

Put On

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Date: 23 August 2026

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[0:00] So, I want to draw our attention to that hymn that we sang at the end.! Sorry, Martha. We need to pray for Martha.

She's doing laps back and forth across the sound booth back there, doing camera and slides. So, I want to focus your attention on these words.

This is speaking of the Lord Jesus. Your name is the highest. Your name is the greatest. Jesus, your name stands above them all. When we talk about Jesus' name or anybody's name, we're not just talking about the label that we assign to them, John Hopkins or Tim Duffing or whatever.

It's your reputation, your character, what is known about you. And so, when we talk about the Lord Jesus, that his reputation, his being, his character is the highest.

It is the greatest. His name stands above them all. All thrones and dominions. All powers and positions. Jesus, your name stands above them all.

[1:07] We need to recognize that. We need to own it. Deep in our souls, we need to come to grips with the fact that this is true. We need to confront ourselves. Do I really believe this?

Do I really believe this is true? Now, the next part of that song is a particular word that's ascribed to God throughout the Bible and then is ascribed to Jesus.

And that's holy. Holy is your name. Now, it's very interesting, particularly in Isaiah 6. You see a picture of a pattern that's true throughout the Bible.

And that really is true in our lives. In Isaiah 6, Isaiah has gone through a period of mourning. The king had just died. And Isaiah had served in his court for a very, very long time.

If I remember correctly, Uzziah was the longest reigning king in Judah's history. And he died. And as Isaiah was mourning his death, he had a vision.

[2:12] And in that vision, Isaiah was transported into the throne room of God. And in the throne room of God, he heard the angels proclaiming, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

Isaiah was confronted not with that magnificence of the angels, which is truly great. Every time an angel appears in the Bible, he says, don't be afraid. Because they're terrifying.

And yet, their glory was completely eclipsed by what Isaiah saw, by who Isaiah saw sitting on the throne, and what they were proclaiming.

Martha, go ahead and give me that next slide. All the angels cry holy. All creation cries holy. You, Lord Jesus, are lifted high, holy, holy forever.

And what happens when we encounter God, when we see his holiness, when it really hits home, we have the same reaction that Isaiah did.

[3:15] Isaiah said, woe is me, I'm undone. I'm a man of unclean lips, meaning what comes out of my heart is filthy. And I belong to a people of unclean lips.

I am undone. I don't deserve to be here. I should be dead. That's the normal, healthy response to an encounter with God and his glory.

And yet what happens next is part of the pattern. The angel takes a coal off of the altar and touches Isaiah's lips with it.

I'm sure it hurt. Isaiah doesn't say, but I'm sure it did. But it purified him. It made him clean. His sins were forgiven.

He was made worthy to stand in the presence of the Holy God. That's what we experience in Christ. And then the next step, what closes the loop, is Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord.

[4:23] Who will go out for us? Who will be my spokesperson to the people? And Isaiah says, here am I, send me. He saw God in his magnificence.

He saw his own unworthiness. He received redemption. And he went out to serve. To give his life for the God that he had encountered and who had forgiven him.

That's the pattern. So when we sing songs like this, we need to stop and listen to what we're singing. Allow it to soak into our hearts. This God that we serve, his name, his reputation, his character is above all.

He is everything. He is holy. He is transcendent. He is without sin. And he makes us pure and righteous before him.

And then we live our lives to serve him. That's the right response. As we go into Colossians 3 this morning, we're going to see that pattern repeated. And we're going to be, I am going to be calling you to follow the pattern that Isaiah did.

[5:40] To see your lostness. To accept redemption. To respond to the call to go and be the voice and the hands and the feet of Jesus to a world that needs to hear the truth.

And to each other. That's what we're going to see in Colossians 3 this morning. So turn in your Bibles to Colossians chapter 3. Which is going to be our text this morning. While you're turning there, I'll tell you something that amused me this week.

Hopefully you've been paying attention over the last year and a half as I've been preaching. One of the things that always makes me laugh is when contemporary deep thinkers, philosophers, scientists, researchers, come up with something new that's got everybody all starry-eyed and twitterpated.

Look at this new thing that we discovered. And we can say as Christians, you're kind of late to the party. We already knew that. Sorry, buddy.

I'm glad you found that by your research, but it's already here. And oh, by the way, you're the same guy who said that my book is irrelevant. We're 2,000 years ahead of you. Welcome to the party.

[6:46] Well, that is part of what I found. I reread this book. Now, Atomic Habits, the cover got lost. Atomic Habits by James Clear has been a repeated bestseller on the New York Times bestseller list.

It has been quoted exhaustively. It's basically a really great approach to replace bad habits with good habits. You're going to see, if you were to read this book, you go, you know, I could read this book that has 297 pages, or I could read 17 verses in Colossians chapter 3 and get the same results.

James Clear just rediscovered what we learn in the Bible. Welcome to the party, James. Now, if you do want to read this book, I have a very special edition because it was annotated by, I think, maybe year old Sunny.

So I don't know if you can see that, but she highlighted that page. Not sure why, but something stood out there to her. So there you go. But I want you to see that about God's Word.

We're told repeatedly that this is an old book that's dusty and irrelevant, written by a whole bunch of authors over several hundred, if not a couple thousand years. What does it have to say to us in the 21st century in a land of AI and self-driving cars, which terrified me, by the way, self-driving cars and cell phones and all this technology that we have?

[8:10] What does this book have to offer? This book doesn't say anything about cell phones or AI. What it does talk about is the fundamental need of the human heart and how we can relate to God.

And that's never gone out of style. It's never become irrelevant. And the proof of that is that James Clear's book has been a bestseller over and over and over again because people want the answers that are right here.

And we need to own that. So we need to own this holy God that we serve. Not own as in possession. Own as in, yes, I'm possessed. I belong to him.

This is the center of who I am. And we need to own this book because it's so more relevant than anything else that comes out of the New York Times bestseller lists.

I just found that amusing. There's some good information there. And what's interesting, Colossians chapter 3, is he echoes what Paul said in Colossians 2.23.

[9:10] These are matters which have to be sure the appearance of wisdom. Remember, this was about rules. All the rules that we impose on ourselves. These are matters which have to be sure the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body.

Remember, this is the main line. But are of no value against fleshly indulgence. Rules don't change behavior. Now, what Clear writes in the first third of the book is that we do need to change our behavior.

We do need to put off old things and put on new things. But if rules don't change it, what changes it? Not surprising to those of us who have been in Colossians chapter 3 is you will not change your behavior until you change your identity.

That's what he wrote. That's what he made millions of dollars writing that you already had in your Bible. Until you change your identity, you cannot change your behavior.

But when you do change your identity, your behavior naturally follows. Because you say, I am no longer that. I am this new person. And this new person doesn't do these things.

[10:24] And we change. And what we're going to unpack this morning as we wrap up this three-week mini-series within the bigger series of Colossians is our identity is rooted in that person whose name is above every name.

That glorious God who is holy, holy, holy, but redeemed us. Our identity is rooted and centered in Him. And when that is the case, as we find our identity in Jesus, the behavior change that's talked about over and over and over again in the New Testament becomes something that we can actually do because we are doing it in partnership with God.

And make no mistake, we are the minority partner in that work. God wants us to change more than we do because He knows what's best for us. So we're going to look at identity.

We're going to look at who we are. Now there's some foundation I want to lay before we get into Colossians chapter 3. The first thing in terms of identity is what are our core basic human needs? There's a lot of things that have been written about what are the needs of human beings, but really if you boil it down, it's actually pretty simple. Every one of us needs to feel secure or safe.

[11:42] That refers to physical safety. We need to know that we can gather together and not be shot at or mocked or humiliated. We need to know that we can go out into the community.

That's a basic fundamental need. We also need to know that we have safety and security in terms of do we have the food that we need to eat? Do we have our basic fundamental needs for clothing and for shelter and for food?

Human beings the world over, that's a fundamental need. Are my basic needs being met? And do I feel safe? Am I in a place that's safe for me physically, that's safe for me socially?

Is this a place that I can be real? We need that. That's very, very important. And by the way, in the Christian community, in the body of Christ, that need should be met.

We should be in a place that's safe. We should be in a place where we're ministering to each other and addressing that need. So that's one need. The other one is for significance. I need to matter.

[12:49] Now there's this idea, and I think it's a false humility, like no, no, no, we're always self-deprecating. And somehow it's better to be self-deprecating. I want to shift the focus away from me.

Now, there's a balance. If it's all about me, me, me, look at me. Aren't I great? Look at me. Did you see what I did there? Hey, but enough about me. What do you think about me? That's not healthy. But we're made in the image of God.

We're actually, we are glorious beings because we are image bearers. And there is a place where it's appropriate to glory in what God has made in us, to use what we have for the benefit of others. Part of that is enjoying what we have. I think you know, I love doing this. This is my calling. This is my gift to you from God, is to open God's word and to teach it.

It's fun. And there is a sense in which I glory in it because this is where I belong. Each of you has something like that that's appropriate. You need to be significant.

[13:59] You need to matter in somebody else's life. One of the things that destroys people is removing any sense of significance. When we tell people, you don't matter, you're not important, they die.

Just as if we'd cut them off from food and water. We were made to be significant because we're like God. And that need is met as we take the gifts that God has given us and use them to bless other people.

And there's glory in that. And it's appropriate glory. And so I want you to remember that. Two fundamental needs. We want to be safe and secure. That's one.

And we want to be significant. We want lives that matter. Now these needs, they're not good or bad. They just are. They just are. They exist.

What we do with them, however, is good or bad. It's righteousness. If I steal your lunch money to feed myself, that's sin. If I get a job to work to feed myself, that's righteous.

[15:10] So it's what we do with these needs that makes it sinful or good. But the fact that you have them, it just is. God made you that way. And it's okay. It's okay when someone says, yes, I need to be encouraged.

I actually remember years ago when I worked at a mattress firm, I had a rather contentious relationship with one of our district managers. And he, from my perspective, looked like he went out of his way to ignore accomplishments that I made.

I'll never forget there was one meeting where he was recognizing guys who had reached a certain sales threshold. And I had met that threshold. And he called all the other people out and recognized them and did not recognize me.

And I was mad. And at first I thought, dude, get over yourself. You know what you did. What's the big deal? But there's actually an appropriate, hey, you know what? It's right to recognize me for an accomplishment.

It's right for us to recognize each other, to say thank you, to recognize a job well done. We're made with that need. It's how we handle it. So the question becomes, and this is what we're going to deal with in Colossians 3 this morning, where do I look to get that need met?

[16:26] Those two needs. Where do I look? The Bible's clear. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

The verse prior to that, Matthew 6.32, says that God knows your needs. He doesn't say, what? You're hungry? How'd that happen? He made you.

He doesn't say, well, you need to feel safe. What's wrong with you? No, he knows. We need to focus our attention where those needs are appropriately met and resist those places where they're not.

So these are the concepts I want you to have in mind as we go forward into the chapter. There was a philosopher, mathematician in France, guided by the name of Blaise Pascal, brilliant man.

I want you to pay attention to this quote because this addresses this question. So these needs that we have tell us something about ourselves. What else does this craving and this helplessness, meaning we need to get these needs met outside of ourselves, what does this craving and this helplessness proclaim?

[17:36] But there was once in man a true happiness. The idea there, C.S. Lewis repeated it later. Blaise Pascal lived in the 1600s. C.S. Lewis talked about it.

I just heard a talk from a gentleman by the name of John Eldridge talking about it. These desires that we have indicate that there is a place where they are rightfully fulfilled. That in the garden, they were rightfully fulfilled.

And in the future in heaven, they will be rightfully fulfilled. They are an echo of a true need that we have. What else does this craving and this helplessness proclaim? But there was once in man a true happiness of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace.

In other words, we feel hungry for something that we haven't yet received. We're missing a home that we know we were made for. This, we try in vain to fill with everything around us since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object.

In other words, by God himself. The idea here is that we have a hole in our heart that can only be filled by God. Pascal puts it very well.

[18:56] But we need to recognize that. These needs can only be filled by and in and through God in our relationship with him. And that's going to be our theme for the rest of the morning is focusing on that relationship with God himself.

So, we've got Colossians chapter 3. Let's read that together. Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, we've addressed this several times.

I'll address it again. You need to be sure. You have to be sure that you have put your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

That you have decided to follow him. That answers the if. If you have been raised with Christ, you can say, yes, I have. If you've trusted him as your Lord and Savior.

Therefore, if you've been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, set your mind on things above, not on things that are on earth.

[20:01] For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ and God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts

to idolatry.

For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience. And in them, you also once walked when you were living in them. But now you also put them all aside.

Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another. That's important. Do not lie to one another since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him.

A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free man, but Christ is all and in all.

In other words, Jesus is the remover of all barriers. Rich men and poor men have fellowship together. Men and women have fellowship together. People of all races and cultures have fellowship together.

[21 : 14] Because what we have in common is Christ. So as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, this is your identity.

You should memorize this verse. You don't even have to memorize the whole verse. Aren't I a nice guy? They give you such easy homework. So as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another, in forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

By the way, I just want to make a side note. Those are really risky behaviors. That's a risk. Because compassion costs me something.

Kindness costs me something. Humility costs me something. Gentleness costs me something.

Patience costs me something. If we don't have an identity rooted in Christ, we're always doing a risk-reward evaluation in our minds, even if we're not aware of it.

Is the risk involved worth the reward I get, the payback? If we don't have an identity centered in Christ, the answer to that question is no. It's not worth it. And so we don't do it. So beyond all things, verse 14, Richly dwell.

[22 : 50] You savor it. You know its nuance, its texture. You value it. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, and with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another.

It's not just my job. It's our job to share the word with each other. Teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. It's interesting, I'm just going to mention this because I don't have time to do it in detail, that Paul focuses on music.

He does that in Ephesians as well. Why music? Well, I was going to subject you to this recording I have of Sonny and Jonah singing Jesus Loves Me, and I thought, now sometimes there's a limit to how much cuteness you can handle.

But they're sitting in the car, top of their lungs singing Jesus Loves Me. That's cemented in their heads because God wired us in such a way that melody is a carrier for words that change our lives.

[24 : 02] And singing to each other as well as to God affects our behavior. That's why it's really important what type of music we listen to. So let's pray together, and we will jump into Colossians chapter 3.

Lord Jesus, we want to say with the angels, holy, holy, holy, you are worthy of our worship, of our lives.

To you we ascribe all power, all glory. Lord, we give you our lives. We want to serve you because in serving you, we find our true identity.

We find out what life is supposed to be. Lord, as we look at Colossians chapter 3 this morning, I pray that we would wrap our heads around that concept. Their identity is rooted in Christ and then how that's lived out.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Over the course of the last few weeks, we have looked at multiple metaphors or little stories or illustrations that the Bible uses to talk about this idea of identity.

[25 : 15] Do you remember we talked about Nicodemus, the leader of the Jewish people, sneaking over to Jesus' house and knocking on the door late at night and asking him questions?

And Jesus cuts straight to the point, unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God. I'm an old man.

I don't get what you're saying. The idea is that what you were is not good enough to see the kingdom of God. You need to be born again. You need to take on a new identity.

So that picture of being born again is essential to our conversation about what it means to be in Christ. If you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you were literally born again.

We may ask, tell me about, tell me your story. When were you born again? How were you born again? Does someone outside say, I don't think those words mean what you think they mean? To which we would say, no, no, you don't know what they mean.

[26 : 19] But what we know that what that means is what was the process that took you from the old identity in yourself to trusting God? In the process, we're born again.

And then repeatedly through Paul's letter, he talks about death to life. You died. He says in Galatians, I was crucified with Christ. He says in Romans, you were buried with Christ in baptism. That's a theme that comes up over and over and over again. Ephesians 2, I could go on and on. We were dead. Dead. Stinking. Powerless.

And we are, with Christ, raised to new life. It's a new identity. It's a change. In 2 Corinthians 5, he talks about, we don't look at each other in the flesh anymore.

We don't even look at Jesus that way. And Paul said, some of us even knew him face to face, but we don't look at him as a man anymore. We see him as a new creation. And that's how we look at each other.

[27 : 20] We're new creatures. Some of you knew each other before Christ and after Christ. Came into your life. Totally different people.

Within weeks of me coming to Christ, my mom said to me, you're different. Did you get saved? It's a new identity. I didn't even know what was going on.

But God was working in me. That's the new identity. It's that same story that we're seeing over and over again is old, broken, dead is being replaced with new, alive, capable, powerful, equipped and released to serve God.

But there's more. We looked at this in Colossians chapter 1. Paul prayed for the Colossian church that they would be filled with the knowledge of the will of God. Essentially, what that is is being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Old identity is pushed to the side. The new identity comes to life as we trim our sails to the wind, to the Spirit, to the direction that God is going and we jump into that current.

[28 : 32] New identity. We're trimming our sails. We're adjusting our lives in ways that we never would have done before, before Jesus came into our life. It's a new identity. And then we see in Colossians 3.1, if you've been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is.

The focal point of that, by the way, is not the chair on which he is sitting or the room in which he is sitting. It is the person in that room, the person in that chair.

We are seeking Christ. The old identity sought ourselves, put us on the throne, found its security and significance in ourselves and what we could drum up.

New identity. We find it in Christ. We're looking to him, trusting that our basic fundamental needs are met in relationship with him.

And then finally, the metaphor that Paul uses in chapter 3 here is putting off some things, like an old ratty coat, and putting on a new one.

[29 : 43] I think it's in Zechariah in the Old Testament. The priest appears before God. And this is where Satan gets the title as accuser of the brethren because he's standing there saying, look at this guy.

Look at Joshua. What a waste. He's your high priest? And God says, wait a minute. Wait a minute. We've got to change the wardrobe here.

And they take off his old filthy clothes and they take off and replace it with a shining garment. It's the same image of Isaiah having a cold touch to his lips.

Both of those are a foretaste of Jesus dying on the cross. And of us, our sin being nailed on the cross, being dealt with at the cross, and then us being raised a new life, new identity.

It's putting off the old and putting on the new. All focused on who Jesus is. What we're coming back down to, and this is what I want to keep our focus on, is how do our basic needs get met?

[30:52] What identity best addresses those things? Our need for security, our need for significance. If you boil it all down, it comes down to one of two things.

It's me. I've heard people say, Christian people, if it's to be, it's up to me. If it's up to you, you're in a stew.

I just made that up. You're in trouble. You're in trouble. Because you're not enough. You're just not adequate. I want you to think about that for a second. And if you're offended, think about it even more.

You are not enough. And the reality is, is if you've been alive more than a little bit longer, well, actually, baby Benji knows it better than any of us.

He's not enough. All he can do is scream and yell. My diaper needs to be changed. I need to be fed. He's got his program that we hold him sitting up, looking eye to eye.

[31:55] Because his social needs, apparently, are very, very forefront in his mind. But he knows he's dependent. We need to be like that. We need to recognize that we can't meet our needs.

And as we go through life, one of the things that part of growing up is realizing, I'm not enough. I can't meet all of my needs. I may meet one portion.

I might be a billionaire. But I'm desperately lonely. I've been through three or four marriages or whatever. Now, that doesn't apply to any of us. Let's bring it down to reality where we don't know how to relate to our children or our spouse or coworkers.

We don't know how to solve these problems. There's always more months than there is money.

And we're working as hard as we can. There's deep wounds that we've been the victim of over the course of our lives.

And I don't know what to do with them. I don't know how to fix them. There's only two places we can go, and that's to look inside of ourselves and try to figure it out or to turn to Christ.

[33:03] And if we turn to ourselves, we're in a hole that we just keep digging and digging and digging. You've probably heard this expression or this question, what's the first thing you've got to do when you discover you're in a hole?

Stop digging. Stop. I can tell you, I've been in that hole. I have talked to all four of my children and said, oh, yo, stop digging.

We've got to stop digging. And we've got to turn our eyes to where it belongs. A few weeks ago, we were talking about the Colossian heresy. And the Colossian heresy really came back to these things.

The mystery of life. My life doesn't work. I want to figure it out. I want to have an encounter with God. And the heretics came up with this involved process to solve the mystery of life.

What is my life? What does it matter? What's its purpose? Why am I here? How do I get my basic needs met? And the heretics came up with this long list of things that we had to do to maybe get to the point where we could address that question.

[34:14] And what did Paul say? Colossians chapter 1. The mystery's been revealed. It's been unveiled. I'm a messenger of the mystery. By the way, you are messengers of the mystery to the world. And the answer to the mystery, the mystery revealed is Christ in you the hope of glory.

The hope of glory isn't just a catchy phrase like a title on a business card. Remember I said you had two needs? You needed to be safe and secure and you needed to be significant.

Our hope is not wishful thinking. Football season starts in a few weeks. I have high hopes that my Broncos will win the Super Bowl.

Whether that's a vain hope or not, nobody knows. I saw some Packer fans shaking their heads.

Yeah, we lost on Friday by the way, but it's preseason, so let it go.

That's not the hope I'm talking about. Our hope is the confident expectation of the righteous. And we're righteous not because of what we've done, but because of what Christ has done. So that need of security, of safety, is met in Jesus, our hope.

[35:32] You need to let that richly dwell in you that Jesus is your hope. Your confident expectation is rooted in Jesus Christ.

But he's not just the hope, he's the hope of glory. What's glory? It's the revelation, among other things, of us free of sin.

John wrote in 1 John 3 that we don't know what we will be like, but we do know that we will be like him because we will see him as he is. We will experience glory.

We will radiate glory that will lift up God appropriately. Jesus is the hope of glory. We need to know that we're significant.

Jesus makes you significant. That's part of the new identity. So Jesus, Christ Jesus, Christ in you is the hope of glory. That is our identity and that's where our needs are met.

[36 : 35] We need to own that and take a hold of it. So let's look at Paul's flow in Colossians chapter 3. So he says, in chapter 2, rules don't work.

Get that out of your field of vision. Remove it. Set your minds, no, keep seeking the things above, verse 1. Set your minds on the things above.

So the things that you were seeking, put it away. Seek God. Set your mind on God. So you're replacing. This isn't just some esoteric, spiritual, mumbo-jumbo.

You got bills you got to get paid. You have needs that you need to have met relationally, socially.

You need healing. Stop seeking the things you were. Set your mind on things above.

Seek God for the things that actually matter to you in the moment. The gospel applies as much right now as it does in eternity. Take those things to God.

[37 : 39] That's the alternative. And we're going to have this back and forth. This is why I'm frustrated with chapter divisions. 3, 1, and 2 addresses and is a counterpunch to 2, 16 to 23.

Don't follow rules, follow Christ. That's the first one. Therefore, verse 5, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

If you boil those down, those are the things, if we're unrestrained, that we use to get our needs met. That's what we do. Is we get those needs met any way we can, I'm getting mine.

And they lead to immorality. give you an example. I had an assistant manager, this is also a mattress firm, that was a very vocal atheist, believed in evolution, and one day we were driving to some function, and I had a good enough relationship with him, I could ask him some real pointed questions.

I said, you know something, Dayton, your fellow evolutionists confused me. Because you believe, and correct me if I'm wrong, you believe in survival of the fittest, right?

[38 : 59] Yes. So, the strongest survive, and that's a good thing, because that means the race, the species survives, right? Yes. Okay, if I believe what you believe, in our environment as salespeople, don't turn your back on me.

I'm going to steal your customers, I'm going to steal anything that I need, I'm going to do whatever I have to to get mine to be ahead, because the strongest survive. So, don't turn your back, but you evolutionists are all about compassion and loving each other, you're actually sounding more like us than we do a lot of the time, and I'm confused.

So, what do you believe? And he goes, he's smiling, he's driving, he said, don't turn your back on me. Okay, that's refreshing, he's honest, but what he said, but you're doing Christian things, you're getting married?

he said, I'm just doing that to satisfy my fiancé, I don't care. And I treat you guys on our sales team with respect, because it serves my goals.

I can do more if we're covering for each other, than if not. But his whole morality was very pragmatic, and if it didn't serve his end, he'd stab me in the back in a heartbeat.

[40 : 14] That's immorality, because he was seeking it himself. If it's to be, it's up to me. So, these are the strategies that we use, apart from Christ, to get what we want, to satisfy our needs.

Immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed. If it's all up to me, greed isn't bad, greed is good, it's the only thing that makes sense.

And if I have to rob from you to cover for my family, sorry, I'm just better at stealing than you are. my greed is stronger than yours. That's where following the rules gets us, trying to do it ourselves, that old identity.

It's bankrupt. For it's because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience. The wrath of God comes upon them because God knows a better way. He's revealed the better way.

And they're ignoring it. That's Romans 1. And in them you also once walked when you were living in them. So before you were born again, you were in the old identity.

[41 : 21] That's how you used to live. That was true then. But now you also put them all aside because that's not your identity anymore. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from

your mouth.

Those are the reactions to not getting what we want. I get angry. I want to get mine and you took it. Now I'm mad. I have malice toward you because you're taking what I want.

I speak badly about you because if I can undermine your reputation people will come to me. See how these things work? That's the old. That's the old nature.

We have our sights set on the wrong means of getting what we want, the wrong approach, the wrong worldview, you, and when it's frustrated, we get angry.

We have malice. It's all about me. I don't care about anybody else. That's the old nature. And make no mistake, that's where the old nature leads, inevitably, is to the darkness of the soul.

[42 : 26] There is a book that I strongly do not recommend, but it's a great illustration. There's a series of children's books, one of which was made in the movie, The Golden Compass, I don't remember the other books, but Philip Pullman, the author, is an atheist, and he hated C.S.

Lewis, hated the Chronicles of Narnia, so he wanted to write a book that was the opposite of the Chronicles of Narnia, and he did.

He's a brilliant writer. I would say he's as good a writer as C.S. Lewis, which is high praise. You know that about me. I think very highly of C.S. Lewis, but Pullman really succeeded in his goal of painting this world where morality was determined by the individual.

There was no higher power that says this is right and this is wrong. It's up to me. What's really interesting about his books is inadvertently he didn't refute C.S.

Lewis. He proved C.S. Lewis, and ultimately he proved what we know biblically. Because you know what's interesting about Philip Pullman's protagonist and antagonist, the good guy and the bad guy?

[43 : 45] You can't tell them apart. The author just arbitrarily putting himself in the place of God, who he denies, just decided this behavior is good, actually not behavior, this end is good, this end is bad.

Why? Because I, the author, said so. And both parties, the so-called good guys and the so-called bad guys, use the same horrible methods to achieve their ends.

And the whole series is about the exploitation of children. By both parties. My point with that little story is to illustrate the fact that if you remove God from the equation, the whole system burns down.

you inevitably end up in the darkest, most horrible place imaginable. And that's where all of his characters end up. They are extremely dark novels.

And so, it's so ironic that from page one all the way to the end, all Pullman does is the exact opposite of what he intended. He proved that this is true.

[44 : 56] You leave men to their own devices and we're all dead. And we will become rooted in anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech, and ultimately we will lie to one another.

The passage in Ephesians 4 that's the root of our mission statement, in verse, I think it's 13 or 14, says, speak the truth in love. That's part of how we relate to each other.

Now, the antithesis is here, do not lie to one another. This isn't just lying about how a certain event transpired, or if you're asked, did you do this thing? No, I didn't when you actually did.

That's lying. But I think the truth-telling in Ephesians 4 and the lying in Colossians 3 are deep down to the core of our identity of who we are. Everything's great.

Life is going perfect. Lie. But we're not safe in that old identity to be honest about how we're doing. We can't. So we lie to each other all the time.

[45 : 58] And it undermines us. Ultimately, it destroys us. So have I painted a dark enough picture of the old identity? It's horrible.

And this is something I want you to see as a side note, but that impacts every one of your lives. You rub shoulders with somebody on a regular basis that is rooted in that world.

world. You pass them on the street. They check out your groceries. They work with you. They may sit across from you at Thanksgiving dinner.

You are touching people's lives every day who are trapped in this horrible, bankrupt, soul-sucking system. They're not going to hell.

They are in hell now. And you've got the answer. You've got the path out. Because what's the alternative?

[47:05] That's what's next. Do not lie to one another, since you have laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self, who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him.

So it's what we talked about in 1 John 3. We're putting on this new nature. We're being made like Christ. Verse 11 talks about a renewal that transcends all boundaries, and then this you've got to memorize.

You've got to own it. So then, as those who have been chosen of God, God picked you. You're beloved.

You are loved by God. That holy God we talked about at the beginning, from that hymn, he loves you. You need to get a hold of that.

You need to believe it. You need to tell each other, you are loved by God. I'm loved by God. And it's not some casual thing like you love spaghetti, or I love the Broncos.

[48:14] No, this is the God who knows you, he loves you. He sent his son to the cross. He loves you. So then as those who have been chosen of God, holy, so your new identity and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone.

And then you can read the rest of the passage. So what I'm going to wrap up with this morning is to get across the idea these are not new rules.

This is the expression of new identity. And the way it's expressed, the way you put on the new self and experience that renewal according to the true knowledge, according to the image of the one who created him, is a partnership.

It's not if it's to be, it's up to me. I gotta be compassionate. I gotta be more of this. I gotta be more of that. I gotta put on the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, etc. It's not that.

But it's also not we're just passive laying there like baby Benji waiting for somebody to to, waiting for God to feed us and change our diaper and bathe us and do all that stuff.

[49:34] It's not, we're not passive. God didn't make you to be passive. What God did invite you into is a picture of a new life, a new identity.

A new identity in which your deepest, most secret needs that you don't want to expose to anybody, but we all have them, that's the irony.

We all really know each of us has these needs because we all have them ourselves, but those needs are met in Christ. And what God wants to do with you in this life, this is why the Holy Spirit comes and lives within us, is he wants to show you these things are true.

Christ in you really is hope, and God wants to show you that you have hope that's real. He wants to show you that there is glory, that you carry glory.

and when you own those things, your character changes. You can afford the risk of being compassionate. You know how to show compassion.

[50:47] Trust me, it isn't easy. You know how to be kind, when to be kind. Those things come out, and the way it manifests itself is pretty basic.

It's pretty simple, not easy, but simple, and it takes a lifetime to master and to understand, but we walk with Jesus. We walk with him.

When Paul said, let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, what he's talking about is we take in the word in this format, as you read it, you memorize it, you think about it, you pray about it.

God, I have this situation, whatever that situation may be, God, I want to invite you into this circumstance in my life, and will you walk with me in it?

Will you help me to understand what I'm supposed to do, and what I need to let you do, or let somebody else do? We need to develop the habits of a relationship with God.

[52:02] It's a conversational relationship, like we have with a friend. You've heard me talk about my youngest son, Micah, who you'll meet in a few weeks, he's an apprentice electrician, just barely begun.

I think the first lesson you learn is don't put your fingers in those holes. And he learned that one. And it's hard work, but he is walking with a master electrician who is guiding him in the steps to become a master electrician in his own right.

That's exactly the picture of your relationship with God. In the ordinary, dirty, messy stuff of life, we're apprenticed to Jesus.

And unlike, this is where the apprenticeship that my son is going through, that metaphor fails, is Micah and his boss, Grayson, are separate.

There's a lot of give and take in conversation over cell phones or texts or whatever. But what's the promise? What's the mystery revealed? Christ in you, the hope of glory.

[53:16] Jesus said, it's to your benefit, he said to the disciples, I leave, because I'm sending another comforter. Comforter is a horrible translation. A better one would be coach.

The literal word for comforter in John chapter 14 is one who walks alongside. It's paraclete. It's someone who's walking with you, and as you're walking together, he's guiding you. And the way that works itself out is you're in the word. You let the word of Christ richly dwell within you. You take it in, you mull it over, you think about it. What does this mean? I demonstrated from the very beginning, it's relevant. All the research we're doing on brain health, on social dynamics, about how the brain works, psychology, over and over and over, everything we're seeing confirms what the Bible says.

So you can trust it. You get into the word. You have the Holy Spirit inside of you who's revealing truth to you. You need to tune your ear to hear the Holy Spirit speaking.

[54:28] Because trust me, He is speaking to you. He's talking. I was talking to somebody this week about, you know, sometimes the Lord will bring a verse to mind that it's relevant but it doesn't fit the context.

What is that? I said, that's, God is using, that's the Holy Spirit using His word as a means to communicate with you. Now it's important to lay a foundation, to know the Bible, to study it, to know the historical context, to know the context within scripture, to grow in your intellectual understanding of the Bible, but there's a very real sense in which God subjectively speaks to us through His word, where He will direct you just a verse that pops in your head.

And where do those verses come from? They come from you reading over and over and over again. You need to be reading the Bible once a year, every year, for the rest of your life. More than once a year, it'd be great. And you're listening to the Holy Spirit.

We're listening to each other. The whole rest of Colossians is about relationship. Our Christian life is lived out in relationship. We've got to be talking to each other.

We've got to speak truth to each other. Not just, hey, you've got a booger on your nose. You know, sometimes you need to do that. I love you, booger. But it's also, you're beloved, someone's discouraged.

[55:51] I feel hopeless. You have hope. And not in a Hallmark greeting card kind of way, but a very real, tangible person who's walking with you, and I'm walking with you as Jesus in the flesh.

We do that in community. We speak the truth to one another. We speak God's word to each other. Look what I learned. What are you learning? Let's put it together. This is even cooler than I thought. We've got to be having those conversations.

And brothers and sisters, you've heard me say this, I'm going to say it again, and I'm going to keep saying it. You have got to be meeting with other people apart from Sunday morning. Go over to Charlotte's, go to Starbucks.

If you're not a coffee person, go to Roses and Berries, they've got great tea. Or just go to your house. Go for a walk and talk about these things.

Pray over things that are hardships. And don't say, I'll pray for you and leave and forget. Say, let's pray right now. You're having a struggle? Let's pray about it.

[56:53] Let's take it to the Lord. Because as we do that together, the Holy Spirit speaks into our lives. And you have got to learn to live out that new identity.

You have been born again if you're in Christ. You have got to cultivate that habit. And the way you learn it is the same way you learn to ride a bike.

You get on, you fall off, you scrape your knee, you get back on again. Sometimes you need somebody who's older and wiser to hold you on the bike and to reassure you that you won't die on the bike.

That's part of speaking the truth. But eventually you master the bike. And pretty soon you're going all over the countryside. You're riding with no hands. That's exactly what we're doing in learning how to walk with Christ.

Actually, driving with no hands, I kind of stumbled into that metaphor, but that's exactly what we need to do. Let the Lord guide us. But you've got to learn it. I don't have the skill to get across to you

what you need to learn through this format.

[58:01] You're not smart enough to take it all in. Sorry. And 45 minutes a week ain't enough. You've got to be in the word. You've got to be walking with God. And I promise you, he will speak to you, you will see that work out, and you will begin to live out this life, and you will be able to say, I have Christ in me, the hope of glory.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, please help us live that out. To know what it means to have hope, to know that you have made us to live lives that are glorious, to your honor, to the extension of your kingdom.

God, use us to lead other people, to deliver people from hell, and to show them that heaven doesn't happen after we die. Heaven starts the day we put our trust in you.

God, I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. may may may