

Seeing the Big Picture Colossians 3: 1-14

July 16 sermon preached by the Rev. Dr. Kenneth J. Macari

When a child is adopted they receive a new last name and oftentimes a new first and middle name: they have received a new identity. When someone becomes a citizen of the USA, they are no longer a citizen of their nation of origin: they have a new identity as American citizens.

The Apostle Paul was exhorting the Colossian Christians to live into their new identity and reality as now adopted into Body of Christ by faith and baptism. They were literally rescued from the worship of pagan gods never to return to their old evil religious practices. The city of Colossae in what is now Turkey lies only in ruins and is popular for tours of New Testament sites. Charms, rings, arm and foot bracelets and amulets engraved with prayers to demons, angels and spirits in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin have been excavated in recent decades. Paul focuses on the identity of Jesus to enable these recent converts to refocus their practices of prayer, corporate worship, church life and conduct among their pagan neighbors.

Christ is image of God Creator and Head of His Body the Church

In Colossians 1: 15-16, Paul says of Jesus that: **He image of the unseen God, first-born of all creation. In Him were created all things in heaven & on earth: everything visible and invisible; and all things were created through Him and for Him.**

Coins are made at the US Mint in Philadelphia: they are all identical with one another. The same imagery is used of Jesus: He is identical in His flesh as to His nature in heaven with His Father. So we are viewed by His Heavenly Father as adopted to be brothers and sisters with Jesus. We have been adopted through the presence and power of the HOLY SPIRIT!

In Colossians 1: 17-18, Paul continues: **In Him all things hold together---He is the Head of His Body, the Church.** Being united with Christ is our greatest gift from God.

John Calvin in his Institutes of the Christian Religion reminds us As long as XT remains outside of us, separated from Him, all He has suffered and accomplished for salvation of human race remains useless; it has no value. To share with us what Christ received from His Father, He had to become ours and dwell with us. Paul calls Him Our Head, we are engrafted into Him; we are called to put on Christ and grow into one Body with Him. It is by the secret energy of the Holy Spirit that we come to enjoy Christ and all of His benefits. It is the HOLY SPIRIT Who unites with us with Christ and with one another in the Body of Christ. Faith is principal work of the HOLY SPIRIT. This SPIRIT is the inner teacher by whose effort the promise of salvation penetrates into our minds--a promise that would otherwise only beat upon our ears. Faith has no other source than the HOLY SPIRIT.

Christians are viewed by God the Father as risen and ascended into heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ through the presence and power of HOLY SPIRIT

In Colossians 3: 1-4, Paul says of Jesus that: **Since, then, You have been raised up to be with Christ. You must look for the things above, where Christ is sitting at God's right hand. Set your thoughts on things above. For you have died and the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed—you, too, will be revealed with Him in glory.**

OK Pastor Ken What is Jesus doing here and now?

Jesus intercedes for our growth in relationship to Him

To paraphrase Hebrews 4: **Our High Priest understands our weaknesses--He faced all of the same testings we do, yet did not sin. Let us come boldly to the throne of grace. We will receive His mercy and find God's grace to help us when we need it most.**

Jesus challenges specific growth in actions & attitudes

Later in Colossians 3, Paul states **As God's people, you are to be clothed in compassion, generosity, humility, gentleness and patience. Forgive each other. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. May the peace of Christ dwell in your hearts as you were called together in one body. Always be thankful.**

OK Pastor Ken What now? **HOW** do we put all of this into practice?

Meditating on the Big Picture Within--we are always an intern in Christian life

+Reviewing and Praying the Scriptures from the weekly Fanwood Bulletins.

Pray for the upcoming events and activities mentioned in the Fanfare.

+Praying the News and events and people and situations featured in print news, TV, radio and internet news sources. Let the Holy Spirit guide in these prayers!

+Log onto and subscribe to internet websites for daily scripture and prayers:

www.ScriptureUnion.org www.ourdailybread.org www.365.org

+Check out daily meditations on the Psalms for the whole year *The Songs of Jesus* written by our seminary classmates Timothy and Kathy Keller

Pastor David and Christie Alston can also recommend other resources as well!

Meditating on the Big Picture Challenging to Mission Around us

+Praying for Vacation Bible School this week --seeds planted in young hearts and minds:

+discipling encouraging our children and children from other churches

to be apprentices of Jesus

+evangelizing unchurched children to be apprentices of Jesus

Volunteer with Fanwood mission concerns

+drivers for **AGAPE** to Westfield Presbyterian and Sundays at First Baptist, Elizabeth

+**Refugee Assistance Program**—working with a family from the Congo Republic in Elizabeth Fanwood Church needs a representative for this interfaith outreach!

+**Attachment Outdoor Sign**--consider this witness of Christian hospitality available from www.welcomeyourneighbors.org

No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor

OR Hate Has No Home Here available from

<https://hatehasnohomehere.org>

*No importa de dónde eres,
estamos contentos que seas
nuestro vecino.*

No matter where you are
from, we're glad you're
our neighbor.

لا يهم اين ولدتم، و لكننا
سعداء انكم جيراننا.

www.welcomeyourneighbors.org

Love God. Love your neighbors.

— Jesus

(Matthew 22: 37-39)

Every day is a chance to show
God's love to newcomers.

Get your yard sign at welcomeyourneighbors.org.
Join us in response to Jesus' call.



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Central
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*Relief, development and peace
in the name of Christ*

mcc.org/neighbors