**The Gift of a Hidden Life**

**The Word**

Read together Colossians 3:1-11

**The Big Idea**

Life in Christ is a hidden life in which we die to ourselves and experience the security and safety of being found in him alone. The daily invitation is to simply be who we already are in Christ, dying to our old patterns of living and stepping into our new identity in Christ through ordinary acts of everyday obedience.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Consider this notion of being hidden in Christ, having died to your own life and priorities and having received a new life and set of priorities that come with being united to Jesus. What about that life seems threatening to you? What about that life seems comforting or attractive to you?

2. In relation to the commands of v. 5-11, the statement was made: “Biblical Christianity is not about these mystical experiences or mountain top moments. Rather, the hidden life shows up in ordinary acts of daily faithfulness.” Do you see an overemphasis on mystical experiences or mountain top moments in our Christian culture today? If so, what has been the harm of that?

3. The commands of v. 1-2 to fix our hearts and minds on Jesus/heavenly things are connected to the practical commands of v. 5-11 that get at daily living, because as was said on Sunday, “where you fix your compass, there you will go. Where you fix your affections, there you will go.” What have you been fixing your heart and mind on of late, and how is that impacting your daily actions and decisions?

4. Sunday’s message gave us one particular litmus test for clarifying if we are truly fixing our hearts and minds on things above in Christ: Is there something in your life, that if it were taken away from you, you couldn’t go on (e.g. your reputation, health, financial security, a loved one)? What comes up for you when you consider that question?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. The movie, “A hidden life.” An ordinary Christian farmer’s life during WWII who may have to enter into service for Nazi Germany. He had a hidden, ordinary life lived with integrity.

B. The Christian life is a similarly hidden life.

II. The Passage

A. What is a hidden life?

1. It means that the fullness of our lives are veiled or obscured from the world until the coming of Christ.

2. But even more than that, it means our lives are hidden in the sense of being guarded, secured, kept safe in Christ. This good news speaks to the vulnerable, shaky, and anxious parts of ourselves and offers us the kind of security and rest we were made for.

B. How do we participate in this hidden life?

1. Bad news: This hidden life requires death.

2. Good news: You didn’t experience death yourself. You died with Christ.

3. Union with Christ is a core theme of Colossians (see Col 2:13-15, 2:20).

4. If you’re a Christian the worst thing that could happen to you has already happened to you (you died), and the best thing that could happen to you has already happened to you (you’ve been raised).

5. Other religions say you pull yourself up to God. Christianity says the way in is by death. There’s nothing you can do to pull yourself up to God. Christianity is not a call to self-improvement, it’s a call to death.

6. So we experience this death experientially (by dying to our own agendas/plans each day), but we also experience it through Jesus as our representative.

C. What does this hidden life actually look like?

1. v. 3-4 function as a hinge. There are commands in v. 1-2 (set your minds on things above), and there are commands in v. 5-11 (practical and specific ways to do this). If you miss 3-4 you might start moving towards rule keeping and self-improvement ala v. 1-2 and v. 5-11. V. 3-4 reminds us of who we already are.

2. So the idea is not “become this kind of person.” It’s “this is who you already are in Christ; now simply be who you already are.”

3. The list of commands (v. 5ff) is extraordinarily ordinary. These are the basic 101’s of Christian morality (lying, anger, etc.). Biblical Christianity is not about these huge mystical moments or mountain top experiences. The hidden life shows up in ordinary acts of daily faithfulness.

4. The practical commands of v. 5-11 are attached to the overarching commands of v. 1-2 of fixing the compass of your heart and mind on Jesus. Where you fix your compass, there you will go. Where you fix your affections, there you will go.

D. One litmus test for being hidden in Christ

1. How do you know if you have set your heart and mind on things above?

2. Consider the example of “evil desires and greed” in v. 5.

a. The term Paul uses refers disordered desires (he calls these “idolatry”). They might be good things, but you’ve turned them into ultimate things.

b. So: Is there something in your life, that if it were taken away from you, you couldn’t go on? Consider your reputation, health, financial security, loved one.

c. There is a way of living, thinking, being hidden in Christ that is safe and secure such that no circumstance can completely destroy you or leave you in despair because the most important part of your life remains utterly intact and secure.

II. Conclusion

A. The invitation of the gospel every day is to run to Jesus and find a hiding place in him.

B. Rather than trying to work harder, do better, or clean ourselves up, we come and die and experience life eternal, not in our own strength and moral performance but in what Jesus has done for us and will do in us.