

PROMISES WORTH KEEPING

The Present of
Presence!



SERMON NOTES
SEPTEMBER 22, 2024

18th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Colossians 3:1-17

COLOSSIANS 3:1-17 (THE MESSAGE)

1-2 So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, act like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective.

3-4 Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your real life—even though invisible to spectators—is with Christ in God. He is your life. When Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you'll show up, too—the real you, the glorious you. Meanwhile, be content with obscurity, like Christ.

5-8 And that means killing off everything connected with that way of death: sexual promiscuity, impurity, lust, doing whatever you feel like whenever you feel like it, and grabbing whatever attracts your fancy. That's a life shaped by things and feelings instead of by God. It's because of this kind of thing that God is about to explode in anger. It wasn't long ago that you were doing all that stuff and not knowing any better. But you know better now, so make sure it's all gone for good: bad temper, irritability, meanness, profanity, dirty talk.

9-11 Don't lie to one another. You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it. All the old fashions are now obsolete. Words like Jewish and non-Jewish, religious and irreligious, insider and outsider, uncivilized and uncouth, slave and free, mean nothing. From now on everyone is defined by Christ, everyone is included in Christ.

12-14 So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

15-17 Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

"As Christ has given himself for us and to us that we might be freed from sin and self, we are called to give ourselves to Christ, seeking to grow into this new life and our love for Christ and for others."

I. TAKING OFF THE OLD...

- A. Paul is writing to the church in Colossae (a church he doesn't really know well) from Rome near the end of his ministry and urging them to hold firm to Good News of what God has done in Jesus Christ...sins forgiven, death defeated, and salvation given.... new life that begins here and now!

- B. How to live out this "new life" seems to be of some controversy in the Colossian church and their differing understandings and doctrines had become divisive.
- C. Paul very pastorally reminds them of the basics of their faith in Jesus Christ that they have received and believed as they have been baptized. Christ came, died, and was resurrected so that "your" lives might be different! Not torn by divisions and broken by sin but freed to live lives in God's presence, seeking "things that are above!"
- D. It seems that among the Colossians there was the tendency to either live rigidly, legalistically, and self-preserving, or they lived with no constraints on their behavior, but continuing to live the same way they did before they received the Good News! They were more concerned with the things of this world, and not God's coming Kingdom!
- E. Their lives were not being transformed by the love of Christ because they were not allowing God to work in and through them...they were content to live "old" lives and unwilling to seek those things which would help them live Godly lives.

II. PUTTING ON THE NEW!

- A. Because of what Christ has done for us, we are given grace by the Holy Spirit to be God's "chosen ones" ...not to be exclusive, but to allow the "peace of Christ to rule in your hearts" so that love is at the heart of all things, and that "compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience" might clothe and shape us as God's people.
- B. We are to be seeking God's transforming grace! God's gracious initiative and our (the believer's) response go hand in hand, and as a community our relationships should be transcending divisions!
- C. We have been given "new life" in Christ, but we are not yet "fully" new, but in the process of being sanctified...our participation...our "presence" ... is required!
- D. Paul stresses that it is through the Word of Christ that we learn and grow in this process as we make ourselves present to God, and that gratitude and thanksgiving for the gift of Christ leads us to further offer ourselves to God in worship.
- E. This "new life" is characterized by God being present to us, and our being present to God, in a living, dynamic, growing relationship through Jesus Christ. It is in this relationship that we allow God to transform us into Christ's likeness and we participate in the redemptive activity of God for the world.

Are you content to live "old life?" Or do you desire to live in the "new life" that Christ brings?

In gratitude and thanksgiving, are you purposefully drawing close to God and to God's people?

Are you growing in God's grace and serving Christ in the world?