



The Mar Thoma Church Diocese of North America & Europe Christian Education Forum

Lenten Meditations

PUT OFF THE OLD SELF

Colossians 3: 1-11

The letter of Colossians especially this chapter invites us to explore the possibility of how to lead a meaningful Christian life individually and corporately. Here Paul states two realities

*".. put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."
Colossians 3: 10*

- 1. Christ has risen and is seated at the right hand of God.**
- 2. You also have resurrected with Christ. So you cannot lead a life as if Christ is absent.**

Not otherworldly but upwardly

Leading a Christ like life is mandatory to every Christians. So then, here Paul is giving an instruction to set our mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. What does it mean? Does it mean to disregard what is happening on earth? Not at all. What Paul intends is that in Christ a new order has been inaugurated on the earth in which believers have become participants. Christ took his earthly life seriously and lived it out meaningfully.

He had challenged and fought against all the evil powers and deadly forces and expressed his compassion and solidarity with poor and vulnerable. We are also called to follow the same path and orientation in our earthly life.

Not alone but together

In this text Paul used the word old self and new self, it means 'person'. Old person is the person as identified with old humanity, living under the present evil age and its powers. The new person is the believer as identified with the new humanity, the new order of existence inaugurated by Christ's death and resurrection. Vs 10 makes it clear that this new person is not yet totally new but is in the process of renewal. We are in the process of becoming 'new people'. Paul declares categorically "there is no such thing as Jew or Greek, Slave or free, male or female, for all are now one person in Christ. All ethnic, political, social- economic, gender barriers have been transcended. A new community is drawn in Christ.

There is an old film, "The Defiant Ones" in which two convicts, one white, one black, escape. They are manacled together. They fall down a ditch with slippery sides. The one struggles up the slope and nearly make it to the top but he can't get out for he is still manacled to his fellow convict at the bottom, and slithers back. The only way they can make it is together, up, up, up, and out. As Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu puts it 'We too can make it together –we can be safe only together. We can be prosperous only together. We can survive only together. We can be human only together'. Let me conclude this meditation with an African saying If you want to walk fast, walk alone. But if you want to go far, walk together with others.

Prayer: Almighty Father, grant us the wisdom to understand the truth that in Christ we are one family, one race, one humanity- Amen

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