Christ Our Hope — Delivery Transcript

Colossians 3:1–17 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, April 21, 2024 · *Christ Our Hope*

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Colossians 3:17: whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Can we give thanks to the Lord this morning for that time of worship and just the presence of the Lord. I think one of the things the Holy Spirit loves to do is point his finger to the person of Jesus Christ, what he's accomplished on the cross. And certainly our time of worship this morning has done a good job of pointing our attention to those truths.

If you have your Bible, we're going to be in Colossians chapter 3, so you can turn there. Maybe you're already there. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair in the seat in front of you. Before we get into the text this morning, though, I want to take a little bit of a break and just reflect with you on what's going on in the life of our church. To put it into context, I need to take you back to 2020. I know we all have a twitch from that.

Year of our Lord 2020 is a traumatic year for many of us because you had all of this crazy stuff going on. But I just can't make sense of the context without 2020. So in 2020, you had of course the pandemic and the early part of the year. We shut our church down. Temporarily, but with the rest of America in March, I believe it was. And it didn't matter what I did, how I did it, no matter what decision, how well I thought out it was. There was somebody who disagreed and they were vocal about it.

And that was tough as a pastor who likes to keep the peace and get everybody on the same page. That was a difficult season but we navigated through it and then we got to the summer and then when the summer hit you had the racial polarization and the riots and all the other stuff that happened during the summer. And again, it was called upon of a pastor in a lot of churches. What is your statement on this or what is your view on this? And again it didn't matter what I said or how I went about it or even if I thought it was right or wrong.

There was somebody who disagreed and they were loud about it and they were very vocal, and a lot of people left our church. A lot of people left our church during COVID. Actually a

lot—like a lot of people—everybody left our church when we shut the church down. But then when we opened the church back up not a lot of people came back. Then during the 2020 summer with all the polarization, political division which had all kind of different shapes and sizes. We had a lot of people leave our church and some people left loudly, some people left quietly, some people left temporarily and they came back, but some people left tragically—they not only do not come back to our church they're not going to any church and some of them are not even walking with the Lord.

Then of course you have the 2020 election which that wasn't fun for anybody. And then Briggs was born. It's like perfect capstone to a wonderful year. And I say all that to say as a pastor during that time of the fall of 2020, it was one of the lowest moments I had ever been in ministry. There were times where I was like, I don't even know if I want to do this anymore. Am I cut out for this? Every decision I make, I can't seem to make it right. I didn't know what the church was going to look like—not just our church, but like I don't even know how to pastor a church in this world.

Everything is so upside down, it's so different, and I was in a very, very low moment and I was struggling with all the people who had left our church. That year—the year before that year, 2019—, we had had like 30 some odd baptisms. And the next year we went all the way down to like 17 baptisms. And those 17 baptisms were mostly pre-March when the church shut down. So we hadn't had anybody get saved; we'd seen no baptisms. And then we go a whole other year and we had a total of 12 baptisms for the entire year of 2021.

And it was out of that dark cloud of depression and insecurity and doubt that the Lord began to do a work in my heart as a pastor, as an individual. And that work that the Lord began in my heart, I began to share with our staff, and from our staff, we began to share with a remnant of people in the life of our church. And as is often the case, it is out of the darkest valleys that the Lord often accomplishes his greatest work. In your life, the most intense crisis you've ever faced, it can be the very thing God uses to strengthen you and set you up for a beautiful season.

And that is exactly what happened in the life of our church. Slowly, over time, through a series of intentional steps, we began to increase our dependency on the Lord, our prayer to the Lord, our pursuit of and the kind of prioritizing of the presence of God in our services and in our life that that if we are going to be Christians, we don't want it to just be some kind of cultural Christianity that is in name only or that looks good on the surface but there's no power, there's no substance.

I was done with that kind of church. I didn't want to lead that kind of church anymore. And our church began to turn, I believe, sincerely, at least a remnant. toward something new, something fresh. And as we began to do that, the Lord began to grow the church quite simply. And so in 2021 we did a series of series where we fasted and prayed together as a

church. We did the same thing in 2022 and gradually we began to see people saved, baptized, added to the church. In 2022, we saw 58 people added to the church in 2023.

We saw a total of 76 people added to the church with 40 baptisms. And now today in 2024, even though we're only 50% there based on how we count our church calendar, we've seen 33 people get baptized, 19 people added to the church, and we're at 52 people total additions. And I think we're also going to see another fifty added to those with over 100 people added to the church. And it's really exciting. I'm so grateful as a pastor to see that new life. In our church that spiritual hunger, and people displaying not only that they're hungry for the Lord but that they're practically doing things in their personal lives to satisfy their hunger in the Lord And the only thing that changed is not some new staff members, nor some philosophy of ministry or way of doing things.

I think the only thing that changed was a recognition that we can't; only God can, and we are desperate for him to do what only he can do. And he has been faithful to do that. to our church, and we have had our record attendance in 2024 since COVID. We've had record attendance in our fellowship events and our gatherings, adding back this middle service was a kind of we're not quite sure if that was the right thing to do, but even in adding that back, we had record attendance in our middle service.

Pre-Easter, and post-Easter. And it's just really encouraging. And anytime you draw near to the Lord like that, I think He'll do a similar work in your heart. He will plant a new seed of hope in your heart when you decide to draw near to the Lord. But it's not just that he plants a new seed of hope when you draw near to the Lord. The other thing that happens is that the light of Christ as you draw near to him begins to expose things that are hidden. And certainly that was the case in my own life in 2020 and 2021 as I began to deal with the sin in my life and I tried to draw near to the Lord, just like if you were in a dark closet and you opened the door to go into a room that had a big bright light inside, as you open that closet door, that light inevitably is going to begin to show things that were previously hidden in that dark closet.

And that's I think what's happening in the life of our church writ large. As we're drawing near to the Lord, we're seeing things get exposed, we're seeing sin come to the surface, we're seeing terrible hardship and difficulty with just physical death. In this year alone, unlike a lot of years, every year people die, but this year for whatever reason since January, I've personally been associated with or involved with close to 20 funerals. In three to four months, twenty funerals. That's crazy. And in our church, I don't know if it's twenty, but it's in the double digits of funerals that our church has performed.

And these are not just like someone got old and they died, kind of funerals. These are unexpected deaths, many of them. These are tragic deaths for a lot of these. They were very important people, certainly in my life, but in the life of our church, and certainly in the lives

of the people that they were married to or related to. It was just a heaviness really since January. And so even as there's a spiritual life and strength and vitality that's growing as we're drawing near to the Lord, there is this heaviness and this burden that is simultaneous at the same time.

And it wasn't just death that created the hardship, it was sin being exposed that created the hardship marriages began to succumb to satanic attack. There were people who maybe had thought they had a pretty strong marriage. All of a sudden it's up in the air and they don't know what happened and I didn't see it coming. And things that they thought were going to last forever, all of a sudden they're walking through the middle of a divorce or they're in the middle of counseling that they never thought they would kind of go through.

And then that's not just married people, I mean in families in a general way, and single people who are experiencing isolation like they've never experienced it before. And I think all of that is just par for the course. It comes with the territory of drawing near. Drawing near ignites new hope in our hearts, but it also exposes the hidden sin in our life. And as a pastor, I'm wrestling with this, thinking about this. How do I help our church navigate this season? And my heart is drawn, as it often is after Easter, to Colossians 3, because this is a passage, it's not my life verse like Randy, but this is a passage the Lord has used repeatedly in my life.

To remind me of why we can persevere, why it's going to be okay, and why the Lord is going to triumph. And so that's what I want to share this morning and that's why I want to share it. It's a little bit different than what we normally do. If you're new to the book of Colossians, it's basically a letter written by the Apostle Paul to a church that was struggling. There was a false teaching that had taken root in the life of the church that is really, I think, a blend between New Age mysticism and cold-hearted legalism.

I know those two things don't feel like they belong together. But that's what they had going on. And I honestly think that's where our culture is headed. I think there's a new puritanical move, even as we've got some crazy New Age stuff going on. So basically what Paul says to the Colossian church is, You need to put Christ back at the center and him alone. Jesus is sufficient. You don't need Jesus plus fancy philosophy. You don't need Jesus plus moral effort and legalism and the law. You need Christ and Christ alone.

And if you will put Christ at the center and exalt him above all in your church and in your heart, then you will see the Holy Spirit transform your lives morally, and you will see the Holy Spirit transform the church doctrinally. And so that's their cure. That's the cure that they needed, and that's I think the cure that we needed. When I came out of sabbatical, the two things the Lord made as clear as day for me is to put Christ at the center. Exalt him, make him the senior pastor of the church, and pursue the presence of God through corporate congregational prayer and fasting.

And so I think their struggle is our struggle and their cure is our cure. And so he gives them this doctrine in chapters one and two, and as he often does after building his doctrine, he goes to application in chapter three. So he says—actually, before we read chapter 3 verse 1—, the whole doctrinal section, I think, just to give you a context, is that everything we need in life and in death comes from the grace of our union with Jesus Christ. The word in Christ—I don't know if it shows up.

It's over ten times in the book of Colossians. Again and again and again. Everything that we need, and this is for us today, everything that we need in our life, everything that we need in death, whether you're in the valley low or you're on the mountain high, everything that you need to endure and persevere comes from the grace of our union with Jesus Christ. And so he says in chapter 3, verse 1, if you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on the things above, not on earthly things. Because you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. If you'll leave this up on the screen for just a few moments. I know that's only four verses, but it is dense. Even in the English, it's kind of like very bulky and you're not quite sure what to do with it. So when you run into a passage like this, just this is a tip of the trade.

One of the things that I try to do is to simplify it. What's the main point here? One of the ways to identify the main point is to distinguish between the different parts of speech. And so here you've got promises of God about the second coming of Jesus. You've got some statements of facts about dead in Christ, raised in Christ, living in Christ. But you've also got these commands to set your minds on the things that are above, and then also to seek the things that are above. So if you were to kind of break it down in that way, what you see Paul do is give them two commands, three truths, and one promise.

And the truths and the promise are what I'm just going to call a gospel vehicle, because the truths and the promise are the pillars of the biblical gospel, namely that we died, that Jesus Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures. He was raised. After he was raised, he now lives to make intercession for us and that he will come again someday in glory. That's the Christian gospel. Jesus died for our sins. He was raised on the third day. He lives seated at the right hand of God, living and interceding for us, and that he's going to come again someday.

What Paul is saying in Colossians is that you're in Jesus and so that's true of you as well. You have died. You've been raised. Your life is hidden with Christ. Christ is your life, and then you also will appear with him in glory. This is the foundation of everything else Paul is going to say. And the foundation is a gospel foundation. He's basically saying you need to seek the

things that are above. You need to set your minds on the things that are above, not so that you can become a Christian, but because you already are.

You need to become in practice who God has already made you in principle through your union with Jesus Christ. And this is what makes Christianity different from all the other religions in the world. It's not that we live a certain way so that God will love us, but that we live a certain way because we've already been loved by God in Christ and so it transforms the way that we live. Everybody got that? That's the foundation. Chapter 3, verses 1 to 4, a gospel foundation. Become who you already are in Jesus.

With that foundation in place, now what Paul is going to do is he's going to make two big points. Namely, take off the old stuff. And put on the new stuff. Take off the old and put on the new. If you're taking notes, the way I phrased it is you need to put off what Christ put to death in you, and you need to put on what Jesus or Christ brought to life in you—put off what Christ put to death in you and put on what Jesus made alive in you.

All under this umbrella of become who you are in Jesus. Now, why is this pertinent for the life of our church right now? Because when you draw near to God's throne of grace, he is going to expose things in your life that need to go, things that need to be put off. And I'm concerned that if we don't persevere in this effort that we're in as a church of drawing near to the throne of grace. If we stop. And we don't deal with some of the sin that's being exposed in our lives individually or corporately as a church, that amazing work of grace that God has begun—we'll press pause and we'll miss out on this new thing that God wants to do.

So you got to take off the old, put off what God has put to death in you, and put on what Jesus has made alive in you. Let's begin with putting off starting in verses five to nine. Therefore put to death what belongs to your earthly nature. Then he names a list that makes all of us squirm in our seats. Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. So you've got five things followed by a summary statement. Because of these things, God's wrath is coming upon the disobedient.

And you once walked in these things when you were living in them, but now put away all the following. Then he puts a new list. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. So you got another list of five and then a qualifying statement. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices, and have put on the new self. Now, you may read a passage like that and be pretty frustrated because you think to yourself, why do I have to put off what Jesus has put to death?

If Jesus put it to death, why am I struggling with it? Why am I still struggling with this sin? Then I have to take it off. Well the way I heard one guy put it is that when Jesus died on the cross, he dealt with the penalty of our sin, he dealt with the power of our sin, but he did not necessarily deal with the presence of sin in our life. That's something we must voluntarily

remove with the help of the Holy Spirit. The power of sin is dead. We're no longer slaves to sin.

The Holy Spirit lives in us. We don't have to succumb to temptation. The penalty of sin, thank God, is removed. We are no longer condemned because of what Jesus Christ has done, but we do have to take off the old. We do have to put off what Christ put to death. Just like new grass, new green grass can't grow unless some of the dead trash is removed. So it also is in your heart. Unless you take off some of this old stuff that characterized your old man, your old woman, you're not going to see the new thing happen that Christ is wanting to do.

Now let's deal with the list. You got two lists of five, right? What are the similarities that you see in those two lists? Well, the first list is all about internal sins, right? Sexual immorality, lust, impurity, evil desire, greed, these are all internal temptations of the heart. What about the next list? You've got anger, wrath, malice, slander, filthy language. Those are less temptations than they are sinful actions, right? They're all sinful actions and they're all sinful actions that pertain to your relationships, if you think about it. You get angry because of your relationship to someone who disappointed you.

And it's not even just zeroed in on your relationships, it's actually zeroed in on your mouth. Because you express sinful anger with your mouth. You slander people with your mouth. Abusive speech comes from your mouth. I think that's interesting. You've got a list that deals with the sins of the heart, and then you have another list that deals with the sins of the mouth. And according to Jesus, those two things are interrelated to one another because out of the heart the mouth speaks. So here Paul is basically saying these sins that are in your life that you are manifesting with your body—Jesus Christ dealt the death blow to those sins.

You are dead to those sins. You need to remove them and put on something else. How do you know what needs to be put off? Well just listen to the words that are coming from your mouth. And just listen to the way that your heart is processing your experiences. And the best way I know how to do that, just practically speaking, is with that word that Paul puts right in the middle after the first list, it's the word idolatry. All of your relational sins and all of your heart sins at root are related to this thing called idolatry.

Another way to think about idolatry is that that list that was second to last on the first list, evil desire. It's not even evil desire. If you look in the original language, it's the Greek word for desire, epithymia. It's not a desire for bad things. It's a desire that's gone bad. So you might think of it like you might think of addiction. Addiction, you become an addict because of a desire gone bad. Initially you did that thing that you're addicted to because it made you feel good. It was a desire that would kind of bring pleasure to your life.

But now because you're an addict, you don't do it in order to feel good, you do it in order to feel normal. It's a desire that's gone bad. It's extended beyond where it needed to be, and

that's idolatry. Idolatry is that way. Idolatry is where we take good things and we use them beyond their scope. We make good things ultimate things and we get to a place where we think in our heart and we begin to practice with our mouths. Without this thing I cannot live. And in that way anything can be an idol, right?

Your children can be an idol. If my kids aren't a certain way, it destroys me. I can't live. If my marriage doesn't look a certain way, if she doesn't act a certain way, if I'm not seen a certain way, if my reputation isn't a certain kind of way, then it destroys me. I can't live without those things. Another way to think about idolatry is related to worship. The word worship comes from, I think, the German word for worth-ship. You ascribe worth to something. When you ascribe greater worth to your children or your spouse or your finances or your reputation when you ascribe greater worth to those things than you do to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's idolatry because you've ceased to worship him as ultimate and you've begun to worship these other things as that which is ultimate. And what happens is idolatry in the heart doesn't stay in the heart, it always filters out to your relationships. Specifically in the way you speak. When you get sinfully angry about something and you lash out to that other person with sinful anger, usually you're defending the idol of your heart. Now I'm not saying every time you get angry it's an idol. But the thing that you get angry about a lot—the thing that you get unusually angry about—, that may expose some idolatry in your heart.

And that's doing damage to your relationships. When you get super anxious, and I don't mean like everybody worries, okay, everybody worries, but I'm saying you get so worried it cripples you. You basically worry yourself sick. Whatever that is, that object of your worry, it's probably indicative of an idol in your heart, and it's impacting your relationship with other people because of the idolatry. What's the other list? He said anger? He said wrath. When you become unusually mean, almost harmful. In your defense of a certain thing in your life, whether it's your reputation, your children, or your honor or whatever, your character, that may be exposing an idol in the heart.

Slander, when you tear people down, when you pull others down to build yourself up, whatever you're building up in yourself, whatever you're destroying in that other person, it may be exposing an idol in your heart. Filthy language. That it's literally abusive speech. He's not saying like you're, you know, being crass and talking, you know, potty language. It's no, you're tearing people down. You're you know exactly what you need to say to end the argument and settle everything by just destroying the other person, whatever that is that you're trying to defend or protect might be an idol in the heart.

Idolatry starts in the heart, but it doesn't stay in the heart. It impacts our relationships in a damaging way. And the way to spot your idol is to listen to your mouth. And all of this, Paul is saying, put that off. How do you know what to put off? Well listen to what you're saying.

Now, why is this important? I think this is important because when you draw near to the Lord, it exposes the idols in your heart. Just like I said earlier. When you get closer to the light, the light exposes what's hidden.

If your main thing is related to your marriage, then as you draw near to the Lord, you're going to get a test in your marriage. If the main thing is related to your reputation, when you draw near to the Lord, you're going to get a test on your reputation. Someone or something is going to attack your reputation in a way where it makes you feel like you have to defend it and you feel insecure and you can't control it. If your main thing is being in control of everyone and everything.

What's going to happen is as you draw near to the Lord, he is going to bring a circumstance into your life that proves you're not in control. And you're going to get a test. When you draw near to the Lord, the flesh gets a test. It's just part of how God works. It's part of his grace in your life. It's part of how God is saying, I want to take this off in your life. I died so that you could die to this thing. And so if you're going to draw near to me, we're going to deal with it.

But as Jesus is kindly, graciously dealing with that sin in your life, you have another party over here. You could call him the enemy, you can call him Satan, you can call him demonic oppression, call it whatever you want, but he is basically arguing the other side of the fence and he's saying, well if you set that aside, if you die to that thing, then you're not going to be okay. You're not going to be financially secure. You may never be happy again if you settle for what the Lord wants.

He's using fear and insecurity and shame to pull you away from God's grace in your life. And Jesus is gently and graciously inviting you to something deeper, something greater, but you've got to deal with the pain of this sin. All of that corresponds with drawing near to the Lord. So if you begin to wonder why is it that as soon as I start getting close to the Lord and I start pursuing the Lord and I want to deal with the brokenness in my life. Why is it that it's when I'm drawing near to the Lord that everything gets harder, that everything is difficult?

I thought going to church would make my life easier. I thought reading my Bible every day would give me more resources, give me more strength, but it's doing the opposite. Well, that's just par for the course. It comes with the territory. And so I want you to identify what that is in your life. Here's a list that I pulled from this text. What is it in your heart that makes you sinfully anxious? Sinfully anxious being I can't even sleep at night because this is keeping me up. What ignites sinful anger?

Not just anger, but okay, that's beyond the pale kind of anger. What makes you slander or tear other people down? Why do you feel the need to destroy them. What are you building up in yourself? What are you being deceptive about? He says, do not lie to one another. Why do you lie? You lie in order to protect your idol. You lie so that they can't find out the thing

that I'm treasuring the most. What is that thing? What is it that you wrongfully defend, justify, or excuse? As soon as somebody points it out and says, this may be an issue here, and you go, it's not an issue—I'm not saying I've ever heard that or said that, but what is that?

That's a symptom of an idol in the heart and what motivates your impurity and immorality. We talked about this list of sexual immorality, impurity, lust. Sexual sin is some of the greatest, strongest sin in the heart. What's underneath that? Why do you feel the need to engage in that kind of sinful behavior? What's going on in here? It's making you act that way out there. Whatever that is, Jesus is saying, I died so that you could put that to death. It doesn't have to control you any longer. And the reason you need to kill it, this is a going to plow plow close to the road, but I'm going to say it anyway.

Look at verses six and seven. He says the reason this has to go is because of these things God's wrath is coming on the disobedient. The reason this needs to go is because you once walked in these things when you were living in them. Basically what Paul is saying is, number one, this sin in your life has to go because it's going to invite God's discipline. Now you will never, if you're a true Christian, you will never experience the wrath of God. You will never suffer eternally in hell. I think once you're saved, you are secure in your salvation.

But I think what Paul is exposing is if you continue in sin, if you live in the way that you used to be, even though you're not that way anymore, maybe you never really change, maybe you never received salvation. So don't mishear me. I'm not saying you need to get rid of your sin so that you can become a Christian. That's not the gospel, that's legalism, that's every other religion in the world. You don't get saved you don't get rid of your sin so that you can become a Christian. But you do get rid of your sin so that you can know you're a Christian.

Another way to say it, killing sin doesn't cause your salvation. But killing sin in your life does confirm your salvation. And I would not sit here if you are in if you are stuck in sin. And you've been so stuck in sin, it's gotten to the point where you don't even care anymore. Where you're not even actively resisting or fighting the sin anymore. You haven't brought it into the light. You haven't put yourself in community. You haven't done what's needed to do to get rid of that sin in your life, I would not be assured that the Holy Spirit is living inside of you.

Because one of the things that the Holy Spirit does is He's saying, you've got to put it off. You've got to get rid of this. Jesus died for this. You're not enslaved to this any longer. This has got to go. And I know that can be a little unsettling, and I and certainly only God knows the condition of your heart. I don't know you nearly as good as he does, but what he has revealed in his word is that's not who you are anymore. God's wrath is coming on the disobedient for these things, and I saved you from my wrath.

So put it off. But don't just put it off. He adds one more thing. You've got to put something on. It's not enough just to get rid of the old. You've got to add in the new. And the new is in verses 10 and following. So you put on the new self you're being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator. In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free, but Christ is all and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen ones, look at this language, as God's chosen ones, holy, dearly loved.

Put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. If anyone has a grievance against another, just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. And above all, put on love. Which is the perfect bond of unity. Now, the best way to understand that this love, he's not saying start loving people in a Christ-like way. No, he's saying you need to put on the love of God for you. You're being renewed in knowledge. What are you coming to deeply understand and know?

You're coming to deeply understand I've been chosen in God. I've been set apart. I'm made holy in Jesus. That he has dearly loved me in Jesus. God has dearly loved me. Not just kind of sentimental wishy-washy love. No, he had compassion. He had mercy on you. He saw you in your worst most despicable, sad sack state, and he blessed you and he rescued you and he gave you what you needed. Put on that love. Drench your mind, drench your heart in the reality of God's love for you. And all these things that you're trying to put off will naturally fall away.

So there's a quote by a Scottish minister named Thomas Chalmers. That he wrote a book called the Expulsive power of a New Affection and he's playing to this dynamic. He's saying the way you get rid of the old is by pouring in God's love for you. The way to get rid of the old and put on the new is by pouring in the love of God So will you go back to that quote just very quickly? It's a screen. So we know of no other way by which to keep the love of God I'm sorry, we know of no other way by which to keep the love of the world out of our heart than to keep in our heart the love of God.

And we know no other way by which to keep our heart in the love of God other than building ourselves up in our most holy faith. In other words, the only thing that is powerful enough to dispel the sin in your life, sexual idolatry or otherwise. Is by pouring the love of God into your heart. When you pour the love of God in, it will displace the works of the flesh out. It's the only thing power powerful enough to do that kind of work. And so if you find yourself struggling to die to sin, I don't think the answer is to try harder or do better.

I think the answer is to become more deeply and truly aware of how you've been loved by God in Jesus Christ. Not just pour the love in to take the old off, but you also pour the love in to put the love on. Look at these words, compassion instead of anger. If you go to the next one. Kindness and goodness instead of wrath, gentleness instead of malice, patience instead

of slander. And forbearance and forgiveness instead of abuse of language. All of this is just the contrast of what was mentioned earlier in the previous list.

And that those two words there at the end, forbearance and forgiveness, it's a I used to think this was just the normal Greek word for forgiveness, which just means let it go. But it doesn't necessarily mean that. This word, forbearance, is kind of like let it go. In other words, don't give them what they deserve. Hold back that anger and whatever it is. But this word is a word that really means give them what they need. Give them what they need in that moment so that instead of responding with anger and wrath and malice and slander, you could give them compassion.

You say they don't deserve it. Well it doesn't matter. This is forbearance. You're holding back what they deserve. You're giving them what they need. They need kindness. They need goodness. They need gentleness. They need patience. They need compassion. Not because you feel compassionate, but because God's love for you has so drenched your heart, your mind, your soul, that it has transformed you. It has displaced those old angry, sinful patterns of thinking and relating, and it has replaced them with the love of God for people, which manifests itself with compassion and kindness and goodness and gentleness.

So don't give them what they deserve. Give 'em what they need. Now this is true of every relationship you've ever been in. This is true in your marriage. This is true with your children. This is true in the workplace. This relates to every relationship. So you've got to deal with the idolatry of the heart. The way to deal with the idolatry of the heart is to in knowledge, be renewed in your mind to understand how deeply you've been loved by God and Jesus Christ. The love of God for you in Christ will crush the idolatry of your heart because that whatever that idol is, it is no savior.

It did not die on the cross for your sins. It cannot save you when you die. It cannot always be for there. He cannot always be there for you. It will not never fail you. Idols make poor saviors. Jesus is the only one who can truly save, and when you let Jesus sit at the front, when you let him sit on the throne of your heart, you will see him begin to displace these sinful behaviors and transform. Your spirit to become kind and gentle, patient and compassionate. Now how does this happen?

That's what the rest of the passage is about. I don't think we have time to deal with it this morning. But in the rest of the passage in verses 12 and or verses 15 and following, he says, let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you and all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another through Psalms, hymn, and spiritual songs Singing with gratitude in your hearts and whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

I think next week we're going to drill down on those commands, but I just want to point out one thing before we close. Notice how inextricably linked your sanctification is with life in the local church. All of these things, let the peace of Christ rule, let the word of Christ dwell, let the be grateful for the work of Christ, all of that is written in a context of doing church stuff. This is written to a local church. As you do church life together, as you sing and as you teach it and as you admonish one another, as you take the Lord's Supper, as you give thanks to God.

These things will begin to materialize in your life. You will put off the old and you will put on the new. You will not put off the old, you will not put off the new unless you're situated in community in the life of a local church. So what does a local church give you that you can't get on your own? Well, number one, it allows you to be guarded by the peace of Christ There is a peace that surpasses human understanding that will begin to grow in your heart and in our community when we allow the Holy Spirit to do his work in our life together.

We will become grounded in the Word of God. This happens in the way that we the songs that we choose to sing to one another, the way that we teach and admonish one another, to be at home in the word where it says, let Christ's word dwell in you. It just means to be at home there. That's your safe place. That's what's familiar to you. You're loyal to your family, just like you're loyal to the Word of God. If the Word of God says it determines and kind of shapes the way that you go about living.

And then finally to be grateful for the work of Christ. This is the Greek word eucharisteō. It's where we get our English word Eucharist, which is what we call the Lord's Supper. It's what the Catholics call it. The Eucharist is a way that we together as a local church give thanks to God for the grace of Jesus Christ poured out for us on the cross. The bread is the body of Christ which is broken for us, the grape juice is the blood of Christ which is shed for us. And in all of these ways, as we practice these things together in the life of the local church, we will begin to see the Holy Spirit take off the old and put on the new.