

I have the opportunity to fill in for Jim this morning. Last year the elders asked Jim to take regular time off in order for Him to stay healthy and refreshed. This is one of those Sundays and He has grandkids in town and is having a great time with them. He will be back next week.

When I have the chance to fill in, we have been working through Chapter 3 of Colossians. To recap I am going to start reading at the beginning of the chapter.

Col 3:1-10

(1) If then you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above, where Christ is**, seated at the right hand of God.

Paul's audience is believers. Since they have been raised with Christ, Paul wants to encourage them to seek the things above. This is not a test if they are saved but a command for us as believers, to seek out eternal things.

(2) **Set your minds on things that are above**, not on things that are on earth.

(3) For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Our real identity is in Heaven. Most of this chapter is going to be describing what living out the new life in Christ actually looks like.

(4) When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

(5) **Put to death therefore what is earthly in you**: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

(6) On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

We are called as believers to kill sin. We have a new life now and do not have to walk in our old sins anymore.

(7) **In these you too once walked**, when you were living in them.

(8) **But now you must put them all away**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

The process of killing sin involves repentance. A putting off of the old. It is the prodigal son running back to the Father.

(9) **Do not lie to one another**, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

Wuest says this about the command not to lie:

“Lie” is present imperative in a prohibition, forbidding the continuance of an action already going on. It is, “Stop lying to one another.” **These Colossian saints had carried over into the new life, the sin of lying.**

Just because we are saved does not mean we always act like it. The Colossians weren't and if we are honest, there are plenty of times when we don't live like we have a new life.

(10) **and have put on the new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

The process of killing sin does not end with putting something off. We must then put on the new self. The last time I taught we walked through what this putting off and putting on process look like. Really it describes what our new life in Christ should look like.

Romans 6 describes how we have been offered a new life.

Rom 6:1-13

- (1) What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?
- (2) By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
- (3) Do you not know that **all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?**

The moment you believed in Jesus the Holy Spirit takes and identifies you with the death of Jesus. We are forever associated with His death. Our sin died on the cross.

- (4) We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, **just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**
- (5) For if we have been united with Him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

It didn't stop there. The story does not end with our sin being paid for on the cross. Jesus was resurrected. It validated who He said He was. It also provided a New life for us.

- (6) We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.
- (7) For one who has died has been set free from sin.

It was His death that broke our bondage to sin.

- (8) **Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him.**
- (9) We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.
- (10) For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God.
- (11) **So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

This is a true reality of us as believers. And yet we are still on this earth and we can still choose to act like we are in our old sin and not live out the new life we have been offered.

We are given a command in verse 11 to consider, some translations say to reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

This word, consider or reckon means:

logizomai (We can see logic coming from this Word)

1. to determine by mathematical process, reckon, calculate,
2. to give careful thought to a matter, think (about), consider, ponder, let one's mind dwell on

We should give careful thought to who we are now as believers. Everything about us changed the moment we believed in Jesus, and yet it can seem like

nothing changed. This is why we need to give careful, logical, detailed thought about who we are now in Christ. If we spend time thinking on this it will lead to verse 12+13.

(12) Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

(13) Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, **but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life**, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

What Jesus did on the cross is tremendous, but His resurrection and offering us new life should radically change our daily life right now. **If all we do is focus on salvation and on the death, we could lose sight that Jesus wants us to walk in our new life.**

This is what Paul is encouraging the Colossians to do.

Col 3:9+10

(9) Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

(10) and have put on the new self, **which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.**

This new self is being renewed back into the image of God. Jim is teaching in Genesis, and has made it clear we are the only creation that is made in God's image.

Gen 1:27

(27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Parts of this image was lost when we sinned. But it is being restored, we are regaining the fellowship that was lost from the garden when we walk in our new life.

1Jn 3:2

(2) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears **we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.**

We will finally be fully restored and get to fully realize our new life when we see Him face to face. And notice what changes us. We finally see Him for who He truly is. It is about Him and seeing what a magnificent God we truly have.

Paul is going to continue to describe how this new life changes everything.

Col 3:11

(11) **Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free;** but Christ is all, and in all.

In this new life there cannot be racial, or prejudice distinctions.

The way the Greek phrase is put together, when it says "there is not" it also carries the idea that it is an impossibility. Distinctions, classes, tiers, prejudice, racism, are impossible in the new life in Christ.

This verse would have been controversial for its day because it picked up on many racial tensions of that time.

Lightfoot says: "To the Jew the whole world was divided into Jews and Greeks, **the privileged and unprivileged portions of mankind**, religious prerogative being taken as a line of demarcation. To the Greek and Roman it was similarly divided into Greeks and Barbarians, **again the privileged and unprivileged portion of the human race**, civilization and culture being now the criterion of distinction. Thus from one point of view the Greek is contrasted disadvantageously with the Jew, while from the other he is contrasted disadvantageously with the Barbarian.

Gal 3:27-28

(27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

(28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, **for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Humanity has always been prejudice. One group of people will always be viewed as superior than another. But notice what these verses are saying. There is tremendous unity through Christ.

This new life should radical changes us. Paul continues to describe what it is supposed to look like in verse 12.

Col 3:12

(12) **Put on then**, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, **compassionate hearts**, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

We are given a fantastic list, of attributes that we are called to live out. Notice this is a list given to God's chosen, you and I as believers. If these things came natural to us as believers, we would not need a command to do them. These are things that we need to learn how to do.

This is a great list to pray through. Ask God which of these areas do you need to grow in putting on. Instead of reading this list and deciding for ourselves what we are going to work on why don't we let God lead us and show us in which area he wants to grow us.

Personally, for me the phrase that I have not been able to get out of my head since I started looking at this passage is putting on a compassionate heart.

The Greek word for heart is *splagchna*, meaning bowels, or gut

Some translations say "Bowels of mercies"

Compassion is slightly different from love, we will see Paul is about to command us to put on love. What makes compassion unique is that there is a tenderness, and a pity involved.

Time and time again scripture tells us of the compassion Jesus felt for the crowds that followed Him.

Mat 14:14

(14) When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and **he had compassion** on them and healed their sick.

Mat 15:32

(32) Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, **“I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”**

Jesus has a pity and a compassion for the people. These crowds were following him because they liked the outcome of the miracles, it is of these crowds that Jesus would say

Joh 6:26

(26) Jesus answered them, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.**

He knew that were not following him for the right reasons and yet He had compassion on them. Having compassion helps us have a more understanding heart that the world is lost, and has no hope.

Mat 9:36

(36) When he saw the crowds, **he had compassion for them**, because they were harassed and helpless, **like sheep without a shepherd.**

We are called to have compassionate hearts.

1Jn 3:17-18

(17) But if anyone has the world's goods and **sees his brother** in need, **yet closes his heart against him**, how does God's love abide in him?

(18) Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

1Jn 3:17 YLT

(17) and whoever may have the goods of the world, and may view his brother having need, **and may shut up his bowels from him** -- how doth the love of God remain in him?

Truth is always balanced. This is a very real command not to be hard hearted to believers in need around us, and yet scripture also tells us we need to use discernment.

Php 1:9

(9) And it is my prayer that **your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,**

There are times you are not called to help, but you still are called to have a compassionate, tender heart.

Col 3:12+13

(12) **Put on then**, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

(13) **bearing with one another** and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Bearing with one another

“to regard w. tolerance, endure, bear with, put up with”

“holding yourselves back from one another”

It is not always easy interacting with each other in the body of Christ. We are supposed to have a unity, in the new life and be compassionate to each other. And then Paul gets pretty real and says put up with each other.

Again, we are all at different stages of learning what the new life in Christ is. This is what it means to have grace for each other.

Col 3:13

(13) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, **forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

God's forgiveness of us is so complete, and He wants us to understand we are truly forgiven in Him.

Psa 103:11-12

(11) For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

(12) as far as the east is from the west, **so far does he remove our transgressions from us.**

He wants us to understand that we have been forgiven.

Col 3:13

(13) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, **forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

God's forgiveness of us is complete, we must learn to forgive others the same way.

Luk 17:3-4

(3) **Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,**

(4) **and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."**

We are called to forgive. But so often passages like this are lifted out and pastors show that forgiven and forgetting go hand in hand. But there is an interesting phrase here, as the Lord has forgiven us, there are two aspects of forgiveness.

Col 3:13

(13) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; **as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

Think about our forgiveness before God, we talk about our justification and our Sanctification. When we believe on Christ, we are forgiven for our sins we are justified and when He looks on us God sees the righteousness of His son.

But we also have this idea of sanctification of being made holy, the idea of restoring the fellowship and learning how to walk in a relationship with God. This is a process that takes time and has to be learned.

We can apply these two principals to how we are called to forgive others. When someone wrongs us or sins, we are called to forgive them before God. This is like our justification, positional we forgive them.

But there can be no reconciliation, forgetting, our restoring the fellowship without a process of sanctification. This takes time and also requires the party that's in the wrong to seek out the reconciliation.

This means if someone wrongs you and then never thinks it was wrong or come to reconcile with you, we are called to forgive them before God, but there can be no reconciliation until that person seeks it out.

This pattern can be seen when Christ is talking about forgiving others

Mar 11:25

(25) And whenever you stand praying, **forgive, if you have anything against anyone**, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

In this passage Christ says to immediately forgive, this would be positional, before God forgive them right then between you and God, but listen to what Christ says in Matthew.

Mat 5:23-24

(23) So if you are offering your gift at the altar **and there remember that your brother has something against you,**

(24) **leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

This reconciliation cannot be done right there before God you have to go and deal with the issue face to face.

This process of reconciliation is a learning process that would involve regaining trust, it also means that you don't put someone back in the same role to be tempted again (someone embezzling from the church).

Joseph is a great model for us of this type of forgiveness. Joseph understood that God was at work in his brothers wronging Him, and he had forgiven them. But notice what he does when he interacts with his brothers for the first time since they sold him into slavery.

Gen 42:13-16

(13) And they said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more.”

(14) But Joseph said to them, “It is as I said to you. You are spies.

(15) **By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here.**

(16) Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain confined, **that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you.** Or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.”

Joseph had forgiven his brothers, but he used discernment and was careful to test and see how they were treating Benjamin. He wanted to know have you changed from your ways.

Paul summarizes what this New life is supposed to look like in verse 14.

Col 3:14

(14) **And above all these put on love,** which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

1Jn 4:7-12

(7) Beloved, **let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.**

(8) Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

(9) In this the love of God was made manifest among us, **that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.**

(10) In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

(11) **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

(12) No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.