

Colossians 3:12-17 | Tom Grass

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Preacher: Tom Grass

[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. This morning, we continue our study on the New Testament book of Colossians.

Colossians, chapter 3, where we're at, we're going to be in 12 to 17. I want to read verses 1 through 4 of this chapter and then read 12 through 17.

And I don't usually dress in a tie, in nice coats. I have to borrow the tie from my son. There's a purpose for that, and we'll come to that later.

So if I want to ask how to get dressed, I either ask my wife or Luke or Jacob, because I think it's a genetic thing and it skips generations. And I was skipped. So I prefer white pants, white shirt and khakis, or jeans and a t-shirt.

Then I know I match. But anyway, all that to be. Let's look at Colossians 3, verse 1 to 4. And then I'll read these verses, and then we'll go into our teaching this morning.

[1 : 09] If then you were raised with Christ, or since you were raised with Christ, seek those things which were above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth.

For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. In verse 12 of Colossians 3, Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another.

If anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to wish all till you were called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. There are numerous messages in this passage.

[2 : 40] I'm going to try to hit on various points so you get an overview of it all, and you can do more study on your own, of course. Verse 3 of this chapter says, For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are new creations in Christ. The old has passed away. Behold, all things have become new. Yet, the sin nature still has influence over us, and we find that no matter what our age is, it does influence us.

I think we could ask ourselves a few questions to check our motives. Does the action or thought I'm engaging in line up with my calling? Whatever you're doing, is it lining up with your calling?

If you're a believer. Is what I'm doing of Christ or the flesh? Is what I'm doing of the Spirit or the flesh? The beginning of verse 12 is a declaration or statement by God of who the believer is in His eyes.

It says, You are elect of God, holy and beloved. In Ephesians chapter 1, verse 3 to 6, Paul says this.

[4 : 03] You could turn with me and read these verses along with me. Ephesians 1, 3 to 6. It says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

In love, He predestined us to the adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us and

the Beloved.

Secondly, verse 12 tells us that we are holy. In one sense, our holiness has to do with being declared righteous by God. It's a judicial declaration.

Our sins will no longer be counted against us. He's declared us righteous. He gave us His righteousness. We are also set apart for His purposes.

We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works. So holiness also means our holy means set apart for. If you remember the temple in the Old Testament, there were vessels that were set apart for the temple service.

[5 : 23] They weren't ordinary use. They weren't something that you would use every day. Years ago, families a lot of times would have china. And they'd have a china cabinet.

And you'd have people over a holiday. You would polish the silver. And you'd bring out the good china. And we'd have Thanksgiving. We don't do that as much today. But those dishes were set apart in a beautiful hutch in our dining room at home.

And they were for a special thing. We're set apart. We're special people before God. We are set apart for His purposes.

Finally, Paul says we're beloved. We are loved of God. I don't know that I think about that a lot. That I'm loved by God.

But we are. We are accepted and sustained in our consecration by His love. That's a few words but a lot of thoughts there.

[6 : 26] We are accepted and sustained in our consecration by His love. Romans 1, verse 7, Paul writes, To all who are in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.

Do you think about that each day? I'm loved by God. What a good thought to wake up to. In Romans 8, verse 37-39, Paul writes this.

If you want to turn to that, it would be great to follow along. But in all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who has loved us.

And Paul goes on to say that nothing will separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. In light of these wonderful thoughts and truths that God has told us, has taught us, we should be willing, we should be, willingly be what He has called us to be.

I'm sorry, it was hard for me to say that. It's easy to write. Hard to say. In verse 12-14, we find eight things that we are to put on. We are to clothe ourselves with the garments of the new creation, starting from the inside out.

[7 : 50] These garments or layers are to be put on daily and will be tested every day by and through our interaction with people around us. So think of yourself getting ready in the morning and you're getting dressed.

I intentionally wore nice clothes today to illustrate the point that putting on that emphasis. Some people will title this the walk of the new man, a walking in newness of life, that type of thing. It's a little different than the verses ahead of this, isn't it? The verses ahead of it were mortify the members which are upon the earth, the sin nature. Here we're talking about starting from the inside out, being like God, being like Christ.

So we are to put on tender mercies. This is a very, some translations will say bowels of mercy. This is the inner part of your being.

This is where you're, kind of like your passion or your heart maybe. Like, you know, when you hear bad news, you might say, oh, it made me sick to my stomach.

[9 : 01] When I heard that my gut hurt, I was so upset my stomach was turning over. Do we say those kinds of things?

Yeah, it's like the innermost being. But this is where we start in the morning. We put on tender mercies. It's sympathizing. It's a sympathizing spirit with those in distress, weeping with those that weep, suffering with those that suffer.

You don't just hear about someone with cancer. Like one day I was waiting on a customer and they said, oh, they haven't camped for a while and they haven't used their trailer for a couple of years. And I go, is everything okay? She said, he said, oh, my wife said cancer came back. I'm like, oh my gosh, you know, that's awful. And my heart of compassion came out and I said, I'll pray for you guys. Well, thank you.

I don't know more than that. You know, it was a very brief encounter, but it was a heart of compassion. It was tender mercies. You're moved by it, right?

[10:03] That's tender mercies. Kindness. Next thing you put on is kindness. This is how we show favor or give freely. It's not expecting anything in return.

That's a crazy thought. You do something expecting nothing in return. Ephesians 4 says, in verse 32, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ Jesus has forgiven you.

Humbleness, humility, humbleness of mind, he goes on. It's not thinking poorly of yourself. It's having the proper estimation of yourself before God.

It's in light of the will of God you're humble, yet humility. Paul in Romans 12, 3 says, for through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than you ought to think, but think so as to have sound judgment, as each has allowed it a measure of faith. You'll find these words kind of in your mind will scramble together. Don't they kind of, these thoughts kind of run together. But they each have their own meaning. And then you have meekness.

[11:14] Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is power under control. Meekness to me means that there are times when I could do something about something and exercise some authority, but instead I'll humbly react and be patient or be kind or be gentle.

but inside, you know, maybe I have some power that I have that I could exercise but I choose not to. Possibly an example in the Lord's life, you know, Satan said, turn these rocks into bread after he had fasted.

But Jesus could have, but in meekness he didn't for other purposes. But then, after the resurrection, what does he do? he makes, he cooks a meal on the beach for his disciples.

Loaves and fishes. Where did he get them? There's mystery there about where he got the fish.

Where did he get the bread? But he did things not for himself. He did it for others. It's kind of like, some consider a horse as a good example of meekness.

They're a beast of burden, right? Horsepower. We use these terms to describe cars, you know, 350 horsepower, whatever that really means. But, but a horse is also gentle and humble.

[12:40] You can ride a horse. You can teach it to do many things, yet inside it's powerful and packed with power, but it humbles itself for us to use it for many things. Long-suffering.

You can come up with your own definition of that, I'm sure. Long-suffering. Putting up with people or circumstances without retaliation. That's a tough one, isn't it? Especially if you're wronged or you think you should be, have a certain privilege or right and someone challenges that.

It involves patience, not looking for revenge. How do you respond when you're provoked would be a question to ask about long-suffering. It's a hard one for me.

I feel provoked a lot when I'm at work. You know, I see things happening around me. I tell guys, do this and this and that and every day you say the same thing and at that point I'm provoked. And so, do I act in humility or do I say what I'm thinking?

I struggle. But there are times where you need to say what should be said and take that, but do it right. It's challenging.

[13:50] It may respond, it may require us to pray through the circumstances and let the Lord vindicate the wrong. Is that a possibility? Long-suffering? Lord, give me the strength to persevere under this situation.

Or Lord, help me to endure it. Lord, vindicate me in this. Lord, you take care of this injustice that I feel is in my life. Sometimes when you do that, you'll realize later that that wasn't an injustice at all and you were wrong in your perception because you reacted.

Has that ever happened to you? This is not right. It's wrong. This is an offense to me. Someone's taking advantage of me. Then later you realize, Noah is my attitude, my flesh getting in the way.

Forbearance. Kind of like long-suffering, it means to put up with, to hold up or hold back. It's intentional. It's like God who holds back judgment. Romans 2.4.

I think Dave Stahl likes this verse. Do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the long-suffering, that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

[15:02] Isn't that interesting? Do we think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

How patient is God with us? How patient is He with me? I'm a hard-headed, stubborn guy. I am. I want to do my own thing. I want to have my own way. And yet, God loves me.

Continually. I will say, no, I'm not going to do that, Lord. No, I don't want to be in this situation. And He says, endure it. But, I think if we're honest, we'll all find places in our life where we spit in God's face.

And we say things to Him without words that says we're defiant. We shake our fists at God. I want my own way. Like a little child that does a tantrum fit.

[16:18] Right? But, the question here is, do you think lightly for the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience?

Do you know why God does that? So that you'll repent. It's not for license. It's not so that you can do your own thing. It's so that you'll come back to Him and be His child.

His obedient child. Next thing we're called to put on is forgiveness. These are all things from the inside out. Right? Remember that? These are all things we have inside of us.

Forgiveness opens our heart up to the fullness of the love of God. Unforgiveness closes our heart to God. If you're holding bitterness and resentment toward people in your life or toward God, you are not open to God.

You shut them off. You ever have a person in your life that you shut off? Have you ever done this? Someone hacks you off. You get mad at them at work or at home.

[17:19] You know, that person just riles me up. And you know, the next couple days while I have that unforgiveness in my heart, I'm not open to God's stuff.

I'm open to other things. But I have to be forgiving. I love the account in Philemon of Paul's plea to Onesimus. I'm going to read Philemon verses 10-21.

I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful to both you and to me.

Apparently, he was a slave, ran away from this guy, and Paul met him while he was in prison. He became a believer. He says, I have sent him back to you in person that is sending my very heart, whom I wish to keep with me, that is Onesimus, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel.

Without your consent, I did not want to do anything so that your goodness would not be in effect by compulsion, but by your own free will. For perhaps he was, for this reason, separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

[18:39] The situation was that this guy ran away and Paul met him. He became a believer and he's useful to Paul, but Paul says, I'm going to send you back to your master. You work that out. If you work that out, then come back and you'll be useful for me and to your old master.

Paul goes on and says, If then you regard me as a partner, accept him as you would me, but if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will repay it, not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well. Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord.

Refresh my heart in Christ. Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you since I know that you will do even more than what I say. Paul really lays it on him, doesn't he?

I'm sending this guy back to you, but I want you to know that you owe me your life too. And if that guy and you don't have in your heart to forgive him and he owes you anything, charge it to my account. Isn't that wonderful?

[19:43] It is. The last thing that we're to put on is love. Here I had to borrow something from my son. A nice jacket. All right.

How's that look? Doing all right here? Put on love. Which is the perfect bond of unity. As we consider verses 3-1 to 4-1, this whole chapter including verse 1 of chapter 4, I think you could say it all hinges on this verse.

For certain, it is the verse or action that holds all the other seven put-ons together. In context, love is the outer layer that covers everything else and holds it all together.

This is the last garment we are to put on as new creations in Christ. I think of it as bigger than just a jacket. It holds it all in.

Okay? That's all fine and good, isn't it? What kind of love is this? What's the word here? Guess what it is? Of all the words of love.

[20:52] Think it's phileo love? It's agape love. Unconditional love, which means preference and goodwill.

It considers others' feelings, circumstances, and needs before your own. Paul really smacks you right in the face, doesn't he? You know, you think, I'm doing alright up to this point.

You know, I can do this. I can have meekness, humbleness. But no, he says put on love.

Unconditional love. 1 Corinthians, Paul says, these things remain, faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.

We also read that this is the bond of perfectness in verse 14. It's like a ligament in the body which is a band of tough, flexible, fibrous, connective tissue that connects two bones or cartilages or holds a joint together.

Is that right? Yeah. Imagine having all the seven previous qualities without love. It would be meaningless or empty. If you have these things but you don't exercise them, you don't exercise them in the people that you're around in the world or in the church or in the body of Christ, it's useless, right?

[22 : 10] You can say you have these things but if you don't do them, it's useless. You have to have love. It has to be done while you're interacting with other people. This is enough.

All right. I'd like to think of this verse, I said it's the main point or the hinge verse if you will. Think of a chain. A chain is very useful, right? A chain on a bicycle needs what to work?

One piece on a chain is missing what happens. It becomes useless. You need that master link, right? You could have a really nice bicycle, looks fantastic, but without that chain, that master link, it's useless.

A chainsaw, great tool, fires right up and works. Without a chain with a master link on it, it's not of any use. If you have any gear that has a sprocket and it's chain driven without the chain with a master link holding it all together, what's good is it, right?

What if you have an RV? So you got your truck all ready and you have a trailer you're going to tow and you're going to hook it up to your truck. The truck is serviced, gassed up, ready to go. You go get your trailer, it's all ready, it's packed, it's got food, and you go to hook up and you're missing one thing for your hitch.

[23 : 28] What is it? Well, a ball. It could be the little coupler pin, the little link, the clip, the pin and clip for your hitch. You don't have it. It's useless.

You can't go on your trip. It sounds ridiculous, but that's what love is. What about, I try to think of one for ladies, okay, what about a beautiful necklace with diamonds and settings of gold?

Wouldn't that be wonderful? But if it's missing that clasp to put it together in the back, it doesn't serve its true function, does it? It's that little link that's missing and uses its usefulness.

I'm going to move on a little quicker here in verse 15. It says, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful. You know that God gives you His peace, if you're a believer?

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. This word rule, it means umpire. It means make the right call.

[24 : 41] You employ an umpire in a game and there's a play at the plate, play at first base, a ruling on the field. You want him to make the right call. This is what rule in your heart means. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

Let it make the right call. Philippians 4, 6 says, the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension will guard your hearts and your mind in Christ Jesus.

I had this thoughts on peace of Christ. It's the highest peace available because it's Christ's peace. He is exalted on high.

It is no longer my peace but His. The let allows our peace to be divine in origin and not human, self-generated. I need that.

His peace starts the moment we believe the gospel. At that special moment we are translated from death to life. The sin debt and guilt of sin is removed. Colossians 3, verse 16 tells us that we are to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

[25 : 49] This is another let. We have to let the peace of Christ rule, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. How do you do this?

It's interesting looking up this verse in commentary. There's not a lot said on this verse. It's kind of curious. But first you need to read God's word. Some verses come to mind.

Thy word I have hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. How can a young man keep his way pure by keeping it according to thy word? The word of God should be at home in our hearts.

We should let it rule in our hearts. Let it dwell in there richly. We're inviting it in when we hear it, when we study it. It should be welcomed.

We should be excited to read it. Allow it to penetrate our hearts. You know it's a command also. This phrase, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, it's a command to us.

[26 : 49] How are you doing on that one? Are you letting it rule? Are you letting it in? Are you letting it dwell? You have to answer that for yourself. For God's word to richly benefit us, to us, we must read it, study it, memorize it, and apply it.

There's teaching, profitable instruction, expounding the word. It is the instruction of churches and the members thereof and the doctrines of the gospel in order to establish and build them up in the most holy faith.

It chiefly lies in a doctrinal way of preaching and opening, explaining, and defending the doctrines of Christ. There's admonishing, which has to do with encouraging, exhorting, and appealing to the mind.

There's singing something I struggle in. We did it this morning. We sang three songs before we opened up here. I'm not a big singer, but you know what? It says you're singing.

Do it with grace in your hearts. Do it with gratitude, thankfulness. It is a worthwhile part of being encouraged in the Lord. The early believers probably sang psalms.

[27 : 55] They may have wrote some hymns. They may have sung some words to remember things, you know. This is one that, I don't know if they sang this one.

How about this? 1 Timothy 1.17 might have gone like this. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. Be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. Maybe they sung that. I don't know. They probably sung it better. But I don't think God cares how it sounds. I don't really do.

It's important to do things well, but I mean individually, if you don't have a good voice or don't think you can carry a tune, so what? Sing praises to God. I think, and I didn't find them all, but there's little, when Paul does his writings, there'll be these little blurts of like the doxology.

And I didn't find them all, but I think some of those were little phrases that the early Christians would have said to each other. Like that one I just sung to you guys, but they're spread out throughout the New Testament, and I think they may have memorized those things and shared them as a way of encouragement.

[29 : 09] I'd like to read how the Berean Study Bible translates this verse. I really like it. It says, Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.

And he kind of breaks it up that way. And then it says, And as you sing psalms, hymn, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your heart to God, it kind of breaks it up a little bit.

I kind of like that. Lastly, we come to verse 17. This is a summary verse for today. It kind of puts a capstone on all these things.

And it says, it almost speaks for itself. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Do I really need to explain it? Seriously. Whatever you do, all that you do, word or deed, do it how?

[30 : 09] Do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father. Are you doing that? Am I? It's very inclusive, right?

All words, all deeds. Do I really think this way in my daily life? Do all my reactions reflect the will of God?

In everything that I do, could I put, in Jesus' name, at the end of it? I wait on a customer, I could say, in Jesus' name. Because I waited on them just like Christ would have.

My dealings with my coworkers when I'm aggravated. Move that stinking trailer, in Jesus' name. I mean, you know, it doesn't come across right, does it? You know what I mean?

What are your frustrations with your children at home? How many, you know, you go there, don't you? Fast sometimes when you're in the midst of raising kids. Can you say you said it and did it in Jesus' name?

[31 : 07] What are you doing personally in your life? What are you looking at? What are your thoughts? Do they align with the Word of God? Are they something else? You have to answer that question.

In closing, musicians want to come up. What we see in these few verses in Colossians is the fullness of Christ in us spilling over in our words or actions.

Years ago, a guy had this picture of, it was evangelism, but it had to do with evangelism, but on the cover of this booklet he made, he showed a picture, which would be like a picture of water, and then he showed water pouring into it and overflowing.

And if we have the fullness of Christ in us, these things will spill out over our reservoir, over our heart, and into the world around us by our words and our actions.

From the inside out, we have Christ's likeness and thoughts as we put on our new man. From the outside in, we're transformed by the renewing of the mind through the reading, teaching, and admonition from the Word of God.

[32 : 30] Get it? Two points there, guys. From the outside in, we're transformed. I've read that wrong.

From the inside out, we have Christ's likeness and thoughts as we put on the new man. From the outside in, we are transformed by the renewing of our mind through the reading, teaching, and admonition from the Word of God.

It's a two-fold approach to our Christian walk. It's a two-fold approach to our Christian walk.