

Colossians 3:1-11

Old to New

Image Church // Living Beyond Sunday: Week 6

Intro

Well good morning Image family, I hope you're doing well! If you have your bibles go ahead and turn to **Colossians 3**...

- BTW **ladies** hope yall had a good time yesterday!
 - Next one is **Nov. 3!**
- Also, have a **men's breakfast** coming up **this Saturday!**

If you're new with us, we're in a series through the book of Colossians...

And what you have is a church that's doing well, but they are getting all of these pressures from the surrounding community... And essentially at the root is the pressure is **that they are being pressed to see Jesus as a thing, not THE thing...**

- Build-a-bear theology...
- On a quest for spiritual fulfillment, a spiritual high...
- Looking to all kinds of things to accomplish this...

Paul keeps pointing them to Jesus- that Christ is superior to all things, therefore He is sufficient, **they don't need anything else but Him...**

That ultimately, the spiritual fulfillment that you want, the growth that you desire, and the transformation that you want to see comes **from Christ and through Christ...**

- **This is what Paul labors for...** This is what He wants to be at the center of the church... It's the message of Jesus that brings the church together, holds the church together, and grows the church together!

The goal that Paul holds up in the midst of all the pressure they are facing is in **Colossians 2:6** ... just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, **7** being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.

And from here Paul presses against certain attempts to pull them away from this reality...

And his challenge is **not to focus on your activity but to focus on your identity in Christ**... This is the starting line... This is what it means to be rooted in Christ... Which means that you're not a slave to activities, there's a freedom that you have through Christ..

Illustration: One of the most interesting transitions was high school to college... And the thing that made it so unique was the amount of freedom that you walk into...

- You can literally do whatever you want... You eat whatever, you can drink whatever, you can go wherever, you can stay up late... **BYW you lose that energy level!**

The amount of freedom is crazy... But for me, one of the things that helped keep me in check was playing a sport in college...

- Yes, you could eat whatever you want, party, sleep in, and miss class...
- But being a student-athlete, I was there for a very distinct purpose... Not only was there money being invested in me but also resources... And I loved playing my sports and was grateful for the opportunity to play it...
- Point is, **being identified as a student-athlete helped me navigate my freedom**... It gave me a lens to look at my freedom through... Shaping how I lived...

Similarly, when you're saved, there is a newfound freedom that you have through Christ, and the way that we navigate this freedom is through the lens of our **identification** with Christ...

The question is, what does this look like?!?

Well, that's what Paul's about to show us this morning... What you're going to see is how **our newfound identity in Jesus impacts our activity**...

- The order is important and you're going to see that...

Moving forward in his letter, Paul's going to get really practical showing us how **our newfound identity in Jesus impacts our activity** in every part of our lives...

Let's dive in...

Colossians 3:1-11

1 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3** For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

See how Paul holds up our **identity** in Christ...

- Raised with Christ...
- Dies with Christ...
- You are one with Christ...
 - Your new identity comes from being **united to Christ**...

What we see here is that our identity goes from **sinner to saved** through faith in the finished work of Jesus...

But we're not just saved from something we're saved to someone... **Jesus**... Which means that when God looks at us He sees us through Christ...

- **This is what it means for your identity to be in Christ**...

Great picture of this... **Baptism**... *Flesh out*

- Buried with Christ in the likeness of His death and raised to walk in the newness of life...

- When you trust in the finished work of Jesus, you're identifying with His perfect life in your place, His death in your place, and His resurrection that gives you new life...

This is why being a Christian is so much more than just praying a prayer... It is receiving Jesus which means you **identify** with Jesus...

Paul begins to show us here what that looks like... Sandwiched in **verses 1-4** Paul highlights **a new way of thinking that's established in light of your new identity**...

- He says: *seek the things of Christ*...
- *Set your minds on the things of Christ*...
- **IOW**: Jesus is the one who shapes how we think and live...

This means that we don't think like the world thinks, it means that we don't look to the things that the world looks to... We look to Jesus...

- We see who He is and what he's done for us...
- And we see what's offered to us in Him...
- That our greatest needs, our deepest longings are ultimately found in Him...

And the more that we seek the things of Jesus... The more that we set our minds on the things of Christ... **The more motivated we are to live in light of who He is and what He's done for us**... We are reminded of our **newfound identity in Jesus and it impacts our activity**...

Listen, **this is why the order matters so much here**... If we start with works there is no motivation and no transformational power...

- It's just an effort to conform and there this leads to exhaustion, and confusion, and distorts your view of God...
- Some of you are there...

*Listen, this is also why when we engage non-Christians we don't lead with activity- we need to point them to a new identity in Christ!

Ok, Paul's about to get practical when it comes to **how our new identity impacts our activity...**

Verse 5: Therefore, [in light of your new identity] **put to death what belongs to your earthly nature:**

This is the second time that Paul's referenced dying and death...

What you need to see is that part of walking in light of your new identity is putting to death you're old identity... **our newfound identity in Jesus impacts our activity**

"When my flesh yearns for some prohibited thing, I must die. When called to do something I don't want to do, I must die. When I wish to be selfish and serve no one, I must die. When shattered by hardships that I despise, I must die. When wanting to cling to wrongs done against me, I must die. When enticed by allurements of the world, I must die. When wishing to keep besetting sins secret, I must die. When wants that are borderline needs are left unmet, I must die. When dreams that are good seem shoved aside, I must die."¹

It is our identity in Christ that gives us the motivation and the means to put to death the things in us that don't align with our new identity... Don't miss that!

Now Paul's about to get specific and list out some things that belong to our earthly nature that we need to put to death...

Here's why: These are things that lure us away from walking in our new **identity**, things that keep us from being but up in Christ... From being like Christ... This is why looking at Him helps us see these things need to die!

Here they are... sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.

¹ Gospel Primer, 41

Now what you need to see is that all **5 things of these areas seem to have a connection with sexual purity...**

Paul's showing us that our sexual desires, our sexual activity is to be in line with our identity in Christ... Which means putting to death:

- **sexual immorality:**
 - This word in the original language is *Porneia*, this is where we get the word pornography from... And it really is a catch-all meaning any sexual activity outside of one man, one woman who are committed in a marriage relationship...
- **Impurity:** broader word that has to do with any kind of corruption... Would include any kind of sexual perversion...
- **Lust:** strong feelings of emotion or passion that come from our flesh... Lust of the eye... Lust of the flesh...
 - Lust of the eye- I crave things...
 - Lust of the flesh- I crave physical desires... Like sex...
 - Sexual thoughts toward someone or about something that's not in the context of marriage...
- **evil desire:** self-indulgent cravings, deep longing for things that are counter to God and centered around you...

Greed: This is one that's not talked about a lot, but it's the thing that the 4 areas above are rooted in...

- *Greed is the excessive desire of more...* It is covetousness... the excessive desire for worldly gain...

Paul's highlighting the reality that *Sexual sins arise because people have an uncontrolled desire for more and more "experiences" and "pleasures"; and such a desire is a form of idolatry.*²

² Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, 258.

Listen, at the end of the day, do you know what's at the root of **greed**? ... The worship of **self** which is **idolatry**...

- Could make an appeal here for ways that we do this...
 - Porn...
 - Sexual activity...
 - Cohabitation...
 - Sexual orientation...
- Each are rooted in the idolatry of self...

Look at what Paul say about these things he just listed... **verse 6**
6 Because of these, God's wrath is coming upon the disobedient, **7**
and you once walked in these things when you were living in them.

These things are evidence of sin and rebellion against God and the reason for his wrath that will come...

But, listen, don't miss this... If you're in Christ you will **not** experience that wrath, even though you may have done those things, **WHY**?! because Jesus took it on for you, **when He died** in your place on the cross...

You have a new identity in Him, this is what Paul's holding up... He says...*you once walked in these things*... These are not who you are...

Our newfound identity in Jesus impacts our activity...

Here's the other thing to understand... These things jade you into thinking that you found what you were looking for but they leave you feeling empty...

- *Make an appeal for the lie these things are...*

Now Paul's going to shift to some things that have to do with relationships that impact the unity of the church...

Verse 8: But now, put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth.

Paul holds up...

- **Anger, wrath, malice...** He's pointing to an attitude of anger, hostility, and ill-will toward others...

And this gives way to **slander and filthy language...**

- **slander:** damaging words falsely spoken that defame a persons reputation...
- **filthy language:** Abusive language, obscene talk, smaeful words... Dirty talk...

Then he says in **verse 9:**

9 Do not lie to one another,

Remember, Jesus said for our of the mouth the heart speaks...

This is what Paul's getting at here... If these things are coming out of your mouth there is a heart issue... You're missing your identity... You're missing who Christ has made you to be...

Look how he continues in **verse 9:**

since you have **put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self.** [Identity] You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator.

We have to see that a change in identity means a change in action...

Example: *when you buy a house... previous owners characterized the house... Gradually over time after you've moved in the house began to look like and characterize you...*

The same is true in the Christian life... As Jesus becomes the center of your life you begin to live in light of who He is and the grace that you have received...

- *Some things may be immediate changes, others may take a lifetime...*

Understand Paul's not jockeying for perfection, I'm challenging you to be at war with your sin...

- The Christian life is characterized by a man or woman being at war with their sin as they see Jesus for who He is and they

This is where the rubber meets the road though... We see many nominal Christians... this text requires us to ask the question, "Have I simply affiliated with Christianity in name or do I actually believe that Christ is your savior and Lord?"

Define People that would claim that Christ "runs their house" but have no evidence showing that... Christian in name only, but doesn't live out the call of Christianity... This person based on what the Bible teaches would not be a Christian...

Typically, this is how this looks:

- Grew up in a Christian home, went to church, knows about Jesus and what He did...
- Possibly prayed a prayer at some point asking Jesus into their heart... But there's no evidence of surrender, there's no putting to death of the earthly nature...
- **Example:** Garrett in College- stop drinking and sleeping around...
 - Lasted 5 days...

The problem is that some of you are happily doing the very things that Jesus died for...

And that's a big deal...

Here's the major disconnect, the major miss when it comes to all this... There is no evidence of true **repentance...**

I have heard some people ask the question, **where do we get repentance?** This idea of repentance vs confession...

Repentance is a word that's used to describe a biblical process...

Repentance is not feeling bad for your sin... It is an about-face in the midst of your sin...

Repentance: I have sinned against a perfect and holy God...

- David: Against you and you only have I sinned...
- And yet in my sin, God has been faithful to send Jesus to make right my wrong and pay the price that I owe....

Here's how you know you're in the right lane...

- When you sin the conviction that you feel should drive you toward God as you acknowledge your sin and set your heart on the hope of the gospel...
- If it drives you away from God that's legalism, that's leaning into the religious approach...
- The biblical approach is that: **Your kindness Lord leads me to repentance (Romans 2:4)**

Guilt is a side effect of the religious and nominal approach... It's not part of the biblical approach...

The old **John Owen** quote, where he says, "*Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you.*"

Repentance is the means of putting to death and putting away the old you...

Putting to death, sin happens when we walk in repentance...

- **Repentance isn't a license to do what you want, it's the power that enables you to walk in the new life Christ has given you...**

This is why the gospel isn't just the starting line of the Christian life, it's the essence of the Christian life...

Example: But I feel like a lot of times, we treat our relationship with Jesus like I treat my laundry... I have **3 piles**

- Fresh and new, dirty and a **tweener** pile- more or an area: this is 1-2 years, *with no sweating*, that are good for another wear before they're washed... (Joke?)

I'm OCD so I don't like to wear my fresh clothes because you wash them and they don't look new...

- So, I go to the **tweener area** a lot... and to be honest, on occasion, I will go to the dirty pile (but only every once in a while) ...

And my wife is like **WHY?!?** You have these other nice clothes, some of them haven't even been worn?? It doesn't make any sense!!!

- Meanwhile, I'm like it makes perfect sense...
 - There's a formula, a system, and an organization to it...

*But the reality is, for a lot of us, when it comes to our relationship with Jesus, we function a lot like this...

Even though He has given us brand-new clothes that have been **washed in His blood**... The brand-new clothes for us, is not just something to wear, it's a whole new identity... we keep going back to the dirty clothes hamper because we forget that Christ gave us a new identity...

There's a direct correlation between **what we believe about Jesus and how we live our lives**...

Beholding and Abiding in Christ compels us to stop going back to the to our old self...

Please hear me on this... the goal here is not simply to stop doing these things so that God is happy with you, but it's seeing Jesus as better...

And that anything that pulls you away from being rooted in Him is destructive...

Our newfound identity in Jesus impacts our activity

Here's where will close... Paul's going to shift to showing what a life of putting off sin yields... And he turns to this in **verse 11**:

11 In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.

Paul's holding up the beautiful *Image of God* language as he reminds us that not only are we a new individually a new creation, but there's a corporate nature to this... There's a corporate new humanity that Jesus is establishing...

- Beautiful diverse church that makes up the body of Christ...
- United through their identity in Jesus and they desire to become more like Him!

Family, this is who we want to be.. But it starts with out **identity**...

Conclusion [VAMP]

Some of you need to receive this identity for the first time...

Some of you need to repentance...

Some of you need to respond through baptism this morning...

Pray

