

Out With The Old, In With The New

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to the book of Colossians. We've been walking through the book of Colossians together over the past several weeks. If you don't have a copy of God's Word with you, that's okay.

We have them available to you. You should be able to find one in a seat back nearby. But as always, I would encourage you to have a copy of God's Word open as we walk through this text together.

Now, our passage this morning is chapter 3, verses 5 through 17. And we're continuing on with Paul's encouragements to the church in Colossae.

We saw in chapter 2, verse 6, his kind of main thesis statement over this section of the letter was, walk in Him. Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, so walk in Him.

Last week, we saw that that walk requires a renewed mind that's set on heavenly things. Next week, Lord willing, we'll see that that walking in Him, it gives us renewed relationships in every sphere of life.

[1:02] And this week, we see that walking in Him engages a whole renewed way of life for the believer in Christ. So if you would, if you found that passage, Colossians 3, verses 5 through 17, let's stand in honor of the reading of the Word of the Lord this morning.

Paul says, Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

On account of these, the wrath of God is coming. In these two you once walked when you were living in them, but now you must put them all away. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

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

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

[2:12] Put on, then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving one another, 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.

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. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

Father God, we ask now once more, would you bless the preaching of your word? Would you sanctify us in the truth? Your word is truth. We pray this in Jesus' name.

[3:28] Amen. You may be seated. When I was growing up, my dad would sometimes share a story about his mom, my grandmother.

She raised four boys, and every now and then, whether it was mother's intuition or maybe she knew that something was going on, I don't know, but every now and then, she would gather her boys and tell them, remember, you are a chancy.

You'd better act like it. And then when I went off to college in Milledgeville, Georgia, my grandmother lived about 10 minutes away from the campus, and she had eyes everywhere.

And I would go to her house for a home-cooked meal or do some laundry every now and then. And on occasion, she would sit me down at the dinner table and look me in the eye and say, now, Jonathan, remember, you are a chancy.

You had better behave like it. In other words, in her mind, there was a standard that came with the family name. There was an expectation, a way of life that ought to be a reflection of your identity.

[4:41] Who you are determines what you do. Well, here in Colossians chapter 3, Paul is saying something very similar to the church in Colossae and to us here at Seawee Bay this morning.

He says, remember who you are. You are a Christian. You are a son or a daughter of the living God.

You belong to the family of God in the church of Jesus Christ. So, live like a Christian. The call of this passage here in Colossians 3 is a call to be who you are in Christ.

And it's very important that we get this emphasis right because the false teachers here in Colossae were trying to switch up the order. They had a long list of things that you had to do, ways that you had to behave in order to become a true child of God.

But Paul shows us, again, by God's grace, he has made you his child. Therefore, go and live in a God-glorifying way.

[5:49] Live as one who has been raised up with Christ. And so, let's ask this morning, what does the Christian life look like in practice? What does the Christian life look like in practice?

And we'll see two clear practices and one power. This will be our outline this morning. Two practices and one power. And he does it kind of like a sandwich.

So, it's practice number one, then the power, and then practice number two. First, practice number one, he says we are to put sin to death.

Put sin to death. He says that starting here in verse 5, if you look there with me. Paul gives a very clear command here for believers. Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you.

Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you. Of course, it is true. Paul's told us that we are no longer of the earth. He's told us that if we're in Christ by faith, we have died with Christ.

[6:54] He's told us that we have been raised up with Christ. It's true, Paul just told us, that when Christ appears, we also will appear with him in glory. We have a sinless, perfected, glorified future awaiting us who believe.

But it's also true that until then, each and every one of us wrestles with what we call indwelling sin in our hearts. We still have what is earthly at work in us.

There is a presence of sin in each and every one of our hearts that is an enemy that resists the rule and the reign of God. This is what Paul often calls the flesh.

This is what's earthly in us. And Paul draws our attention here to several ways that that earthliness can manifest itself in our lives. I see three main categories here that we're called to put to death.

The first is our sinful desires. We are to put to death sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

[8:04] Does it surprise you to know that Christians still wrestle with sinful desires? According to a Barna Group study, this is from 2024, so it's a couple of years old now at this point.

But according to this study, 75% of Christian men and 40% of Christian women acknowledge that they view pornography to some extent.

They say, according to this study, quote, among Christians who have attended church services within the last month, so are at least somewhat active in church community, more than half say that they view pornography at least occasionally.

This is even more concerning. 49% of those practicing Christians say that they are, quote, comfortable with how much they consume. Another study from Pew Research, also from 2024, says 57% of American Christians, and I realize, by the way, that is a broad category, right?

But 57% of self-identifying Christians say that homosexuality should be accepted as a normal way of life. So that may be normal out there in our culture.

[9:22] That may be totally normal for the non-believing world, but this is what we have been redeemed from. We are called to flee from sexual immorality, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6, verse 18.

Now you see why Paul calls us to lift our minds away from earthly things and set our minds on things that are above, set our minds on the Word of God, not on what is normal here on earth.

These are sinful desires of the flesh. Now all of us are prone to covet and to crave what doesn't belong to us. And would you notice how he defines covetousness here?

He says that it is idolatry. It is worship of a false man-made God. At the root of all sin, sexual sin included, is misdirected desire, misdirected worship, misdirected affections of the heart.

And we're called to set our affections on the Lord and make no idols of any earthly thing. And he gives us a pretty compelling reason why here, verse 6. He says, on account of these, the wrath of God is coming.

[10 : 39] Do you see it this way? Do you take it this seriously? Paul says in Ephesians 5, he says, You may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure or is covetous, that is, an idolater, has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not become partners with them. For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

So walk as children of the light. This is the call, church. We're called to put to death sinful desires. Second category, sinful attitudes.

Sinful attitudes. Would it surprise you to know that Christians still wrestle with sinful attitudes?

Verse 7, he says, And these two you once walked when you were living in them, but now you must put them all away.

Put away anger. Put away wrath. Put away malice. You know, one of the most confusing verses in the Bible to me, Be angry and do not sin. Have you all figured that one out yet? I haven't figured that out yet.

[11 : 52] There is such a thing as righteous anger, but that's usually not what happens in my heart, is it? And the reason why is because our anger so often is self-centered, isn't it?

No, we get angry because we didn't get what we wanted, or when we wanted, or how we wanted, or we lash out because our pride has been stepped on.

We get angry because we've grown impatient. We get all riled up because somebody has sinned against us, and so we think, well, that gives us an excuse to sin against them. But David Powlison wrote a book on anger, and one of the diagnostic questions that he gives, I think this is really helpful when we get angry, ask yourself, whose kingdom am I defending?

Is it me and my glory and my pride and my possessions, or is it God's kingdom and God's glory?

James 1 says, We are to be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

Why? For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. This type of angry attitude is evidence of the indwelling sin in our hearts. Not only this, he gives a third and final category here, which is sinful speech.

[13 : 13] He says, As God's people, we are to put away slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, he says in verse 9. Again, in Ephesians, Paul says, Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Does it surprise you to know that Christians still wrestle with sinful speech? Does it surprise you to know that God cares about the way that you speak? And here's where we have to be so careful, because as you know, so often what comes out is a direct reflection of what goes in, isn't it?

If all you intake, all you listen to is crude, obscene music, don't be surprised if that's what winds up coming out of your mouth. If all you watch on television or the movies that you partake in is crude, obscene language, crude, obscene joking, don't be surprised if that's what spills out of your own mouth.

If all you consume is political media, if ever there was an example of slander, and corrupting talk, and bold-faced lying, if all you consume is that sort of language coming into your mind and into your ears, don't be surprised if you start to reflect that same sort of language in your own daily speech. We are called to put to death everything that is earthly in us. This is a call to mortify your sin. Do not take a passive approach to your sin.

[14 : 59] Mortify it. Kill it. And take no prisoners. Don't ignore it. Don't minimize it. Don't make excuses for it. Don't say, well, I'm just like everyone else.

Everybody acts this way. We are called to take a militant approach to our sin. Jesus says if your right hand causes you to sin, then what? Cut it off. In the words of John Owen, be killing sin or sin will be killing you.

You may ask, how in the world are we supposed to do this? What is the power behind this way of life? Paul shows us. Second, let's consider the power here.

The power for this mortification of sin and the power for the new Christian life, which we'll see in just a moment, is in Christ and who you are in Him.

Again, John Owen, he says this principle of this putting off and putting on is not the strength of our own resolutions, but in the power of the work of the Holy Spirit, who alone creates in us the graces of the new man.

[16 : 09] The power to live the Christian life is in our identity as children of the living God. Spirit indwelt children of the living God.

Look what he says in verse 9. Why are we called not to lie to one another? It's because we've put off the old self with its practices. And we have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

We have already put off the old man. This is repentance. This is the fruit of regeneration. This is what the Spirit does in the hearts of those who belong to the Lord.

This is what happened when you became a Christian. You heard the good news of the gospel. You heard the good news that Jesus has come to save you from your sin. You heard the good news that Jesus has lived perfectly in your place, that he's died in your place for your sin, that he has risen from the grave.

You heard that, and by God's grace, the Spirit took that message, and he put in your heart faith in Jesus, and he put in your heart a distaste for this life of sin that you've been walking.

[17 : 21] So you turn from your sin, and you put your faith completely in Christ. You turn from your sin, and you cast yourself into the arms of Jesus. You put off the old man, and you put on the new.

And that new self we see here, that one that is now united to Christ, that one that has been resurrected and raised to walk in newness of life, that new self is now being remade after the image of your creator.

It's called sanctification. The work of the Spirit. And the children of God. And again, would you just notice how different this is from the idea, the false idea that the teachers, the false teachers were trying to sell there in Colossae.

They were trying to sell this idea of all that you have to do in order to be spiritually complete. Don't do this.

Don't do that. They had a long list of rules and regulations. You have to observe certain holy days. You have to be circumcised. You have to worship angels.

[18 : 27] You must be this and that and this and that. The list is unending. It's like you're an old broken down house, and they're the realtor. And they have this list of things that you ought to do to make yourself more marketable to God.

You know, if you would just paint the walls and fix the plumbing and clean the baseboards and get rid of the mold, then maybe, maybe God would look at you and He would purchase you.

This is the lie of man-made religion. The gospel, it takes all of this and it turns it completely upside down.

This is not how it works. We're told God has purchased you, sinner, with the blood of His own Son, Jesus Christ. Not when you were very good, but when you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you walked.

And now that you are His, now He's getting to work by the power of His Spirit at work in you. He's getting to work to renovate and fix up this old dwelling place to be a dwelling place for His own Spirit.

[19 : 36] You are a Christian by His grace. Therefore, we're called to live as a Christian. You are in the family of God. Therefore, live as one who is in the family of God.

You are no longer of the earth. Therefore, live as one who has put to death earthly things. This is the one and only path to belonging to the family of God.

It's not by works. It's all of His grace. By the power of His Spirit. By putting your faith in Christ. This is what he means in verse 11.

He says there's no distinction here between Greeks and Jews and circumcised and uncircumcised. Barbarians and Scythian slave and free. Get rid of all of these distinctions.

Christ is all. Christ is all. Simply by faith in Christ. You are adopted and accepted and justified.

[20 : 34] And then you are set on this lifelong path of transformation into His image. Man-made religion. It says clean yourself up and God will choose you.

The gospel says God chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world. You are God's chosen ones. Therefore, put on Christ's likeness.

Verse 12. The gospel says by faith in Christ. God's already declared you holy in Christ. Even as you wrestle with sin here and now. You are covered with the righteousness of Christ.

The gospel says you don't have to earn God's love. You don't have to clean up your act so that God will love you. The gospel says God demonstrates His love for us. And that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Do you hear the good news, church? You have been adopted into the family of God. Live as His child.

[21 : 40] Live as His child. This is what the rest of the passage shows us. This is not a list of have to. I hope you see this. This is not a I have to do this list.

This is the new life that is possible for us who have been born again by His Spirit. So let's take a look. And third, we see another practice here.

Third, we're not only called to put sin to death. We're also called to put on Christ's likeness. Put on Christ's likeness.

We see the starting verse 12. Paul says we're all called in the family of God to put on Christ's character. Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved.

Do you hear that? This is who you are. You are chosen. You are holy. You are beloved. So then put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

[22 : 40] This is Christian character. As we are being remade in the image of the Lord, we are to reflect the character of Christ, who is Himself the image of the invisible God.

We are to be Christ-like. Well, what does that look like? He says, well, for one thing, it looks like compassion. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Christian, put on compassionate hearts.

We're told Jesus saw the crowds and saw that they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd, and He had compassion on them. Church, when we put on compassion for those who are lost in sin, when we don't get angry at them for their sinfulness, when we don't get bitter at them for not walking a Christian life as we expect them to do, when we have compassion on the lost, we reflect the heart of Christ.

When we interact with those people in our life who are just difficult and hard to engage with, and hard to, you know who I'm talking about. When we're not impatient or rude with them, but we're compassionate with them, we show the world what Christ is like.

He says it looks like putting on kindness. By the power of the Spirit, put on kindness. Jesus says in Luke 6, 35, that God the Father is kind, both to the ungrateful and to the evil, and He is especially kind to His children.

[24 : 20] When we put on kindness, we reflect the glory of God the Father. When we think more about the needs of others than our own needs, we reflect the kindness of King Jesus. When we go out of our way to help and to love and to serve one another, we reflect the kindness of the Lord.

He says by the power of the Spirit, it looks like putting on humility. Who is more humble than King Jesus? Who emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form.

He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, Philippians 2 tells us. Church, when we put on humility and meekness, when we clothe ourselves with humility, and we resist the urge to be right all the time, and we resist that selfish desire to be the most important person in the room all the time, when we set aside our own needs for the good of others, we show the world what Jesus is like.

He says it looks like clothing ourselves with patience. Are you patient? Has God been patient with you? Our God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Is this the type of character that you reflect in your own life, church? That sort of character is odd in the world, but it is a powerful witness to the glory of God.

[26 : 03] We're not only called to clothe ourselves with Christ-likeness as individuals, we're also called to put on Christ-likeness in our interactions with one another in the community of the church.

Do you see how this isn't just an individual pursuit? This is a community pursuit. You realize that these aren't just commands for us as individual Christians.

These are commands for us as a church. The gospel is meant to shape us, not just as individuals into the image of Christ, but as a church community, as a family in the image of Christ.

I love how Paul does this because you know Paul has been around some churches, and he has experienced life in the church long enough to know that when membership actually means something, and when you're not just a name on a roll or an invisible face in a crowd, when it actually means something to be a member of a local body of believers, guess what?

At some point or another, you're going to rub somebody else the wrong way. Somebody's going to step on your toes. You will offend somebody, and you will be offended by somebody.

[27 : 12] It's inevitable. That's how family works, isn't it? You love each other. You're committed to each other. You want what's best for one another, but sometimes y'all just get on each other's nerves.

Be honest. How do we handle that? By putting on Christ. He says, Bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving one another.

As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all of these, put on love, which binds everything together. in perfect harmony.

Don't you want to be a family like that? You know, the ways of the modern church go something like this.

Either you're so invisible that there is no opportunity to step on anyone's toes. You just go to an event once a week. You're in, you're out, you're invisible. Nobody really knows you.

[28 : 11] You're not really in each other's lives. Or, as soon as I get offended, boom, I am out. Down the road. I'll go to another church with other people who are bound to offend me at some point in time.

Church, we are called to love one another as God has loved us. We are called to forgive one another as God has forgiven us. We are called to love one another enough to bear with one another in love.

Charles Spurgeon says, If you must reckon up your injuries, let them be written in water. But let your mercies be carved in granite. If a brother has offended you, forgive him.

If he has offended you again, forgive him. If he has offended you 70 times 7, still forgive him, because Christ has forgiven you. This is what we're called to be as a church family.

And we're called to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts to which we are called in one body.

Don't you want to be a family like this? I desire for Sea Wee Bay to be a family that reflects the glory of Christ.

[29 : 26] Don't you? I want to be a family that is bound together in love. A family that reflects the character of Christ.

A family that's eager and quick to forgive. Quick to show grace to one another. A family that is, in verse 16 he says, a family that's full of the word of God.

Look there to verse 16. He says, Church, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom.

And would you look at this? One very specific way that he gives us to do this, he says, is in our singing. Singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Do you realize, church, that our singing is one of the primary ways that we teach one another the word of God. Our singing is one of the ways that we allow the word of Christ to dwell in us.

[30 : 33] Have you ever thought about it like that? Some of you who are newer to the faith have told me at first you thought that it was kind of odd, right, for us to come together and for us to sing out loud and it's a little bit uncomfortable, right?

You notice that the lights are on, the music is not overbearing, and we can actually hear you singing if you will actually sing out a little bit. It's a little bit uncomfortable at first, but guess what?

That's intentional. Why do we sing? And why do we sing the way that we sing? Why do we sing the songs that we sing? It's because right here we're told our singing is one of the primary teaching ministries of the church.

Our singing together is not a performance of one or two performing for a crowd. It's not a concert where we come to be entertained, where we may sing along if we know the song or know the words or happen to like the song.

Our singing together has two primary directions. Do you see it? Do you see it here? On a horizontal plane, we are singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to one another.

[31:47] I need to hear you sing. You need to hear one another sing. Why? Because in our singing, we are teaching and admonishing one another with the word of God.

And so we sing songs that are true and filled with the word of God. We sing songs that teach proper doctrine. We sing songs that let the word of Christ dwell in us richly as we go out with that tune stuck in our head.

We want to fill our minds and our hearts with this word of God. Singing is a gift from God to allow that to happen. And then on a vertical plane, we sing unto the Lord.

It says, we sing in worship with thankfulness in our hearts to God. It is a both and. It's not just you and the Lord here this morning, is it? Well, you look around, you have a family around you.

It's not just you being transformed into the image of Christ. It is us together. This is a community project. We want to be a community that's shaped by the grace of God for the glory of God, which is where Paul closes.

[32:58] It's like, just in case he left anything out, he says, whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is what the Christian life is meant to be. Church, by the power of the grace of God, of his spirit at work in us, we are called to put sin to death.

Whatever is earthly in us, and we are called by his grace to live together as a community shaped by the gospel, putting on Christlikeness, reflecting his image to the world, extending his grace to one another, doing all things for the glory of God.

Why? Because he has made us his. Sinclair Ferguson says it like this. He says, sanctification is the process of becoming who you already are in Christ.

You put off the old clothes because they no longer belong to your new status. You put on the new clothes because you are now a child of the King.

[34:19] You know, if you have listened to all of this this morning and all you heard was a long list of do's and don'ts, a bunch of stuff that you have to do, if you're not a believer, would you please don't try and do any of this at all?

Not yet. You know why? It's because in your own strength you can't do it. What you need more than anything is to become a child of God by putting your faith in Christ.

And then, and then, for the Christian in the room, and then, by the power of His Spirit, put off the old man and put on the new.

And by His grace, would you remember who you are in Christ? Remember what God has done for you in the gospel of Jesus. Remember that you are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ.

Remember that sin no more has dominion over you. Remember that you are a new creation in Christ Jesus, raised to walk in newness of life. You are a Christian.

[35:26] Therefore, live as a Christian. Father, the Christian life is impossible apart from your help.

We praise you that you have supplied all that we need by the power of your Spirit. We praise you for the finished work of Christ that is our only hope. And we pray God that by your grace would you empower this church to reflect the holy image of Christ to the world.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.