who should the private, the one at the bottom, obey? The major, because he outranks the sergeant. He knows who is to be meek before, who is to be, who is to move to and who to obey. Likewise, when God gives us a command, we're to ignore the world and obey God. We are to be meek before God. And this done in the right spirit, done with gentleness, can even look like arrogance before men.

[22 : 27] Just think of when we say there is only one way to God. That's a very arrogant statement in our world. But in believing it and being unmoving in it, we are being meek before God. Think of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego being thrown into the fiery furnace for not worshiping the King. Think of Daniel thrown to the lion's den. Think of Jesus when slandered and accused. When he was tempted to be caught out by the lawyers, Jesus stood his ground. Jesus held to God's law, but he was never arrogant or proud. Meekness is not actually cardus. It's courage. It's holding to your convictions to God's word because they were commanded to you by God. It's strength, more like a mountain, more like a mountain than a reed before the wind. Meekness is strength. Patience and long-suffering. Our Lord is patient and long-suffering with us. Christ's actions in this world with His disciples was patient and long-suffering. Christ is patient with us still. Think of how much we could turn back to the previous chapter and go, I'm still like that. How many years have I been a Christian? Have I still not put to death the same sin that keeps popping its head up? But Christ is patient. He's long suffering. He is still united to us. He still loves us. He still cares. He still wraps us. Likewise, Jesus was forgiving. Jesus said that we should forgive our brother who comes to us 70 times in a day over the same thing. That one's hard to live with. Children are in March. I'm sure that one comes out all the time.

Forgive overdoing the same silly thing. Our serious thing. There's no limit to this. Sometimes we can put a limit on our forgiveness. Like, I'll forgive you of this, but not this. But it's forgiveness all the time. If we love Christ, we want to be like Him. If we're to emulate Him, if we're to put on Christ, we're to dress up like Jesus. We're to dress up like Jesus. When we do, the peace of Christ will dwell richly in our hearts. Compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, forgiveness, and patience bound together with love will mean we think of others first and not our own rights, not our dignity, and in that, we'll truly have the peace of Christ resting in our hearts. We'll truly be free of all the shackles that hold us to this earth when we're trying to be our true self. Lewis goes on to say that God is trying. I don't take this personally. This is Lewis talking about all of us, me included. He's trying, God is trying to get us to take off a lot of sick, silly, ugly, fancy dress that we're strutting about in like the little idiots we are rather than feel the relief of having for once got rid of all that silly nonsense about your own dignity which has made you restless and unhappy all your life. And getting rid of all of that, all of that nonsense will have peace because it's will be like Christ. And I would add, we would find happiness and contentment in our lives. So stop seeking after your true self. Rather, seek after your new self that is Christ Himself. If we realize that we die to this world with Christ, that we are no longer the earths, we are heavens, we are Christ's. We will see our old life the way we what we used to call our true self, see it for the very chains that bound us. That old self with every vice that we hated in ourselves must be cast off when we see it for what truly is. Then we can put on a new self, a real and genuine one as we copy Jesus. And in giving up who we are, we are finally free to become who God has always wanted us to be. A people who are patient, kind, humble, compassionate and forgiving. We would be a people who are truly free. So please, will you stop trying to find out who you are?

[27 : 51] And realize who you can be? Will you throw off your old self and instead copy Jesus? Amen, let's pray. Our Father in Heaven, it sounds like a simple task just to copy Jesus, to not have to reinvent ourselves or find out who we truly are or what we're truly like. The Father of the Taskus truly seems daunting before us.

We pray that you would help us, help us remember these things and help us remember all the mercy and patience and kindness you have had on us because you love us so deeply and dearly. Help us remember that we are hid in you and that you will never leave us or forsake us. In Jesus' name, amen.