Freedom for a New Life
11/22/26
Colossians 3:1-17
Sunday AM

Yrs ago, I played golf w/ a friend who apparently missed his calling as a PGA teaching pro b/c as I was warming up on the range, he was commenting on my grip, my stance/alignment – and more. After every swing, I got some diagnosis – *You picked your head up! You're standing too close*! *You came over the top*!" After 20-min. of free instruction, I was worried he was going to send me a bill! And yet, he hadn't hit a single ball – which should've been my 1st clue! Finally, we go to the 1st tee. At his turn, I'm thinking – *after all he's told me, I'm about to witness greatness*! He adjusts his grip, checks his stance, and takes a nice practice swing – and then – WHOOSH! Completely misses the ball! I wanted to say something, but sometimes silence is a spiritual gift! Then, on his 2nd swing, he topped it to 15 ft. Well… the rest of the day was Army Golf – left, right, left, right, left! He spent so much time in the trees I thought about buying him a hunting license!

Issue – my buddy wasn't a golfer; he turned out to be a golf commentator. He could talk the talk, but he couldn't walk the walk. Which describes too many Christians. We look the part, but our lives don't always reflect it. We're experts at correcting everyone else's spiritual lives while ignoring our own.

WHY – It's b/c information w/out transformation only leads to spiritual inflation and stagnation!

This was Paul's point in Colossians 3. He moves from what Jesus did FOR us in ch. ½ to what He desires to accomplish THRU us. In essence, he was saying – it's time to live what you say you believe – b/c if Jesus is our life – we should increasingly look like Him.

I **EMBRACE** Your New Identity 1-4

Since you've been raised w/ Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden w/ Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, you also will appear w/ Him in glory.

These verses speak to our new position in Christ. DYK that in salvation everything in our lives change. **Our past** changes as we've died w/ Christ. **Our present** changes as we're now hidden in Christ. **Our future** changes as we now will appear w/ Him in glory.

This means that by His finished work on the cross, our lives have been transformed. By His victory, our past is no longer our master, our present is secure, and our future is guaranteed! This is our new position.

I'm reminded of Jesus' words on the cross – *It is finished*! **tetelestai** – the word is used in a business sense to mean a debt was paid in full, in a judicial sense to say a sentence had been fully served, and in a military sense to say a victory had been won.

So, in this (1) word – Jesus was declaring that our sin debt was fully paid, our judgment was fully served, and the spiritual war being waged over our lives against sin, death, and the demonic has been fully won.

Meaning – our position in Christ is fully secure as Jesus **IS** our life – and not some spiritual accessory we put on Sunday and take off Monday. He now lives w/in us thru the H.S. and we belong to Him. This means we're not improved versions of our old selves. We're new creations being transformed into His likeness.

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

But wait – there's more. He also gives us a new focus.

set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Paul commands us to *set your hearts*/*minds* on things above. Both verbs are **pres. act. imp.** – that is, this is an ongoing command to pursue Jesus and continually direct our thoughts/affections toward Him.

Question – who/what has your focus/affection? What captures your attention, drives your decisions, or occupies your thoughts? Even good gifts – family, career, ministry, success – can become idols when we make them ultimate things.

I think this is why Paul told the Philippians to dwell on what is *true*, *right*, *pure*, *admirable*, and *praiseworthy* – b/c focusing on heavenly priorities should change how we handle earthly responsibilities.

Paul then shifts gears to address the enemy of our intimacy w/ God – our flesh.

II **ELIMINATE** Old Allegiances v. 5–11

Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. B/c of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Don't lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self w/ its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge of the Creator.

Paul begins w/ a command to **put to death** whatever belongs to our earthly nature which is an idol. ***An idol is anything that competes for God's place in our lives***. So here, he's calling for decisive action against the *appetites*, *ambitions*, and *attitudes* of our flesh. B/c while salvation saves us and sets free to live this new life in Christ, it doesn't eliminate temptation. So, Paul's point is simple – ***don't negotiate w/ your flesh or tempt temptation***! Instead, draw near to God and respond to the leading of the H.S. living w/in you.

Notice that Paul identifies (5) idolatrous inclinations that our flesh naturally craves, the devil tempts, and the world applauds – *sexual immorality*, *impurity*, *lust*, *evil desires*, and *greed*. These key motivators of the flesh become idolatry whenever satisfying them is more important to us than pleasing/walking w/ God.

Question – what must have to be happy? What disappointment has the power to steal your joy or control your attitude? B/c most idols aren't chosen deliberately; they develop as we become convinced that we can't be satisfied w/out them.

Truth – sin always promises satisfaction and only delivers slavery. This is why Jesus bore our judgment on the cross – to break sin's dominion to enable us to walk in the freedom of a new life in Him.

This is why in v. 8 Paul moves from our appetites to our actions when our idols go unsatisfied – *anger*, *rage*, *malice*, *slander*, *filthy language*, and *lying*. These behaviors expose who or what's sitting on the throne of our hearts instead of Jesus.

Think – when control becomes our idol, we become angry when things don't go our way. When lust becomes our idol, we become resentful when we don't get what we crave. When comfort becomes our idol, we become impatient w/ anyone who interrupts it. Our reactions always reveal what we're really worshiping.

Don't Miss – our behavior always tattletale on our belief, values, and convictions – ALWAYS!

So, Paul begs us to take off these attitudes/actions – much like you'd take off and throw away dirty clothes if you'd been sprayed by a skunk. It's b/c these aren't harmless personality traits, emotional reactions, or the way we're wired. They're expressions of the old life still seeking satisfaction, security, and significance from this world apart from Jesus. ***Why would we put back on the filthy clothes Jesus died to free us from***.

Good News – God doesn't just call us to take off the old life; He gives us something far better to put on. The Christian life isn't only about removing what's sinful but becoming more like the Savior who has set us free.

III **EXHIBIT** Your New Character 12-14

As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves w/ compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear w/ each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Don't Miss – before Paul tells us what to put on, he reminds us of who we already are – *God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved.*

Meaning – we're not trying to earn a new identity; but live out the identity we've already received.

So, when Paul says clothe yourselves, he's telling us to put on the character of Christ the way we'd put on clean clothes. These qualities closely reflect the fruit of the Spirit – the character of Jesus being developed in us thru the H.S. which comes only thru abiding.

Thru the H.S. **– compassion** sees the hurts/needs of others and moves our hearts to care. **Kindness** puts compassion into action. **Humility** sees self rightly before God while valuing others. **Gentleness** is strength under control enabling is to respond w/ grace rather than harshness. **Patience** treats others the way Jesus treats us when the others treat us the way the world treated Jesus. **Forgiveness** releases others from the debt of their offenses, extending the grace we've freely received from Jesus. And **agape love** binds all these virtues together empowering us to love others sacrificially, just as Jesus has loved us.

Point – these aren't just behaviors we're trying to imitate; they're expressions of God's character being formed in us thru the H.S. as we surrender to Him. Remember – ***our behavior tattletales on who/what is sitting on the throne of our hearts***! LWF – the proof of Jesus living IN us is Jesus showing THRU us!

IV **EXPRESS** Jesus in Everything 15–17

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another w/ all wisdom thru psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father thru Him.

This 1st statement is in regard to our relationships w/ each other w/in the family of God – b/c believe it or not – sometimes w/in God's church, believers don't see eye-to-eye. I know… SHOCKER! And when this happens, we're not to pack up or toys and leave for another church – we're to figure it our defaulting to Jesus and His mission.

rule (*brabeuetō*) carries the idea of an umpire making the call. IOW – when conflict breaks out among us _ we're to check on our pride, preferences, and motives to see if they align w/ our will or God's Word.

Meaning – in conflict w/in the body, our default shouldn't be to win the argument or prove a personal point, but to honor Christ. Are we seeking revenge or reconciliation? Are we allowing pride or the peace of Christ to govern our responses?

But this kind of peace doesn't happen accidentally. It requires our hearts/minds to be saturated w/ God's truth. This is why Paul continues in v. 16 w/ *let the message of Christ dwell in you…*

dwell (*enoikeitō*) means to make one's home. Paul isn't suggesting that we occasionally visit God's Word but that we allow His Word to take up permanent residence in our lives.

Does the Word of Christ have a visitor's pass to your life – or does it have the keys to the house?

And notice, this isn't just personal; it's communal. We're to teach, encourage, and lovingly correct one another w/ God's truth. Our conversations should move beyond sharing information to encouraging transformation. Even our worship should do more than stir our emotions; it should shape our understanding, strengthen our faith, and direct our affections toward Christ. Why? B/c the goal isn't simply to know more about Jesus but to become more like Jesus.

Which brings us to Paul's rubber hits the road – and put up or shut up statement – *whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

This means in your conversations at work, attitudes at home, the way you spend your money, and how you respond when someone disagrees w/ you. To do everything to reflect and honor Jesus.

Why is this so essential? **B/c when Jesus is our life, His character should become increasingly visible in every aspect of our lives**.

And don't overlook that Paul repeats (3) to be grateful! **Be thankful** (v. 15). Sing w/ gratitude (v. 16). Give thanks to God (v. 17). Why? B/c a life governed by Christ's peace, filled w/ Christ's Word, and lived for Christ's glory should be marked by gratitude. Gratitude reminds us that everything we are and everything we have is b/c of Jesus.

Remember my golf buddy? Knowing the swing and living it out are (2) different things. The same is true spiritually. Raising the question - **Is what you believe about Jesus showing up in how you live?**

So, what's capturing your heart that needs to be surrendered? What needs to be put off, what needs to be put on, and where does Jesus need to become more evident in your life?

If you've never trusted Jesus, He isn't offering to improve your old life but to give you a new one. Turn from your sin and trust Him today. And if you belong to Jesus, quit reaching for those old clothes! You've been set free FROM the power of sin to live FOR the glory of Christ – b/c when Jesus IS our life, our lives should increasingly look like HIM!