

Colossians 3:12-17 "Teach and Admonish One Another"

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- [0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.
- Let's pray. Jesus, we worship you full of mercy and truth and righteousness and peace.
- You're glorious. Father, so work by your spirit that I would remember that I stand complete in Jesus before I preach this sermon.
- That we stand complete in Jesus before we obey the first word of it. We're yours because of Jesus.
- Thank you. Would you work in our hearts that we would be who we are. That we would become in our lives those who reflect the reality of Jesus in us.
- [1 : 05] Who live lives of mercy and truth and righteousness and peace like our Savior. Now, Lord, speak.
- Your servants are listening. Amen. Turn with me to Colossians 3. Another one another passage.
- Where Paul, through the Holy Spirit, depicts the church as a gospel community. In some areas that we've already discussed this summer.
- And a new one for this morning. We'll start reading in verse 12. Put on, then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved.
- That's the context of this. As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. Put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.
- [2 : 11] Bearing with one another. And if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
- And above all these, put on love. Which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.
- To which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Now where we'll focus this morning. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
- Teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom. Singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. With thankfulness in your hearts to God.
- And whatever you do, in word or deed. Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. Giving thanks to God the Father through Him. So far, God's holy, inerrant, infallible word.
- [3 : 10] For which we give Him great thanks. Amen. Amen. Amen. So the particular one another. That we're talking about this morning.
- Is teaching and admonishing one another. In all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Or as the parallel passage in Ephesians says.

Speak to one another. With psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. I've always wondered what that means. That's so strange, isn't it? You speak to anybody like that? Is the Christian life supposed to be one big live musical?

Musical theater in our relationships? It's kind of scary, isn't it? I don't know if I want to be a part of that. But in order to understand this part of gospel community.

We've got to see the gospel part really big this morning. It's the whole context. The whole environment of teaching and admonishing one another.

[4 : 10] We've seen this gospel dynamic of our relationships every single week. But this passage especially highlights it. So I want to linger there a bit together this morning.

By the gospel part, I mean that our relationships are focused on and fueled by Jesus. That's what it means to be in gospel community.

A few weeks ago, we saw the gospel reality of Jesus' sacrificial love moving toward us in relationship. That that was what actually fueled us to move towards others with sacrificial love.

Then we saw how Jesus identifies with us in our joys and in our sorrows so that we can do the same for one another in our joys and sorrows.

We talked about the freedom the gospel offers to us to confess and forgive as God and Christ has solved our sin problem. Last week, Peter so helpfully reminded us of our need for the community of the gospel.

[5 : 21] Where big needs find other big needs and together find an even bigger savior. Today we'll see again how vital the good news of Jesus is for the relationships God calls us to share in his family.

Finally, I've always loved Dale's steak sauce. It's really, really good. In fact, I was just looking this morning.

It's basically soy sauce with some extra salt added to make sure. It's liquid salt, okay? I know that, but it's really good. That's why I like it.

It's possible that when I'm grilling dinner for my family, sometimes I've put a little bit too much Dale's for a little bit too long. And when they get their chicken, all they can taste is salt, which seems delightful.

But for whatever reason, they don't love that. Verse 16 says, our church needs to be marinated in Dale's.

[6 : 26] Well, it doesn't say that. Actually, in gospel Dale's is what it means. So that gospel flavor seeps through us in our relationships, in our community together.

That's what the word of Christ dwelling richly among us means. Together marinating, soaking through, thoroughly taking us over, so that when someone gets a taste of us, they say salt, or better, gospel.

That's the only way to define what I just tasted is gospel. See, the word of Christ here in this passage is not merely specific words Jesus spoke, but more fully the message about Jesus, the gospel.

That's what Paul is saying we must be marinated in, defined by. It's the most important thing about us. In the beginning of Colossians, Paul has explained that gospel this way.

You and I had one definition, dead in our sins. Dead, unable to bring ourselves back to life. And on top of that, condemned because we have a debt so big we couldn't possibly pay it.

[7 : 53] And it's written up against us and there's nothing that we can do. That's how we're defined, condemned and dead. But he says the good news is that God sent his perfect image, his son Jesus to the cross where he pays that debt to free us from what we owed and to bring us from darkness and death and drag us into light and life.

In fact, actually to bring us into God's family that we would know him and be reconciled to God. So the good news, the gospel, the word of Christ is that we have everything in Christ.

In fact, everything we have and are is only because of Jesus. Otherwise, you're just condemned and dead. We are alive only in Christ.

We have purpose only with Christ. We have joy only because of Christ. So Paul says in chapter 3 that Christ is your life.

Makes sense, right? Christ is your life because you're only defined rightly in relationship with him. Listen, you're not defined as a failure.

[9 : 16] As a dropout. As a sinner. That's not what defines you. And equally so, you're not defined as a good doctor.

As a successful student. As a caring mother. No. Verse 12. You're defined as God's chosen ones.

Holy and beloved. Set apart for him. Adored by your father. Father. You have a purpose in this world.

It's his glory. You have security in this life. It's his love. Why is that not enough for us? I'd suggest that you and I spend a lot of time and a lot of effort trying to define ourselves.

And make up an identity for me. And trying to find our life in a lot of other places. But a gospel community is a place where we marinate together in the gospel.

[10 : 33] And are defined only by that good news. We sang it earlier. Father. This family bears your name.

Live in us. Through faith. Shape us. By your incredible love. Love. Wanted a drink of water and almost got a drink of Dale's.

Trying to be honest with you. It's one thing to be defined by something. It's quite another to delight in it.

Isn't it? You can agree that you are defined as salty and not like the chicken. Right? I've seen this Facebook post several times.

Everyone who knows me knows I love blank. And then your friends all comment and fill in the blank for you. I'm always scared to post that.

[11 : 37] Everyone who knows me knows I love blank. What would they say Will loves? What does he delight in?

What would people say for you? One of the things you can't miss in this passage is this overflowing delight. As the word of Christ dwells richly among God's people.

They're singing isn't there? Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs. This good news. This new identity defined as a beloved child of God. It so delights my heart that you can't stop it from coming out.

All the time. Everywhere. Perhaps in particular in this passage when I'm around others who share that delight. It's like God's people when their feet touch the ground on the other side of the Red Sea.

And what do they do? They break into song together. Singing about the greatness of their God. And of his salvation. This incredible deliverance where he's brought them through miraculously.

- [12 : 38] They can't seem to get over it. They don't just sing there one time. They throw parties about it every year don't they? They write songs about it and sing them every week.
- They tell stories about it to their kids. Because their delight is in the God of their salvation. And you can see it. It's the word of God.
- And the life changing story that it draws you into your chief delight. Is that what people would say about you? That's what characterizes a gospel community.
- Before we even talk about what we will share with each other in relationship. It's this group of people so defined by the gospel. So delighting in the gospel that it is unmistakable.
- They're salty. They're gospelicious. They're gospelicious. Yes, kids. I can coin words on your sheets. And I made one up this week. Gospelicious.
- [13 : 43] Christ-centered. Maybe more traditionally. Jesus-obsessed. Right? A few weeks ago we talked about being a people sent to live for God's glory and declare his grace.
- And one of our members came up to me after the service and said, Pastor, do you have any trouble talking about your wife to other people? I thought, I don't know, it sounds like a trap.
- I'm not sure what you mean. And she said, listen, I mean, when you really love someone, you can't stop telling people about them, can you?
- She said, I used to be like that with Jesus. I would tell anybody and everybody I could find how awesome he was and how he loved me. And I don't do that as much anymore.
- She said, I heard you saying that this morning. And I think our problem is not that we don't know how to. It's that we don't actually love him. We don't love him that much.
- [14 : 48] We don't love him as much as we say we do. Pastor, we need to pray for all of our hearts, for mine and all of ours. I thought that was really insightful.
- And a great example, by the way, of teaching one another. As she helped me understand, gave me insight into this reality. When the gospel is truly what defines and delights you.
- When Jesus is actually your love, your life, you talk about him. That's what this teaching and admonishing one another is about.
- About talking to one another. About what? About Jesus. About the gospel and its transformative reality in all of life.
- In whatever else it is that we might want to talk about. About the word for teaching is focused on the head. Informing someone about something.
- [15 : 51] Instructing them. We do this all the time. We teach each other, don't we? Sure. We teach each other what we should watch on Netflix. We teach which diet fads to embrace.
- Where to vacation. How to handle challenging children. Children. What about how to handle the challenge of following Jesus together?
- What about what God is teaching me in my marriage? What about seeing singleness or retirement or loving neighbor through gospel lenses?
- And where my struggles or my study, God is showing me something new. When the word of Christ is dwelling richly among us.
- We teach one another about it. Paul is talking here, by the way, about the gospel dwelling richly among the community. It's the y'all part there.
- [16 : 52] That you is the y'all version of you. Among y'all. That actually assumes the individual, doesn't it? If the word of Christ is dwelling richly among us, it assumes that each of the individuals is marinating in that, doesn't it?

Remember that picture from the end of Luke's gospel we talked about? Where all the disciples gathered around sharing what Jesus has shown them about their Bibles? Why not here too?

Isn't that a beautiful picture to be a part of? That's gospel community. Teaching one another. Admonishing one another is very similar to that. But the word here actually goes a bit deeper beyond the head to the heart.

Addressing the will and the affections. I've said inspiring for that reason. That's what we want to. Inspiring one another.

Although often admonishing has an idea of correction associated with it. Let me give you examples. Earlier this summer, a friend from church saw me playing tennis with one of my girls.

[17 : 57] And after we finished, we were talking and talking about the challenges of parenting and the importance of getting that one-on-one time with our children to be able to really engage their hearts.

And she shared with me how valuable it was and impactful in her life, her relationship with her dad in that time that she got with him. And she encouraged me.

She said, maybe even wake up early to get it. Because I was bemoaning how difficult it was to find that time. Maybe even wake up early and go play tennis just with her. It's really worth it, Will.

Graciously, she was admonishing me toward being a godly father. I'm so grateful to learn from her. Moving more toward the corrective.

Last year, I sent out a prayer request in our prayer guide that was unthoughtfully worded. It implied that I felt our retirees may not be living for Jesus.

[19 : 02] A couple of you came to me and said, Pastor, words are important for all of us, and especially someone in your position in our church family.

I'd urge you to consider if these words reflect God's heart well. They didn't. And you gave me the chance to apologize, to learn, and to grow.

That's admonishing one another. More than once during or after a meeting, I've had a fellow pastor or elder pull me aside and say, hey, I think as you led this portion of our meeting, you started to forget the truth of the gospel.

You became defensive. You didn't listen well. But instead of beating me down with that, he said, you know, it's really unhelpful when that happens, and you're leading the conversation.

So I really want to pray for you that you would remember God's delight in you as his child, that you would have confidence in that, and the truth of the gospel for you. It'll be a blessing to all of us in the meeting.

[20 : 11] What a needful and life-giving admonition. Do you hear how that offers grace? Helping me see idolatry in my heart, in my life, and at the same time inspiring me back into delighting in my Father the way I should be.

What a gracious thing to say. Now, we don't always receive admonition well, do we? It's one of the reasons some of us are afraid to admonish one another.

We especially struggle if it's not communicated graciously. But the reason it ought to be frequent in gospel community and well-received is when you speak with a brother or a sister, you're teaching, you're admonishing another person in whom God dwells.

You're talking to another person where the Spirit is already at work, so you don't have to fix their heart. You don't have to change them. You just get the privilege of sharing what God is teaching you or pointing them to be sensitive to what the Spirit is doing, pointing them to Jesus, right?

There's hope in that. That's why we can and we must enter into this joyfully in our relationships. Even singing, we're getting to that part. It's connected here with teaching and admonishing because of our overflowing delight in the gospel that shapes and defines me, right?

[21 : 34] That's where that comes from. See, this is for all of us, isn't it? This teaching and admonishing, singing. I hope you're hearing that in my examples because it's easy to think, okay, singing.

Yeah, James, good. Teaching. Oh, good, Will does that. Admonishing. Ah, that's why we have elders. And it is true.

The Bible says God gives particular gifts and callings to lead here in the community, but this command is not talking about that. This command is quite clearly for all of us.

Teach and admonish one another. Everyone, everywhere in this gospel community. So listen, teaching or admonishing one another doesn't require a seminary education.

It does require God's word dwelling richly in and among us, doesn't it? That's why we so often open the Bible to see Jesus together.

[22 : 43] Why we do it at VBS with our kids and at youth large group gatherings, in our small groups, in our connect communities, so that we see Jesus and the reality of the gospel that defines and delights us, that it can shape us and make us gracious, even gospelicious teachers to each other.

Because how else are we going to do that unless we're dwelling richly, marinating in it ourselves? I love how this passage in Colossians and the one in Ephesians move us from the sanctuary into all of life.

See, it certainly includes corporate worship services, just like this one. Services where we're teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Yes, listen, our worship is vertical to God for sure, but it also has a horizontal element to it, doesn't it?

Just this morning, we called each other to worship with a psalm. What did we say? Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us make a joyful noise to God, for he is great and we are his people.

We're urging each other toward him, aren't we? Then we sang that great hymn, How Firm a Foundation. It's a hymn admonishing one another to cling to Christ in hard times.

[24 : 10] How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, singing at each other, is laid for your faith in his excellent word. And then we go on to talk about how we can remind each other that God says don't fear, that God says I'm with you, I won't forsake you.

And we're reminding each other of that even as we worship God. We need that admonition, don't we? It's a beautiful thing, y'all, to find yourself embracing or crying with or praying with a brother or sister in the middle of this worship service.

It's not disruptive, it's not inappropriate, it's beautiful and right and good. And I encourage you towards it. And, verse 17 says, whatever you do.

Not just here, but from the sanctuary now to the playground, to the classroom, to your dinner table or a lunch meeting, what do you talk about? Our vertical worship of God has a horizontal element.

And maybe even more challenging for us, our horizontal relationships must have a vertical element. Our hearts must be overflowing with a desire to focus on Christ, not on self.

[25 : 35] That's what we say it means for us as a church to be committed to being Christ-centered. That's not just in the preaching, that's as a church family and our first core commitment about being Christ-centered.

We say it means giving glory to Jesus is the goal, not just of preaching, not just when we're in this room, but even of our life and community together.

Because the Bible's all about Jesus, not just the sermon, but our conversations, every one of them should point us back to Jesus so that we live each day in His strength rather than our own and for His glory rather than our own.

Y'all, that's not easy, is it? Listen, it's normal for football fans to get together and talk about football. It's expected that parents will get together and talk about their children.

It's a good thing and important that engineers get together and talk about engineering. And it is vital that Christians get together and talk about Christ.

[26 : 39] Amen? That should be what happens in our relationships. Not just talking about it, but challenging one another with God's Word. Sharing what God is teaching us.

Even at times, singing with overflowing delight at the good news of the Gospel. Can you believe it? Did we come to worship today in a place that delights in calm order or delights in Jesus?

Do we live in a community that delights in our home renovations or delights in Jesus? What do you talk about? What makes your heart sing?

Is it not the good news, the Gospel of Jesus Christ? It changes not just your Sunday morning, it changes everything. What would it look like for Southwood to be more and more a community like this?

Musical theater? No. Do we become the weird people everyone whispers about? They talk about Jesus in the Bible all the time.

[27 : 47] Y'all, let me be honest. That's not our problem. It's not. I haven't had anybody in my office complaining about one of your members talks about Jesus too much.

Maybe it would mean more of our conversations at the pool would begin with, guess what I read this morning? Isn't this so good? I just had to share this with y'all. I want you to see this good news from God's Word.

Maybe it sounds like two guys in a small group sitting at lunch and one says, hey, I love that new concept for the business y'all have. I'm really excited for you but I just wanted to say to you as I hear you talking, I keep hearing you talk about nothing but the financial possibilities it has for you and I wanted to just warn you about the deceitfulness of wealth because I've seen it in my own life.

I've really struggled with that and we read about it in our Bible study this week and I just wanted to encourage you and let you know, I'm praying for you and I'm praying that new idea goes great for the sake of the kingdom that it's really successful and I'm praying God would guard your heart from that dangerous idol too.

Can we pray together about that? Maybe it means when someone shares a struggle or heartache they'll not hear human solutions or spiritual platitudes but real hope in Christ offered from a fellow struggler who's found the good news and has nothing more important to do than listen to you and pray for you and point you to Jesus and they can't think of anything else that would be a higher priority in their day than that and that will happen.

[29 : 34] It will. God will do that as we continue coming back here to be defined by and delighting in the good news of Jesus.

That's how it happens, right? It's not from the external in, it's from the in out. We don't just say, I'm gonna start speaking more spiritually. I'm gonna make sure to use more thou's and these and Jesus's in all my sentences.

That's not how you teach and admonish one another. No, we actually need the spirit to work in our hearts. That we repent of the other places we find our identity and our joy so that we're increasingly defined by and delighting in the good news of Jesus making us God's very own dearly beloved children and that starts to flow out.

That's exactly why, by the way, Jesus planned and commanded this table for us regularly. For us to be here often so that we could remember that we are His and we could celebrate the thing that is most important in who we are and how I live my life even this week so that His gospel and His grace would not only define us but it would overflow from us to others.

Jesus sat at that table on the night that He was betrayed and He took bread. He broke it and He gave it to His disciples as I'm ministering in His name give this bread to you.

[31 : 07] He said, take and eat. This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And then He took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for many for the remission of sins.

drink it and remember me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes and you proclaim that this is who you are and whose you are.

If you know Jesus if you trust Jesus if He is your life then in His name I offer you the only thing that will truly fulfill and delight you Jesus present with you meeting with you by His Spirit sitting with you at His Father's table come and eat and celebrate.

And if you don't know and trust Jesus if you say I've heard about Him but He's not He's not my life He's certainly not the thing that defines and delights me then listen in the name of Jesus I offer you the one who's the bread of life who's the living water who says if you drink of me you'll never be thirsty again don't come just to these outward elements come to Jesus and know Him as the fulfillment of every longing that you have come and let us even pray with you this morning we would love to do that and love to share with you about Jesus let's pray and we'll come together Father thank you for a reminder I need of where my life is found I need that reminder more than weekly you've sent your son you must have delighted in us so much we must have been so precious to you we must be indeed your joy and crown that you would give your son for us remind us of that as we celebrate that he gave his body and blood for us we ask in his name amen for more information visit us online at southwood.org