

**THE NEW LIFE**  
Colossians 3:12-17 – Part 3

**Intro:** For the past two weeks we have been considering together from the text which I have also announced for my message today, *the new life* which those who are trusting in Christ for their salvation, are to live. It is *a new life* because Christians, true Christians, are *new people*. Nobody who knew us before we were saved has any trouble recognizing us after we are saved, but we are different. We have been born again, or born from above. We have eternal life which is God's life. Paul told the Corinthian believers that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Here in Colossians Paul has expressed our pre-Christian nature as "the old man," and what we have become in Christ as "the new man." And in respect to the change that has taken place in us, the same kind of a change that had taken place in those Colossian Christians, he told them to "put off the old man" and to "put on the new man." And by those expressions he meant that they were (and the same is true of us) to quit living like we used to live, and to start and to continue to live in ways that are consistent with the new, godly life that we have in Christ. *It is not that we are to live so as to change ourselves, but it is because God has changed us that we are able to live in an entirely different way, the way that is described for us in the Bible.*

Now we have seen that certain false teachers had come to Colosse, and they were preaching a different way of life also. But there was one fundamental difference in their teaching. Their teaching was that by doing what they said, people eventually would be accepted by God. So they were preaching a salvation by works. Paul referred to some of the things that they were teaching in 2:16. And he mentioned more in 2:18. And then in 2:20 he rebuked them for being "subjected to ordinances," some of which he mentioned in 2:21, and which he utterly condemned in 2:22 and 23.

Now the main error in all of that is that it was designed to emphasize what they needed to do for God instead of the preaching of the true Gospel which speaks of what God has done for us *in Christ*. And so they were not preaching Christ. They probably were giving some kind of lip-service to Christ, but more as an Example for us to follow than as a Savior who had done all that was necessary for our salvation. Paul was not preaching that some things in our lives need to be "put off," and other

things “put on” in their places, so that they could be saved, but because they were saved. He was explaining to them that because they were saved, their lives had to be different. And he wanted them to know that it was because of Christ’s work on the Cross, that they were different. They had full and eternal acceptance with God. If they or anyone else would follow the false teachers, they would be attempting to do what no man had ever done, not even the false teachers who were teaching them.

In the early days of the church when the apostles and elders gathered together to consider what was to be preached to the Gentiles, it was because of the same kind of teachers who had gone to Colosse preaching that if Gentiles were to be saved, they had to keep the Law. Peter, in defending what he had done in going to Caesarea to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and other Gentiles, he asked this question in concluding his . remarks. I am reading from Acts 15:10-11:

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

And then he went on declaring this:

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

God doesn’t have one way of salvation for Jews, and another for Gentiles. He doesn’t have one way of salvation for men, and another for women. He doesn’t have one way of salvation for blacks, and another for whites. Make any contrast that you want among people, there is only one salvation, only one Savior, and His Name is the Lord Jesus Christ.

So if you really know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are not going to be able to live like you did before He saved you. He gives us new life, and the Bible was written to tell us how we as the people of God are to live. “Put off” the old life, and “put on” the new life. Don’t just stop doing what you used to do, but by the grace of God. Let us do what the Apostle Paul ordered the Christians in Rome to do. I am referring to his words recorded for us in Rom. 13:11-14:

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and

drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

I am taking the time to emphasize what Paul was doing here in Colossians 3 because it is extremely important for us to understand this. Whenever you hear anyone speaking about knowing God, listen carefully to see if he has anything to say about the Lord Jesus Christ, and if he speaks of Christ, what is he saying about Him? Christ alone is the Savior. And Paul told the Galatian churches that if they added anything to Christ as a necessary part of salvation, “Christ shall profit you nothing” (Gal. 5:2).

Now let us get back to our text.

Last week we considered the words found in Col. 3:12, tender mercies, kindness, humility of mind, meekness, and longsuffering. But this did not exhaust the list of things he had to say. Look with me now at verse 13.

### **I. FORBEARANCE AND FORGIVENESS (Col. 3:13).**

Paul was recognizing here that not all Christians are easy to get along with. In fact, sometimes we can be downright obnoxious. We ought to be the easiest people to get along with, but sometimes we aren't. Before we get through this epistle we are going to see what Paul says about getting along with people in the world. For the moment that is another issue. But here he is speaking about our relationships with each other as the people of God. If every one of us would do what Paul said here, there would be a lot less trouble among the people of God. Paul was not saying that we need to excuse bad behavior, but he was saying that we need to be careful about our attitude toward other believers who rub us the wrong way. We are never to be unforgiving, never to carry grudges. We need to forgive each other like the Lord has forgiven each one of us. Think of the Lord's words from the Cross when He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

Regardless of how people may have sinned against us, it has been nothing compared with the way we have sinned against God. Through Christ God has forgiven us freely and fully. We are to do the same. How wonderful it is to be able to say to people when they come seeking our forgiveness, that we have forgiven them before they asked.

## II. LOVE (Col. 3:14).

This is the final garment which the Apostle Paul mentioned. “Above all” means *upon all*. So this is what gives true significance to all that the believer has been exhorted to “put on” up to this point. Without true love everything else that has been “put on” would be mere hypocrisy. Love is the “the bond,” that which keeps the other parts of the garment in place. And being “the bond of perfectness,” or *perfection* it is the evidence of spiritual maturity. Since the particular kind of love is not specified, it must refer to “the love of God” which “is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5). It is a many-sided love – love for God, love for Christ, love for the Word, love for righteousness, love for the Lord’s people, and a love to see the spiritual needs of unsaved people met through faith in Christ.

This would be a good place to read 1 Corinthians 13 to see the nature of the love of God.

## III. PEACE (Col. 3:15).

The better reading is, “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” The word “rule” means *to act as an umpire*. This verse has to do with guidance. The statement is an imperative, and it would seem that Paul was indicating that peace is the result of godliness. Often we have a mistaken feeling of peace when we are able to do what we want to do, or when it looks like circumstances are working out our way. But that can be a false sense of peace. God gives the peace of Christ when we are seeking to do His will. We need to always be concerned about peace because it is the Lord’s way of indicating to us, within our hearts, that we are doing His will because His peace in us confirms that.

The verb “rule” is in the third person singular, which means that each individual believer needs to be concerned about this, and being in the present tense it means *always rule*. It is to this we are called “in one body,” which is the church. So the instructions we are considering not only are fruitful for the individual believer, but for the church of Jesus Christ as a whole.

“And be ye thankful.” Lit. it means *become thankful*. Fausset, in the JFB commentary, says that Paul used this verb forty-one times in his epistles. So it is a major emphasis in his writings and one which we cannot afford

to overlook. How thankful we should be for our calling! Here in Colossians we have thanks referred to in Col. 1:3, 12; 2:7; here in 3:15, then in 17; and finally in 4:2.

Matthew Henry said,

To preserve in us this peaceable disposition, we must be thankful. The work of thanksgiving to God is such a sweet and pleasant work that it will help to make us sweet and pleasant towards all men.

Most of us are very deficient when it comes to praising the Lord. Consequently we overlook many of the blessings God gives us, and so we rob Him of glory that rightfully belongs to Him.

There are two more wonderful verses for us to consider. The first of these two has to do with:

#### **IV. THE WORD OF CHRIST (Col. 3:16).**

This phrase, “the Word of Christ,” is clearly a reference to the Scriptures, but it can mean *the Word from Christ*, i.e., the Word from Christ, or it can mean *the Word about Christ*. Actually we probably should take it both ways. When the Lord was with His disciples just shortly before His death, He told them, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12) – an obvious reference to the books which would be revealed later, the NT epistles. But our Lord also told the Jews in words which we find in John 5:39,

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life:  
and they are they which testify of Me.

This shows how important the Bible is.

But here the Apostle Paul was telling the believers at Colosse to “let the word of Christ dwell in them richly.” “Dwell,” as you might imagine, means *to be at home*, as opposed to being a stranger. Matthew Henry suggested the idea of not only keeping house, but keeping a good house. And “richly” means *abundantly*. We not only need the Word, but we need *much* of the Word. And this also is an imperative. Paul was not just speaking to all of the believers, but to each believer. And this will give us wisdom which is the ability to understand what the Lord wants us to be and to do. In other words, “in all wisdom” has to do with the application of the Word to our lives. But then the Apostle Paul did a very important thing. He related the Scriptures to singing, singing in the church, or

singing wherever the people of God are gathered together. Notice from this verse that singing has a twofold purpose in addition to the way it can benefit us. First, we are ministering to “one another,” in particular “teaching and admonishing one another.” We are to learn from our singing to each other, and we are to *admonish* one another in our singing. Paul used this same word in Col. 1:28 where it is translated “warning.” We need both, don’t we? Teaching and admonishing.

But what is the other purpose in our singing? We are to be “singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord”! “Grace” here is probably equal to thanksgiving. We minister to each other, and we minister to the Lord, as we sing “psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.” Psalms are from the book of Psalms. “Hymns” are music which have God as their object. “Spiritual songs” are songs which may be written later, but which are either made up from the words of Scripture, or fully in accord with the message given us in Scripture by the Holy Spirit. And we have to recognize that in these days when churches have gotten away from solid Bible teaching, they have also gotten away from godly, sanctifying, God-centered and God honoring music.

But we need to be careful that we are “singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord.” It is easy to sing wonderful hymns with great messages, but without really paying attention to what we are singing, nor to whom we are singing.

This is a tremendously important verse for the day in which we live. It contains truths that probably most of the Lord’s people have never even thought about.

And now we come to verse 17 where Paul was speaking about:

#### **V. WORDS AND DEEDS (Col. 3:17).**

This has to do with the way we talk, and what we do. But what does it mean to “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”? *It means to talk and walk under the authority of the Lord Jesus, and in order to please and glorify Him.* This brings us back to the Word, doesn’t it? *We are to talk like the Lord wants us to talk, and we are to walk like the Lord wants us to walk.* This includes all talking and all walking, or living – no exceptions!

How does all of this react upon us? Is it a burdensome life, or is it a

happy way to live? Obviously it must be the happiest of lives because we are to do this “giving thanks to God and the Father by Him,” *i.e.*, by Christ.

**Concl:** As we close today, let me call your attention to the way the Apostle Paul referred to our Savior. He is Jesus because He came to save us from our sins. See Matt. 1:21. But He is also our Lord, “the Lord Jesus.” He is our sovereign Lord. He is our Master. We have been reading “the Word of Christ.” It is the Word which is to “dwell richly” in us, “in all wisdom.” Dwelling in us means that it is there to stay. Our hearts are to be the home of the Word of God. If we faithfully abide by the Word, learning more and more about our heavenly Father and our precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, then we will find that our love for Them will be so great that we will have no time for those who do not come to us with the true message of God and of Christ, and the message which shows us our great need for God’s saving grace in Christ.

Whatever Colossians 3 may show us about the real needs in our lives, let us earnestly seek God’s blessing in bringing our lives in full accord with God’s will.