

Leader Guide



Speaker: Casey Scott

Series: Forgotten Ornaments

Title: Redeeming Undecorating

Text: Colossians 3:1–14

Big Idea: We take down what doesn't look like Jesus and put up what does

Sermon Outline

1. Introduction: The Sadness of “Undecorating Day”

- The tree is dry, candy canes are gone, glitter everywhere, tubs come back out... and everyone disappears.
- Undecorating feels like “the fun is over” and the house looks bare and cold.
- What if undecorating didn't have to be depressing, but could be a **holy moment**?
 - A time to let God help us take down what doesn't belong anymore...
 - ...and put up better things instead.
- Colossians 3:1–14 gives us a spiritual “undecorating guide.”

2. Step One: Read the Room (Colossians 3:1–4)

- Before undecorating, you assess the room: What needs to come down? What stays?
- Paul's version:
 - “Set your hearts on things above... set your minds on things above... for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”
- Identity:
 - Your life is **hidden/safe** with Christ—not defined by how “festive” your life looks.
 - The “room” is your life in Christ; the decorations are circumstances, celebrations, and feelings.
- Illustration: Tree vs. Room
 - When the tree comes down, you realize it's still the same room; the room itself matters most.
- Kids: Where is your life if you believe in Jesus? Hidden with Christ—God is with you not just on Christmas Eve, but on a random Tuesday in February.
- Because the room belongs to Jesus, we start by **reading the room**: looking around at what's on the walls of our lives.

3. Step Two: Take Down the Old (Colossians 3:5–11)

- Some decorations simply **have to come down**.
 - Strong language: “Put to death... rid yourselves...”
- Paul's list reaches everyone:

- Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed (idolatry), anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language, lying.
- We're not invited to:
 - Rearrange them, cover them, or paint over them.
 - We're told to **kill them** and **rid ourselves** of them.
- Illustration: The Ornament Nobody Likes
 - The ornament everyone secretly hates but keeps putting up "because we always have."
 - We do the same spiritually: sarcasm, secret sin, scrolling instead of engaging family, patterns everyone feels but no one addresses.
- If Jesus asks you to take something down, it's because He has **something better** to put there.
- Warning:
 - If we only take things down and never put anything up, we become an empty room.
 - Jesus (Matthew 12:44): empty hearts become dangerous places.
- Paul doesn't stop with removing; he moves us to **redecorating with Christ**.

4. Step Three: Put Up the New (Colossians 3:12–14)

- We don't just take things down; we **put up what looks like Jesus**.
- Order matters:
 - **Identity first**: "God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved..."
 - **Then character**: the list of Christlike virtues.
- You decorate what you value:
 - God sees you as chosen, holy, dearly loved—so He wants your life "decorated" accordingly.
- Virtues to "put up":
 - Compassion
 - Kindness
 - Humility
 - Gentleness
 - Patience
 - Forgiveness ("Forgive as the Lord forgave you.")
 - **Love** over all, which binds everything together in perfect unity.
- Illustration: Redecorating a Room
 - When Christmas décor comes down, you put back what matters:
 - Family photos, meaningful artwork, things that reflect your story.
 - If someone walked into the living room of your heart in March, what would be on the walls?
- Examples:
 - Compassion: seeing others' needs as opportunities, not inconveniences.
 - Kindness: deliberate acts of good, not just niceness.
 - Humility: thinking of yourself less, not thinking less of yourself.
 - Gentleness: strength under control.
 - Patience: how love behaves when things take longer than hoped.
 - Forgiveness: removing old, faded hurts and replacing them with grace.
- Love is like the tree topper or the chair that makes the room feel "right"—the ornament that holds all the others together.

5. Conclusion: Making Undecorating a Spiritual Practice

- Turn undecorating day into a yearly spiritual rhythm:
 1. **When you take something down**:
 "Lord, show me what needs to come down in my life this year."

2. **When you put it in a box:**

“Lord, help me leave this past year’s junk with You.”

3. **When you fill the empty place:**

“Jesus, what do You want to put at the center of my life this year?”

- Even when we forget where we stored the decorations, God never forgets where He put us: our lives are hidden with Christ in God.
- This isn’t about trying harder to be a better person; it’s about Jesus living in you and changing what’s on display.
- For believers:
 - One thing the Spirit is asking you to take down, and one Christlike quality to put up in its place.
- For not-yet believers:
 - You can’t decorate a house you don’t own; first step is giving your life to Jesus and letting Him begin His work in you.
- Final Big Idea:

We take down what doesn’t look like Jesus and put up what does.

Heart Questions (This Is Me)

1. **How do you usually feel about “undecorating day”?**
 - Sad? Relieved? Indifferent?
 - How might those feelings mirror what happens in your heart after a “high” season spiritually?
2. **Where in your life does it feel like the decorations have come down and the room looks bare?**
 - How does it feel to imagine Jesus stepping into that “bare room” with you?
3. **When you hear “your life is hidden with Christ in God,” what stirs in you?**
 - Comfort? Doubt? Confusion? Joy?
 - Why do you think that is?
4. **Is there a “spiritual ornament nobody likes” in your life that you keep hanging up anyway?**
 - How does it make you feel to name it honestly before God?
5. **Which word hits your heart more strongly right now: “chosen,” “holy,” or “dearly loved”?**
 - Why that one, and what does it touch in your story?
6. **When you picture the “living room” of your heart, what do you emotionally sense is on the walls—peace, shame, anxiety, gratitude, anger?**
 - How do you feel about inviting Jesus to “redecorate” that space?

Head Questions (This Is What I Need to Think About)

1. **Read Colossians 3:1–4.**
 - What does it mean practically to “set your heart” and “set your mind” on things above?
 - How does Paul connect this to your identity (“you died... your life is hidden with Christ”)?
2. **Read Colossians 3:5–9.**
 - Why do you think Paul uses such strong language—“put to death,” “rid yourselves”—instead of softer language like “improve” or “manage”?
 - Which items on this list are easiest for Christians to excuse or minimize today?
3. **What dangers do you see in only “taking down” old behaviors without “putting up” new, Christlike ones?**
 - How does Jesus’ warning about the “empty house” (Matthew 12:44) help explain this?
4. **Read Colossians 3:10–11.**

- What does it mean that you have “put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator”?
- How does this reshape how you see spiritual growth—more like decorating, repainting, or rebuilding?
- 5. **Read Colossians 3:12–14.**
 - Why does Paul remind them of who they are (“chosen, holy, dearly loved”) before listing the virtues?
 - How does starting from identity change the way we approach Christian character?
- 6. **Look at the list: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love.**
 - How do these virtues contrast with the “old decorations” in vv. 5–9?
 - What does it say about the kind of “room” Jesus wants your life to be?
- 7. **The sermon said, “We take down what doesn’t look like Jesus and put up what does.”**
 - How does that summary help you understand sanctification (becoming more like Christ) in simple, concrete terms?

Hands Questions (This Is How I Need to Act)

1. **Undecorating Practice:**
 - When is your actual “undecorating day” this year?
 - How will you intentionally use the three simple prayers as you take things down, box them up, and fill the empty spaces?
2. **Take Down One “Old Ornament”:**
 - Based on Colossians 3:5–9, what is one specific habit, attitude, or pattern the Spirit is nudging you to “take down” (put to death / rid yourself of) in the new year?
 - What concrete step could you take this week to start?
3. **Put Up One “New Decoration”:**
 - From Colossians 3:12–14, which Christlike quality do you sense God inviting you to “hang on the wall” of your life more intentionally?
 - What is one practical way you can practice that virtue in the next seven days?
4. **Household / Family Practice:**
 - If you live with others, how could you turn undecorating into a shared spiritual rhythm?
 - For example: praying one of the three prayers together at each stage, or asking, “What do we think Jesus wants to ‘put up’ in our family this year?”
5. **Relational Application:**
 - Is there a relationship where “old decorations” (anger, sarcasm, bitterness, withdrawal) show up regularly?
 - What is one specific “new decoration” (kindness, gentleness, patience, forgiveness) you will choose to put up there this week?
6. **Accountability Step:**
 - Who is one trusted friend or group member you can tell:
 - “Here’s what I sense God asking me to take down.”
 - “Here’s what I sense God asking me to put up.”
 - How will you invite them to check in with you on this over the next month?
7. **Next-Year Reminder:**
 - What could you practically do now—note on your calendar, card in the storage tub, reminder on your phone—so that next year’s undecorating day prompts you again to ask:
 - “Lord, what needs to come down?”
 - “Jesus, what do You want to put at the center of my life this year?”