

Sermon: Part 7, Living in Your New Life in Christ (Colossians 3:1-17)

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. How long does it take for you to decide what you are going to wear? What is your favourite piece of clothing? Why?
2. Tell of a time when you experienced great spiritual growth? When have you really struggled in your Christian walk?
3. What virtue do you appreciate most in others? Why?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. Pastor Henry reviewed the terms Spiritual Realm and Temporal Realm. Read the following verses to discuss how the words justification, sanctification and glorification relate to these realms: Romans 5:17; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Colossians 1:13,14, 22; 2:6, 7; 3:4. Use your own words to summarize these concepts for a Christ-follower.
2. How are 'knowing who you are in Christ' and 'setting your hearts and minds on Him' ways to be set free from the power of sin?
 - a). How does Paul's analogy of 'rid yourselves' (3:8) and 'clothe yourselves' (3:12) illustrate what he is teaching?
 - b). If you were to contemporize this concept, what other analogy might you use?
3. The Apostle Paul also writes about 'living the new life in Christ' in Romans 6:11-13, 21, 23. How do these verses help to explain Pastor Henry's illustration of "Mr Sin"?

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

1. Pastor Henry referred to 'grave clothes' (3:5-9) and 'grace clothes' (3:12-14). Which piece of clothing gives you the most difficulty (getting rid of or putting on)?
2. Which piece of clothing (getting rid of or putting on) gives you the most victory?
3. How can you 'stockpile your mind with God's truth' this next week?
4. As you plan for this next week, what will you do to ensure that 'Mr Sin' is deprived of power in your daily interactions?
5. How can our group pray for you?

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

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 5:17

¹⁷For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

2 Corinthians 5:17,21

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!...²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Colossians 3:1-17

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

Sermon Study Summary

Colossians 1&2 lifts up the name of Jesus and describes how we have been **justified** (set free from the penalty of sin and made spiritually alive in our relationship with God), chapters 3&4 describe how we are presently being **sanctified** (set free from the power of sin so we can grow in our relationship with God). So too, it tells of our future **glorification** (set free from the presence of sin – Col 3:4).

Do you, or have you felt at times, that you are falling short of God's expectations? That because you are struggling with sin God is not pleased with you? The big question on many a Christian's lips is 'How do I put sin to death in my life?' Paul himself struggled with this (Rom 7:15), and the Apostle provides us these keys to being set free from the power of sin.

Know who we are in Christ (Col 3:1). How is it possible to have 'died' and yet be 'alive'? Or that our lives are 'hidden with Christ'? We live in both the spiritual and the natural realms. The spiritual realm is the eternal, heavenly, unseen realm where everything is whole and perfect. For a Christ-follower this is the realm of who we truly are in the eyes of Christ and God. Jesus' death and resurrection changed how God sees us and brought about the capacity for us to change (Col 1:13). When we surrender to Jesus and put our trust in Him, God takes the sin that is on our account and puts it on Christ's account. He also takes the righteousness of Christ and puts it on our account (2 Cor 5:21). This righteousness (or right standing with God) is a gift. We either accept it or reject it. In accepting this gift, in the spiritual realm, our old sin nature died and was buried with Christ. Because of His resurrection (Col 3:1) we are made spiritually alive in the spiritual realm and are a new creation in Christ. We are totally forgiven and righteous, holy and complete in the eyes of God because we are 'hidden with Christ' and He is righteous and perfect in the eyes of God.

The natural realm is the temporary, earthly, visible realm where our body and soul reside. It is where we live, and it is where we are still being made holy and are growing in the love and grace of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:18). It is in this realm where our lives often fall short. Because of this, our confidence can be eroded and we lose the sense of who we are in Christ and begin to feel we are a disappointment to Him. Yet this is not so! It is no longer you and your sin and failures against God. Rather it is you and the Lord together against the power of sin in your life. Don't doubt that you are a new creation in Christ and that sin is no longer your master.

Set your hearts and minds on Christ (Col 3:1, 12). Given that you are in Christ, chosen and dearly loved and are a new person, begin to live and behave in alignment with your new identity in Christ here in the earthly realm. Set your hearts (your affections and desires) and your minds (your thinking) on things above and transform not only your beliefs and convictions but also your behaviors. Paul says to take off the 'grave' clothes you wore before you were raised with Christ (Col 3:5) and put on the 'grace' clothes – those virtues that reflect the person we are in Christ (Col 3:12). Such virtues include:

- Compassion (tender heart for the hurting and needy) which the people in Paul's' day had little of and Jesus expressed so abundantly.
- Kindness (others' needs over yours). We should be mindful to show kindness to those near and dear to us, and not only to strangers.
- Humility (trusting Jesus in what He says and putting Him first rather than ourselves) is something the Greeks did not even have a word for as they felt it showed weakness and so they despised it, yet humility reflects Jesus' heart.
- Gentleness (strength under control) is where one could humiliate another (physically, emotionally, and intellectually) yet chooses not to.
- Patience (longsuffering in the place of insult, injury, abuse or frustration) is giving others slack and giving them the benefit of the doubt.
- Forgive (those who have hurt, disappointed, wounded or betrayed you) knowing how much Jesus has forgiven you.

On a day-by-day basis how do we put to death sinful behaviors and put on such Godly virtues as Paul listed? Paul uses the analogy of taking off and putting on clothes. It is something we do daily, just like the process of becoming more like Christ. We put clothes on one item at a time and that involves the mind. So too is putting on godly behaviors – the renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2) – which is **setting your mind on Christ** (Col 3:15) and making Him Lord. It is also **letting the message of Christ dwell in you richly** (Col 3:16). This is to soak in God's word and fill your mind with the truth of His written Word. By doing this you will be better equipped to make God-honoring decisions. (See Romans 6:12-13) What will you choose? To choose Christ to live His life through you, or to choose the sins and temptations that yet lurk within. But sin no longer controls us. Should we choose to surrender our minds, emotions, wills and bodies to Christ we will have joined forces with Him against sin.

In Romans, Paul personifies Sin. He treats it as a separate entity from us that we can offer ourselves to. Typically, when tempted, we think that we would like to sin but God wouldn't want us to. We then conclude that it is us against God. Yet as a follower of Christ this is a lie. That desire to do wrong isn't really you. That is 'Mr. Sin' tempting you. Example: You lied, and hence sinned. You confess it to a friend and earnestly say that you wish you hadn't done that. This is the 'real you,' the spirit inside you, saying you don't want to sin. There is not a good you and a bad you; there is only you, and you will either give into the temptations of your mortal body and soul or you will submit to the life and desires of Lord Jesus. The fact is: you are dead to sin. It's not you against God. Rather it is you and God against Mr. Sin. For the Christian when temptation comes your way the real you is the one who says 'I don't want to do this.' The one who says I want to do this is your earthly nature. Should we believe that our desire to sin is the real us, we will conclude there is something wrong with our heart and devotion, that God is disappointed with us and that Mr. Sin is still master over us. This may then lead to a sense of resignation that we may as well continue in this sin. But that is NOT you! You will face temptation but you are no longer a slave to 'Mr. Sin' and thus you do not have to submit to him (Rom 6:13). Your real you does not wish to submit and loan Mr. Sin your eyes, ears, mouth or hands and feet. The spirit part of you is alive in Christ and therefore you have a new Master and King and the freedom and power in Christ to say no. Where there is sin, death will follow (Rom 6:21, 23) through the consequences of that sin in our lives and world. But surrendering to Christ in our new identity will yield a full life now and through all eternity. This will happen day-by-day, step by step as you surrender your life to His control.