

Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church USA

Reverend Dr. Daris Bultena

August 1, 2010

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Psalms 107:1-9, 43

¹O give thanks to the LORD,
for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

²Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
those he redeemed from trouble

³and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

⁴Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to an inhabited town;

⁵hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.

⁶Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress;

⁷he led them by a straight way,
until they reached an inhabited town.

⁸Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.

⁹For he satisfies the thirsty,
and the hungry he fills with good things.

⁴³Let those who are wise give heed to these things,
and consider the steadfast love of the LORD.

Colossians 3:1-4

¹So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

“Focused”

I give—I need to wear glasses to read. I’m, ah, of that age all of a sudden where I’m stuck wearing them whether I like it or not. Until not that long ago I could get away with it and now without those words on the

page are just too “fuzzy” to figure out what it says. The simple glasses help me to focus.

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Focus. Ah focus.

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It is put this way in Colossians: *“So if 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 the earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.”*

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Above. Below. It is not so much about a dualism as if up there is good and down here is bad. It is more about focus. Are you focused in on what you need to be focused on?

Symbolically we are to remember baptism—there is a transformation that takes place where we are buried with Christ and then raised with him. That being raised is a new life. It is a new perspective. It is a new way of seeing the world.

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“Seek the things that are above...” is about that transformation. The old way verses the new way. Mmm...deeper than that—it is about the default way verses a higher way. The default way. You know about the default—it is that tendency towards that which we know the most, that which is easiest, and that which provides immediate result.

We tend to default to the immediate and the familiar. We default to our ways of being and patterns of behavior that we have learned by coping with this world of ours.

The life of faith is not the default. Surely there is in us this deep natural orientation that reaches beyond us to the holy. But the default is what we learn early on...it is what the culture teaches us. We have learned the lesson well – the most important focus is the self focus. The default provides immediate gratification without providing long-term fulfillment. You know well the default—it is that way of being that leaves one beyond the moment empty of any permanent contentment.

Such is why Paul points us, oh people of today's Colossae, beyond our default to "seek that which is above." Namely, to seek the focus on Christ. What we see in the world is a fuzzy distorted view of reality. We need to put on the glasses of Christ in order for our life to come into focus.

As we allow Christ to literally color our world we start to see with a new eyes—the focus we were created to have comes into view...

So if 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 the earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory."

What do you see?

Where is your focus?

The default view is distorted. The real view is a focus on the one who says: “Broken for you....Shed for you...”

The default view is distorted. Will we focus?

So if 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 the earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.”

Amen.