



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Something Old, Something New -Pt. 3 (Colossians 3:15-17)

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This Week's Bible Study Schedule

- **Wednesday, April 27, 7 AM in HHR #5**
-Breakfast Provided
- **Wednesday, April 27, 8:30 PM in Room #225**
(Sen. Bob Dixon's office)

A Quick Reminder: Our Capitol Commission Bible Studies are open to all who are interested. We are non-denominational and non-partisan. Anyone who desires to know about the life of a Christian is welcome to join us.

A governing official who is a follower of Jesus Christ should be noticeably different than his or her colleagues who do not follow Jesus. It is not to be seen in an arrogant, "better than thou" manner. It ought to be seen in one's actions, attitudes, votes and values. The new life is the focus of the Apostle Paul's teaching in Colossians 3 & 4.

INTRODUCTION

God did not give His Son as a ransom to "reform" people. He did not sacrifice Jesus simply to knock off the rust and polish the chrome. He gave to make people "new". Since every aspect of one's life has been ruined with sin, every aspect of one's life needs to be made completely new. The "new" is the Apostle Paul's continued discussion in Colossians.

In this section of his letter, Paul wrote of the new life one has after he or she has been raised from spiritual death. The new life is a life focused on things above, no longer upon the things of earth (Colossians 3:1-4). Sexual sins and greed were to be cut off or "killed"; no longer a part of one's pattern for life. Also put off and set aside were wrath, hot-temperedness, deception, harsh words and malice (3:5-9).

The new life brings with it a new knowledge, new relationships and a new identity. The "new clothes" that the new person is commanded to put on include a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness. All of these are wrapped up by love (3:10-14).

Paul continued in his letter to describe the total make-over of one who has been made new. Not only does it involve new approaches and actions, the new also includes a new standard, attitude, "tenant" and purpose.

Colossians 3:15-17 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

THE NEW HAS A NEW STANDARD (3:15)

This "peace of Christ" is defined in two ways. First of all, it describes the treaty or pact that has been brought about through the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The certificate of debt, which separated one from God, that belonged to the follower of Jesus has been paid in full (Colossians 2:13-14). Thus, as Paul told the church in Rome, we have "been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1b). Secondly, this peace is the security and rest one has because of the "treaty" made by Christ between God and the believer (Philippians 4:7; John 14:27).

IF THE WORD OF CHRIST IS ABIDING IN A PERSON'S LIFE, IT WILL BE NOTICEABLE; SEEN IN THE ACTIONS OF SOMEONE AND IN THE CONTENT OF THEIR SPEECH.

True peace is one of the basic desires found in all people all over the world for all times. True peace is not just the act of not shooting at or fighting each other. It is so much more. It is a calmness of mind; no remorse, no tensions, no anxieties about the future, no apprehensions about death and what is after it.

But this true peace is only found in one place or one person; in Jesus Christ. It is only through Him that all those things that disrupt peace are dealt with. There is no remorse—because believers are forgiven and the guilt removed. There are no tensions—because the believer is now reconciled to God and living in His grace. There are no anxieties about

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, ROOM #225

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, BROADWAY BUILDING 3RD FLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

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the future—because the believer knows “who holds tomorrow”. There are no apprehensions about death—because for the believer to live is Christ but to die is gain.

No earthly government or treaty can ever ensure true peace. Even if it could get nations and people from harming one another, governments can do nothing regarding one’s eternal concerns of sin, reconciliation, death and purpose. This is truly the realm in which God can only satisfy.

It is this peace that is to rule in the heart of a believer. This “rule” is best understood as an “umpire”; an umpire in a sporting event. The umpire calls a pitch a ball or strike; he determines whether one is safe or out.

“Wherever there is a conflict of motives or impulses or reasons, the peace of Christ must step in and decide which is to prevail.”¹ The umpire can be seen in one’s actions and decisions by asking, “Is this which I am thinking of doing going to enhance this peace or hurt it?” It is also seen as one lives with others within the family of God: “Are my words or deeds going to increase the peace or hinder it?” The peace of Christ determines what is good and that which is wrong. It defines what will promote continued peace or that will bring strife to your life or church.

Paul followed this with the reminder that believers “were called in one body.” He has already written that Jesus Christ is the head of this body (1:18). Therefore, by letting the peace of Christ—the only perfect, all fulfilling peace that all desire—umpire the believer’s heart, he or she is following the lead of Christ.

THE NEW HAS A NEW “TENANT” (3:16)

When one visits another’s home, many hosts will say “Hey, make yourself at home.” Should that be taken literally? Does the host really want the visitor to take off one’s shoes and socks? Does he or she really want the other to remove his shirt, throw it in the floor and stretch out on the couch to take a nap? Can she just throw open the refrigerator to find a snack and a Coke? Do people really want their guests to tell their kids that they can play at their house like they do at their own? The statement is probably not meant to be taken literally.

The Apostle Paul made a similar statement. He truly means for the follower of Christ to make the “Word of Christ” to make itself at home in the life of the follower.

The “Word of Christ” describes the writings about Jesus and the things that He said and performed. In essence, it is talking about the

Scriptures—its teachings and doctrines, its revelation of God, its warnings and promises.

This “Word” is not a mere guest in the believer’s life. Paul commanded that it be made a permanent tenant. John Calvin stated that believers are exhorted not simply to “...take a slight taste merely of the word of Christ, but exhorts that it should dwell in them; that is, that it should have a settled abode and that largely, that they may make it their aim to advance and increase more and more every day.”

“IF GRATITUDE TAKES POSSESSION OF OUR MINDS, WE SHALL WITHOUT FAIL BE INCLINED TO CHERISH MUTUAL AFFECTION AMONG OURSELVES.” —JOHN CALVIN

The Word dwells in a believer when he or she hears it (Matthew 13:9), works with it (2 Timothy 2:15), memorizes or “hides it” (Psalm 119:11) and clings to it (Philippians 2:16).

This “dwelling” is not solely a knowledge or understanding. It is a knowledge that exhibits itself in wise living; along with the teaching and warning to others. If the Word of Christ is abiding in a person’s life, it will be noticeable; seen in the actions of someone and in the content of their speech.²

In another letter, the Apostle wrote: *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father...* (Ephesians 5:18-20). The results of being “filled with the Spirit” and letting “the Word of Christ richly dwell” are the same. Therefore, it is proper to say that being “filled with the Spirit” is the same as letting “the Word of Christ richly dwell”. The Holy Spirit works hand in hand with the Word of God. A person will not be led by the Spirit if the Word is not dwelling within them.

Once again, Paul is emphasizing the reading, meditating and teaching of the Scripture in the life of the believer. The preaching and teaching was Paul’s mission (Colossians 1:24-29). It was what he commanded Timothy (2 Timothy 3:16-4:4). It permeates the longest chapter of the Bible in Psalm 119. One who desires to please God and live a holy life cannot do so without being filled with Spirit and letting the Scripture “make itself at home” in their life.

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THE NEW HAS A NEW PURPOSE (3:17)

The next new aspect of a new life in this passage lays out direction and purpose for the new.

It is interesting that the New Testament does not contain a detailed code of rules for the follower of Jesus Christ. In this particular passage, Paul taught that the new things one is to “put on” are not actions, per se, but rather attitudes—compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, endurance, and above all, love.

The New Testament does provide, though, the basic principles of Christian living which may be applied to varying situations of life. For example, after answering the question from the church in Corinth about the eating of food, Paul sums up his words by saying, “whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

In a similar manner, Paul wrapped up this section by teaching that “whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of Jesus”. In other words, whatever the believer does or says should reflect the nature of Jesus and be done for His glory and honor.

Many issues and decisions come up daily in the believer’s life that does not have a direct “Thus Saith The Lord” found in Scripture. But this principle does much to help in the direction one should go. F.F. Bruce writes,

“The Christian, when confronted by a moral issue, may not find any explicit word of Christ relating to its particular details. But the question may be asked: ‘What is the Christian thing to do here?’ Can I do this without compromising my Christian confession? Can I do it ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus’ – whose reputation is at stake in the conduct of his known followers? And can I thank God the Father through him for the opportunity of doing this thing?” Even then, the right course of action may not be unambiguously clear, but such questions, honestly faced, will commonly provide surer ethical guidance than special regulations may do. It is often easy to get around special regulations; it is less easy to get around so comprehensive a statement of Christian duty as this verse supplies.”³

Paul’s command not only gives guidance as to what to do, but also gives the reason for doing. Believers do not do the things that are right and they do not serve and they do not love simply for themselves. These things are done so that the name of their savior, Jesus Christ, may be glorified.

This teaches the follower of Jesus that others need to know why one does what he or she does. For example: If a person is in need and the believer supplies that need, it should be known that the need is filled because of Jesus. If it is not stated, people may simply think that the believer is a fine, upstanding person and he or she will receive the glory. When someone says ‘thanks’—the believer has an open door to honor Christ, the one who has nailed their “certificate of debt” to the cross and has made them new.

1 Peter 2:12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

THE NEW HAS A NEW ATTITUDE (3:15-16-17)

All three verses in this passage have a common attitude--thanksgiving (cf. Colossians 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15-17; 4:2).

v15 ...and be thankful
v16 ...singing with thanksgiving
v17 ...giving thanks through Him to the Father

If love is the belt or sash that holds together and covers the “new clothes” of a new person (3:14), then “thanksgiving” can be seen as the prevalent attitude throughout the life of one who follows after Jesus Christ. Gratefulness is a natural characteristic of a believer.

Hebrews 13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 ...in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

Ephesians 5:20 ...always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father...

Ingratitude is an attitude of the unbelievers (Romans 1:21). It should never be known in the life of believer. No matter how difficult life may get for one who follows Jesus (no one promised smooth sailing) there is always room for thanksgiving. The straightforward fact that God has qualified, rescued, transferred and redeemed a follower (Colossians 1:12-14) is reason enough to show thanksgiving to God. “Count your many blessings” is how the old hymn goes; thanksgiving should never be far from the heart and lips of a child of God.

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Thanksgiving is also instrumental in living a life of peace with others. John Calvin wrote “if gratitude takes possession of our minds, we shall without fail be inclined to cherish mutual affection among ourselves.”

CONCLUSION

And just like the conclusion of the last study, we can find that all of these traits of the new person are seen first in our God and in His Son Jesus Christ. And the new self is “being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him” (3:10b). The follower of Jesus is to imitate Jesus and be a reflection of Him.

When God makes a person new through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ every aspect of their life is affected. The old things are to be killed or put away. New attitudes, umpires, purposes, “clothes” and standards come to the person made new. True peace can now be attained, a purpose can be found and one can live a life of true gratitude and thanksgiving.

Friend, God can forgive you of your sins and you can be made new--are you interested?

¹ J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (1879; reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 223.

² “Psalms were taken from the Old Testament psalter, the book of Psalms. They sang psalms put to music, much as we do today. Hymns were expressions of praise to God. It is thought that some portions of the New Testament (such as Col. 1:15-20 and Phil. 2:6-11) were originally hymns sung in the early church. Spiritual songs emphasized testimony (cf. Rev. 5:9-10). They express in song what God has done for us.” (John MacArthur, *Colossians & Philemon* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1992), 160).

³ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 160.