

Putting the old off and putting the new on

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[0:00] Amen. Just wanted, before we jump into this passage, to remind ourselves of what have we looked at over these few weeks when we've been thinking about the subject of growing in Christ.

So the first week, week one, we thought about the vine. Jesus stood up and said, I am the true vine. And so we thought about how that was a picture of our union with Christ.

Jesus is the vine, he's the plant, and we're the branches, we're attached to Christ, we're united to him, and he calls us there to bear fruit.

And we saw that that bearing fruit process might be painful. He prunes us, and he does that through testing, times of trial.

But though that pruning may be painful, the growing is fruitful. It can bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, etc. In week two, we thought last week about a new relationship that we have, a new relationship with Christ, with his children, with dearly love by God, the Father who lavishes love on us so much that we should be called children of God.

[1:17] A new relationship with God, and a new relationship with sin. And in thinking from that, springing from that, we're turning to this passage this morning, which tells us that we need to have a new wardrobe.

We'll see that as we go through the passage in a moment. But firstly, we need to see some other things. Now, I don't know if you've ever watched this TV show, Sort Your Life Out with Stacey Solomon.

Some of you have. That's great. I really enjoyed the last series. I've never seen it before, was introduced to it by my wife, and very gladly so.

It's amazing. Stacey and her team go to people's houses where they are not functioning well. The houses are full of clutter all over the place.

It's not good. And so Stacey and her team work with the families to pack up boxes of stuff, and they're put into these big removal vans, taken off to a warehouse.

[2:26] And as you can see on the picture behind, the family will walk into the warehouse, and they see all their stuff from their home laid out. And they're like, can't believe how much stuff we had in our home.

And it's a bit scary when you're watching it to think, how big a warehouse would we need for all our stuff? And so begins the sorting. And they have to get rid of about 50% of their stuff.

That's the target they have. Well, this morning, in this final sermon on the subject of growing in Christ, I think this passage is a bit of a sort your life out passage.

We're called to get rid of some stuff. But as we are going to see, we're also called to put on some new stuff, to get that new wardrobe.

This is a sort your life out passage. And we see that it is so, because firstly, we see we're in a new home.

[3:30] We're in a new home. Have a look at verses 1 to 4 with me. Since then you have been raised with Christ. Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated.

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 with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you will also appear with him in glory. These four verses are another picture that it helped to explain our union with Christ.

We're not just united with Christ in his death, our sin nailed to his cross, and in his resurrection, we've got new life in him.

But look at where our home is. Verse 1. Since then you have been raised with Christ. Set your hearts on things above.

[4:46] We've been raised with Christ. And where is Christ? Well, he is seated at the right hand of God. Christ is seated in heaven. And with him, we're united.

And it's like we're seated in heaven with him too. You've moved. Your address isn't 17-something Brighton.

Your address is in Christ. This helped me to picture it a little bit. The big circle. That's Christ. And look, you're there. You're that small circle. You're in Christ. You're safe in him. Surrounded and protected by him.

He is your life. You have your home in Christ. Our life is hidden in Christ.

[5:47] That's what verse 3 says. And that's just a picture of us being hidden in him. Hidden in him. He is our home. And that means each of us can say in response to the question, what is your only confidence in life and death?

Your only confidence in life and death, it is that I am not my own. But I belong body and soul in life and death to my faithful savior, Jesus Christ.

He is so much our home that it's like we don't belong to ourselves anymore. We belong to him. He is ours and we are his.

We're hidden in Christ. Now, like last week, when we saw there was a now and not yet aspect to our passage, that's the same here in this passage.

There's a now and not yet aspect. See, now we are hidden in Christ. Now we are seated with Christ in heaven. But now we also do live on this earth, don't we?

[7:00] Now we also do live in decaying bodies. Now sin is still lurking within our hearts. And so we need to think about how we live now.

But we can also look forward to the not yet of this passage. Verse 4, when Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

And now a not yet aspect. See, one day our union with Christ, Christ our life, will reach its consummation as Christ appears.

And we get to dwell with him forever in the new creation. And then those decaying bodies and that sin that's lurking within our hearts will be completely done away with.

But this passage helps us to sort out our lives now. And particularly helps us to deal with that sin that is there.

[8:02] When you're sorting out your home. I wonder if you're naturally a hoarder. Or whether you're someone who ruthlessly throws things out.

I know that I'm naturally someone who wants to keep things. Thinking one day they'll be useful. Or they hold a very dear precious memory to me.

But in a Christian life, there is no room for hoarding. Not in terms of sin. Not in terms of our old life. We have to be ruthless with it. And this passage helps us to see that. In verse 5, we're told put to death. That word put to death, you could use the word mortification.

That would be more literal. It means killing. Put to death is a very helpful translation. But just notice it's brutal. It means killing.

[9:07] And so that leads us to our second point. We have a new home, but we need to deal with the stuff from our old home. We need to put sin to death. Put sin to death.

Now, having moved home recently, I'm still getting used to the fact that we're not our old address. And so sometimes it's been in my mind to start walking back to the old address. Or when I've been driving, thinking, oh, I need to drive to our old address. But then realizing, no, I don't live there anymore.

I live in the new address. And this passage tells us, don't go back to the old address. Don't go back, in fact, put to death anything that was from that old address.

This passage helps us to see sin as it really is. Not something that can be played around with.

[10:10] No, something that needs to be dealt with radically. Kill it. John Owen said, always be killing sin or sin will be killing you.

So a great warning. This passage. Put to death. See sin as it really is. That even means those sins that feel acceptable to us.

So I was thinking about this this week. I was getting really frustrated up there with the printer in church. I sent something off to print.

And it just wasn't printing. I was like, what is going on? And if David wasn't up there, I think I would have shouted, why won't you print, printer? Frustrated that my plans were failing.

But then I was also having this passage in mind and thinking, that frustration and giving no thought to God in this matter, that's part of the old me.

[11:19] I didn't even think to stop and pray, Lord, I know that you're in control of all things. Please give me patience in this. Or please, it's your will with this print.

Rather, I was thinking my plans are completely failed. And it was making me frustrated and angry and irritable. And we may excuse that.

It happens. Technology can be unreliable at times. It happens. But if we're not giving any thought to God, if that frustration that I'm feeling isn't driving me to pray, then I think there's sin there.

And so it's not acceptable. That's part of my old life. When I used to ignore God. But now I'm His.

We need to see sin as it really is.

We need to see that it doesn't belong. It doesn't belong. Verse 7. You used to walk in these ways. In the life that you once lived.

[12:30] It doesn't belong. That's your old address. That's where you once lived. Verse 9. Do not lie to each other since you have taken off your old self with its practices and put on the new self.

It doesn't belong. Sin is to be killed. It's to be put to death. At the moment, we're in the season of spring.

And we're particularly enjoying the season of spring this year. It's wonderful. And it's wonderful in springtime when you see the flowers popping up, a blossom on the trees, the sun shining, feeling the warmth of it again.

But if spring was just the same as the old, the winter, it would be a terrible time of year, wouldn't it? And just so with the Christian lives. If we came to Christ in faith and nothing changed, then what would be the point of us turning to Christ?

[13:40] If we were just walking about in the same old ways, doing the same old things that we were before being in Christ, what's the point of being a Christian if it's not changed us?

But this passage says, you have been changed. You're living at a new address. And so live like you're at this new address.

Paul says, put to death. See sin as it really is. It doesn't belong. Mortify it.

Kill it. For the wrath of God is against it. Verse 6. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming because of sin.

The sins mentioned in this passage. It's the greed, the anger, the lies, the wrath of God is being revealed. But mercifully, if we've moved a dress, if we find that our lives are in Christ, mercifully, we're not heading for the wrath of God forever.

[14:50] For Jesus has taken that wrath of God for our sin. And we're now hidden in him, covered in his righteousness. But hopefully, that helps us to see how serious the sin is.

If the wrath of God is against sin, then don't play around with it. It doesn't belong to us anymore. We're in Christ.

Christ. This passage shows us we're at war with sin. We're at war with our old nature that lurks within.

Put to death. Kill it. We're in a battle to the death with it. We're at war with those things in our inner person. So verse 5, what are those things?

Whatever belongs to your earthly nature. And this list isn't full. It's just giving us some examples. So first of all, sexual immorality, impurity, lust.

[15:57] So those things that lurk within us, those things perhaps we don't want to talk about really. And yet so many of us struggle with.

Things that the culture around us wants to normalize and celebrate. Adverts on TV. You could say, asexualized.

If you go and watch some comedy, there could be jokes, which are really sexual immorality, impurity, lust, just making fun of it.

Brighton pride events, celebrating sexual immorality. We live in a culture where anything sort of goes. Things just seem normal.

It seems normal to indulge our sexual fantasies. But this passage here says, don't play with it. Put it to death. Jesus, in speaking about lust, he says, take radical action, doesn't he?

[17:07] If your eyes cause you to sing, gouge them out. Now I heard, and I don't know if I'd completely made this up, so I checked on Google, and it's a true story.

In 2011, an Italian churchgoer, during a church service, apparently gouged out his eye to the shock of the congregation. Thankfully, his eyesight was restored.

But I don't think Jesus meant to literally gouge out our eyes. Otherwise, potentially, not many of us here would have many eyes left. But the point is, take radical action.

Elsewhere, Paul says to Timothy, flee from sexual immorality. Flee. Get out of that room. Turn your phone off. Delete the app. Whatever it takes, flee from it.

Flee from it, and run to Jesus. He is your home. And there's more. Verse 5.

[18:14] Evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. I wonder if you thought of greed as idolatry. Greed, whether it's for financial greed, or for reputation, or for food, or whatever it is, it's desiring something more than we desire God.

And so, in that respect, it's idolatry. That belongs to the old self, the old ways, before we found our home in Christ. But now, we found our home in Christ.

We want him, and him alone, to be on the throne of our hearts. And so, put to death greed, he says. And then there's more, in verse 8.

But now you must also rid yourselves, of all such things as these, anger, rage, malice. There's a bit more about, how we relate to others. Malice, isn't a word I normally use, so I had to look it up.

It's that desire, to harm someone. Which, perhaps, if we're feeling angry, or in a rage, perhaps we could have that desire, to harm someone.

[19:31] To see someone failing. To see someone falling, from their position. To see someone hurt. Perhaps we think, we would never, act on those thoughts, but this passage, helps us to see, those thoughts are sinful.

And so, we need to cry, Lord have mercy, forgive me, for those sinful thoughts. And then there's, the sins of our mouths, which follow, in verse 8.

Slander, filthy language, from your lips. Do not lie, to each other. If you were to read, the book of James, in the New Testament, he talks about, taming the tongue.

He talks about, how in one moment, our tongues, can be singing praise to God, as we are doing, this morning, but in another moment, they can set a whole forest, on fire, through our lies, through our slander, through our filthy language.

And I wonder if, this was written, to us today, if it would say, and the things, that you type. because we, don't always, have verbal communication, we type things, on our phones.

[20:51] Perhaps, things that we'd never, say to someone, in person, yet we're very happy, to type them. And so we need to say, Lord, have mercy.

Lord, help me to put, these things to death. death. Don't play with sin. Flee from it.

Paul says, instead of, of, of, turning to these ways, set your hearts, on things above. And who's above?

Christ is above. He is seated, at the right hand of God. That's where your, life is. And so set your minds, on Christ, who is your life.

One way we can set, our minds on Christ, who is our life, is by, taking, the Lord's Supper, as we're going to do, this morning. Having our eyes, fixed, again on the Lord Jesus, and his work, on our behalf, because we are sinful.

[22:00] Seeing that Christ himself, was put to death, for our sins. And as you flee to Christ, remember that he is with you.

He is with you by his spirit, and because he's with you, by his spirit, he's given you the resources, that you need to be putting things to death. So, Romans 8, verse 13, Paul uses that put to death, that mortification word again.

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the spirit, you put to death, the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

It's by the spirit, the spirit, the spirit, of Jesus, at work in us, that we can put to death, the misdeeds of the body.

Puritan John Owen, I quoted from him earlier, and quoted because he wrote a book, which was literally called, The Mortification of Sin. It's worth a read, not an easy read, but it is worth going through.

[23:12] And he says this in the book, all other ways of mortification are in vain. Men, that's humans, may attempt this work based on other principles, but they will come short.

It is a work of the spirit, he says, and it is by him alone, that we're to experience victory. Think of all sorts of ways, to try and put to death these things, but if we're not looking to the Lord Jesus, if we're not looking to the spirit, who is at work in us, then we're going to struggle.

Elsewhere, Paul writes about the armor of God, in Ephesians. And in that passage, he talks about the spirit again. And he says, take up the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

So in the word of God, we've got a resource that we need to put to death sin. We've put a sword, the sword of the spirit, the word of God, which then reminded me of Jesus in the wilderness, who had the spirit of God with him.

And as he fought the temptations of the devil, he used the word of God. He used the scripture, the sword of the spirit. And so we need the spirit's help, and we can use scripture.

[24:42] So one way we can train ourselves for the war against sin, it is with scripture. And that seems to me, we need to be reading scripture.

We need to be remembering scripture. To arm ourselves in the fight. So in the face of sexual immorality, how wonderful it would be if we could remember Matthew 5 verse 8, blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Or in the face of greed, how good it would be to remind ourselves that we don't need to be greedy for other things, because we've got everything in Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in him.

In Christ, we don't lack a thing. When anger comes, how good would it be to remember, in your anger, do you not sin, do you not let the sun go down while you're angry?

In the face of lies, remember the verses we've read this morning. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.

[26:07] Just some suggestions to you of verses that would be good to get in our heads, get on the walls of our home or whatever we need to remind ourselves, to help us, to be putting to death sin, because sin is serious.

But also remember that our home is in Christ. Remember, verse 3, for you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

And so as we face the battle, the war against sin, remember who we are. Remember that our identity isn't found in that sin, it's found in Christ.

But for knowing our life is in Christ, we can be reminded of the living relationship we have with the God of heaven. And if we know Christ, we know the pearl of greatest price, a greater treasure, a greater joy and a greater satisfaction than any sin can ever bring to us.

Knowing our life is in Him will help us to see sin as it really is. Ugly and not belonging to us.

[27:40] Now we're in Christ. And then finally, we need to get this new wardrobe.

On a more positive note, we need to get this new wardrobe. In this sort your life out passage, as we've seen that we need to remember we have moved, address, our home is in Christ, to remember the moving home often involves new furniture.

And it's a chance to get rid of the old and bring in the new. And here it talks about new clothes that we need.

New clothes that are in the likeness of our beautiful Saviour, Jesus Christ. So let's read what they are. Verse 12. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Bear with 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.

[29:08] unity. So we need to get a new wardrobe. We need to be wearing the right clothes as a Christian. Just as this morning, those preparing to run the marathon won't have thought I'm going to wear a big old coat and a big woolly jumper and some jeans.

That's not going to be appropriate for them running the marathon. So as Christian people, we read here the clothes that we should be wearing, that we should be clothed with, the compassion, the kindness, the humility, gentleness, and patience, the forgiving one another, the love.

We don't want to be known for those old, dirty clothes of sin. For Christians this morning, we've got this new home, this new identity in Christ, which means, verse 12, we are chosen.

Chosen before the world began. God thought of you and thought, I am going to save them. They are going to be mine. Christians, this morning, we're holy.

God is perfectly holy without any sin. And because of the Lord Jesus and his righteousness, we too are counted as holy.

[30:44] And we are dearly loved, as we thought about last week, so loved by the Father that we're called his children. We're in the royal family.

Christ is on the throne and you're with him there. You wouldn't expect the royal family to be going around and wearing filthy, dirty rags, would you?

so as people in the royal family, as we are chosen, holy and dearly loved, as we are secure in our status in Christ, we can then work hard at clothing ourselves with these new beautiful clothes in order that we may grow in Christ.

clothing ourselves with Christ's character of compassion, kindness, of humility, of patience. Just thinking about a few of these things, we won't think about every single one, but compassion.

It's all about how God has his compassion on you. Sometimes we read in the Gospels of Jesus' compassion, how he's deeply moved in his inner being towards people, particularly the outsider, those that other people wouldn't associate with.

[32:15] And all of us were once outsiders, but because of God's compassion, he has brought you in. Because of his compassion, he chose to go to the cross and be nailed to a cross of woods.

And he's had compassion on you and forgiving you of your every sin and making you his. And so shouldn't we therefore have compassion on others?

Compassion on one another, particularly where we're struggling. Compassion on those who are unlike us, those who are different from us. What about humility?

As we think about the Lord Jesus on the cross, we can find that as we look at him, our pride falls away because whatever we boasted in before, our own achievements, our own goodness, our own righteousness, we see that we're sinners who deserve the wrath of God and only Jesus could bear that in our place.

And so as we see the cross, there is no place for pride. And so seeing Christ on the cross is a good place to begin as we think about growing in humility.

[33:48] humility. Talks about patience here in this passage. Hasn't God been so patient with us? Even as we brought into the family of God and told to put to death sin, we still do sin.

Hasn't God been so patient with us in continuing to be merciful to us and not saying, I'm done with you. Our sins, they are many, but His mercy is more.

And so because of that, we ought to then bear with each other in love. Verse 13, bear with each other and forgive one another.

If any of you has a grievance against someone, forgive as the Lord forgave you. C.S.

Lewis says this, to be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.

[35:05] That should be our motivation to forgive. Even the deepest hurts. because in Christ you have been forgiven completely for your sin, past, present, and future.

These are the new clothes, the new wardrobe that we as Christian people are to have. And all these clothes are wrapped up in the clothing of love.

Verse 14, and over all these virtues put on love which binds them all together in perfect unity. This is all about love for one another and love for the Lord.

God is all to have to have the new self. And so as we're wrapping up, all this putting to death the old and putting on the new self, it can feel like it's hard.

It can feel like we're on our own. But we're not fighting alone. We have the Spirit of God at work within us.

[36:17] But also we do have one another. And this passage reminds us of that. Verse 16, let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

And so whether it's in the formal preaching on a Sunday or whether it's through one-to-one conversation, or group conversations with one another, through the singing together that we do on a Sunday.

This is all helping us to remind one another we're not alone in this war. We're together. Together we're in Christ and together we're putting to death the old and to put on the new.

And so being here as we sing, have you thought that we're not just singing praise up to God, we're singing truths to one another?

Isn't that precious? precious? And perhaps you're here this morning and there's a particular sin you're really struggling with and you just don't know what to do with it.

[37:45] But perhaps you need to find a trusted Christian friend, perhaps here in the church, you can say, can I chat with you? And just someone that you know you can be honest with, you can be accountable to, the temptations, the battles with sin that you face, in order to help one another grow in Christ, to help one another look to him, look to the help of the Spirit, to grow in him.

So don't struggle alone. And secondly, know that we're on the winning side. Do you see that in this passage?

Verse 1, since then you have been raised with Christ. That's past tense. If we have come to Christ in faith, we have been raised with him.

that is our new identity, that is our new home, and that's not changing. Even when the struggle is fierce, the warfare seems so strong, and we don't feel like we can stand, you have been raised with Christ.

And it gets better because the not yet is true for us too. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

[39:17] That's not a, you might appear with him in glory if you've put to death enough sin. That is a, you will appear with him in glory. And so if we're struggling, know that we will find one day an end to that struggle.

for we will appear with Christ, our life in glory. And that can give us great hope as we're seeking to grow in Christ.

We're going to respond together by singing to God and to one another this hymn, May the mind of Christ my saviour, live in me from day to day so that by his love and power it will control all that I do and say.

We'll stand and sing.

sing. Let's stand sing. Amen.