

Planning a Funeral

Quick Backdrop

How would you complete this sentence:

“Because I have been raised with Christ, I will ...”?

Does anything pop into your mind? If not (and that’s okay!), the passage below will help you fill in the blank. Most of the New Testament is a collection of letters written within a few decades of Jesus’ ministry. These letters were written by church leaders like apostles Paul and Peter to help new believers understand the gospel and know how to live it in their daily life. Many of these letters have a pivotal moment that goes something like this: “Since God has done so many great things for us, then *this* is how we should live.” And the next few verses explain what “this” is.

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

Colossians 3 contains one such pivotal phrase, which is below. The entire passage, which you may want to print out or paste into an e-doc, is noted farther below.

Try this: Read the entire passage (Colossians 3:1-10) and list in the space below all the things Paul, the writer of Colossians, tells you to do since you’ve been raised with Christ.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ:



Colossians 3:1-10

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Fold or Cut

Now read the first few verses again (Colossians 3:1-4). This time draw a smiley over every reference to you (look for words like “you” and “your”). Draw a cross over every mention of Christ. After you’ve read and marked the passage, write down all the connections you find between you and Christ.

2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

Big question: How does the knowledge that you’ve been raised with Christ motivate you to obey the commands Paul gave?

Notice what you’re to do with whatever belongs to your earthly nature: *put it to death!* What do you have in your life that needs a funeral? Circle any that apply and add a few of your own.

| | | | |
|-----------|----------|-------|-------|
| Attitudes | Language | _____ | _____ |
| Temper | Impurity | _____ | _____ |

3 Seal the Deal (God, Change Me!)

So, go ahead: have a funeral for those things in your life that are to be put to death. First, make a list of those things. Then, journal on a separate sheet of paper or in an e-doc a few lines about each one as if you were eulogizing it at a funeral. Call it for what it is and does and then bury it. Here’s an example: temper.

Dear Temper:

You give me a short-term fix (release valve) but you leave long-term consequences. You cater to my frustrations. You knock me off my game in trying to be gentle and gracious. So, I do not need you. I have been raised with Christ. Therefore, I bury you. Good bye temper.

My List of things that need a funeral:

Now let them die:

Write out a step you can take for each thing that indicates it is put to death. Then, take the step.

Enjoy the freedom:

You’ll be surprised at the freedom you will feel when something that had a grip on you is now gone. Not only gone, but dead.