

# Wanted Dead And Alive

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[ 0 : 00 ] We turn now to the words of Scripture. We ask that by your Holy Spirit we may hear them as your word to us in the very circumstances in which we live in this moment, in this day, in this city. We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Looking at Colossians chapter 3, which is page 189 in your pew Bible, if you want to follow it.

And... This is a difficult passage. And you're going to have to learn. I mean, you're going to have to listen carefully, probably discount heavily what I say, and go back again to figure out what it actually says when you get home.

So look at the text and see what you can do with it. Last week, it was great to tell you that because you are risen with Christ, you are to seek those things which are above.

Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Your life is hidden with Christ in God. And that's... That's it. And... And...

[ 1 : 43 ] I... consciously put my faith in Christ on an April evening, a good many years ago, and delighted in all that belonged to me in my inheritance in Christ.

That Christ was risen from the dead, having died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins, and that I was assured that I would be in heaven with Christ when this life was over.

That I was indwelt by God's Holy Spirit. That I would be instructed by God's Holy Word. That I would live in the fellowship of God's holy people.

And... Apart from the fact that I had to put in a few years before I got to where I was going, everything was going to work out just right.

And... That's because nobody went on and dealt with Colossians 3, verse 5. There's something that has to be done. What has to be done is you are risen with Christ, now put to death.

[ 3 : 08 ] That which belongs to the earth, your earthly life. Because it's incompatible with the fact that you are risen with Christ.

You need to put to death. And I can pretty well assure you that if you try to do this by yourself, you won't. You will...

You will make this the kind of secret battle of your life that you won't let on, that you're losing. And you will learn to sing triumphantly and to lie courageously and to carry on your life in that way.

And... But that's not what Paul is telling us to do. He says, acknowledge that it's there and put it to death. Hack and hack and hack until it's dead.

Now, what is it that has to die? Well, look at the text. Whatever belongs to your earthly nature. That is...

[ 4 : 15 ] He talks about the members of your body. This is... These hands. These eyes. This body. These ears.

These are the things that... You know, they make it possible for me to live on earth. And they are closely related to earth. And they constitute a significant part of my earthly nature.

And God has ordained that I should live with them and enjoy and delight in them. But, he says, they are not to be in charge.

Because if they are in charge, this is what happens. Look at it. In the text, it says, those things which belong to your earthly nature are sexual immorality.

In the fine words of long ago, it was pronounced whoredoms, which is a much more refined word.

[ 5 : 28 ] than gross sexual immorality. But, means the same. Erotic lusts, evil desires, and greed.

Now, you're alive to all those things. And you and I and our world have created an alternative solution.

In our culture, we seek to accommodate sexual immorality, impurity. We make a joke of it.

We sophisticate it. We justify it. We say it's human. We deal with it in all sorts of gratuitous ways in order that we don't have to hack it to death.

You know, we find ways of giving expression to it, to sexual immorality. Impurity, erotic lusts, evil desires, and greed.

[ 6 : 29 ] But you see, the difficulty is that you're risen with Christ. Your life is hidden with Christ in God.

You are a disciple of Jesus Christ. He is the one that you're to worship. He is the one that you're to serve. He is the one whose disciple you are. So, don't allow for the possibility of reversing that whole thing and instead of you using the members of your body to worship Him, you become the slave of your body to worship it and what it desires.

And it becomes the tyrant in your life which demands your obeisance, which demands that you bow down and obey the longings, the lusts, the passions, the evil desires, the sexual immorality.

this is, I think, fairly foreign to our society to look at Colossians, but that's what it says and it's an embarrassment because we are so sophisticated and we have handled our sexuality so well or so badly.

We deal with it at the level of providing abortions or condoms or medicines to cure the ravages of sometime illicit sex.

[ 8 : 07 ] We look at it after it that way and we know how to accommodate it that way. We provide divorces and all sorts of things that for people that can't handle this thing where it's not put to death, we can accommodate it.

And I'm not criticizing that nor am I saying that we're to tell our society how to behave because I don't, I think, you know, apart from death and resurrection, I don't know how you handle it except in the best way you can and in the most compassionate and caring way that you can.

You need that. But, you see, what it goes on to say is that this is idolatry. So you who have been crucified with Christ, you who are raised with Christ, you who are the disciples of him who sits at the right hand of God, you whose life is hidden with Christ in God, all those things are true of you, but you and I in the course of our earthly lives are in danger of being dragged back into an idolatry which is marked by the subservience which is characterized by the dominance, the indomitable reality in our life of sexual immorality, impurity, erotic lusts, evil desires, and greed.

Those things become an idolatry because we're worshiping our members and their lusts and we're seeking to obey them. Sarah was, Fleming, was very nice with the children.

She said, sometimes you have these problems and sometimes we do, but in fact all of us do, all the time, and that's part of our life.

[ 10 : 27 ] And how are you going to cope with it? How are you going to deal with it? How can we deal with it? Well, we're told to put it to death and the reason that we have to put it to death is because it's idolatry and if you look in the next phrase, idolatry attracts the wrath of God.

That's the only way it can ultimately can be dealt with. If you don't deal with it, then the wrath of God has to deal with it. If you don't put it to death, it brings you under subjection to death.

And so it needs to be put to death. death. Now, verse 7 is helpful to us because it says, you used to walk in these ways in the life you once lived.

In other words, there is nobody who is not familiar with this. You are familiar with the problem from your own experience. So what we're trying to deal with is your experience and my experience, not somebody else's experience.

Because Paul says to the Colossians, you know what I'm talking about on the basis of your own life. You used to walk in these ways in the life you once lived, but now you must rid yourself of all such things as these.

[ 11 : 54 ] You've got to put them to death, get rid of them. And that's what you're called upon to do. And I don't think it's essentially different than if you want to become the Olympic champion in the hundred yard dash, there's certain problems you've got to deal with, or else you're not going to get there.

If you're a disciple of Jesus Christ, and your life is hidden with Christ in God, then you're going to have to deal with this.

help. And you're going to need help. And if you look around you, you'll see the people that are going to help you. Now what happens in a world that doesn't deal with it is that communication breaks down.

And people in relationship to one another become subject, as Paul says, to a wonderful catalog of things. that you communication breaks down in that world, and anger, which Stephen Neal says is the sullen disposition that hates fellow humans.

I can see it on some of your faces right now. And I don't say that because I really can, but I just know it's there. You know, because lots of people are consumed by anger.

[ 13 : 36 ] Rage is when anger explodes and leads to violence. Malice is when you are hatefully plotting and planning to undermine somebody else.

slander is the way a coward deals with it, with some of his problems with his fellow human beings. And filthy talk is the way we degrade one another. I would love to startle you with some examples which come to mind, but it would offend you and embarrass me, so I won't do it.

But that's the kind of way we talk about one another in totally degrading terms. And that's what happens.

That's the process that takes place around which our human society learns to accommodate this. And they know, I mean, we know anyway, that this attracts the wrath of God and ultimately leads to death.

[ 14 : 49 ] So it's a thing that has to be dealt with. But then look at the next verse. It says, do not lie to each other.

Now he's talking to the Christians at Colossi, as he well might be talking to the Christians at St. John Shaughnessy. It shouldn't be necessary for us to lie to each other. Now in the society in which we live, it is expedient to lie to one another.

It's necessary to lie to one another. We can justify lying to one another. And lying is just an accepted value. It's the only way you can deal with people is to lie to them.

That was a Freudian slip. But part of the function of the church is to create a community where we don't have to lie.

[ 16 : 09 ] you don't have to lie about the reality of sexual immorality, impurity, erotic lust, evil desires, and greed, because we know that this is a universal battle and that we all have to fight it and that we have to help one another fight it.

We don't have to lie in terms of dealing with the anger and the slander and the malice, all those things which are part of a culture which depends for survival on the acceptance of lying.

Now, lying is a harsh word and you can put a nicer, more accommodating word in there if you like, but that's what it depends on, is that. And it says now, but you as a community of Christians, you don't need to lie to one another.

You can tell the truth because you're all facing exactly the same problem. You all have come into exactly the same inheritance. You all know what belongs to you in Christ, the inheritance which together you want to claim.

So we don't have to lie to one another. Then he goes on to say, you have taken off the old self with its practices and you've put on the new self.

[ 17 : 58 ] this you have already done. That is no longer who you are. So when you are aware of a culture that accepts sexual immorality, impurity, erotic, lust, evil desires and greed as motivating the engines of our culture, or a society which has learned to adapt to anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language, even though you know that, you say, that is no longer who I am.

And to the extent that I still respond at that level, that needs to be put to death. I no longer want to be that person. I have put that off. I am finished with it.

There is no future in it for me. My future is hidden with Christ in God, and when he appears, I will appear with him. That's my future.

That no longer is who I am. Well, so you have put off the old, that tyranny, and you have put on the new self, and that is who you are in Christ.

Now, the difficulty with the old is is that it is subject to the attrition of the process of sin and death, and it's going nowhere, except ultimately to an encounter with the wrath of God, and that's not where you're going.

[ 19 : 44 ] It says what our life is about, and look at it there, it's there. our life, the new self, which we are in Christ, is being renewed.

That is, we are new, and we're in the process of being renewed, and we're being renewed not in the direction of the wrath of God, but in the direction of the image of God, so that what is to happen to us as a group, as a community, as individual, is that we will have restored or renewed in us the

image of God, because that's what God is doing in us, and the thing that we put to death, we put to death because it is not allowing the process of being renewed in the image of God.

Amazing, eh, that that's what it's all about, and then Paul says, here, this is a very radical statement, with which I will conclude, is, there is no Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, those categories no longer have any meaning.

In our society, they have the greatest of meaning, you know, we always are dividing our society up into various groups, the people on the right and the people on the left, management and union, the 20% that have made it and the 80% that won't, the people who have graduated and the people who have dropped out, and we constantly are working on one another in order to be able to identify one another and put one another in the slot.

so that we can, in a sense, manage one another. But Paul says to us, those things no longer are important, those categories into which we want to put people.

[ 22 : 01 ] He says there's only one category that's important, and that is, are you in Christ or are you not? are you sharing the resurrection of Jesus Christ or are you subject to the slow process of attrition manifested in worshiping what our body desires and making our members slaves to that desire, or are you concerned for the renewing of who you are in the knowledge of the image of God so that you will be conformed to that.

That's the category that matters. And Paul concludes this section at least, but he goes on, but he concludes this section by saying, none of these categories matter, Christ is all that ultimately matters, and Christ is in all.

That is, that's God's eternal purpose towards us, is that we should be in Christ and Christ in us.

Before you sing the hymn, turn to your prayer books in the end of the communion service.

Just look at that prayer which we say at the conclusion of every communion which is on page 85, the last paragraph on page 85.

Do we offer ourselves to the enslavement to the lusts and desires of our bodies, our earthly members, or do we do this?

[ 24 : 09 ] And very humbly, in the light of what we are taught in Colossians 3, we say together that last paragraph. Say it with me, will you, and I'll conclude with that.

Hear. And in top of voices, in our oga De■■■■ the presence of Christ, the priority of our peace, the riches of Christ our Lord, to whom He will lead us, in all honor and glory, for all that name.

That says it all. Amen. We're going to sing our offertory hymn now.

It's hymn 295, Hail Thou Once Despised Jesus, 295. Amen.

Hail Thou Once Despised Jesus, Hail Thou God of the King and Prince, Thou His Son, Ag themes, Ag■■ Ashley, Ray.

[ 26 : 44 ] isotope of la Russia, G ■■■ spendthorn in Ecclesia, willpower of the King and Prince, Thenes Colossians.

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Heavenly Father, you have given us so much, especially through Jesus Christ.

As we bring these gifts for your kingdom, we pray that they may be just tokens of the offering of our souls and bodies to you.

[ 29 : 55 ] This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Please turn now to prayer. And please, Neil and Matthew will lead us in our prayer together.

Thank you. Please turn to your Book of Common Prayer, page 14.

In a moment, we'll prayer the prayer for all conditions together. In this prayer, we'll ask for the healing work of God's church to continue.

And we'll pray for those individuals known to us. You can pray silently between the lines if you like. But please keep in mind the confirmation class that's entering its final stages.

The needs of the Chrism family and the Kennedy families here. And particularly Frankie Brown.

[ 31 : 10 ] So would you join me, please, in the Prayer for All Conditions, page 14. O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts of conditions of men.

For thou wouldst be pleased to make thy ways known to them. Thy saving health unto all nations. More especially, we pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church, that it may be so guided and governed by thy good spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those who are in any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or state, that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings and a happy issue out of all their afflictions.

And this we beg for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Please turn now to page 53. We think of the depleting, depleted fish stocks in the Maritimes and we think of the difficulties of the prairie farmers. We particularly think of the drought-stricken areas of the world, war-torn Africa, and the earthquakes in California. And we pray together the prayer in time of dearth and famine.

[ 33 : 15 ] Amen. O God, our Heavenly Father, who by thy blessed Son has taught us to ask our daily bread of thee, behold, we beseech thee the afflictions of thy people, and send us a seasonable relief to this our necessity.

Increase the fruits of thy earth by the heavenly benediction, and grant that we, receiving with thankfulness thy gracious gifts, may use the same to thy glory, the relief of those who are needy, and our own comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We also think for the difficulties in this province and other parts of the country, the strikes in the hospitals and industry, and the adversarial attitude that has beset labour and management.

We particularly, well, we just pray the prayer for industry together. Amen. O Lord Jesus Christ, who in thy earthly life did share man's toil and hallow the labor of his hands, prosper our brethren who maintain the industries of this land and give to all who labor pride in their work, a just reward for their labors and joy both in supplying need and in serving thee, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit livest and reignest, ever one God, world without end.

Amen. And finally, would you turn to page 736. In all our difficulties, we do stand secure in God's mercies.

[ 35 : 33 ] And I'd like us all just to take a moment and reflect on God's many gifts to us now. Amen. Amen. And we pray the prayer for thanksgiving.

O most merciful Father, we humbly thank thee for thy gifts so freely bestowed upon us, for life and health and safety, for power to work and leisure to rest, for all that is beautiful in creation and in the lives of men.

We praise and magnify thy holy name. But above all, we thank thee for our spiritual mercies in Christ Jesus our Lord, for the means of grace and for the hope of glory.

Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Please sit for our netices.

Good morning and welcome.

[ 36 : 54 ] Especially to any of you who are newcomers, we welcome you on behalf of all of the congregation. And we trust that you'll join us for coffee or tea after the service. We'd also like you to take a moment to fill out one of these orange cards, which will allow us to know more about you and for you to know more about us.

So why don't you drop it off at the back, or if you come to coffee and tea, leave it at the information desk. One of the things that you can find out about would be the small study groups, Bible study groups, which are a vibrant part of our life here.

So please find out more about them. There are a number of notices in the Green newsletter. I'll just highlight a couple of them. There's a slave day. The youth group, we talked about slaves.

The youth group are sponsoring a slave day to raise funds for their Mexico trip. And basically what you get is for \$40, you get five hours of work from one of these young people.

And one of the members of our church committee pointed out that there's much more than just the work that you get. It's a chance to know a young person and find out what's motivating he or she to go on this Mexican mission.

[ 38 : 03 ] So give that some serious thought. Just contact the church office and one of these people will be in touch with you. They'll do pretty much anything and they'll do it joyfully. Just a reminder, this is also the last Sunday upon which you have the opportunity to register for family camp.

Now you've had a series of young people giving you weekly reminders of this weekend. But please remember that it's not just for young people. It's a weekend for families and we mean everyone here.

There's grandparents that come, there's young singles, middle-aged singles, teenagers. There's a whole group of people who come. So it's just a fine time for everyone. So please make an opportunity of this last call for registrations.

So please join us for coffee and tea after the service. The service for Gilbert Kennedy, who died this past week and was a former warden of St. John's, is at 10.30 on Tuesday morning.

And at 2 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, a service for Diane Chisholm, who passed away yesterday. And she was a member of our confirmation class just two years ago. So those two services on Tuesday, just for your prayers and possible participation.

[ 39 : 28 ] Bearing that in mind, and also bearing in mind, last Friday we had a wonderful concert here, singing or hearing about Handel's, hearing Handel's Israel and Egypt.

We're going to sing a Handel tune, and the words are wonderful in talking about the resurrection. Hymn 303. Please stand. women's ahora que cambia condom  
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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS He praise us, God has been When  
the church in matters is our triumphs O the Lord is living Death has lost its sting I believe it's our  
return And war without he love he his strength  
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