

**LOOK UP! HE is your life!**  
Colossians 3:1-17  
Moscow First Presbyterian Church  
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August 1, 2010

**Colossians 3:1-17 (New International Version)**

Rules for Holy Living

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is your<sup>[a]</sup> life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.<sup>[b]</sup> 7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## Colossians 3:1-17 (The Message)

### He Is Your Life

<sup>1-2</sup> So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, act like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective.

<sup>3-4</sup> Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life. When Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you'll show up, too—the real you, the glorious you. Meanwhile, be content with obscurity, like Christ.

<sup>5-8</sup> And that means killing off everything connected with that way of death: sexual promiscuity, impurity, lust, doing whatever you feel like whenever you feel like it, and grabbing whatever attracts your fancy. That's a life shaped by things and feelings instead of by God. It's because of this kind of thing that God is about to explode in anger. It wasn't long ago that you were doing all that stuff and not knowing any better. But you know better now, so make sure it's all gone for good: bad temper, irritability, meanness, profanity, dirty talk.

<sup>9-11</sup> Don't lie to one another. You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it. All the old fashions are now obsolete. Words like Jewish and non-Jewish, religious and irreligious, insider and outsider, uncivilized and uncouth, slave and free, mean nothing. From now on everyone is defined by Christ, everyone is included in Christ.

<sup>12-14</sup> So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

<sup>15-17</sup> Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

## INTRO/REVIEW OF COLOSSIANS

Author: Paul – in Prison in Rome

Paul had never visited Colosse - Colossae was located approximately 100 miles east of Ephesus. Evidently the church had been founded by Epaphrus and other converts from Paul's third missionary journey – ACTS 19:8-10 *Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.*

The church had been infiltrated by religious relativism – they combined paganism, Greek philosophy with Christian doctrine – And in this book to the church in Colossae he confronts these false teachings and affirms the sufficiency of Christ, as we saw last Sunday.

He clearly teaches:

- That Christ has paid for sin
- That we are reconciled to God through Christ
- It is Christ who gives us the pattern and the power to grow spiritually
- Because Christ is the exact likeness of God, when we learn what HE is like, we see what we need to become.

In Chapters one and two Paul emphasizes Christian Doctrine. 3 & 4 emphasize the Christian life.

### COLOSSIANS 3

Let's look at this passage in Chapter 3:

Message:

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NIV

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Setting your minds on things above means striving to put heaven's priorities into daily practice – concentrating on the eternal rather than the temporal...as Peterson says – looking at the ground. Look up!!

**PERSPECTIVE:**

It's all about your perspective on your daily activities and routines. Is God a part of your work, or do you leave Him at the door?

**PRAYER:**

It even relates to our Prayer life: Do you pray to God looking THROUGH your circumstance? i.e. "God, why aren't you doing something about this, can't you see that this circumstance is not what I need? Please remove it!"

When we do that our view of God is discolored by the circumstance.

When we set our minds on things above...we view our circumstances from above. Our prayer is more, "God – as you can imagine this circumstance is not fun. Please teach me through it more about yourself, more about myself and how I can relate to you and to others, and move me to where you desire me to be. Your will be done."

**EXAMPLE OF SETTING MIND ON THINGS ABOVE:**

NT Wright wrote: The Kingdom of God is, at its heart, about God's sovereignty sweeping the world with love and power, so that human beings each made in God's image and each one loved dearly, MAY RELAX IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL.

If our minds are set on things above, we have to acknowledge God is in control, and that IS our peace.

Early in our marriage I was finishing up my graduate degree and Donna was working in a bank. All of a sudden our peaceful lives were thrown into turmoil...Donna was pregnant. I needed to get a real job! We prayed, and my professor called with a new listing of a Community College teaching position written "just for me"! I began the application process, when I received a letter from a good friend, and fellow graduate student who had finished up his degree a year earlier. He said he had found this great job opening in a community college (the same job!) and was applying and was asking if I would send a letter of recommendation down.

You can imagine what I went through...until Donna reminded me that God is in control!!! I rested completely in that truth and wrote a glowing letter for Don. I also sent my application in for the same job. He and I both interviewed for the job, and during my interview two of the interviewers asked if I had written the letter for Don before or after I had applied. It had impacted them that I could write a letter for my friend and be comfortable with that.

Incidentally...I was offered the job, and thoroughly enjoyed my teaching opportunity at Lassen Community College.

### **OTHER MIND SCRIPTURES:**

*But we have the mind of Christ.* 1 Corinthians 2:16 And again in 2 Corinthians *Take every thought captive.* (2 Corinthians 10:5) Or when he is writing to the Church in Philippi and he says: *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 2:5)

### **TRANSFORMED MINDS:**

Paul writes to the Romans...and is very clear about one thing:  
*Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.* (Romans 12:2)

The Greek here is to be “continually transformed” by the “continual renewing” of your mind. It didn't just happen and boom your mind is transformed....

That is why Paul goes on to say:

<sup>3-4</sup>*Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life. When Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you'll show up, too—the real you, the glorious you. Meanwhile, be content with obscurity, like Christ.*

<sup>5-8</sup>*And that means killing off everything connected with that way of death: sexual promiscuity, impurity, lust, doing whatever you feel like whenever you feel like it, and grabbing whatever attracts your fancy. That's a life shaped by things and feelings instead of by God. It's because of this kind of thing that God is about to explode in anger. It wasn't long ago that you were doing all that stuff and not knowing any better. But you know better now, so make sure it's all gone for good: bad temper, irritability, meanness, profanity, dirty talk.*

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### **WE ARE NEW CREATIONS:**

In Christ we are NEW -

II Corinthians 5:17:

*17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has*

*gone, the new has come!*

**CHRISTOPHER SANG ABOUT OUR NEW LIFE THIS MORNING:**

*Praise to God, that sin that bound me no more is my master. I was lost, but Jesus found me to Satan's disaster.*

**CHRIST IS ALL, AND IS IN ALL:**

**Vs 11 – on the bulletin cover –** *Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

The Christian church should have no barriers of nationality, race, education level, social standing, wealth, gender, religion, politics, power, cultural standing, the style of music one appreciates, the way one dresses, or how one smells, . Christ breaks down all barriers and accepts all people who come to him, NOTHING should keep us from telling others about Christ, or accepting into our fellowship any and all believers. **Christians should be building bridges, not walls.**

Kathy Warren shared what fellowship she had with her visit to a Christian Church in Thailand even though she didn't know the language spoken or sung...she experienced a unity with the believers because Christ is all and in all.

ALEX from Cameroon found joy, peace, fellowship with us when he first came to Moscow that snowy winter...because Christ is ALL and in ALL!

**OUR INSIDE LEAKS OUTSIDE:**

We all live out of what's going on inside of us. We all inevitably live out of the kind of thoughts and intentions and desires that we have. When we talk about personality traits, somebody being cranky or bossy or sad or joyful, we're really only talking about the habitual patterns of thoughts and then the feelings that go along with those thoughts.

If you try to get people to just do the right thing, to obey commandments, to change their behavior without aiming at the transformation of deep, habitual patterns of thought, it's a losing proposition. This was a lot of the conflict between a lot of religious leaders and Jesus in His day. Jesus understood you cannot just aim at trying to do the right thing or you'll always end up going down the road of legalism and externals, as the Pharisees did. You have to aim at becoming the kind of person who just naturally does what is right, because your mind is set on things above. So many people try to do the behavior modification thing...but it doesn't work, because CHRIST is not in it!

**JOHN ORTBERG EXAMPLES on what it looks like:**

What would it look like to have a mind set on things above? John Ortberg has some good examples. There would be things like this:

*I hear of somebody who is wildly successful, somebody in my field, and my first thought is it's good news and instead of being mad or bitter, angry or jealous of them, I actually derive joy out of somebody else's success.*

Or I have a problem and my first thought is:

*How competent God is. I can ask God for help and He will be right alongside with me.*

Or somebody criticizes me and my first thought is:

*But God loves me. So I don't have to get hooked by this. I can learn from it and respond with freedom and joy. I see injustice and it makes me angry and I want to take action, but not be self-righteous.*

### **CLOTHE YOURSELVES:**

*12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

Donna and I have had the pleasure for years of hosting a Bible Study in our home. One summer we chose to spend the entire summer studying these verses.

*compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience*

How are these characteristics in your life lived out? Are they what you do? OR are they who you ARE? They should become who we ARE for we should "wear them" all the time.

**John Ortberg** once shared in a message that if you want more PATIENCE...we should practice patience and let it grow in us... to do that he suggest *that we get in the right lane and stay there on the freeway, that we get in the longest line at the grocery store, that we take care of children in a nursery for a day!* EUGENE PETERSON elsewhere refers to it as not just patience...but passionate patience!

*15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Does the WORD of Christ dwell in you richly? Spend time in the Bible on your own. Memorize scriptures that are important to you!

Is there a song in your heart? Take the insert home with you and tuck it in your nightstand...sing it to yourself when you go to bed.

Do you bring HONOR to Christ in every aspect and activity of your daily living? What impression do people have of Christ when they see or talk with you? What changes would you make in your life to honor Christ?

**REBECCA PIPPERT – OUT OF THE SALTSHAKER:**

When I first came to Portland, Oregon, I met a student on one of the campuses where I worked. He was brilliant and looked like he was always pondering the esoteric. His hair was always mussy, and in the entire time I knew him, I never once saw him wear a pair of shoes. Rain, sleet or snow, Bill was always barefoot. While he was attending college, he had become a Christian.

At this time a well-dressed, middle-class church across the street from the campus wanted to develop more of a ministry to the students. They were not sure how to go about it, but they tried to make them feel welcome. One day Bill decided to worship there. He walked into this church, wearing his blue jeans, T-shirt and of course no shoes. People looked a bit uncomfortable, but no one said anything. So Bill began walking down the aisle looking for a seat. The church was quite crowded that Sunday, so as he got down to the front pew and realized that there were no seats, he just squatted on the carpet--perfectly acceptable behavior at a college fellowship, but perhaps unnerving for a church congregation. The tension in the air became so thick one could slice it.

Suddenly an elderly man began walking down the aisle toward the boy. Was he going to scold Bill? My friends who saw him approaching said they thought, You can't blame him. He'd never guess Bill is a Christian. And his world is too distant from Bill's to understand. You can't blame him for what he's going to do.

As the man kept walking slowly down the aisle, the church became utterly silent, all eyes were focused on him, you could not hear anyone breathe. When the man reached Bill, with some difficulty he lowered himself and sat down next to him on the carpet. He and Bill worshiped together on the floor that Sunday. I was told there was not a dry eye in the congregation.

The irony is that probably the only one who failed to see how great the giving had been that Sunday was Bill. But grace is always that way. It gives without the receiver realizing how great the gift really is.

As this man walked alongside of his brother and loved him with all that he had received from Christ's love.....so must we.

AMEN!