

Look above



IPC HEBRON LOS ANGELES
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From Pastor's Desk...

Set Your Minds on Heavenly Priorities in Life

We live in a hostile world with increasing tensions due to differences in culture, class, race, linguistics, religion, ideologies etc. The whole world is struggling to come out of the pandemic now. There are always two pandemics: worldwide spread of a pathogen-viruses, bacteria and fear. We must always address the fear first because of the promise of God we have in the Bible for 365 times- "don't be afraid".

We are no longer dead in our sin, but alive with Christ when we put our faith in Him completely. Setting our minds on things above (Colo.3:2) means concentrating on the eternal rather than the temporal. This is to set our heart's central focus while we are on earth. There are people who set their mind on earthly things: their destiny is destruction,

their god is their stomach and their glory is their shame because their mindset is developed to focus on earthly things (Phil. 3:19).

A T Roberson writes: “the baptized life means that the Christian is seeking heaven and is thinking heaven. His feet are upon the earth, but his head is with the stars. He is living like a citizen of heaven on earth”. In this we look life at God’s perspective and to seek what He desires. This provides the antidote to materialism, sensuality, empty philosophy etc. A life on earth disciplined by God’s grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives (Titus 2:11).

The early Christians often met in homes. Church buildings were not common until the third Century. Christ alone was the source of their spiritual life, the head of the body of

believers though many heresies like legalism, asceticism, Gnosticism and mysticism threatened the church. Christians should be empowered by the Holy Spirit for building bridges, not walls, through receiving all without any barriers. The pandemic season all over the world should be a time for the churches to grow in faith, love and hope. The Lord is near: let us watch and pray.

Henry Morrison and his wife returned to New York due to age and ill health after 40 long years of mission work in Africa. He was unnoticed by others, but a huge crowd was there to cheer and welcome President Theodore Roosevelt travelling in the same ship. Missionary entered in the one room apartment assigned by the mission agency and was discouraged, saying 'it was not fair'. His wife advised him to pour out his heart before the Lord. He came out with great joy after prayer. He heard a voice from the Lord in

response to his complaints, “my son you are not home yet”. We are a pilgrim community passing on this earth with heaven’s priorities in daily practice, looking forward to our eternal home.

Rev. Dr. K. P. Mathew

(Senior Pastor, IPC Hebron, Los Angeles)

A vision of things above

Br: Anoop Balachandran

I vaguely remember a story that I heard long time ago. A soldier who was badly wounded was lying in the battlefield waiting for his time to come. He looked at the evening sky and saw how beautiful it is. He thought to himself - all my life the sky was right there above my head but I never took time to appreciate how beautiful it is. There he lay

wishing he could live a few more days but this time appreciating the beauty of the sky, the clouds and the stars above.

Sometimes in the haste of this life we tend to forget the things above. But God's voice is whispering to us asking us to slow down so that we can also see and understand what He wants us to. I am glad that none of us are too late to understand this like the soldier in the story above. Whether we want to do it or not- one day every knee shall bow down and every tongue will confess that that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2 10-11). But for us who acknowledge this today while alive- it will be a day of great joy and reward.

In this world success is usually measured by how rich, famous and influential a person is. But when we start to look at things from a heavenly perspective we see a different story.

In the "Be-Attitudes" (Matthew 5:1-12) Jesus tells us how radical this difference can be. The poor in spirit becomes rich in heaven, the ones who mourn are comforted, the meek inherits earth, the ones who are deprived of righteousness are filled, the merciful are shown mercy, the pure in heart gets to see God, and the ones who are persecuted and mocked will receive a big reward in the kingdom of heaven. If only he had a vision of the things above - the rich young ruler (in Mark 10:17-27) would have realized that loss on this earth will be a big gain for him in the kingdom of heaven. Indeed he was a successful man on this earth. But he did not inherit heaven because he had set his heart on the wrong place.

Bible reminds us time and again - that we are not citizens of this earth. If we keep that vision in front of us then nothing on this world can bring us down. Only a person who has set

his mind on heaven in all aspects of his life would be able to say like Paul (Philippians 1:21) "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." I can reciprocate those words out of emotions in a split second. But I ask myself - "Will I be able to say those words the next time the world is enticing me to raise up to its standards". It's easier to say this. But that is a journey that we have to continue with every breath we take and every decision we make.

I pray that God will lead us through this life and help every one of us to keep our eyes on the heavenly things that He has in store for us.

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