**Colossians 3:15-17**

Introduction

I. Notice how relational and communal Paul’s description of new life in Christ is

II. It’s easy for us to read these commands through an individualistic lens, but Paul has in mind our relationships with one another

III. God is not just saving individuals, but he’s forming a people for himself (a temple) who, in their life together, live out the life of Christ.

The Passage

I. A community where peace rules (v. 15)

A. The word “rule” translates a Greek verb that refers to the activity of an “umpire,” who renders verdicts in contested situations.

B. We are to let the value of peace/unity with one another be the “umpire” that makes the call for how we behave.

C. We should avoid things that create disunity (gossip, bitterness, etc.)

D. We should pursue things that promote unity (come to church on time, stay after for a while to engage other people).

II. A community where the Word of Christ dwells richly (v. 16)

A. The word “dwell” describes a house and someone living within it. We are God’s house/temple, and his Word is supposed to take up residence in our community

 B. Paul mentions a variety of ways this happens

 1. “teaching and admonishing one another”

2. “singing” (music helps our hearts respond to God’s word, helps us memorize God’s word, and helps us consider the same truths at the same time)

C. We want the Word to be central at our Sunday morning gatherings (see 1 Corinthians 14:26) and our small group gatherings

III. A community of gratitude (v. 15, 16, and 17)

A. Gratitude should mark our conversations with each other

B. Gratitude is contagious; grateful people are wonderful to be around

IV. A community where Christ is all in all (v. 17)

A. This command sums up everything Paul’s been saying in chapter 3

B. We are to let Christ and our relationship with him be the motivation and the goal of everything we do (word and deed)

1. If we are not captivated by Jesus this wil feel like a very oppressive command (I have to run every purchase I make, every show I watch, every word that comes out of my mouth through the grid of, “would this please Jesus?”)

2. If we are captivated by Jesus and he has won our heart, than this is the deepest desire of our hearts (= to please Jesus) even if we don’t always do it perfectly

Conclusion

I. Wouldn’t it be great if the church was better known for what it’s for, rather than what it’s against?

II. If we live out these values, we will be a community that is compelling to the world

**Discussion Questions**

1. Consider what was said at the beginning of Sunday’s message regarding how we often take an individualistic lens to passages that are actually very communal and relational. Did you relate to what was being said? If so, what are some of the implications of that?

2. Of the four qualities of Christian community mentioned in the passage, which one struck you most and why?

3. To what extent does the Word of Christ dwell within your conversations with fellow believers? What are some of the barriers to that happening more in your life? For example, are their emotional barriers to bringing up conversations about God’s Word, or are you not spending time thinking about God’s Word to have something to say in conversations, etc.?

4. As you consider v. 17 and the idea of running every single decision you make through the grid of whether or not it will please Jesus, how do you respond to that idea? Does that feel overwhelming? Exciting? Do you already basically live that way? Is that a new idea?