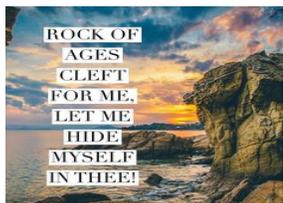


American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts March 2020

Hidden with Christ

By: Eric Watkins



Colossians 3:1–4 is full of heart-warming, soul-comforting reflections on the implications of Christ's work on our behalf and our union with Him. Verse 3 says, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." What does it mean to be "hidden with Christ"? In order to answer this, we need to think broadly about the prominent language of *hiding* in the Bible. ...

As soon as sin enters the world, what do Adam and Eve attempt to do? They foolishly clothe themselves with fig leaves and attempt to hide from God. What a sad, tragic reaction to the same voice that had not only called them into existence, but called them into sweet fellowship. Now, instead of running to God's voice, they run from Him and attempt to

hide. Their plan of self-protection failed, but God in His grace gives them a covering for their sin in place of the all-consuming judgment they deserve.

... In Revelation 6:15–16, we are told of "the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free" all calling out to the rocks and hills to "fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne." This time, however, there is no mercy. It is the climactic day of God's judgment. The slain Lamb is now the devouring Lion, and there will be no place to hide for His enemies.

Centered between these two books (Genesis and Revelation) stands the cross of Christ. It is the apex of history, as God's grace and justice are mingled like streams meeting in a river. Neither is weakened as they come crashing together at the cross. They deepen and intensify as they overtake the Savior in a flood of judgment, yet become the

river of life for you and me.

What ought to deeply pierce our hearts is that in order for God's just judgment to pass by sinners like you and me, it has to find Jesus. ... At the cross, the full, unbridled wrath of God came down upon Jesus, and, in that moment of judgment, there was nowhere for Jesus to hide. No fig leaves or shade trees. No mercy, no grace, no compassion. Jesus, for us, is exposed to the all-consuming expression of sin's cruelty and the wrath of God. No friends come to defend Him; no lamb is offered in His place; no one negotiates His release.

Clothed in our shame, crowned with our thorns, and exposed to the judgment of God that we deserve—Jesus is our hiding place. Outside of Christ, there is no safe place to hide, but being found in Christ there is peace and safety. "Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee."

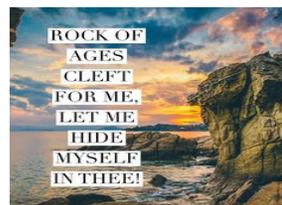
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New Life in Christ

By: Steve Dornan



“Therefore, since Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties and abominable idolatries” (1 Peter 4: 1–3).

Far too often I see men in the church acting just like those outside the church. We see the sins mentioned above on what seems to be a greater level than ever. Internet pornography, adultery, and drunkenness pervade our churches at levels equal to the world. But we are less troubled by these sins and less

concerned with correcting the offenders than we ought to be.

Peter clearly tells us that we are not to look like the world. Because of what Christ has done for us, we not only can be different, but we must be different. Do we believe that we have not spent enough time in the pagan things of the world? For some the answer is yes, and Paul tells us what to do with those who are immoral: “Purge the evil person from among you” (1 Cor. 5:13). Most cases do not require this action, for the true Christian man will confess his sins, or, when he is caught in immorality he will repent and be restored. In other cases there is no repentance. We cannot allow impenitence to exist because the church is called to be holy.

The things that lead us to eternal condemnation are precisely what Christ’s work has saved us from. I desire to live according to the will of God solely because He changed my will. Now, I do not always wish to act like my will has been changed, but it has been, and I am responsible to act accordingly. Peter refers to our past

lifetime, but makes it clear that we are now in a new lifetime. We have been born again in the shadow of the cross; we are made new and must look different from the world.

John Calvin said: “The goal of the new life is that God’s children exhibit melody and harmony in their conduct. What melody? The song of God’s justice. What harmony? The harmony between God’s righteousness and our obedience. Only if we walk in the beauty of God’s law do we become sure of our adoption as children of the Father.”

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Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
2 Corinthians 5:17

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