

# Colossians: The Supremacy of Christ (Col. 3:5-11)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 13 July 2025

Preacher: Scott Liddell

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good morning, church. Today we are going to be, if you're a guest with us, in Colossians chapter 3. We're going to be looking at verse 5 here in a moment. Before we do, I want to cover where we're going in today's message.

We're going to be talking about what is it to be a new man in Christ? What is it that the believer in Christ is to embody, to exemplify, to emanate before other people, to embody?

What is it that the new man in Christ is to embody? We're going to look at two things that the believer in Christ is supposed to embody, and then secondly, we're going to look at, or thirdly, we're going to look at how.

How do we do that? But if you have a copy of Scripture with you, I want to read the text that will be our message today. Colossians chapter 3. Look with me in verse 5.

Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming.

[ 1 : 1 0 ] In these, you too once walked when you were living in them. But now, you must put them all away. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth.

Do not lie to one another. Seeing that you have put off the old self and its practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here, there is not Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free. But Christ is all and in all.

What is it that the new man in Christ is to embody? Firstly, we see in our text, the person in Christ, the new man, is to be a morally pure man.

The top of the verse in verse 5 says, Put to death, therefore. There are some things that, presuppositions that Paul has already spoken of.

[ 2 : 1 3 ] In the book of Colossians, Pastor Jay spoke on these two passages. In his previous two messages, he has shared these with us. Look with us, the presuppositions that Paul has to say, Therefore, put to death what is earthly in you.

What is he, what are the presuppositions? Look with me first in Colossians 2, verse 20. The first reality is, if with Christ you died, you could also read it, since with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of this world.

In Christ you have died to the elemental spirits of this world. That's a presupposition. Put to death what's earthly in you, because you have died in Christ.

Christ died. Secondly, second reality, chapter 3, verse 1. If then, or you could also read it, since then you have been raised with Christ.

You've been raised with Christ. Sin is dead. You've been made alive in Christ. Colossians 3, verse 3, from last Sunday as well.

[ 3 : 2 4 ] For you have died, and your life is hidden in Christ in God. For you have died, and your life is hidden in Christ in God. So therefore, put to death that which is earthly in you.

Or put to death, you could simply say, put to death sin. That's the command. He opens up with the command, with the presuppositions that we've already talked about, that Paul has already spoken of in the book of Colossians.

Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you. This is similar to what Paul also wrote in Romans 6, 11 through 13. Paul writes this in Romans. Very similarly.

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unforgiveness, but present yourself to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

Put to death what is earthly in you. Put to death sin. That is the command. And we are to be, what is this new man in Christ to be?

[ 4 : 41 ] Morally pure. Look at the list of sins that begins. Sexual immorality, impurity, passions, evil desires, covetousness, which is idolatry. The top of the list is sexual immorality.

Put to death. Render mortally dead in you sin. It is, it's a broad term, this term, sexual immorality, for sexual sin.

It includes, but it is not limited to that which is pornographic images, whether it print or online, whether in writings, in novels, or websites. It's sexual activity that is outside of marriage, that is only to be in within marriage, whether it be a girlfriend, boyfriend, fiancée, a friend, or just another.

You're to put this to death. And our culture is saturated with immorality. Billboards, songs, movies, entertainment, I don't need to mention them all.

But we are saturated with immorality in our culture. The second two words are impurity. It moves to motives now.

[ 5 : 51 ] Not just the sin, but now the motives. Impurity. This is generally a term for immorality, and it's beyond the act, but it's the evil thoughts. It's the evil intentions of one mind.

Matthew 5 says it this way, But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust intent has already committed adultery in his heart, with her in his heart. Evil behavior begins with evil thoughts. Therefore, the battle against all sin, especially sexual sin, begins in the mind. The third and fourth motives there mentioned in the list are passions and evil desires. These are similar words.

Perhaps one is physical, one is more on the mental side of the same vice. The fifth one is covetousness. Covetousness and covetousness. The antidote to covetousness is contentment.

A content person will not violate another person sexually or anything that that person may own. In the book, Kevin DeYoung wrote a book entitled The Hole in Your Holiness.

[ 6 : 52 ] We're together as a staff. We're reading this currently. And he likens modern immorality to high places in Israel. You know that in Judah and in Israel, a good king would take reign over the nation of Israel or Judah, and they would rid the land of idols.

And this was God was well pleased. And because idols represented a false religion. And God was pleased when a king would help Israel be a righteous people and rid the land of high places.

But often, even good kings like Asa, we would find that despite much progress, that even good kings like Asa did in Israel, they couldn't muster the courage to get rid of high places.

Or it was so normative that they couldn't even see it anymore. Imagine, in the nation of Israel, every high mound or precipice on something, there would be stones erected and an idol put there.

And people would come and offer sacrifices. But it was so ubiquitous. It was everywhere in Israel that it just became normal. It's just part of our culture. High places were normal. And so we read of King Asa, verse 14.

[ 8 : 09 ] 1 Kings 15, verse 14 says this. But the high places were not taken away. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was wholly true to the Lord all of his days. Isn't that a sad commentary?

Here's this man who loved the Lord all his days and yet somehow missed the high places. The high places were this symbol of compromise for Israel.

The ubiquitous nature of the high places became deeply ingrained in the culture of Israel. They seemed to be normal. Even good kings did not even think to remove them or they lacked the courage to do so.

And the people began to see what they really represented. The worship of a false god. And so sexual immorality, may I propose, are those high places even for us in America.

And isn't it interesting then how verse 5 concludes? Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you. Sexual immorality, impurity, passions, evil desires, covetousness. Which is idolatry.

[ 9 : 18 ] Immorality in all of its forms, when we commit these sins, is a high act of treason. Giving worship to another.

Giving worship to an idol. Something very earthly that pagans give worship to. Not the people of God. Instead of fleeing immorality, we have a temptation to entertain or be entertained by immorality.

Immorality. We entertain immorality instead of killing it. Let me illustrate. A couple of weekends ago, my wife and I were at a wedding.

And there was a seating assignment for the reception at the wedding. And so my wife and I were seated with some great young students. Recent graduates from college.

And they had all their future is ahead of them. And so we were visiting with this couple. And it was great. I enjoyed getting to know them. But it was obvious as they spoke that they were living together.

[10:19] And they were planning to move out of town. And the town they were going to go move to, they were looking to buy an apartment together. And yet they were engaged. They weren't even married. But they spoke of it as plainly as just this is normal.

This is what people do. And yet that's a grievous sin. And not only did they speak of it as if everyone, it was acceptable to everyone.

But it was also said in such a way that everyone should be happy for them. And so it was so, it's the high places. We don't even see it anymore.

It's everywhere. Everywhere. And if not careful, even believers in Christ can accept it as acceptable. Romans 8, 13.

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death, the deeds are in the body. And you will live. Why kill sin?

[11:22] Well, the text is helpful for us. Look with me in verse 6. On account of these things. Here's reason, motivation number one. Why kill sin? On account of these, the wrath of God is coming.

It informs the believer that you have been spared from God's wrath. Remember that the wrath of God is on sin. You're no longer that.

How do we know? Because there's motivation number two in verse 7. Listen, these things you too once walked in. All this immorality. You, as the Colossian believers, this was a part of the Roman saturated culture.

It was just full of immorality. And so it was normative to you. And you too once walked in these things when you were living in them. But he's, the presupposition is, but you're not anymore.

You've put to death those things. Don't return to those things. This is to create a grand contrast in their mind. Before Christ, this is what pervades our culture and even our lives.

[12:31] And we were affected by it. But now in Christ, we're dead to sin and alive to God. And this is not even to be named among us anymore. This immorality. The wrath of God is coming for these, on account of these things.

Okay? And these things, we once walked in when we were living in them. But not anymore. I'm going to conclude the message with some application.

So I'm going to move on in the text. But what is the new man in Christ supposed to embody? Notice moral purity.

We just talked about that. But also notice in our text, we're going to continue. There's to be a social purity about us. Colossians 3, 8 through 9.

But now you must put them all away. Not only immorality, but then he's going to go on to perhaps what is under the surface of those things. Anger, wrath, anger, anger, and the truth. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth.

[13:34] Do not lie to one another. These are sins. Why do I call this social purity? There's to be a moral purity, but there's a social purity.

Because these are sins that we commit against one another. Not just our own body. Not just our own body. And notice instead of killing these things, we're to say put them all away.

Put it away. In the inclusive language of all. No exception. If it's sin, put it away. Put a separation between your new identity in Christ and your old man.

Anger tops the list. It's this deep, smoldering, resentful bitterness. The kind that rehearses the wrong that someone has done to you over and over again.

I don't know what ladies struggle with, but myself and other men as I have spoken to, even as placid and kind as men can be, struggle with anger.

[14:55] Wrath. What happens when anger outbursts? That's wrath. It's the sudden outburst of anger. It's the explosion of anger.

Malice. It's the vicious nature that is bent on doing harm to others. And what does it look like when there is a vicious nature that is bent on doing others harm?

What does it look like when it becomes visible? Well, it's the very next word. Slander. It's the public expression of malice. People are to be treated with dignity because they are made in the image of God.

God, and our speech is never to be marred with insults and disparaging remarks. It's so humbling to read James 3 about our mouth, that with the same mouth comes blessing and cursing.

Obscene talk. When does malice come out? Well, it's obscene speech. The result of anger, wrath, and malice is obscene speech. Ephesians 5, 4 says it this way, Let there be no filthiness, nor foolish talk, nor crude joking, which is out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

[16:22] Gratitude is the antidote to obscene speech. Be thankful. Be grateful. And then do not lie to one another concludes the list.

Satan is the father of lies. Lying characterizes Satan, not God, not the child of God. When we lie, we are imitating Satan, not our heavenly father.

Do not deceive. It is to lead someone something to believe that is not true. It's historical revisionism. Don't do it. It's not true. And so we're to kill this, and we're to put it away. And I want us to be careful how we domesticate sin with our language.

You say, I struggle with, I have a problem with, I make mistakes, I have wandering eyes. I slipped up. Everyone has shortcomings. I'm doing, I was just doing my thing.

[17:27] And we domesticate sin by saying these things. And it minimizes, it trivializes, it makes sin ordinary. It obscures the need for repentance.

It obscures the gravity of sin. Let me illustrate it this way. Let's assume I'm a pathetic, everyone's on a safari, and I'm a guide on the safari, and I'm not good at my job.

And so I take these 20 tourists, and I have another guide that's not very good either, and we take the 20 tourists on a safari, and we said, hey, we're going to go deep into the Serengeti, and so tonight we're going to make camp down by the river.

Because we all know animals go to the river, so I want to give my tourists the best opportunity to see the best animals, and so I bed down by the river. And so at night, in the early morning hours, the sun is just cresting, and my other guide says to me, and my job is to keep everybody safe, and as the guide, and my fellow guide says to me, pst, Scott, hey, look, there's a critter.

Now, I think I'm about to look outside the tent and see something fluffy, and something that I would want to pet, and something I would want to grab my camera for, but instead the guide is saying, there's a critter, and it's a crocodile.

[18:57] And one of the tourists has his legs outside the camp, and the crocodile is crawling up, about ready to grab one of those legs. And it's my job to keep everyone safe.

That's not a critter. That's a crocodile. Like it, that's not wandering eyes. That's sin. And we can domesticate sin with our language, and we numb our need for repentance.

We numb our need to confess sin. We numb the gravity of sin. Sin is not critters. It's crocodiles. It's deadly. It'll kill you. So instead of saying, I have wandering eyes, one should say, it is with lust in my heart that I committed adultery against another.

That's what I need forgiveness for, not wandering eyes, per se. Okay. So how?

[20:16] How do we put to death sin? How do we have nothing to do with this? We're given our reasons in verse 9 and 10. How? See that you put off the old self with its practices, and you put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator.

So how do we be this new man that embodies moral purity and social purity? How do we kill sin and put these things all away?

Well, there's a metaphor of clothing change here happening. You can read the words, put off the old self and put on the new self. It's as if there's a clothing change.

And what he's speaking to is, and here's the how, it's by remembering there is a new identity that you've had. There is a change of your identity.

Something fundamentally has been altogether different now that you've come to faith in Christ. You were once dead in your sin, but now you've been made alive unto God.

[21:24] And because of your faith in Christ, you have died with your old nature, so you can put that off now. Change that clothes. And put on the fact that you have union with Christ now.

That your predisposition now is actually to honor Christ with your life, not to sin. You're not to have sin have dominion over you anymore. That is who we are in Christ.

That is who you are if you've believed in Christ. That's who I am. So what's the encouragement that it sounds impossible to kill sin, put it all away? There is help.

And I want to say it this way. God never separates what he has called you to do that God has not already done. Let me look at Romans 8.13 with you.

God has never called you to do something, to kill sin, to put it away, of something he has not already done. And look at how it's said in this in verse 13 of 8 in Romans. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

[ 22 : 30 ] But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. God doesn't separate what he's called you to do that he has not already done.

He's already done it. He's given you the empowerment, the enablement. You've been made alive unto God. The Spirit will help you. Secondly, Galatians 2.20, this is how Paul says it in Galatians 2.20.

I've been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Why is this so important? Because if you don't believe that, there's two ditches that you'll likely fall off into. One is passivity. One ditch is passivity.

It's the thing that people just say, well, I'm going to obey God, but I'm just going to let go and let God and Jesus take the wheel and just you do it, Lord.

[ 23 : 36 ] You kill the sin for me. So then what it does is it says it's a convenient excuse not to kill sin because I would be more holy, but God has not done it for me.

So God's to blame for my sin, and so my lack of holiness is really God's fault. That's passivity. The other ditch, and as a recovering legalist and the resident expert, the recovering Pharisee here at 4th, is legalism.

The other ditch is legal. Passivity and legalism. Legalism would say trying to make yourself approved in God's sight through self-effort alone, apart from Christ. That's legalism.

So the wrong motivation is I obey to be accepted. The proper motivation for the saint is this. I'm accepted because of the obedience of Christ on the cross.

And because of that, I want to obey. He has called me in time. He forgave me. He justified me.

[ 24 : 43 ] He has promised to glorify me. Because of what He has done for me, I want to live for His glory, and I want to kill sin. I want to put sin away and turn from my sin.

And I can only do that because Christ has already gone before me and empowers me by His Spirit, I want to live for Him. That is Christianity.

And it avoids the two ditches. Okay. How? Because we remember there's been a change of identity.

Secondly, because we're being renewed by knowledge. Look with me in verse 10. Put on the new self. And what about that new self?

Well, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator. Being renewed refers to being a new quality.

[ 25 : 46 ] It is becoming qualitatively better. This is the new quality that has never existed before. Unlike who we were prior to Christ, ever decaying, ever deprived nature, the new self is continually being renewed by God.

How? In the knowledge after the image of its creator. The knowledge of Christ. I... I look forward to the fall.

I want us to be a people who read God's word. So if I were to summarize it in three disciplines, I would say this. Hear God's voice.

Read scripture. Enjoy God's voice. Pray. And be with God's people. Live in community. Don't neglect being with God's people.

And I look forward to the fall. Pastor Jay has helped us and our elders going to be leading these regional groups this fall studying scripture together.

[ 26 : 52 ] And we're going to be going through a book of 1 Peter. So we're going to have a sermon series of 1 Peter. But collectively, we as a church are going to be looking at the book of 1 Peter. And you'll get one of these books. And there's a way to study 1 Peter.

And it's going to just lead you through the... And if you've never studied scripture and read scripture and been in community and talked about it, I just look forward to the fall. Let's do this together.

And this is a tool that we'll all have to study scripture together. Because what are we doing? The new self which is being renewed in the knowledge and the image after its creator.

And we want to know the creator well, read God's word, and be renewed in our mind to kill sin. This is the benefit.

One of the benefits of scripture. Of knowing the Lord. Okay. I'm going to have a prolonged application here. I'm going to try to do this as fast as I can.

[ 27 : 50 ] But let's look at then how do we then kill sin? If you said, Scott, how do we do this? I've just given you what Colossians says. I want to also turn to Romans 13, 14 with us and then we'll conclude this way.

But put on the Lord Jesus and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. If you were to ask me, Scott, when you have folks in your office and even in my own life, what is it about sin that is so difficult?

And I would say this. For people to break and I would say this. It's that we often make provision to sin. Let me illustrate it this way. My wife and I went to, we took a 3,000 mile road trip last summer and we went to several national parks and we had to keep moving because to travel that far and to see the national parks down to Colorado and Utah and Wyoming, Montana and we just made this big road trip and we were going to camp and if you've ever been camping, there's some provisions you need to make in order to have a successful camping trip.

You can have a detestable one. That's easy. But to have a successful one, you need stuff. I mean, camping chairs and tents and something to cook on and all the utensils to cook and all the things to make a fire and all that kind of stuff.

And we were to do this every night. We would set up a camp and then do the national park and then tear it all down and keep moving and keep driving. And we really enjoyed it but there's a lot of provisions you need to make.

[ 29 : 20 ] And so what if we said, hey, we'll meet you in Utah. Just come by the camp. And you were to come and all these provisions were done for you and you get to enjoy a hot meal and enjoy some time around the fire and all this.

That would be so easy. All the provision has been done for you to enjoy the camping site. May I argue that's what it is like often for us to sin.

All the provisions have been just made for you and all you got to do is plop yourself in a seat and then just sin. Because there's a lot of things that were done before in order to make that possible. And so for us to avoid sin think about all the things that make it so easy for us just to sit down and sin. So I'm going to break those down.

What are those things that may go neglected that we can think about for us to avoid sin to make no provision for the flesh? None. Number one.

[ 30 : 22 ] By nurturing sinful desires rather than mortifying them. Sin begins in the heart.

We nurture them by fantasy, by envy, by bitterness, by pride, by lust, by not taking our thoughts captive and bringing them into the obedience and subject to Christ.

we do this often without much effort. we cultivate sinful desires rather than mortifying them. And I'm appealing to us.

Let's mortify them. Take thoughts captive. Don't let them just run rampant. Number two. By staying in tempting environments, by staying in tempting environments, we make it easy to make provision for the flesh.

We cannot linger in places. Maybe those are online spaces. Maybe those are conversations.

Maybe those are relationships that feed the flesh rather than edify your spirit. Proverbs 7 talks about this temptress and this fool.

[ 31 : 30 ] And this fool lingers around the town and this temptress is seeking him out. And then they commit sin together, this temptress and this fool. And it says this of the fool, and he did not know it would cost him his life.

Because he just stayed around tempting environments. He thought he could handle it and no, he could not. And we're no better. Number three. By neglecting spiritual disciplines.

When believers stop reading God's word, stop praying to the Lord, stop gathering with the saints, we are opening ourselves up for prime opportunity. And we make ourselves, we're making provisions for our flesh.

Number four. By justifying small compromises, we make provision for the flesh. It's not that one compromises, it's that you justify our compromises.

Some boast, well I was just telling it like it is. You ever heard someone say that? Or you said that? Here's what I hear. I am wise in my own sight, and I'm just the fool in Proverbs, that I like to express my own opinion and ignore others.

[ 32 : 40 ] But I told them like it is. I mean, yeah. Or indulging anger with the excuse of just being honest.

I just have an outburst of anger and I'm just being honest. And so we justify our compromises. We watch question media, questionable media under the banner of just relaxing.

I was just relaxing. And so we're making provisions for the flesh. I'm just relaxing. Fifthly, and there's only two more, by isolating from wise community.

When someone pulls away from Christian fellowship, they lose the guardrails. And in Hebrews 3, 13, says, so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

We're to be in community. Let's not be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. We need each other. And then sixthly, by failing to flee. By failing to flee.

[ 33 : 45 ] The Bible does not only call us to fight and kill sin and put it away, but sometimes the Bible just says flee. Get out of there. Especially with sins of immorality.

And just like Lot, we pitch our tents towards Sodom and we make provisions to linger where we ought not. So I have four questions and we'll close. Where have you made provision for your sin and where are you making provisions to sin?

Identify the things that are prompting you towards sin. Identify the things that make it easy to sin and make it easy to traffic in sin. And those are the provisions that we make that may just make it easy to sit in sin.

May that not be named among us. May we remind ourselves of what the command is in our text today. But now, you must put them all away and put to death therefore the things that are earthly in you.

Let us do that and enjoy one another next week reporting victory over sin. Father, thank you so much for this day. thank you for thank you for thank you for your person and your work on the cross making it possible to kill sin.

[ 35 : 18 ] To making us dead in sin and alive unto you. Thank you that you don't ask us to do something that is without your enabling and empowering to do. Thank you that by your spirit living for you is possible and to kill sin is possible.

Forgive us for all the ways that we domesticate sin by using language that minimizes, trivializes. Help us to be repentant people.

We love you, Lord. Thank you for this body of believers. Thank you for this church where we get to do life together and help one another in the same endeavor to walk with you.

We love you, Lord. It's in your name. Amen.