

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

OCTOBER 19 - 23, 2020

Above All

8.30 - 11.22

BOOK OF COLOSSIANS



MONDAY

Colossians 3:12

The Lordship of Christ – Evident in Our Attitudes

Colossians 3 finds Paul moving past his concerns about some false teaching in the church to an assumption that he is addressing those who have “*been raised with Christ*” (v. 1) and are therefore in the happy position of knowing that their lives are “*now hidden with Christ in God*” (v. 3). The challenge to these young Christians is that they must get rid of the “*old self with its practices*” (v. 9) and put on (“*clothe*” themselves) new ways of living. If Christ is truly Lord, this must be evident to those around us.

The first area in which it must be evident is in our changed **ATTITUDES** to others. The unregenerate person is self-centered, narcissistic and selfish. The person who has experienced the grace of God in salvation must of necessity evidence that in the way we relate to those around us. Paul suggests five marks that should be evident: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. It is not without significance that three of these are the same as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, since without God’s indwelling Spirit, we are not going to be able to have our attitudes changed.

To those three, Paul adds compassion and humility. Compassion has been well described as “pity, with a desire to help.” When we grasp what God has done for us and we see others in need, it should never just

spark pity, after which we walk away like those who by-passed the bleeding man in the story of the Good Samaritan. A changed heart means that we actually want to do something about it. It's no coincidence that this requires humility, since we have to get ourselves out of the way! Our own needs, wants, comfort and convenience must take a back seat when Christ becomes our Lord, because He immediately sends us out into His world to make a difference.

We skipped over the word "holy," but we mustn't forget that this doesn't mean without sin. The proper meaning is "set apart." We are set apart for God's exclusive use, and if the Lord has a task for us to do, we'd better be obedient and do it! If our attitudes have been truly changed by the work of God's Spirit, this should be no great hardship.

QUESTIONS

What "attitude adjustment" do you need in your life today to reflect the Lordship of Christ? What does it mean to you to lead a holy life?

PRAY FOR REFUGEES

Pray for people who find themselves in refugee camps around the world. There are lots of reasons for these camps, but because of the crowded quarters, the possibilities of getting COVID-19 are greater, so pray for protection. Pray also for Christian communities that are trying to reach out to individuals in these camps that they will meet practical needs and share with these individuals about the love of Jesus.

TUESDAY

Colossians 3:13

The Lordship of Christ – Evident in Forgiveness

In our last devotion, we spoke of how having a relationship with Jesus as Lord affects our attitudes, but it is not long before we realize that those attitudes affect how we view others. The moment we see others through the eyes of Christ, we're going to see them differently, and this immediately becomes evident in **FORGIVENESS**.

Two young boys were having a fist fight and a dear Christian lady was trying her best to break it up. "Don't you know that Jesus tells you to forgive?" she asked. The response from one boy was, "Well, just let me punch him once more; then I'll forgive him!"

Sadly, forgiveness is not a character trait that we find easy to exercise. We are very quick to spell out of "our rights" in these days, and very slow to show genuine, heartfelt forgiveness when we have been wronged. Yet, if Christ is Lord of our lives, then we would do well to remember that Jesus was very clear in his teaching on this issue. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:14-15 NLT), He addressed this matter of forgiving others and put it into a rather hard-hitting warning: *"If you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."*

What Jesus is trying to teach His disciples here is that there is both a vertical and a horizontal dimension to forgiveness. If our relationship with others is blocked through unforgiveness (horizontal), it's a little hypocritical to then go to God to ask for His forgiveness (vertical). In fact, Jesus taught a whole parable about the unmerciful servant who gratefully accepted forgiveness of a massive debt from his king, but then refused to forgive the relatively minor debt of a fellow-servant (Matthew 18:23-33). This was told in the context of Peter asking Jesus how many times he should forgive. Jesus effectively said, "You don't compute forgiveness. Just keep forgiving!"

In our passage, Paul is saying precisely the same thing. "Forgive as the Lord forgave you." You and I had no hope of heaven because our sins were blocking any hope of heaven. But while we were still sinners, Christ died for us to make access to heaven possible by forgiving our sins. We would do well to show the world around us what that looks like.

QUESTIONS

Who do you need to forgive today as Jesus did? How do you take this from a prayer to an action?

PRAY FOR CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

Pray for Christian churches, leaders and individual Christians around the world during this pandemic. Pray that Christians respond not in fear but in love. Pray for renewal as those who do not know Jesus see that those who do know Jesus have a hope that is grounded in what God is doing and not what the "world" wants to do.

WEDNESDAY

Colossians 3:14

The Lordship of Christ – Evident in Love

In his message on the introduction to the Colossian letter, Pastor Tim reminded us that **LOVE** is one of the three key characteristics that Paul highlights to set the tone for his message to the church at Colossae. Paul mentioned it again in chapter 2 and now he returns to it again in chapter 3. One could be forgiven for concluding that he considered it important!

In fact, the verse 14 here sounds just a little like the climax of the great love chapter in 1 Corinthians 13, where Paul shows that Christian love should override everything else. It is even greater than faith and hope—*“the greatest of these is love”* (1 Corinthians 13:13). He tells the Colossian Christians exactly the same thing with the very beautiful statement that all the other virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness that he has already mentioned are bound *“together in perfect unity”* by love.

C. W. Vanderbergh was quoted as saying, “To love the whole world, for me is no chore. My only real problem is my neighbor next door!” Hopefully this was said somewhat tongue-in-cheek, but it is a reminder that true Christian love is not some kind of sappy emotional feeling. It actually is a very intentional act of the will. The original Greek word “*agapé*” carries with it the connotation of self-giving, sacrificial love of the kind that Jesus

showed when He died on the cross for us. So it's not going to be easy, because we are called to love even the unlovable—who just sometimes may be that “neighbor next door”!

We live in a day when there's an awful lot spoken about love, but virtually all of it presents love as an emotion or a feeling. While there is obviously an element of that in Scripture, the primary meaning of the term is that it is an action—something we DO. Paul wants to see unity among the Colossians to DO love rather than just FEEL it. I wonder if it could be said of our church, as the early church father, Tertullian, is purported to have said, citing pagan Romans of his day, “See how these Christians love one another.”

QUESTIONS

How can you show the “unique” love of Christ to others today? Is there someone who comes to mind that needs to know that you love them?

PRAY FOR FOOD PANTRIES

Pray for food pantries (Shepherd's Pantry, Sowing Seeds and others around the country) that they have the needed resources and the ability to not just give out food but to minister spiritually to those in need. Pray for Glenkirk's upcoming Food Drive on November 1 between 12 pm – 2 pm.

THURSDAY

Colossians 3:15

The Lordship of Christ – Evident in Peace

Jesus made it clear to His disciples that His coming was NOT going to bring peace into the whole world. As early as the night of Jesus' birth, the angels stated that the peace that the Prince of Peace would bring was for those “*on whom His favor rests*” (Luke 2:14). In other words, we were told right up front that, because there is sin in the world, the message of the Gospel would not be gladly accepted and would result in division, even within families (Luke 12:51-53).

Yet the Scriptures are equally clear that there definitely is **PEACE** to be had for those who are “in Christ Jesus.” When all the world around us may be in turmoil, the wonder of a relationship with God is that there can at the same time be a settled peace in our hearts that He is still in control. Surely this is a year when all of us as believers need to hear that message!

Paul takes this a step further and suggests that not only is this personal, internal peace, but it also has a social or communal dimension for those who are “members of one body.” Frequently when Paul uses the term “the body,” he is referring to the Christian Church; and in this verse, he is reminding the believers that they “*were called to peace*” in this context as well. In fact, the word that he uses for “rule” is very interesting. It actually

means “to be an umpire,” as in a tennis match. If only we will let Christ decide for us what is right or wrong, good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable, we stand a far better chance of both having peace in our hearts and being at peace with those around us.

Paul ends this verse with the words, “*And be thankful.*” Who wouldn’t be thankful for being so privileged as to live in a state of peace with ourselves and our fellow-believers while the world around us is blowing itself apart? This is why Jesus said as He was about to leave His disciples, “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid*” (John 14:27).

QUESTIONS

What can you change in your day to feel the real peace of Christ? How do you become an advocate of peace in our church and our community? What does “peace in action” mean to you?

PRAY FOR CHRISTIANS

Pray for Christians around the world who are in countries where persecution exists. Pray for courage. Pray that as they engage with non-Christians that the Holy Spirit would work in miraculous ways. Pray for protection, especially as they seek to worship and grow together.

FRIDAY

Colossians 3:16 & 17

The Lordship of Christ – Evident in Wisdom, Worship and Thanksgiving

Just in case we are tempted to build our lives on a subjective feeling of peace, Paul hurries on to remind us that everything must be based on the objective, inspired, special revelation of Scripture that God has given to guide us. We are to “*let the word of Christ DWELL*” in us “*richly*.” This means we are not just to know a few favorite verses; we are not to leave all the study of the Bible to the pastor while we remain passive listeners; nor are we to leave the words on the page, as we do with any other human book.

No, says Paul, if you have imbibed Scripture as God intended you to do, it is going to have several very definable outcomes.

Bearing in mind that **WISDOM** is linked to life (rather than simply knowledge, which is linked to understanding), truly immersing ourselves in the word of Christ will result in our being able to teach one another (positively) and even admonish one another (if necessary, negatively), since the Bible is given as our only reliable Guidebook for living the Christian life as God intended us to do.

This will then lead us to **WORSHIP** the Author of the Book and the One who has saved us. Our hearts should almost burst with gratitude to this God; and this, says Paul, will be expressed in the “*psalms, hymns and*

spiritual songs” that we use to worship Him. Of course, “worship” is much more than just music; but music is a vital, integral element of how we worship God, as we are the only part of God’s creation equipped to sing with mind and meaning.

If we are truly thinking of the words that we are singing (which is why we need to check regularly the theology of our songs!), that should inevitably lead us to a point of giving thanks to Jesus and the Father. Do note that **THANKSGIVING** is not just an act of the lips, but also of life (“*in word or deed*”). All of life should be our response to the Lordship of Christ who, to quote Paul’s first chapter again, has given us “*redemption, the forgiveness of sins*” (1:14).

QUESTIONS

How do you see wisdom, worship, and thanksgiving manifest itself in your walk with Christ? How do you respond to the Lordship of Christ with thanksgiving every day?

PRAY FOR DEVELOPING WORLD

Pray for those in the developing world who do not have the same access to health care as we do in our country. Pray for individuals in our country and around the world who need to continue to work in the public, often without the necessary precautions.

Sources:

- C. W. Vanderbergh's quote can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/passionchurchtv/posts/cw-vanderbergh-to-love-the-whole-world-for-me-is-no-chore-my-only-real-problem-i/581483478563507/>
- Tertullian's quote can be found at <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191826719.001.0001/q-oro-ed4-00010813>

