Out With The Old — Delivery Transcript

Colossians 3:5–11 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, April 23, 2017 · *Greater*

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Well, today's the day when we kick off our Greater campaign. If you're just now joining us, you picked a good Sunday to come. I just want to take just a few seconds at the beginning of the message to take care of a little bit of housekeeping on the Greater campaign. Some of you are in small groups, Sunday morning small groups, and in your groups you've probably already got one of these booklets. If you haven't yet, though, there are some out in the Gathering Place, or there's some in your small group room.

The other thing I'd like to mention: some of you are going to be doing midweek groups. So you come to eleven o'clock service, but maybe you have a small group that meets on a Monday or a Thursday, and so they don't have these guides in their houses yet. They have the DVDs, but not these growth guides. And so I want to encourage you to pick one up on your way out today if you're going to participate in the Greater campaign to some degree or another. If your small group on Sunday morning is not doing Greater, but you want to participate in the campaign, we put all of the videos that the small groups are going to be going through on our website and they're also in our Broadview app.

So if you want to just do it, you and your wife or maybe you and the kids or you want to bring a couple people over to the house, you can just pick it up. If you have an Apple TV, our app is right there in the App Store. You can just play it right from your TV. Otherwise you can do it on your phone or go to our website, broadview.church/greater, and it's all on there as well. I want to encourage you to pick up one of these guides, even if you're just going to be loosely attached to the campaign, not just because they have a place to take notes and discussion guides, but our staff team developed devotionals for every day of the week during the whole campaign.

So the campaign's six weeks long, and Monday through Friday there are devotionals that'll reinforce the main ideas of what we're going to talk about on Sunday morning. So today, for

example, we're in Colossians chapter 3, verses 5 to 11. There's going to be a big theme to the text this morning. And then every day for the rest of the week, these devotionals are going to reinforce what it is that we hear on Sunday mornings and the goal is that we'll have some extra intentional time given to allowing the Lord to speak into our lives on these various different areas of our day-to-day life.

Now for those of you who are just now hearing about the Greater campaign, it's basically taking the victory and the power behind the resurrection of Jesus and bringing it to bear on things like your marriage, your relationship with your kids, you and your workplace or your vocation, whatever it is you do with your life. And then just generally living an effective Christian life in the world today. So many Christians— sometimes we're not known for our persuasion. Sometimes we're known for something else. And what does it look like to live an attractive Christian life in the world today?

It's just going through the last part of the book of Colossians and Paul, like he normally does, he puts all his theology and doctrine at the first part of his letters and he puts all the practical stuff at the end. And now we're at the practical part of the letter. And my goal is to try to equip you with as many practical things in your life as I can. So what you hear on Sunday is not going to be what you hear in the small groups. Same text, different application points, different content.

So I would encourage you to participate as much as you can to whatever level that you can. We kicked off the series last week in some ways when we celebrated the resurrection. We looked at the book of Colossians, chapter 3, verses 1 to 4, and talked about what it meant to be raised in Christ, what it meant to die with Christ. We saw it just today with the baptism. That when a person goes under the water, it's symbolic of having died on the cross with Jesus Christ. We've been, as Paul said in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ.

It is no longer I who live." That old man, old Paul, the old way of doing things, died with Christ on the cross. He said, "The life I now live in the flesh"— with my physical body— "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." So not only did I die with Christ, I've been raised with him. What's true about Jesus is now true about me. And that's true about every single Christian in the world ever. If you're a Christian person, everything that's true about Jesus is now true about you.

You died his death, he died your death, you have his life. He took your life onto himself, and he's taken his perfect life and put it on to you. Now even though that's true, I bet every single one of you can sympathize with the fact that you don't always feel that way, right? Sometimes, you know, you hear the preacher say everything's true about Jesus, true about me. Well I'm stressed out and my life stinks. And I don't think that's true about Jesus. I don't think he had that kind of stress.

I don't think he felt the way that I feel. And so there is a discrepancy sometimes. There can be a gap between what the Bible says is true about us in Christ and what we actually experience on Tuesday. Can I get an Amen there? Am I the only guy that feels that way? Yeah, amen, right? So what Paul's doing in this text and what he's going to do for the next couple of weeks is he's going to try to nudge us to show us how to shorten the gap. How to shrink the gap between who we are, our identity in Christ, and our daily experience.

You could get, for example, a promotion in your job. You could go from being the janitor to the president. But if somebody doesn't clue you in on that, if somebody doesn't teach you how to become the president, you're still going to have patterns of thinking and doing and reacting that are still like your previous position. And essentially what Paul says is you've been promoted, you've got a new position. Positionally, you are in Christ. And so let's shrink the gap between your identity, who you are, and what you experience in your day-to-day life.

And to do that, he gives a positive and a negative. The positive is to put on certain things, to weave in certain virtues in your life that we'll look at next week. But this week's all about the negative, and that's putting off other things. There are patterns of thinking, there are ways of reacting and living that are unhelpful, they're not conducive to living the greater life. And so Paul's going to say, we've got to put those things to death. Because if you don't, if you just kind of coast and just kind of do life as it is, then you're going to not get where you need to be on time at best.

But worst case scenario and what many of us have experienced, is if you go on autopilot and just start coasting in life, you're going to end up somewhere you never intended to be. And that's just true about coasting. Nobody drifts into godliness, right? You know your spouse doesn't. It's not just true of your spouse, it's true of everybody. Nobody accidentally becomes a godly person. Nobody accidentally becomes a godly man or a woman. It takes some degree of intentionality. You got to do certain things. And as we're going to see, it requires taking off certain things so that we can put on other things in that place.

So let's read the text. We're just going to read verse five because I think it's enough to chew on for quite a while, and then we'll go on. Colossians chapter 3, verse 5, here's what Paul says. "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you." Then he lists six things:[1] "sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Put to death those things. And if you have an old King James version, anybody reading King James this morning? One of my favorite words in the King James Bible, he says mortify.

Isn't that a scary term? I wish I had a movie announcer voice so that I could say it like a movie announcement. But I don't, so I'm not going to try and embarrass myself. It's a good word, though. It just means to put it to death. And the reason I think we need to spend some time on this one verse is because some people have taken this one verse and done all manner

of craziness. There's a story about one of the ancient church fathers, a guy named Origen. I don't know if this is true or not.

It hasn't ever been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt. But some say that Origen took a text like this, it was actually a text in Matthew 19, but the same kind of idea, you know, put to death, you know, utterly destroy. He actually— I don't know how to put this nicely. He castrated himself in an effort to obey texts like this, where Jesus says, gouge out your eye if it causes you to sin. Well, he, you know. If you don't know what castration means, you're going to have to talk to your mom or dad about that.

I'm not going to do that this morning. But basically what he decided: this must be literal, this must mean something physical. So you know, off with his head. Now, this is not what this text is saying. It's not saying literally, physically hurt your body. I read just this last week about a text like this. That a guy developed a belt that he wore underneath his garments and he put those little thumbtack things, you know, the pokey thumbtacks. He would push it through the belt, but instead of wearing his belt on the outside of his pants, he wore his belt on the inside of his clothing, and it would sit there and poke him all day long.

Anytime he would move it would kind of tear out his skin. And when asked, man, why would you hurt your body like that? He said, I'm trying to be righteous. I'm trying to be holy because that's what the Bible says. You got to put to death your earthly members. And he took earthly to mean fleshly. He took fleshly to mean physical body. Now, aren't you relieved to know that's not what this text means? It does not mean to physically harm yourself. There's a whole branch of Christianity, the monastic movement that seeks to do that.

Not all monks are that way, but there's this approach to Christianity. In fact, Paul is retaliating against that in the book of Colossians. It's not what he's talking about. Some of your translations will say, put to death your worldly nature. Anybody's translation say that? That's a better translation. Or put to death your old nature or your sinful nature. That's what he's talking about. Many times when the scriptures talk about the flesh, he's talking about the works of the flesh. He's not talking about your physical body. He's talking about your life, your lifestyle before you became a Christian.

You could call it your pre-Christ life. And he's saying there are patterns of thinking, there's assumptions and lifestyle patterns. That you had before you became a Christian and you've got to put those things to death if you're going to experience the greater life. When you became a Christian, boom, everything became new in an instant. You have a new life, you have a new power, you have new resources available to you. You have Christ living in you, shaping your thinking on a continual basis. But even though that old nature has been transformed and made new, there's still a residue.

As one of my favorite preachers says, sin no longer reigns in your body, but it remains in your body. Does that make sense? Sin has no power over you, but that doesn't mean that it's still not present in you. There are patterns, there's ways of thinking and reacting that will jeopardize your life. They will ruin your relationships. It'll undermine your marriage. It'll jeopardize your life in the workplace if you do not mortify it, put it to death, kill it. John Owen, old-time Puritan, he wrote a book called The Mortification of Sin, and that's essentially what Paul's getting at.

You've got to die. Not die to yourself, but you've got to put to death certain ways of thinking and living that are going to undermine you living the greater life. And I want you to notice he says kill it, not avoid it. It's kind of tempting to say, well, I just will avoid, you know, circumstances that would cause me to act in a sexually immoral way. Or, you know, I'll try to avoid the kind of people who make me angry. But he doesn't say avoid it because what he's talking about are not dangers that are out there somewhere that might come and get you.

He's talking about something way more scarier than that. He's talking about little monsters in every single one of our hearts. It's something inside every single one of us that if we don't become aware of it and we don't do whatever we can to crucify it and to kill it, then they will come and get us. Kill or be killed. As John Owen said in his book, you can either be killing sin, or sin will be killing you. It's your choice. You can be killing sin or sin will be killing you.

So let's talk about what it is that we're to kill and then we'll talk about how to do it. Look at the two lists. We'll continue reading. You see the first list in verse 5, but he gives another list in verse eight. And I think the lists are helpful because it keeps it from being super generic. We kind of get some things to drill down on. He says, "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you," then the six things: "sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away." Then he gives another list. Look at this, verse 8: "anger, wrath, malice"— kind of growing in intensity— "slander, and obscene talk from your mouth." Verse 9 says, "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all." So just focus on the two lists for just a minute, okay? So the first list starts with actions and then it leads to motives. The second list starts with motives and then it leads to actions. Did you guys notice that? The first list is personal, it's kind of private. The second list is more social, kind of corporate, things you do against one another. The first list has to do with feelings, some things that are inside you, things, emotions that you feel.

The second list has more to do with speech. But in each case, they're both things that you could think of them as little monsters that reside in each and every one of our hearts. And those little things, if left to materialize, those are the things that will ruin your relationships in life. The things that you care about more than anything else, and the people you care about more than anyone else. That's why you've got to be killing it, or it will be killing you. Now you might be thinking, that's a little dramatic, Wes.

I mean, be killing it or it's killing you, what's all this? You're being a little bit extreme, I think. And you might think to yourself, You know, take a thing like anger. Is anger really going to ruin my life? Is that what you're trying to say? Or say sexual immorality— that was a junk drawer term, any kind of sex outside of God's design. So you might be thinking, are you really telling me that a little bit of sex with my boyfriend or a little bit of sex with my girlfriend that's really going to keep me from living the greater life?

And I get that sentiment. I kind of get the idea that you're being a little bit you know, you're being a little bit harsh. You don't normally talk this way. So why are you being so dramatic? Why is Paul being so dramatic? And I think you get a clue of the reason why when he says in verse five that he talks about covetousness and he says, which is idolatry. At the heart, covetousness is idolatry. Covetousness is you putting yourself in God's place. And so if anger is saying you owe me, you did me wrong, so I'm angry because you owe me, greed is saying, God owes me.

He shouldn't have given that person that thing, he shouldn't have done that to that person. And so you put yourself in the place of God. That greed makes you an idolater. But if you think about it, think about all those sins, at root, take any of those sins and just leave them and let them materialize into their full ugly selves. Each of those things can lead you to idolatry. They're all little miniature idols of the heart. And let's prove my point. Take sexual immorality, for example. Do you know anybody in your life who has taken their sexuality, used it in a way that didn't honor the Lord, kind of, you know, they were liberated, and so they wanted to do whatever they want with their sex life.

And those same people ended up using their sexuality to a degree that now their life is miserable because they deviated from God's design. They can't feel valuable unless they're with a man or they're with a woman. They feel like they're cheap and unlovable unless they have a certain kind of feeling when it comes to their sex life. And now their sex life has essentially become an idol. Idolatry is not bowing down to a wooden statue. Idolatry is loving anything more than God or worshiping something as God that isn't God. And obviously we don't worship it.

I'm not saying you sing songs to your sex life. That would be really weird. But you begin to seek things out in your sex life that only God can provide. You begin to seek sweetness from your sex life. Only God can provide that kind of sweetness. Only God can provide that

unconditional acceptance and love. You begin to look for security in that instead of the other thing. That's how idols begin to form in our heart. Not that we sing songs to them. But we find security in them and we draw sweetness from them that should be found in Christ and in Christ alone.

And so I mean sexuality is an easy one. You could take greed, obviously that's easy to do. Money. Look, anger. So anger, do you know anybody who is totally consumed so much by anger and unforgiveness that it's become an idol in their life? That getting revenge on that person has become more important to them than walking in obedience to the Lord. That's what they think about. That's how they nurse themselves. That's how they get sweetness out of life, is daydreaming about that other person suffering. That's become an idol. Or here's an interesting one: the slander or obscene talk just talks about coarse joking, saying things that you shouldn't say.

My mom used to tell me, "Wes, when people say something bad about you, it's because they don't feel good about—" what? Themselves, right? Was my mom right? She's not right about everything, though, right? You're not right about everything, Mom. She's the only one who watches these things. But she's right about this thing, because when people talk bad about you, it's usually because they don't feel good about themselves. Well, let's pull that thread. Your sweetness, your wholeness in life comes from you spinning a certain narrative about yourself. You've got to be perceived in a certain way.

And as soon as somebody starts to destroy that, you destroy them because now they're a threat to your idol. Being looked at a certain way is your idol. I've got to be perceived in a certain way because that's how I feel secure. That's where I get sweetness in life. That's idolatry. And this little sin list, slander and obscene talk, is just pulling that thread. That's why Paul's so serious about it. He's saying these things— I know they seem kind of minimal. I know they don't seem like a really big deal, but if you don't kill it, if you don't put an end to it, decrease its influence over your life, then it's going to grow and grow and grow, and pretty soon you're going to find yourself all wrapped up in that thing and not wrapped up in Christ.

And when you get all wrapped up in that thing, that's the essence of idolatry, and you'll never be able to experience the greater life. Your marriage will never become what it is meant to become. Your relationship with your kids will never be what it was meant to be. Because you're going to be trying to find your identity in them being successful instead of finding your identity in the Lord. So kill it. Put it to death. Now, obviously you can't kill a lifestyle habit. It doesn't have biological life, but you kill it by starving it out.

If you've ever done any kind of dieting, you know what this feels like. People tell me— I've never experienced one, no. If you ever tried to stop sugar, anybody? First time you try to stop sugar, it's like, man, you really figure out quick how much power it had over you, right? Because the day you try to stop it's like insane urges. You realize, man, I was really addicted

to sugar. But the longer you go without it, it loses its power, right? And if you go long enough, eventually you might like get a sip of a sugary drink and you're like, I can't believe I used to put that in my body.

You know what happened? You starved it, you killed out that addiction, that evil desire. I'm just kidding, sugar's not evil desire, but, well, it depends who you ask. But you're lessening the power of that thing, and that's how you put an end to it. It's that way with any kind of self-improvement, and it's that way spiritually. It's taking that thing that used to have power over you, that anger, that evil desire, that sexual immorality, whatever the list is, and there's things beyond that list. It's living your life in such a way that you starve it out.

You don't give it any more control, you don't give it any more power. That's what you're killing. You're killing the old man, the person who you were, outside of Christ, because left unchecked those things can lead you to idolatry. Now how do you kill it is the better question. How do you take something that you know is going to jeopardize your life and get it out of your life? And I think Paul gives us an indication of how that's done. If you notice in verse 6, he says, "On account of these the wrath of God is coming."

I heard an old-time revival preacher talk about the difference between taking your sins to the cross and just feeling sorry for yourself. A lot of times when we repent over something and we're not actually repenting over it, we're just feeling self-pity. We don't really feel true repentance. The difference is when you have self-pity you're not really sorry for what the sin has cost God or what it's done to the Lord. You're just sorry over the consequences of your sin. So take a thing like sexual immorality or any of those things and so you say, man, I wish I wouldn't have done that, I wish I wouldn't have made that decision.

Now my relationship with this person is in jeopardy. Now I may not get the promotion. I may actually lose my job. And you focus on how devastated you are because of that one decision in your life. That's pity, that's self-pity, that's feeling sorry for yourself. I'm not saying it's a bad thing, it's a natural thing, but that's not exactly repentance. Repentance takes it to another level. It takes it past self-pity of the consequences of that sin and what it's cost you, and it focuses itself not just on what it's cost you, but what it's cost the Lord.

Just imagine a mental picture of the Lord trying to sweep down and rescue you from a certain thing. And as he's sweeping down in love to rescue you, your sin just kind of impales him back on the cross. Because that's essentially what the cross is. We sometimes think about the cross in terms of God's justice. You know, his wrath was poured out on Christ, and it was to satisfy his justice, but the cross wasn't just a display of the justice of God. It was also a display of the love of God that while we were yet sinners, Christ Jesus died for us.

So he was sweeping down in love, and what true repentance is, is seeing that as Christ was sweeping down in love, my sin put him on the cross. It kind of impaled him. And so as he

was sweeping down to do the most gracious act that he could have ever done, I did the most insulting act I could have ever done. And when you begin to see your sin in that way, it doesn't matter what the sin is, just take any sin in your life, and you begin to see it in terms of what it's cost Christ, how that is a thing for which Jesus died, then your heart begins to feel differently about sin.

Repentance isn't just a change of behavior. Repentance is a change of heart and a change of mind. And so when you begin to think about sin differently and feel about it differently than just feeling sorry for yourself, that's when true repentance can take place and true change can happen. It's the difference between hating sin and hating yourself. The best example I know about this is just take any kind of addiction. If you've ever been an addict you know this feeling where you hate what your sin has done to your life.

It's ruined your relationships, but you don't necessarily hate the sin. You still need the sin to stay straight. And so take a substance. You hate what the substance has done to you, because you're an addict and it's ruined all your relationships, but you don't hate the substance. You just hate the consequences that it's caused, and you hate yourself. Because what kind of person does this? So you don't hate the sin, you hate the consequences, and you hate yourself, you're trapped. You can't ever get out of that kind of lifestyle. Because you don't have the kind of care for yourself that you need to get past it and you don't hate the sin enough to let it go.

That's self-pity. Repentance is saying, not only did this cause a mess in my life, it's grieved the heart of God. It's cost Christ his life. Then you begin to hate your sin. And while you're hating your sin, you find it very difficult to hate yourself. Because at the cross, you see the Lord Jesus Christ dying for you. And who are you to hate yourself when Jesus Christ loves you with that kind of love? You got to be extremely arrogant to hate yourself at the cross. Because the cross is one of the most magnificent displays of the love of God.

And so when you take your sin to the cross, you learn to hate your sin the way you're supposed to hate your sin, and you stop hating yourself like we're so tempted to do. Usually when we're living in sin, we're either going to blame someone else for our problems or we're going to blame ourselves. Neither one of them are helpful. You need something bigger than that. You need something more powerful, and that's why you take it to the cross. So you take it to the cross. The other thing you got to do is you got to be awake.

You got to be aware of the fact that these kinds of things are taking place in your life. I was reading an article the other day and he gave the challenge. He says you're probably not nearly as godly as you think you are. And he was right. So what I did, for 24 hours— I'd encourage you to do this before you judge me. See what happens in your own life. He said, just start paying attention to the way that you think, the way that you react, what you say to people, what you want to say to people, but you don't say.

Just for 24 hours to see how much of the flesh is really still inside you. How much of those old patterns of thinking are still there. And I did that for 24 hours and I discovered I am not nearly the man that I thought I was. Way more fleshy than you think. And again, before you judge me, just try it. Try for 24 hours. What happens is we'll kind of get on autopilot with our lives. We're kind of coasting, doing life as we're always doing it, and we'll let what other people say about us define who we really are.

They think you're a really godly person, you're a really great guy, and doing all these wonderful things. And when we begin to believe that narrative without introspection, without doing what David said in Psalm 139, where he said, search me, O God, and see if there be any unclean way in me. If we're just coasting without some degree of introspection and being awake to the fact that maybe some of these things are happening in our life, then we'll miss it. And the only way to defeat your enemy is to know where he's at, to know what he's doing.

So you got to wake up, you got to see what's happening, when you see something, you got to take it to the cross, and then you've got to starve it out. Look at what he says in verse 9. He talks about lying. He says don't lie to each other. Why? Because you've put off the old self with its practices and put on the new self. And when he says don't lie to one another— if you just take that idea of where does sin get most of its strength, any kind of sin in your life, it'll get its strength from secrecy and deception.

Your sin will grow as you hide it, lie about it, excuse it, cover it up. The more you isolate yourself, the stronger that sin's going to get. If you've ever— oh man, what's a good example? Take any kind of addiction, but pornography addiction is very common in men, statistically. And that kind of addiction thrives on secrecy. You open up the private window on your phone, you do it in a place no one's going to see. You try to hide it. And the longer you hide it, the more you hide it, the more power that addiction has.

But the day you bring it out into the light, when you say, "I'm not going to lie about this, it's not going to thrive in the darkness, I'm going to bring it out into the light," you may still be addicted to pornography that day, but immediately it's lost a lot of its power over you. Why? Because you brought it into the light. So I'm not going to lie about this anymore. I'm not going to conceal this. That's what's true with anything. Take anger. I'm feeling angry. You got anger in your marriage, instead of being secretive about it, instead of holding it in, instead of keeping it in the darkness and having imaginary conversations, the ones where you always win and they always lose, bring it into the light.

I was feeling angry today. It loses its power. So when you stop making it a secret, it loses its grip on you. You starve it out. You starve out sin in your life by bringing it into the light. It's that way with everything on the list. Passion, evil desire. Feeling more consumed with your work than you are your most important relationships, bring it out into the light. Just tell

somebody. Maybe it's not your spouse, maybe it's somebody you trust, but when you tell somebody, it loses its power. So how do you kill it?

You wake up to the fact that it's happening. Pay attention. You take it to the cross. And then you starve it out. And the last thing, and we're not going to talk about it this week, but the last thing is to replace it with something new. And that's what we're going to talk about for the next couple of weeks. But just real quickly, if you look in verse 10, he says that your new self is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator, which means you don't become perfect overnight.

You don't become an amazing man of God or an amazing woman of God the day after you become a Christian. There has to be a renewing. It's a process. So don't cut yourself a little bit of slack in some ways, and the other thing is get yourself in those environments and in those things that are going to grow your knowledge. And knowledge in this text is not talking about academic knowledge, you know, learn more theology. He's saying come to a deeper knowledge of who you are in Christ. Go more deeply into the gospel, more fully understand what it means to be wrapped up in Christ, to know your identity in him.

He's not asking you to figure out when Jesus comes back, he's asking you to know Jesus more deeply, more intimately. And as you do that, as your mind is renewed, you'll find that sin has less sway over your life. That's by renewing the new self. Now I desperately want every single person in our church to experience this kind of life, but it won't happen accidentally. It'll happen when you're intentional about it. And so for some of us here this morning, maybe you're not a Christian, and so for you the decision would look like coming to a place where you realize the life I've always wanted is not going to be found with me in charge, me running my life and me calling the shots.

It's going to come when I make Jesus the Lord of my life. And so maybe for the first time ever you would come to a place where you repent and true repentance is seeing not just what your sin has done to you but seeing what it's cost the Lord and seeing the price that he's paid and responding in faith that he's paid my debt, he's suffered my death and he's given me his life, and I can be accepted and made whole and righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. And if you've never made that decision, I would encourage you to make it.

But for most of us, I'd say Christians in the room, we're in one of two places. Either we're coasting and we're kind of checked out and we're not paying attention to what our enemy's trying to do with our lives. Paul says don't be unaware of the schemes of the devil, and we're kind of unaware. And so I would encourage you to wake up this morning. If you want to live the greater life, there may be things in your life you don't even see it yet. Because you haven't asked the Lord, search me, O God, and see if there be any unclean way in me.

And so open yourself up to the eyes of the Lord and his sovereign search. And take your sin, whatever it is in your life, take it to the cross. Some of us this morning you know what it is in your life. You don't have to guess. I got too wrapped up in this thing and now my life is miserable. And you need to bring that to the cross. Others of you need to starve it out. Still more need to replace it with something else. But however the Lord leads you to respond, I encourage you to do that now.

We don't have any musicians up here; let's go ahead and stand and respond to the Lord. I don't know when Daniel's going to come in here, but right there where you're standing, you can do business with the Lord and I would encourage you, whatever, as you read a text like this, usually the Holy Spirit will bring certain things to your mind, certain things to remembrance. And I just want to encourage you to take whatever that is and to ask the Lord for wisdom. What do I need to do with this thing?

How do I need to respond in light of what you've said and then to do something. Sometimes we make making a decision in church kind of mystical and secretive and ooey and gooey. It doesn't have to be that. It's just a response to the Word of God. And every single person responds to the Word of God every single week. A response to not respond is a response to go one more week without letting the Holy Spirit in. And so whatever the Lord has shown you this morning, my encouragement would be to respond in faith.

And that may mean some changes. It might mean a difficult conversation, but know that he's faithful to finish out what he started in your heart this morning. He'll be faithful to make the conversation happen like it needs to. He'll be faithful to give you the energy and the resources you need to let that thing go, whatever it may be. But let's respond to him as he leads.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "six things" (twice); Colossians 3:5 lists five: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness. Source: Colossians 3:5 (ESV). ↩