

Colossians 3:5-11 | Ted Tash

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 April 2018

Preacher: Ted Tash

[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.

All right, good morning. We took a week last week off from our study in Colossians to have Easter Sunday, which was great.

We had a good message on resurrection from Dave. And so good. But now we are back to it, back to Colossians. We're in Colossians chapter 3 today. We're going to look at about seven verses there.

It's Colossians 3, verses 5 through 11. I should have a PowerPoint, maybe, perhaps. I do. Do I have to click it to start? Ah, I was trying to change the songs back there, but it wasn't working for me. I was trying to mess with them a little bit. But Colossians 3, verses 5 through 11, about seven or so verses. Ah, to start with. And we're going to have a couple points that we'll go through today.

[1 : 04] A lot of times when I speak, especially on the New Testament, I like to kind of take it verse by verse. I think a lot of how Paul writes, he builds a case. He was a Pharisee, you know, so a little bit of a lawyer.

And he likes to build his case one point at a time. But I think this passage lends itself to a greater 30,000 foot view, if you will.

Almost a topic by topic way to teach it. So that's kind of what we'll do today. But the topic is Christian living. Two reasons we know that.

One, it says it there on the PowerPoint. And another reason, if you look in your Bible right above verse 5, it probably says in italics, Christian living. So that's the topic today, is Christian living. And we're going to look at that through these couple verses. Do got to get this out of the way. There's Lily, looking extra cute yesterday. She was six months old yesterday.

[1 : 59] That's crazy. So today she's closer to being one than she was to being a newborn. It's wild, but it's been a good time. So we've just got four points that we're going to look at today. We're going to look at Christian living and then how these four points relate to that.

So we're going to look at the believer's standing versus the believer's faith. Another way to think of that would be to look at the believer's position and the believer's practice.

So where is the believer spiritually positioned? And then practically, day to day, how does the believer live his life? We're going to look at grace and living a holy life or living a godly Christian life under grace.

Or do we live it under the law? What does the Bible have to say about that? We're going to look at spiritual renewal or daily renewal and what the New Testament teaches on that.

And then finally, we'll look at Christ's preeminent. That's really the underlying theme of the book of Colossians. So that's where we're going to start.

[3 : 04] Let's go ahead and pray and then we can read the passage here. So Father God, thank you for this day and thank you for the sunshine this weekend and for the rain maybe later today. And thank you for your word and that it's truth.

And then it gives us guidelines on how to live and just how we should view our lives while we're still here on this earth. And so thank you for that. We pray your blessing upon your word as it goes out now in Jesus' name.

So Colossians chapter 3, we're going to go verses 5 through 11. So starting in verse 5, it says, Therefore put to death the remembers which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Now I do want to pause just for the one and only time right there. But you go through this list and those are some pretty heavy sins. Fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire. Talking about immorality.

Pretty big picture stuff. And then he tacks on at the end, covetousness, which is idolatry. Kent Hughes, who's kind of a commentator that we loosely follow for our study in Colossians, had a good quote in there and I just wanted to throw it in.

[4 : 18] He says the first three or four here talking about immorality. They said if a man was sleeping around and it was known within the church and he was unrepentant of it, we'd throw him out. And he says if he was a drunk, we'd throw him out of the church.

But if he's successful, if he's covetousness and money is his idol and he becomes this great successful businessman by means of coveting others and that's his motivation, then we make him a deacon.

We throw the drunk out and make the covetous idol worshiper the deacon. I thought that was a good quote. So anyway, going on, verse 6. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Talked about the Christian life. Put off the old man. Put to death your members. Put off all these. And then he lists some sins in verse 8. Put on the new man.

[5 : 53] Christ is all and in all. Talking a whole bunch about the Christian life, Christian conduct, daily holy living. And I think to understand that we need to really look first at the believer's standing, or the believer's position, and his faith, or his practice.

So, I've got a couple scriptural truths up here. These are found all throughout the New Testament. Talking about the believer's position, or the believer's spiritual standing.

So, positionally, we died with Christ. You see that from all those verses up there. One from just a few verses above in your Bibles there. Colossians 3, verse 3.

Romans 6, how shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? We're baptized into his death. That means we're submerged.

We are immersed. Totally covered. It's not a little sprinkle of death. It is the whole thing into his death. That we having died to sin. If one died for all, then all died.

[6 : 54] And this is where a lot of people get tripped up. This is a tricky topic, the believer's position versus his practice. It's a tricky, tricky topic. This is where a lot of people run into some trouble.

They say, well, how's that possible that we died? Aren't we still pumping blood, sucking air? We're all still alive, right? Well, if you look at this, it says that we've been raised with Christ.

Spiritually, in a positional sense. Again, in Peter, it says that we are dead, according to the flesh, but alive. So we're dead, but we're alive. That doesn't make much sense either.

But it says we've been raised up with Christ. It says you died, and your life is hidden with Christ and God. So we died, but we have life. And finally, as Christ was raised, so we should walk in the newness of life.

We shall also be united in the likeness of his resurrection. And that's also talking about baptism there, being just totally immersed in the newness of life. And so if you think about this in a practical sense, it doesn't make much sense.

[8 : 00] Dead, but alive. And that's why you have to look at it, not practically, but positionally. That's our standing. That is how, in a spiritual sense, we stand before God, is dead, but raised with Christ.

And then you see, you kind of muddy the picture even further, and you see verses like the first one in our passage today. Put to death your members which are on the earth.

Well, I thought I already died, and I thought I already rose again. So why do I have to put something to death? Or in Romans, likewise, you reckon yourselves or consider yourselves to be dead.

Well, that doesn't make much sense. If I was already dead and raised again and walking in the newness of life, why do I have to consider myself dead? Other folks will say, well, why do we still struggle with sin if we've died to sin?

And the answer comes not in our position, not in our standing, but in our practice, in our practical state. We're still here on this earth, and we're still in the presence of sin, and we still have these members.

[9 : 05] We still have the flesh. We still have flesh and bones, and the physical tent that we're in. And so that's where we have to look at the believer's state. And for now, that state, practically speaking, is here on earth.

In a practical sense, we're at 210 Chestnut Avenue. I mean, that's where we are. And this is where you see Paul use these kind of physical, fleshly, flesh and bone type of terms.

You'll see the words members, body, outward man, he used in Corinthians. And that's the verses that are up here. Don't let sin reign in your mortal bodies.

Don't present your members as instruments of unrighteousness. Romans 7, boy, he's talking all about his practice, his physical state, all through Romans 7.

That's a great chapter. And then again, the passage that we have today, put to death the members which are on the earth. And so if you look at it from this point of view, that us as Christians are freed from sin as far as the power and the penalty of sin, but practically we still have the presence of sin around us, it starts to clear the picture up just a little bit.

[10 : 17] And that's kind of the great hope that the believer has, is that one day, and this is from Romans 8, one day our earthly members, this body of ours, this body that we're still in, will be redeemed as well.

And Paul says that's the great hope that we have. We don't hope for something that we already have. We don't hope for our salvation. We already have salvation. We hope for the redemption of our body, the removal of this body to a new one.

And that's the great hope that we have, one day being freed from the presence of sin. But for now, who will we serve? That's a great question. This verse up here says, Don't present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God, being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

There's another verse in that same passage, Romans 6, just a couple verses later, that put it this way. Don't present your members as instruments of sin leading to death, but as instruments of obedience leading to holiness.

So we have a choice. As Christians, we have a choice. Are we going to present these earthly bodies as instruments of sin, instruments of unrighteousness, or of righteousness leading to holiness?

[11 : 34] And obviously, I think we would all say we would prefer to have the latter. We would prefer to present our earthly bodies as members of holiness and obedience to God.

But how do we go about doing that? So this kind of brings up the great debate in kind of the how do we do all this?

And so this question, this argument's been around since at least Paul wrote the letter to the Romans, because he brings it up there. But if salvation is based only on grace, should we stop sinning?

Should we live a holy life? And the premise of that is this, is that if God saves us by grace, and when we sin, grace abounds, then the more we sin, the more grace we get.

Does that make sense? And well, grace is a good thing, so we could sin more, that way we get more of a good thing. But that's some flawed logic. Darryl Lynn, a lot of you guys know Darryl Lynn. Any of you that went to Impact, Darryl only had about ten messages that he would kind of cycle through at Impact.

[12 : 46] And nine out of the ten were the wallet trick, where this hand is man, this hand is God, and then he had this wallet that was like this wide that would go in the middle, and that would represent sin. And so the other message besides the wallet trick, the tenth one, was based on the premise that if the verse is true where it says, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, then as Christians we should just go out and rob banks and kill people.

And those were his words, not my words. But the thought is, if that's true, if all we have to do is confess our sin, and God is faithful and righteous to forgive us those sins, then let's go have a good time.

Let's go rob banks, kill people, just live it up, have as much fun as we can, and we can just all confess it later, and it will all be covered. And while that's true, in a sense, that God would forgive us that, that's missing out on life.

That's missing out on getting to do good work for God. That's missing out on a lot of blessing in life. That's missing out on many, many things. So it's kind of flawed logic.

But that's the same logic that comes up in this question. If salvation comes from grace, and the more we sin, the more grace we get, then what's the motivation to stop sinning?

[14:03] Should we even bother trying to live a holy life? Should we even bother trying to be godly and have a good Christian life? And so here's the premise of that.

Again, if sin brings out more grace, we should just keep sinning. But the implications of that are pretty serious. The implication there is that grace is not a sufficient motivator to live a holy life, that the grace alone isn't enough to get us motivated to live for God.

And if that's the case, if grace is not a sufficient motivator, then we have to put ourselves back under the law, right? I mean, we'd have to say, well, you know, I don't eat meat on Fridays, or, you know, I don't eat meat that sacrificed to idols.

And that's putting us right back under the law. Three weeks ago, Jeffrey had a great message on the end of Colossians chapter 2, and he warned us against asceticism and legalism, and there's one other one, but it's okay.

Mysticism, was that it? I don't remember that. But legalism, and he had a picture of a pork steak. That was what he started off with. I had my daughter, that's fine, and he had a pork steak. It was a big old juicy pork steak, and the thought was the Islamic religion couldn't eat pork, the Jewish religion couldn't eat pork, and some Christians even put themselves under a lint and say, well, we can't eat pork or any meat on Fridays during the time of Lent.

[15:31] And they're putting themselves back under the law, under the presumption that that is what is going to bring about a holy life. Well, if we go back under the law, we can live up to this standard, and then we'll have a holy life.

Grace has nothing to do with it. We need to put ourselves back under the law. And that is a totally flawed premise. That is a very wrong premise. So should we keep sinning? Should we go back under the law?

Absolutely not. If you look at this quote here, this again is from the Kent Hughes commentary, it says, It's far easier to cut off your hand or pluck out your eye than it is to sacrifice your evil passions and desires.

This is referring to the passage where Christ says, If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It's better to enter the kingdom of God blind or one-handed.

It would be a lot easier to take your hand off or to pull your eye out than it would be to stop lust. Or to stop evil thoughts. Because those come from the heart. And you can't change a heart.

[16:36] By a physical, legal consequence. The verses at the end of Colossians that Jeffrey spoke on. It says these, and he's talking about regulations.

The regulations where they would say, Do not taste, do not touch, do not handle. They have an appearance of wisdom and the appearance of religion, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

You know, if people want to not eat meat on Fridays, that's all well and good, but is that going to stop them from sinning in their hearts? No. It's not. They're of no value. Those regulations, going back under the law, won't stop you from sinning.

There's an example I read. I guess old-timey England way back in the day. If you were a pickpocket or a thief, they'd chop your hand off.

And it'd be your dominant hand. You would lose. There's a story. There's a guy that did it. And sure enough, they cut his dominant hand off. So then he was left with another dominant hand, I guess. That was all he had left. And continued to pickpocket.

[17:42] And again, boom, other hand's enough. So now he's got no hand. And they said he continued his profession, and continued being a pickpocket with his teeth. And so the idea there, these physical, legal requirements are never going to stop the heart of sin.

A sinner is a sinner is a sinner. It's a heart issue. So we can't put ourselves back under the law. The other problem with going back under the law is that God is the holy judge under the law.

The law is a set of requirements. It's a standard. And if we don't meet up to it, then there's some penalty to pay. And God becomes this holy judge if we as Christians try to put ourselves back under the law.

And that doesn't work. And this is a great quote. It says, The Christian life is lived not out of fear of what God will do to him, but out of inspiration for what God has done for him.

That's a great quote. Picture a situation, whatever it is. I don't know, stealing a candy bar. We'll just make an easy example. You don't want to approach that situation and think, Well, you know, it says thou shalt not steal, and I don't want God to strike me down if I steal his candy bar, and I don't want him to punish me.

[18 : 58] You know I'm not going to do it. That's not the mindset you should go into it with. The mindset is, God loved me, and he sent his son to die for me, and it would break his heart if I sold this candy bar.

In whatever situation it is, that is the mindset we should have as believers. It is not under law. It's under grace. God loves us, and that alone should be inspiration enough to live a holy life, to live a godly life.

So, Christian life is not lived out of fear of what God will do to you, but out of inspiration for what God has done to you. I think that's a great quote. So, kind of going back to the debate here, salvation is based only on grace, should we stop sinning?

Should we just continue sinning so that grace would abound? And this is kind of the premise that Paul writes Romans chapter 6 off of. This is kind of the premise that he starts with.

In Romans chapter 6, you can't look at a passage like we have today in Colossians 3 without really understanding Romans 6. Romans 6 is a great, great passage on Christian living and how to deal with the flesh.

[20 : 11] And it's a bit of a confusing passage, but Bill McDonald, I think, has a great commentary on it. And this is kind of the summary of that. You can break Romans 6 in about four parts about why the Christians shouldn't just continue to live in sin so that grace may abound.

Now, four points to it. The first part is he's reasoning with the Romans. He says, you cannot continue in sin because you've been united with Christ. And this is where he's saying you die with Christ, you were raised with Christ, you were united to Him and baptized with Him.

And so you cannot continue in sin just because that unity, that marriage to Christ. There should be no more sin just based on that alone. He's reasoning with them. And then he goes from there to kind of appealing to them.

He says, there's no need to continue in sin. Sin doesn't have dominion over you anymore. Why would you want to go back under that bondage of sin, that burden of sin? There's just no need for that.

You've been free. Live a free life. So he starts kind of appealing to them about that. And then it kind of changes as he goes on. He starts commanding them. He says, we must not continue in sin because that would make sin our master.

[21 : 22] Again, he says, do you want to be a slave of sin or a slave of God? God's going to be a much better master than sin would be. He reasons with them.

He appeals to them. He commands them. And finally, he warns them. He says, you better not continue in sin because that would end in disaster. That would end in death. You know, Romans 6.23, a popular verse that the wages of sin is death.

And I think that is talking, you know, it is a gospel verse, I think that it's talking spiritual death. But I think it's also talking physical death, death of relationships, death of friendship, that kind of thing. When sin creeps in, there is death. There's an end to sin. So I think it's just a great, great summary table, if you will, of Romans chapter 6.

And definitely stole that from Bill McDonald. So I'll give him the credit for that. But yes, as believers, we should live a holy life not based on the law, but just based on grace and what God has done for us.

[22 : 26] And that's why. All right, so we want to look at spiritual renewal. So why do we want to look at that? Well, verse 9 of our passage today says, Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him.

That verse should be up on the screen there, verse 10. So put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him.

So what I want to do, this idea of renewal is unique to the New Testament. It's unique to Christianity as a religion as well. So I want to read every single verse that has to do with renewal in the New Testament.

There's only three, so we already got one out of the way. But this word renewed comes up three times. Here in our passage and there in Corinthians. It says, Therefore we do not lose heart for even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed, is our word again, day by day.

That verse in Corinthians 4, that's a passage that Keith Treepolt spoke on down at Tinecrest this year where he talked about finishing the race.

[23 : 51] And one of the next verses after that talks about the outward man is perishing and the inward man is being renewed day by day. And the temporary light affliction, right, will be outweighed by far more exceeding weight of glory.

finishing the race. That's the context of that passage. But to live a Christian life we need to be renewed. And you say, well what does that mean? In those two verses this word means to renovate, to make something old become like new.

You know, we bought a house last February and we didn't move in until like May 1st or so. So we had about two and a half months or so to put into the house.

And a lot of blood, sweat, and tears and vomiting. Lydia was really pregnant during the time so there was some blood, sweat, tears, and vomit involved but it was alright.

But we completely renovated. We took some of the walls in the kitchen all the way down to the stud and the same thing in the bathroom and one of the bathrooms and put all new stuff in and it was nice.

[24 : 55] It wasn't just, well let's put a little paint here and a new light fixture there. It was, let's tear it all the way out and start over from new. A complete renovation. And that's what this, this word means.

Like it means a substantial change, significantly different. Just to completely change it. And as believers, you know, at one point we were sinners. We were, we were that old man where every intent of the heart was wicked, right?

And the heart, the human heart is wicked above all things. It is desperately, desperately evil. But as believers, we have this renewal. And this renewal comes in the knowledge of Christ.

That's what it says in verse 10, put on the new man who is renewed. How? In knowledge according to the image of Christ. Renewed in knowledge according to the image of Christ.

It's a complete change, completely different from the old way of life. It's not, let's get saved and continue robbing banks and killing people. It's a whole new life. Complete change, significantly different. The last word, or last verse that talks about renewal is found in Ephesians 4.

[26 : 03] If you look in context of this, he's talking again about the old man and the new man. But this word is a little bit different. It's a different Greek word. But it means to reform or replace.

And especially, it means to bend your mind towards God's mind. To bend your will and your desires towards God's will and God's desires. Well, how do you do that? Again, it has to come by knowledge of God's will, knowledge of God's heart, knowledge of his desires.

You can't say, I'm going to live my life like him if you don't know him. So to kind of summarize, this is a real brief summary of spiritual renewal. Those three verses are the only three verses that mention it in the entire New Testament.

We know that it comes daily from 2 Corinthians. It says day by day. So it's a daily knowledge of God's will and the daily knowledge of Christ.

In Corinthians 4, verse 10 and also verse 11, it repeats it twice. It says that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.

[27 : 14] Again, that's going back to the believer's state, the believer's practical day-to-day life, our members. That the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our body, in our members, in this earthly temple that we have.

And how do we do that? Well, day by day we have to know God's will. Day by day we have to know more about Christ. It comes from being in the Word. You know, John Kleppel, he's not here so I can pick on him a little bit.

He always says the reason we are supposed to read every day is because we live life every day, right? We're out in the world every day, you know, however many hours a day getting sin and getting the world pressed on us.

And if you don't go here for renewal, then you start picking up on what the world has to say. So a daily knowledge of Christ so that his life may be manifested in our life.

This next slide here, I didn't know really where to put it to be honest with you. It kind of summarizes Colossians chapter 3 which as a whole talks about Christian living.

[28 : 17] And this slide didn't really fit anywhere else and I don't know that it fits here either. But there's nine or ten things that Paul mentions here on how to live a Christian life. And I don't think that the Christian life or holy life should be a series of do's and don'ts.

Again, we shouldn't go back under the law. But these are just some practical things that he says. He says, seek the things above. Set your mind on things above. Put the death of your members on the earth. Put off these things.

Put off the old man. Put on the new man. And then he goes on into next week's passage to put on tender mercies. Put on love. And then verse 17, do all things and he says either in word or deed in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 23 says, whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not to men. So again, I'm not sure where this slide should go. But these are just some really practical things that us as believers can be doing in order to live a Christian and godly life.

Putting off the old, putting on the new. A complete change. And then finally, we have this slide here of Christ being preeminent.

[29 : 27] And this comes from the last verse in the passage, verse 11. Let's read verse 10 again too. It says, and have put on a new man, renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him.

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. To live a Christian life, to live a holy life, has to come from Christ being preeminent.

Colossians as a whole, if you look at it, that's a huge theme all through the book. Chapter 1 kind of culminates in verse 18 where we're saying that in all things he should be preeminent.

he should have first place. When you put Christ at first place, it wipes out all these other titles.

Greek, Jew, barbarian, Scythian.

I don't even know if I'm saying Scythian right. It could be Scythian. I don't know. But the idea is that there were these barbaric people, these uncultured people, these people that were just violent and murderers and just totally uncultured.

[30 : 35] All that goes away whether you're educated, uneducated, rich or poor, slave or free. All of those titles go away if you put Christ first.

It says that Christ is all and in all. I love this quote at the bottom here. These three words, Christ is all, are the essence and substance of the Christian life.

That's a great quote. These three words, Christ is all, are the essence and substance of a Christian life. When He is first place, when He is preeminent, all these other things sort of fall away.

If the musicians want to come back up here, we can just close with this thought. You know, again, verse 18 of chapter 1 talks about Christ being preeminent.

And the more you know about Him, the more your life will be like Him and just from that chapter alone, we see that He's the Redeemer, He's the Reconciler, He's the Sustainer of life, He's the one that holds all things and the whole universe together.

[31 : 44] He's the firstborn, He's the first one resurrected, He's the Savior. Christ is all and in all. And when we give Him that first place, that place of preeminence in our lives, a holy life and a good Christian life will follow.

Father God, thank You for the time that we can spend in Your Word today. Thank You that, God, that we're not under the law, that it's not a series of do's and don'ts, it's not a bunch of regulations of what we can eat and what we can't eat or what we can drink and what we can't drink.

Lord, we would only be prideful if that were the case, that I would be better than others or they would be better than me. Lord, there's none of that. Christ is all and He is in all and Lord, we're thankful for that.

Thank you.