

Sermon: Part 8, Living in Your New Life in Christ (Colossians 3:1-17)

IN *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. As a child, what was your 'career goal' when grown up?
2. What is your mission and goal in life? Over time, have your goals changed?

UP *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Pastor Henry told about the American history of slavery freedom, December 18, 1865. How does that story illustrate the struggle that many believers have concerning their freedom in Christ? Of the five keys (see summary), which one(s) help them overcome this struggle?
2. How do Romans 8:1; Colossians 3:1, 3, 12 help the Christian maintain identity in Christ, and ultimately be free from the power of sin?
3. Another illustration that Pastor Henry gave was the cartoon of 'Cathy and the Donuts.' How do the following verses demonstrate the process of her failure: Romans 6:13, 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:5? Where does 1 Corinthians 10:13 fit in with the process of how sin invades our lives? (Optional verse James 1:15)
4. "Peace is an athletic term meaning 'to umpire' . . . in a game, the umpire has the final say." (Pastor Henry) Using Paul's words from Philippians 4:6-7, what does it mean to 'let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts'? (Col 3:15) Give an example of a time when you have had this experience?
5. How does Paul's warning 'Do not lie to each other' (Col 3:9) connect with his command, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly . . .' (3:16) Do you have someone whom you can trust and be honest with?
6. Why does this passage end with the principle of 'doing everything in the name of the Lord with thanksgiving'? How does this relate to the third Commandment, Exodus 20:7? About what is there to have gratitude?

OUT *Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community*

1. Which 'keys' or Scriptural phrase from this study do you need to focus on this week? Why? How will you live this out?
2. How can the group pray for you this week?

UP – IN – OUT *reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).*

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 8:1

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, . . .

1 Corinthians 10:13

¹³No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

2 Corinthians 10:5

⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Colossians 3:1-17 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. ¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Sermon Study Summary

What is your goal or mission in life? Healthy people aspire to live loving, peaceful, joyful and fulfilling lives. Why then, are so many people miserable and so many families falling apart? Why is there so much conflict and unhappiness in our world? Fundamentally it is because we decide to do things our way rather than God's way. The Bible calls this sin and this is the reason our loving God warns us about sin.

Romans 6:23 says "the wages of sin is death" – death of hope or peace, death of relationships, and even physical death. God loves us and He desires that we live a full life filled with peace, joy and meaning. In Colossians 3 God calls us to put sin to death. How can we do this and be set free from the power of sin in our lives and live a victorious Christian life? In Colossians 3 Paul gives us 5 keys:

1. Know who we are in Christ

In 1865 slavery was abolished in the US but many still lived as slaves, not knowing that they were really free. When we surrender our lives to Christ we are no longer slaves to the sinful person we once were (Col. 3:1, 2). Verse 1 says "you have been raised with Christ"; verse 3 says "for you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God"; and verse 12 says that "you are chosen, holy and dearly loved." Anyone who is unclear what these verses mean will most likely be unclear as to how God sees them and who they are in Christ. If this is you, go on line and listen to the last two messages Pastor Henry gave on Colossians 3. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God and if we do not know our identity in Christ, we can be tempted into believing we are unworthy to call ourselves Christians. When that happens we can easily give in to more sin and fall victim to self-condemning thoughts which are lies from the pit of hell. "Therefore, there is now NO condemnation for those who are IN JESUS CHRIST." (Romans 8:1) Followers of Christ have died to sin and are new persons in Christ - you are in Him and He is in you. If you are not a follower of Christ, you need to ask what you base your identity on. There are really only two sources for the development of your identity – our culture and the God of the Bible. Basing one's identity on our culture or what other people think is problematic because people are fickle and their ideas and feelings change. Professions change; good looks give in to aging and accidents happen; businesses fail... Who are you then? God is unchanging and being a child of God gives you an identity that cannot be shaken and a foundation that cannot be taken away.

2. Setting our hearts and minds on Christ (Col.3:1,2)

Paul challenges us to live and behave in alignment with our new identity in Christ. Growing in godliness and finding freedom from the power of sin in our lives involves the mind and it is like taking off and putting on clothes each day. Each day we must make decisions about whether to offer the members of our bodies to God to use for His purposes or to our earthly nature – Mr. Sin. Romans 6:13 reminds us to offer ourselves "to God as those who have been brought from death to life." Roman 12:2 reminds us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We need to delete old thoughts, habits and sinful ways and replace them with new thoughts and habits. This is not always easy. 2 Corinthians 10:5 reminds us that Christ gives us power and authority to take temptation captive and to refuse to give in to it – in obedience to Christ. Pastor Henry illustrated the importance of taking a thought captive right away when he shared the story of Cathy and the donut. Because she refused to take captive her first thought about the donut, she ended up doing what she really did not want to do – eating junk food. We can't directly control our feelings but we can control what we think. The mind is the control center of all we do. We don't do anything without first thinking it. In Christ, every believer has the capacity to take a thought captive and say 'no.' 1 Corinthians 10:13 teaches that God provides a way to escape every temptation.

3. Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts (Col. 3:15)

Peace is an athletic term that means "to umpire." In a game the umpire has the final say. We need to decide who will rule in our heart and life. Who will we trust – the Lord – or our emotions? Paul says – I CHOOSE JESUS – not only because Jesus is God but because Jesus is peace. Nothing frightens, or intimidates or surprises HIM. Whatever we are facing, wherever sin seems to be winning – take it to Jesus. Philippians 4:6 encourages us to not be anxious about anything "but in every situation, by prayer and petitions, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

4. Let the word of God dwell in you and among you (Col.3:9)

One of the greatest ways we are kept from finding freedom from the power of sin is the telling of lies or the believing of lies. John 8:32 says the truth will set us free. Could it be that most Christians are never set free from the power of sinful habits because they are afraid to be open and honest about them with another godly Christ-follower they can trust? Problems kept in the dark do not go away; they intensify. Only when they are brought into the light can healing begin. The only way to identify falsehoods is to know the truth and that is why in verse 16 Paul writes, "let the message of Christ dwell among you richly..." We need to regularly study and meditate on God's word and ask ourselves what God is saying to us and what does He want us to do about it.

5. Do everything in the name of the Lord with thanksgiving (Col.3:17)

This means that everything we do should be on Christ's behalf, doing it as His representative according to His purposes, His will, His plans and in His authority. In John 14:14 Jesus says that "you may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." If we want our prayers to be effective, though, we must pray in His name according to His will, His purposes, His character and promises. We must be representing His interests and plans. To not do so would be misusing His name (Deut. 5:11) Paul says that we are to give thanks as we do everything in the name of the Lord. (Col. 3:15, 16 Phil. 4:6) Paul defines a thankful person as one who chooses to give thanks in ALL circumstances. (1Thess.5:18) There is nothing that breaks the power of sin in our lives and empowers us to live the abundant life than a thankful heart and a life that is surrendered to God.