

A Sermon “Set Your Heart Above”  
From Colossians 3:1–11  
Preached at Plymouth Presbyterian Church  
St. Helens, OR  
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## **Introduction**

In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, C.S. Lewis tells the story of Eustace, a boy turned into a dragon by his own selfishness. He tries to tear off the dragon skin himself—but fails. Only Aslan, the Christ-figure, can remove it. It hurts, but it heals. Eustace becomes who he truly is. That’s the image Paul gives us in Colossians 3. We’re being made new in Christ. The old self (the ‘dragon-skin-self’) must go. The new self must rise. This isn’t about self-help—it’s about transformation.

## **I. Set Your Heart and Mind on Things Above (vv.1–4)**

Paul begins: “Since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above.” The word *since* is key. Paul doesn’t say, “Try harder so God will love you.” He says, “[Since] God already raised you with Christ. Now live like it.”

To “set your heart” and “set your mind” above is to live with a new compass. It’s not escapism—it’s reorientation. Instead of anxiety, we pursue peace. Instead of greed, generosity. Instead of chasing worth in status or stuff, we rest in Christ.

Paul says our lives are “hidden with Christ in God.” Your identity isn’t in your job, your failures, or even your successes. It’s in Jesus. When Christ appears in glory, you will too. That’s your future. Until then, live like it’s already true—because it is.

## **II. Put to Death the Earthly Nature (vv.5–9)**

Next Paul says, “Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature.” This is strong language. These aren’t habits to manage—they’re sins to kill.

Paul names heart sins: sexual immorality, impurity, greed. Then he names relational sins: anger, malice, slander. These destroy trust, relationships, and communities.

Why must they go? Because they belong to the *old self*—a self that died when Christ raised you. But here’s the thing: the old self doesn’t go quietly. It keeps trying to run the show. That’s why this is a daily decision. We crucify what once ruled us.

And Paul adds: “Do not lie to each other.” Why? Because in Christ, we’re done with masks. We don’t pretend. We don’t perform. We live in truth because we belong to the Truth.

## **III. Put on the New Self (vv.10–11)**

Paul then says, “You have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” This is creation language. God is making something brand new in you—something that looks like Jesus.

This isn’t about being slightly improved. It’s a full makeover of the soul. We’re being remade into Christ’s likeness, not by our strength, but through His Spirit.

Then Paul makes a radical claim: “Here there is no Gentile or Jew... slave or free... but Christ is all, and is in all.” That was shocking in the first century. It still is.

In the world, we’re divided by race, class, gender, and politics. But in Christ, those walls collapse. We aren’t defined by what separates us—but by the One who unites us.

That means our churches aren't clubs for the like-minded. They are sanctuaries for the reborn. No one's higher. No one's lower. Christ is all, and is in all.

### **Conclusion: Raised to Live Differently — Now What?**

So what does it look like to live as people who've been raised with Christ?

It starts first thing tomorrow. Before you reach for your phone or your planner, pray:

**“Lord, help me set my heart on things above today.”**

Then ask:

- **What old self behavior needs to die today?**
- **Where have I let anger or envy take root?**
- **Who do I need to forgive—or seek forgiveness from?**

Next, **put on the new self**. Just like you get dressed each day, you put on:

- Compassion, when you meet someone who's struggling.
- Kindness, when you could just scroll past.
- Humility, when your pride wants to be right.
- Patience, when everything in you wants to snap.
- And love, which ties it all together.

And as you move through your day, remember:

**Christ is in all.**

- That person who cuts you off—Christ is in them.
- The family member you disagree with—Christ is in them.
- The person the world ignores—Christ sees them. So must we.

So here's a challenge for the week:

1. **Name one “old self” behavior to surrender.** Confess it. Let it go.
2. **Name one “new self” virtue to practice.** Choose it daily.
3. **Name one person in whom you'll try to see Christ.** Honor them.

You don't live this way to earn God's favor—live this way because you already have it. The tomb is behind you. Resurrection is your new reality.

So go.

Live as people raised with Christ.

Live with hearts set above.

Live with lives made new.

Live with Christ at the center of everything.

**Amen.**