**Colossians 3:5-11**

Introduction

I. Paul is helping us live in the already/not yet tension of our Christian experience

A. We have put on the new self (v. 9-10)

B. But it is still in the process of “being renewed” (v. 9-10)

II. We are called to take off the old clothes of our former values, habits, and ways of thinking and to put on the new clothes of our identity in Christ and the habits and values that come from that.

The passage

I. Paul addresses three old practices that get in the way of unity in relationships

A. Old postures of the heart: anger, rage, and malice (v. 8)

B. Old uses of our tongues: slander, coarse language, lying (v. 8-9)

C. Old ways of seeing people in the world (v. 11)

1. We so often divide people into categories of us and them, neighbor and stranger

 a. Race and culture: Jew and Gentile

 b. Class: slave and free

 c. Gender: male and female

2. It is natural to seek friendship with those who look and feel like us and to avoid those who are different than us

3. It’s easy to forget that the gospel has a lot to say about race and class

4. God is not simply saving individual souls and preparing them for heaven; he is forming a people for himself from every tribe and nation who, in their life together, demonstrate the life of Christ in the world

5. Books of the Bible were written to address different races and cultures coming together in the body of Christ (Romans, Galatians)

II. Paul’s explanation in Colossians

 A. Here there is no Jew or Greek . . .

 1. It’s not that those categories no longer exist

 2. But something unifies that goes even deeper: Christ

 B. Christ is all: Christ is the most important thing in this community

C. Christ is in all: When I see Christ in you, I see beyond your race, gender, age, class, to the most important thing about you that unites us together.

III. Paul’s explanation in Ephesians

A. Ephesians 2:11-18

1. The cross reconciles each of us to God

2. The cross reconciles us to each other. Now that we are God’s children, that makes us brothers and sisters

B. Ephesians 3:10

1. God’s purpose is to create a multi-faceted, diverse group of people who love each other well. Their love for each other will be a witness to the watching world of the wisdom and power of God.

2. Image: God is like a painter painting a multi-colored work of art (= the church composed of very diverse people)

C. Rev 7:9-10: In eternity the church will be a multi-ethnic, multi-national family, and the church is to be a foretaste of that.

IV. How can we be a part of this community that displays God’s wisdom to world?

A. Lean into and engage in relationships with Christians who are very different than we are (age, culture, gender, class, etc.)

B. Make this more of a priority in our lives

**Discussion Questions**

1. On Sunday the following statement was made: “God is not simply saving individual souls and preparing them for heaven; he is forming a people for himself from every tribe and nation who, in their life together, demonstrate the life of Christ in the world.” How does that vision line up with the vision of the gospel you had growing up?

2. On Sunday a comment was made about a common sentiment today that says, “I’m color blind.” How did you react to that?

3. Read together Ephesians 2:11-18. What stands out most to you in that passage? What questions do you have about that passage?

4. Practically speaking, how can you personally and how can Grace Fellowship Church lean into this value of becoming a diverse group of people who, in their unity within diversity, point the world to the power of Jesus to transform lives? Do you have any specific steps we can take that seem appropriate given who we are as a community?