

Put Off

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[0:00] You know, this morning as Pete and the team introduced that new song about being bound for the promised land, at first I thought, I'm not sure I agree with that because we're in the promised land.

Then I realized, no, actually we're not. And these two reports are a stark reminder we are not yet in the promised land. But I want to remind you of something that's really important to keep in mind. That the people of Israel forgot over and over again. We're not in the promised land. We're wandering through the desert. But God is present every single day.

The Israelites had the pillar of fire by night, the pillar of cloud by day, always in their presence. The tabernacle was there in the middle of the camp as a reminder of God's presence.

And yet they managed to forget. We need to discipline our minds. We need to remind each other that we are never alone. We are always in the presence of a loving God who knows what our needs are before we even think to ask.

[1:21] And is intervening in our behalf. We are never alone. Remember what David wrote in Psalm 23. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. I think I got those out of order. But that's all there. That's the important part.

God is with us. And this morning, as we look at Colossians 3 and dig more into that, what I want to have this Sunday morning be is one that's filled with hope.

Filled with joy. That we are never, ever left to our own devices. We've got to hold on to that with both hands. So open your Bibles to Colossians 3.

Jeff, could you mute me just for a second? I once had some smart aleck comparing my blowing my nose to the sound of the trumpet.

[2:31] And that was without a microphone. So we don't need that help at all. So I want to give you a little bit of a reminder. We're in the book of Colossians. And we're spending, we spent two weeks ago, and then today and next week, we're focusing in on Colossians 3, 1-17.

And what I've decided as I looked at that passage is that the way Paul was arranging his thinking, it was easier to do that one passage and highlight specific things rather than to do my usual practice, which is to break it into smaller chunks.

Because Paul layers that passage. And if I try to follow his layering, I think I would confuse everybody, including myself. So we're going to go over again another emphasis in Colossians 3, 1-17.

But let me give you a reminder, because it's been a couple weeks. We're talking about the fact that we are to seek the things above.

This is chapter 3, verse 1. And we're to set our minds on the things above. That's where our focus is to be. And if you recall, at the end of chapter 2, Paul talks about, do not let anyone be your judge about various practices.

[3:49] And he said, don't try to regulate your behavior by taking on new rules. And chapter 2 ended with this statement, these are matters which have to be sure the appearance of wisdom.

So all these rules to regulate our behavior appear to be wise. They have the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

In other words, rules can't change our behavior. It just doesn't work. I can testify vehemently, strongly to the reality of that, because we have four small children in our house.

Rules do not seem to regulate behavior. But I can also tell you, as a 60-year-old man, rules don't do me a whole lot of good either. I'm just more polite in the way I defy the rules. So the solution is to

set our minds on the things above, to keep seeking the things above where Christ is.

And if you recall, we talked about a couple of contexts. Where do we do that? Do we set ourselves aside? Do we go join a convent or a monastery? Do we become a hermit up on a hill so that we can focus exclusively on God?

[5:02] No. Do we seek God? No. It's helpful to have times of silence, but we actually set our minds where our minds need to be. We seek God in the midst of life.

And there's truths about life that we want to keep front and center. It's not hard to forget, because life has a way of punching us in the nose. But the context in which we are seeking God, the context in which we are setting our minds on the things above, is the hardships of life.

The struggles with a body that's not functioning the way it's supposed to, with the fear of cancer, with even the joys. Got at least a couple of ladies here who are expecting babies.

That's joyful. But it also brings fear and worry and how we handle a new child in our lives and all the adjustments that have to be made.

And all the little things. Paying our bills. Going to work. Putting up with the guy who's on the next station or that we keep bumping into that's irritating.

[6:07] It's in those contexts that we see God. Or that we can. Life is hard. And in the hardships of life, that's where we learn to turn our face to Jesus and allow him to comfort us, instruct us, show us hope, show us the way that we're to behave.

How to bring him and the kingdom into the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Both for our comfort and for his glory. And then the other place where we seek God, where we set our minds on God, is the adventure of living out our calling.

We talked about that a couple weeks ago. We all have a calling. Generically, we are called to follow Jesus. And by generic, I mean that applies to all of us.

We are called to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We're called to love each other as we would like to be loved and as Christ loved us. We are called to go and make disciples. So we're to take what we have received in Jesus, show it to other people, and invite them to have what we have. Share our hope with them. And then specifically, oh, I forgot the last one.

[7:23] And we're to seek unity together as a body as we walk and follow Christ. But it's in that calling. And then each of you has a specific calling. You have unique gifts. My calling is such a blessing to me to have the privilege of studying God's word and delivering it to you on a regular basis and to disciple people.

Your calling is shaped by your gifts. It's shaped by your context, just like mine is. But as you step into that calling, as you look for divine appointments that God sets up for you, those divine appointments open the path and you discover this adventure of walking with God, experiencing God and sharing his love with other people.

And you get to know him better in that context. Tell you, I want to give you an example of a divine appointment. And I want you to look for these things. So as you know, we were in Colorado for the last week and a half.

And I was talking to my youngest son, Micah, who is on the path to become an electrician. Micah's 31 or 32. I can't remember. I think he's 31. I think he turns 32 in a few weeks.

But his boss, the owner of the electrical company he works for, is actually a few years younger than he is. This guy's a great electrician, very good at his job, but he can't say no.

[8:44] And so this poor kid works 100 hours a week. Micah is sucked in and is working 60 to 65 hours a week. They're both exhausted. But what's interesting is Micah's boss is a younger believer than Micah.

He's less mature. He doesn't know a lot about business. And so what Micah brings to the table is 10 years of work experience, of having observed how good companies run, of lots of conversations that he and I have had.

And so as his boss is teaching him how to lay wire and to bring electricity into homes and businesses, Micah is discipling him about how to run a business in a godly way.

It's really cool. That's not the divine appointment. So Micah and I were talking about this, and I said, you know, I could disciple him, but it'd have to be over Zoom, and I don't have a whole lot of time.

And I got to thinking and praying about it, and I thought a man came to mind that Kara and I worked for about 15 years ago. Kirby runs a nursery out in Colorado that's very successful.

[9:50] God has blessed it. They have been very intentional. For three generations, this nursery has been focused on creating an environment of beauty, but of peace, where God's presence is tangibly felt in community.

And God has blessed that vision. And Kirby has matured. I've watched him from when he was the apprentice, soon-to-be owner, to now he is the main man. And I've watched him grow.

It's been really exciting to watch him over the 20 years I've known him. And now he's a mentor for business people. I was thinking, I should reach out to Kirby. But I haven't seen Kirby in 15 years. I don't know if that'll work out.

I'm busy. I'm here to see my family. I don't know if this is on the agenda. So last Sunday, we went to church with Micah and his wife, Alexis. And it was a great time. We come out of the church. We're getting in our car, and this forerunner pulls in front of us, brakes hard, and says, oh my goodness, that's the Hopkins. And there's Kirby. Kirby, that, brothers and sisters, is a divine appointment.

[10:55] Because we ended up going to the nursery and walking with Kirby and hearing how God has been working in the years since we were there last. And then I talked to Kirby about Micah's boss.

And he said, yeah. If he'll reach out to me, he's got to take some initiative. And if he's open, I'd be glad to mentor him. That's a divine appointment. Now, in that one, I just put people together. You never know.

You just have to be willing and step in, and God will open those doors. So that's where we discover God. That's where we meet God. That's the context. Now, as we go through life, we want to look at every, really every day, and think about, God, how have I served you?

Where have I seen your presence? Where could I invite you in? What can I learn from today that will apply tomorrow? And where we do that is, first of all, is listening to the Holy Spirit.

We've got to set aside time to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us through his word, through prayer, through community. God is speaking. We need to listen. But we also need to use these tools, these tools that we've talked about many times of discipleship that God has given us.

[12:07] They're the tools of the Bible study. You can go ahead and put that Venn diagram up for me. We need to look at these tools of being in the word on a daily basis. We need to be people who pray, who are actively pursuing community, to build relationships among us.

Because that's really how Jesus oftentimes communicates, is he'll speak to me through one of you, or to you through me, or to somebody here. I've had some profound lessons from little children, where the Holy Spirit says, okay, you clearly don't listen very well to me, so here's a kid that you really enjoy, so he'll speak the truth to you.

We need to be looking for that. We need to be a worshiping body. Worshiping that we're focusing our attention on God and celebrating him and bringing him glory. But also, this is Romans 12.1, our entire lives are an act of worship.

We need to be thinking about how, in the way I do my work, in the way that I relate to my family, in the way I relate to my spouse or my grandchildren, my neighbor, how am I bringing glory to God? That's worship. And then we need to be on mission, going and making disciples, sharing the good news. So this is where we seek God. This is how we seek God and set our minds on him.

[13:27] Now, what's the foundation for all this change? Because the last thing I talked about a few weeks ago was this apparent contradiction between Colossians 2, 16 through 23, and Colossians 3.1 to the end of the book.

Because I just read to you, Colossians 2.23, these rules are of no value against fleshly indulgence. Okay, Paul, got it. No rules.

Then you read chapter 3 and you think, that looks an awful lot like rules. Sure looks like it. And then you get into chapter 4, yep, more rules. So Paul, I'm a little confused.

Is it no rules or a certain kind of rules? What's going on? Well, here's the thing that you've got to wrap your hands around. You have to own this.

These are not new rules. They're not. Rules earn us something. When we abide by the rules, we gain something.

[14:30] If we fail to obey the rules, we lose something. In this context, if we're trying to follow rules, we're thinking, well, I can earn God's favor.

I can earn God's pleasure. I can show God I'm good enough to justify him dying on the cross. And if I don't obey these rules, I get smacked down.

No. No, you're not understanding. What we're going to see from Colossians 3.1 to the end of the book is a portrait that's painted of what it looks like to live out your identity in Christ.

To be the person that God is making you into. You already have God's favor. You already have his righteousness. Remember we talked about that from the Sermon on the Mount?

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Not making yourself good, but seeking his righteousness, the goodness that comes from him. And we're going to really unpack that this morning, this new identity that we have in Christ.

[15:40] So let's read together Colossians 3.1 through 17, and we'll get down into the details. I'm going to pray first, and then I'll take us through the passage. Father, this is such glorious news that we are free from rules.

We are not bound to do certain things to earn your favor. We're not bound to stop doing certain things to earn your favor.

We're not like Adam in the garden who felt ashamed and is hiding because he's naked. God, Adam was already naked. There was nothing there that you didn't know about him.

And that's true of us as well. And because of Jesus' work on the cross, as we've received you as Lord and Savior, we stand before you accepted as children.

And you are making us new into the image of Christ. God, I pray for each of us today that we would really come to understand what that means. To be buried with him and then raised to new life and to recognize that new life is not on the other side of death's door or after your return.

[16:54] But that new life is something that we're experiencing day by day now. Lord, I pray that you would work through this sermon this morning. I pray that you would mute anything that's confusing or inaccurate and focus each person's attention on the things that we really need to hear and learn.

I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So Colossians 3, 1 through 17. Therefore, if you've been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

I didn't mention this. I'm going to say it in passing. That imagery of Jesus seated at the right hand of God is really important. That's a physical, visual reminder of what Jesus said on the cross.

It is finished. And the resurrection was God's amen to those words. Jesus has been raised, but he's seated because the work is done.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

[18:12] 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, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who has been 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, he breaks every barrier that could exist between us. So as those who have been chosen of God, this is you, brothers and sisters. Listen to these words.

[19:12] So as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, you're beloved. Say that to yourself.

I'm beloved. Remind your neighbor, you're beloved. You are 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, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful.

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom, 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. So this week, we're going to talk more about our identity in Christ, and then next week, we'll wrap up this mini-series within the Colossians series about what that looks like practically, and what that means to put off certain things and put on certain things.

[20 : 36] But today, our focus is going to be identity. So I already talked about the tension point between 2.16-23 and 3 through the end of the book.

Paul says no rules, then he seems to give a list of rules, and we're caught in the middle saying, I don't understand. I discovered another one this week that's also confusing. What's interesting, before I tell you what it is, what's interesting is these tension points are exactly the point where Paul is taking the Colossian heresy and destroying it.

Because it's in these areas, the place of rules in our lives and discipline, and this other thing that I'm going to tease you with and not tell you what it is quite yet. That's the tension point between the Colossian heresy or contemporary heresies like deconstruction and the truth.

And we need to get a hold of the truth to protect ourselves from false teaching when life gets hard or challenging and difficult to understand. So the one is the rules.

The other one is, what's the role of the spiritual in my life? Now, according to the Colossian heresy, the spiritual realm, if you will, and the physical material realm are separate.

[21 : 55] And the material realm is completely and utterly devoid of value and never held value.

The people who are embracing the Colossian heresy fail to remember what God said over and over and over again in Genesis chapter 1.

Do you remember what he said? It is good. Oh, that's good. Oh, that's good. And I think it was with that emphasis. It wasn't kind of a, oh, that's good.

And no, I think that as God was speaking, Jesus was creating, the Holy Spirit was exercising power to bring creation into being.

The Trinity was looking and celebrating saying, oh, that is so cool. That is good. The material as originally made bears the fingerprints of God.

It's inherently good. God. I'm not saying it. God's saying it. Those who embrace the Colossian heresy and the idea of Gnosticism, which is alive and well today, say, no, the material world is inherently broken.

[23 : 08] And we just need to walk away from it. And because that's the case, God is totally separate and unapproachable and unapproachable because we're material beings.

And so in the heresy, there has to be some other way that we can get into the presence of God to discover how we're supposed to live and to escape from this evil material world that we want to get away from completely.

That's the heresy. And so what they do, the heretics, is they impose all these rules and regulations to get up there to where God is. You have to embrace a life of asceticism.

We talked about this weeks ago. You have to embrace a life of asceticism. It's a path fraught with danger, so you need to place yourself at the beck and call of angels.

You have to worship them. You have to subject yourself to these angels who will be your conduit up into the presence of God. And you need them because there are fallen angels.

[24 : 15] Now, this is true. Every false doctrine has an element of truth woven through it. There are these evil angels, fallen angels, who are opposing our access to God. And so you need these guides who will conduct you into the presence of God, who doesn't really want to see you there, but okay, you've done all this work so you're there, but it's such a hard journey that only a select few, only the elite, can actually ascend to that place.

And then we, just a regular rank and file, have to approach one of these gurus to get their help and instruction to get mainly into the outer courts, if you will, to get some semblance of relationship with God.

That's the false teaching. So what is the role of the spiritual life in that context? It's like running in sand into a headwind while lightning striking all around you.

That's the spiritual life and you need all this help to get there. Well, that's not even close to what the Bible teaches. Not even close. And so what we're looking at here, and this is the other tension

point, is what's the role of the spiritual?

Therefore, if you've been raised up with Christ, we've talked about that. You've been brought into new life in Christ. Keep seeking the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above.

[25 : 44] It's not about all these spiritual exercises. It's not about this heroic effort to somehow conduct yourself and earn your way into the presence of a reluctant God.

It's quite the opposite. And you need to remember the message of the cross constantly. because in false doctrine, all the work depends on me.

I have to get up the hill. I have to battle spiritual forces of darkness. I have to defeat my own nature. I have to overcome my materialistic tendencies to hopefully, successfully gain the attention of a God who really doesn't want to have anything to do with me.

But what the cross says and reminds us of is that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. While we were dead in trespasses and sins, God sent his son.

There's no initiative with us. Got to get a hold of this, folks. This isn't just a pattern for your redemption. This is a pattern for your entire life.

[26 : 56] We are not the initiators. God is reaching out to you every single second of every day. God is reaching out to you.

He's saying, I love you and I want to bring you into my presence because you're my child. You are a reflection of my glory. I created you in my image.

Come on up. Oh yeah, you're a hot mess. But I dealt with that at the cross. And I'm dealing with it every day to make you more like Jesus.

That's what Ephesians 4 teaches. That's what we're going to see more in Colossians chapter 3. So we do not have to get wrapped up in spiritual exercises in all these efforts to gain God's attention. So look at Colossians 2.18 and I've got a slide for that as well. Colossians 2.18 says, let no one keep defrauding you of your prize. If it's all up to me and I'm being taught that it's all up to me, I'm being defrauded of my prize.

[28 : 07] It's being robbed from me. Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on things, on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.

It's interesting. These false teachers are trying to enlist you into their false doctrine because it gives them brownie points. It's what helps them get closer to this reluctant God.

Now one thing I've noticed as we've talked about deconstruction and I've studied what that looks like because it's a real problem in the contemporary church. The idea of that I've been hurt, my life isn't working right, it's God's fault, everything I've been taught must be wrong, so I need to re-imagine who God is and what it means with this whole Christianity thing and they throw everything out.

One of the things I've noticed about deconstruction, people who go through that process, is they are evangelists. I mean, to the point where we need to follow their example. They are evangelists where people who are deconstructing are all over social media.

They're on Instagram, they're on TikTok, they are actively trying to persuade people like you and me that what we've believed is a fairy tale.

[29 : 28] And that we need to rethink the whole thing. They're evangelists. They want to defraud you because there is this validation.

If I do something wrong and I'm by myself, I feel pretty bad. But if I can get you to do it with me, oh, it must be okay. If I can get a whole mob of you to do it with me, hey, this is normal. That's what they're doing.

And Paul is speaking to defend us, to help us to fortify ourselves against that. that we will not allow ourselves to be defrauded of the prize that's being offered to us in Christ.

So how do we get there? Two weeks ago, we had a baptism. That's the picture. When a person goes down into the water, it's a very tangible, especially for the person being baptized, it's a very tangible representation of you're dying.

when you go under the water, that's a picture of death. We were joking with a couple of them, Tiana in particular, because she asked, how long do you hold me under?

[30 : 35] And Roger and I both said, just till the bubbles stop. So she got a real, real tangible sense of what it means. We didn't hold her down that long. But that's a picture of death.

And then when the person who's being baptized is brought back out to take air into their lungs, that's a picture of new life. That is a picture of what we have in Christ. We literally died with Christ. Paul said that in Galatians 2.20. I have been crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. We have been brought to new life. Here in Colossians 3.3. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Paul repeats that theme over and over and over again. He really develops it in Romans 6. You're dead. You died on the cross with Jesus. Your sin is gone. [31 : 42] It's gone. And it's been replaced by the righteousness of God. That's the promise of Romans 5, of 2 Corinthians 5, that we have the righteousness of God in Christ.

We have been declared righteous. You don't have to earn God's favor. You don't have to prove anything because you are already a recipient of his righteousness. righteousness. So when Jesus himself said in Matthew 6.33, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, it's not righteousness that we drum up ourselves. It's righteousness that is given to us because of Jesus' finished work on the cross. You're dead and you've been raised to new life. The other image that Jesus used very graphically, if you recall in John chapter 3, Nicodemus comes at night, knocks on the door, probably didn't want anybody to see that he's talking to that radical rabbi, and he says, you know, help me to understand. And Jesus says in John 3, John chapter 3, verse 3, Jesus answered Nicodemus and said to him, truly, truly, when Jesus says truly, truly, he's saying, hey, pay attention. [32 : 57] This is the truth. This is the truth. Listen to me. He's verbally taking Nicodemus, holding Nicodemus, both sides of his face and looking at me eye to eye.

Listen, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus says, oh, that's not possible. What do you mean born again? I'm an old man. I can't be born again. That's a one-time deal. It happened a long time ago. It's the same idea as being buried in baptism and raised a new life. It's the exact same idea is being born again is bringing new life into the world and that new life is what happens, what we receive when we receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord, when we pray and invite him into our life, accept the forgiveness that has been given to us, accept Jesus' redemptive work on the cross as our own, recognizing that I need that because I can't do it myself. We're brought to new life. And just like that, the person coming out of baptism, they take that deep breath because we held them under, a new baby doesn't breathe until he or she is born. [34 : 22] And they get the swat on the butt and they cry and they fill their lungs. in a very real sense, when I got saved, when you got saved, you took that first breath and received new life. But just like that baby, you have to learn how to live out that new life. You have to experience it. Now there's another metaphor that the Bible uses to explain all this, to breaking of the bread. We're going to break bread together this morning now. And I want you to use this time as the elements are coming forward. We've got some time of silence. There's a reason that it's a time of silence. It's a time for you to think. to think about what does this tiny little cracker represent. That little thing is a picture of the most important truth in your life. That Jesus' body was broken for you. [35 : 39] Thanks, Jim. Jesus' body was broken for you. Think about that. as the elements pass to you.

Listen carefully to the words I'm going to read you from 1 Corinthians 11. This is Paul speaking. For I receive from the Lord that which I also deliver to you that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed, he knew it was coming. He was still thinking of us. In the night that he was betrayed, he took bread. You've heard me talk in the past about substitutionary atonement. That's what the term the theologians use for what happened at the cross. Substitutionary atonement. The bread is a reminder of the substitution part. It's a picture of Jesus' broken body. It's a picture of punishment carried out on him. It should have gone to me. It should have gone to you. But instead it went to Jesus. [36 : 55] And as this bread is broken, it's a reminder that Jesus' body was broken for you. The things it's a reminder of are you deserve the punishment.

You didn't have to take it because Jesus took it for you. And undergirding all of that is God's emphatic statement. I love you. I love you.

Remember that. Let's pray. Father, your love for me is indescribable.

I don't deserve it. God, you say, it's not a matter of whether or not I deserve it because you've chosen to love me. You've chosen to love us. God, the length to which you are willing to go for me and for us is unfathomable.

We cannot even begin to sound the depths of what it means for the Son of God to become a man and to die on our behalf.

[38:10] And yet it's true. God, thank you for what you've given us. Help us to order our lives around the love that you have clearly demonstrated for us and that you have set us free from the power of sin and death.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You can take the bread. And now as we pass the cup, the theological term is substitutionary atonement.

Atonement is paying a fine. If you get a traffic ticket and you pay the ticket, you're atoning for breaking the law, driving too fast. In the substitutionary atonement, Jesus' body was broken for us. In our behalf, that's the substitution part. And the atonement is in his blood. It says in Hebrews that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.

Jesus' blood is the fine that had to be paid to wash us free from sin. And Jesus allowed his blood to be shed.

[39:22] This cup is a reminder of that. So as the cup is passed, think through that. You've been atoned for. The price has been paid. There's nothing less to pay.

Let's pray together. God, years ago, I remember being curious about that hymn, There's Power in the Blood, and actually calculating how much of your blood was actually mine.

Less than is in this little cup. Yet that was enough to completely change the directory of my life. Not just for the years I live on earth, but forever. My sins have been forgiven.

I've been declared righteous. Your Holy Spirit's come to dwell in me. And Lord, that is true for every single person here that's in Christ. Each person here can say, that is true of me.

My sins have been paid for completely because of the blood of Jesus. What a gift. I pray, Lord, that we would be able to live that out and model it and show it to a world that desperately needs to know the hope that we have in Christ.

[40:48] I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You can take the cup. That's a reminder. And we do it periodically because we're forgetful.

We need to have that reinforced again and again and again. The way I like to think about it is volume. I like to listen to music.

And sometimes, if you happen to pass me, especially if I'm driving my car by myself, you will get to participate in whatever music I'm listening to because I like to listen to it really loud with the windows down.

I'm sure my neighbors love it. But at home, especially there's times of the day where I love acoustic guitar. Wish I could play it.

God hasn't gifted me that way. But I love acoustic guitar. And that's subtle. It's quiet. quiet. I have four tornadoes that live in my house. Do you remember the Tasmanian devil in Looney Tunes?

[41:53] I got four of them. There's no quiet. If there is, I want to be in bed. And the problem is that that's a good picture of our lives.

The volume of our lives is so loud that oftentimes we miss that subtle message of God. That still small voice that Elijah encountered when he went to the cave.

I think it's in 1 or 2 Kings chapter 19. But God speaks quietly and gives him direction. We need to be able to listen, to still our hearts and listen in the midst of that loud, loud volume of life.

So let's go back to Colossians chapter 3 and unpack part of the fruit of what we have because of the cross. Remember what I said? What we're going to talk about for the last few minutes we have and going into next week is these are not new rules.

They're not. This is a picture of what the life will look like as you learn to walk with Jesus.

Remember, we talked about Paul's prayer for the Colossians back in chapter 1 verse 9.

[43:09] Paul prayed that they would be filled with the knowledge of the will of God with all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And what we talked about was that being filled with the knowledge of the will of God is trimming our sails, ordering our lives, so we can catch the wind.

Interestingly, the word for spirit in Greek is also the same word for wind. So in a very real sense, Paul was praying that the Colossian people and us would be filled with the knowledge of the Spirit of God.

And as we trim our sails, our lives follow the path that he has laid out for us. We bear fruit. We get to know him better. We earn his approval. Not earn.

We receive his approval. We get to know him better. We're fortified. We get what we need to endure through hard times. ourselves. We trim our sails to walk with Jesus, to live out what's already ours, to walk out what it means to have our identity as a follower of Jesus.

That's what we're learning to experience. Now you need to remind yourself of things regularly.

We're going to talk about this again next week as well. We need to talk to ourselves.

[44 : 28] Actually, just in passing, tripped over part of a sermon by Timothy Keller. I love this phrase that he stole from somebody else named Martin Lloyd-Jones, who was a great preacher back in the middle of the 20th century.

Lloyd-Jones says, we need to preach to ourselves, talk to ourselves, but not listen to ourselves. Talk to ourselves, don't listen to ourselves. It's kind of like, I went to the gym while I was out in Colorado.

Now, my workouts are hard here at an elevation of 100 feet. In Colorado Springs, I have a sticker that says it's that the gym out there gave me. I was at 6,000 feet.

There's no air. And so, one part of me is saying, you're going to die. Don't listen to that part. And another part of me says, one foot in front of the other, keep going, you can do it, you've lived here most of your life, you can do it.

Besides that, you're out running to the guy next to you, so that's kind of cool too. But actually, don't do that part. But you're running, and I was telling myself, you can do it. Keep going, maybe slow down, but keep making progress.

[45 : 39] I need to listen to myself. I need to speak to myself to keep my eyes where they need to be, to keep my focus where it needs to be, but I can't listen to myself, you know what, 6,000 feet, a two-minute workout is plenty.

No, you have to resist that voice, and you've got that voice inside your head that says you can't make it. You're not strong enough, you're not good enough, you're not enough. You need to ignore that voice and speak to yourself the promises of God.

You remind yourself of some things. First of all, and this is looking at back to Colossians 3.

Colossians 3, we're going to look at verses 5, 8, and 9.

Your old self, that's still lurking, has habits of the heart and of the mind that affect your behavior.

That old nature is still there.

Paul wrote about it in Romans 7. I don't do the things I want to do, and I do do the things that I don't want to do. Your old self is still lurking. Its power has been broken, but it's still there.

[46 : 45] Paul wrote, therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. Now, we can rationalize these things.

Life is hard. I need to make more money, so I can cheat a little bit. And you can apply that principle all over the place. But you don't need to do that anymore because you're a new person in Christ and you have accrued all the benefits of being a child of God and a fellow heir with Christ.

Therefore, consider passion and desire and greed which amounts to idolatry. 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. We lie to each other all the time to cover up what we don't think is acceptable. Or we lie to cover up what we don't find is unacceptable about the people around us.

Oh, you look great today. Whew, brush your teeth. We lie to each other. We need to stop lying. Do not lie to one another since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.

[48 : 02] And you might think, well, when did I do that? Receiving Jesus as your Lord and Savior entails realizing my way isn't going to work. John the Baptist and Jesus said, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repenting is saying, wow, my path, doesn't, isn't going to work. My strategy isn't going to work. So I'm going to follow God. And when you become a believer, you know what that means.

It's truly an act of faith. I didn't know what it meant. That was 14. But you turn. You set that aside. When I accepted Christ, when you accepted Christ, that's when you laid aside the old self, even if you weren't aware of it, with its evil practices.

Remind yourself, that's not who I am anymore. And when you go to God, when you say, God, I screwed up, I blew it, you're not pleading for his love.

You're not pleading for acceptance. Remember the picture of the prodigal son returning home. His dad didn't say you're on probation. His dad said, welcome home, I've missed you, I love you, let's throw a party, because you're back.

[49:17] that person who sins, that's not who you are anymore. That's not your identity.

Remind yourself, I have a choice. Before Christ, you didn't have a choice. If you had a choice, you would choose the wrong one. Kind of like a certain toddler that lives in my house.

Option A, option B. Option A is good, option B is bad. Oh, I love B. Single-minded focus. If he hits A, pure dumb luck. No, you have a choice.

Exercise that choice. The next time the temptation comes along, that's not who I am. I'm a new person. I'm a child of the king. How does a child of the king conduct himself?

And then the next thing, so first thing you remind yourself is that your old self has habits of the heart and mind that impact behavior, and it's dead. dead. The second thing you need to remind yourself is your new self has habits of the heart and the mind that impact behavior, that need to be cultivated and developed in partnership with the Holy Spirit.

[50:31] Listen to what Paul says in verse 12 of Colossians 3. Now listen first, he goes to identity first, then behavior. behavior. You've got to see this.

So as those who have been chosen of God, you've been chosen. You've been chosen by God, holy and beloved.

What? Holy means without sin, pure. What? And beloved, me? Yeah, you.

Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. Not because it earns God favor, but because that's what a child of the king looks like.

I can be patient with you because God's patient with me. I've been forgiven, and I'm going to extend you that grace. because heaven knows I need to be forgiven, so I'll forgive you as well.

[51:41] I can be compassionate because compassion has been shown to me. I can be kind because kindness has been shown to me. And we do it as an echo of the character of God that's being created in us.

It's your new identity. So you need to remind yourself, I'm a new person. I can do that. I can exercise compassion. What does that look like? We're going to talk about that next week because that's not an easy question to answer.

It takes wisdom. It takes the Holy Spirit to be working in you, which is the next thing you need to remind yourself of. As you embrace this new identity which you have received, past tense, this is important.

Paul didn't write, so is those who will be chosen of God if you do certain things. He speaks in the past tense. so is those who have been chosen of God accomplished.

As a man or woman who is holy, not will be, who is beloved, not will be, that's your identity because I have a choice and that choice is empowered and even shown to me because I have the Holy Spirit living within me.

[53:03] When we accepted Jesus as our Savior, he came to live with us. The Holy Spirit is now inside of us showing us the path that we should go.

It says in Isaiah 30 that he's there saying this is the way, walk in it. Take a left here, take a right there, stop. Or what are you doing? Stop that.

Do this instead. But it's not that. It's I love you, let me show you the way. You have the Holy Spirit residing in you, directing your path.

So what are we reminding ourselves of? The old nature is still present, but dead. And I can turn away from it. We have a new nature that we've received, already received, and we can live out that nature and become literally the person that God made us to be.

And that's a person who looks just like Jesus everywhere we go. The church at Antioch was called Christians derisively, mockingly.

[54:07] Oh, you're those little Jesuses. Hey, the mockers recognize what they were. I hope I get mocked that way. Oh, you're just like Jesus.

Yes, I am. Thanks for noticing. You need to remind yourself of that truth. And then remind yourself that God has given you tools to resist the old and put on the new.

And we're going to unpack that more next week. You've got the Holy Spirit. You have this community as we share together and meet together. Remember our mission statement.

Go ahead and put that one up there for me. We exist to glorify God. Walking closely with Him. What a privilege. Adam had that privilege and now you do too.

To manage your life as Adam was tasked to manage the garden. We walk with God striving together.

[55:09] Nobody's alone. To become more like Jesus every day. We become more like Jesus. And in becoming more like Jesus, we become a blessing and we're blessed.

I honestly don't understand how people could reject this deal. It's the best news ever. The gospel applies to every part of your life. However great you think the gospel is, you're wrong.

Not wrong as in the wrong path. Wrong as in it's so much more than you could ever imagine. It's so much greater. And our life is walking and discovering more and more and more of what we have in Christ and living that out.

Let's pray together. God, thank you that we have new life in Christ. That we were dead in trespasses and sins and you gave us life.

And in giving us life, you gave us hope, which is a sure thing. It's not wishful thinking. You redeem us. You make it so that everything works together for good for us.

[56:25] We can't go wrong. Life is hard. Life is challenging. It's overwhelming. Living out our calling is hard. And yet, even in those things, you work all things together for good.

God, what a great Savior. And I pray that we would just be captivated by what we have in Christ.

And just hunger to live that out. Because it's so much better than the alternative.

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