

All Things New
Week 8: Christ is All
Colossians 3:1-11

Michelangelo is known for being one of the greatest artists of all time. He was a sculptor, a painter, an architect. In 1504, at the age of 29, he completed David, one of his greatest works of art. It took him 3 years to complete, but 500 years later, people still travel from all over the world to see it.

It's amazing to me that this beautiful statue started as a single block of marble. Marble's not like clay. Clay is soft and moldable. You can form something out of clay. Marble is hard and cold. You can't form and shape marble, you have to chip away at it, piece by piece, little by little, until it's finished.

Michelangelo believed that the finished work of art was already inside the stone and his job was to liberate it. It's like it was in there, trapped, and he had to free it from everything that was keeping it from being what it already is. He once said, "The sculpture is already complete within the marble block, before I start my work. It is already there, I just have to chisel away the superfluous material."

In other words, when Michelangelo looked at that large piece of unformed stone, he didn't see pieces of marble that had to be chipped away, he saw David. He saw the finished piece. And for 3 years, he just slowly and methodically chipped away at anything that didn't look like him.

And, in a way, I think that's what God is doing in us. We are like that cold, hard piece of stone. We look and feel more like a mess than a masterpiece. But, when we put our faith in Jesus, we are in Christ and Christ is in us. That is who we are. And then, through the work of the Holy Spirit, God slowly and methodically starts chipping away at those things in our life that don't look or act like Christ. He liberates us from everything that keeps us from being who we already are.

We see this in our text today. In Colossians 3, Paul uses all of these contrasts to describe what God is doing in us. Death to life, old to new, used to be, but now are. This is what Jesus does in us. He makes all things new. That's the good news of the Gospel, and we can illustrate that good news like this...(3 Circle Gospel)

Paul puts it like this in Colossians 3:9 and 10...(READ 9b-10)

We don't become new by doing better and trying harder. This text lives here, not here. We become new by putting our faith in Jesus and following him. After that, God starts chipping away at the old. The Gospel is not about just giving up a few vices and living with some new virtues. It's dying to ourselves and finding new life in Jesus.

We see the brokenness in our life and just want to patch and paint over it to make it look better. God wants to rip it out because that's not who we are anymore. So, He's chiseling out all of those things in our life that do not look and act like Jesus. He's already made you a masterpiece, now He's just chipping everything else away. He's taking it off to reveal what he's already done.

So, living out the Gospel in our life really just comes down to this phrase: **You are, now be!** You are raised with Christ. You are made new. Now be that new creation. Be who God is making you. Stop picking up the old, broken off pieces of who you used to be and live free from the ways of life that once weighed you down. And there are a few things that Paul mentions in our text. Some old ways of living that God is chipping away to reveal the new creation inside of us. Things that we might be tempted to pick back up. The first thing is our selfishness. **Verse 5...(READ)**

You hear that list and it's like, "One of these things is not like the other." Paul ends this list of sexual sin with greed and calls it idolatry. It seems out of place, but I think it fits perfectly. You see, sexual desire is not evil. It's hardwired into us as part of how God designed us, just like providing for ourselves and family and having what we need. But, outside of God's design, money and sex can become idols that we worship and make sacrifices for. We sacrifice our marriages and intimacy. Our families. Even our own hearts.

Both greed and sexual sin put us at the center. They elevate our wants and desires above anything or anyone else and add to the brokenness of this world and in the lives of others. That kind of selfishness doesn't look anything like Jesus, so God's chipping it off. It's why Paul says in **verse 7...(READ)**

As God's renewing us, he's chipping away at our selfishness, but he's also chipping away at our pride. Pride is at the root of our sin and it manifests itself in so many ways in our life. One of the most visible ways is anger. How we treat others and talk about them speaks a lot about the work God is doing in us. And for many of us, anger is one of those pieces that God is chipping away and we just keep picking it back up. Paul says in verse 8 **...(READ vs. 8-9a)**

We're doing a series after Easter called Default Settings where we'll learn how to be unoffendable in an offensive world. And it seems like anger is the default setting of our culture. Maybe it feels that way in your life. It's always simmering, and every now and then it explodes into an outburst of rage. We see malice towards others; this sense of hatred towards people. Our culture is constantly taking cheap shots at one another. Degrading them with their words.

In fact, when Paul talks about filthy language, he's not talking about the 7 words you can't say. He's not talking about curse words, he's talking about words that curse others. Words meant to be abusive and demeaning. Words that communicate a sense of superiority. This kind of anger and vitriol comes from a place of pride and it doesn't look or sound anything like Jesus. So, for those of us who have been made new in Christ, God's chipping it all away.

So he's removing our selfishness and our pride, but he's also removing the divisions between us. Verse 11 says...(READ)

The new humanity God is recreating in Christ erases all the old sinful divisions that segregate us from one another. The Gospel tears down man-made walls. It doesn't classify or judge people by race or ethnicity. It doesn't calculate someone's worth by their social position. The Gospel destroys an "us" versus "them" mentality. It teaches us that we've all sinned. We're all in need of a Savior. And we can all find it in Jesus.

And so those places inside of us that still want to put up walls or cast judgement on others based on race and ethnicity, God just keeps chiseling it all away to make us look more and more like who we are in Christ. More and more like Jesus.

All of this old way of living...selfishness, pride, divisiveness...Paul says we've taken it off, turned from it. God's chipping it away. It's not who we are anymore in Christ, so stop picking it back up. And we're not being made new by avoiding all of these things or trying harder. We've been made new through our faith in Jesus. You ARE, now be. Be the new creation God has already made you. Paul tells us how to do that at the beginning of our text...(READ 3:1-4)

That phrase in verses 1 and 2, "set your hearts/minds," it literally means to "seek" something. A couple of days before I was supposed to leave for my freshman year of college, I lost the keys to my car. This was when you had 2 keys for one car. One to unlock the door and the other to start it. I couldn't find either of them. For those two days, looking for those keys consumed me. I tore our house up. My heart and mind were set on finding them so I could drive to college!

I finally had to give up and call a locksmith to come out and cut a new set of keys for me. I forget how much it cost, but it was enough that I told my mom and little brother, "Listen, if you find that set of keys, don't tell me! Just throw them away or hide them or something. I don't want to know." It was so frustrating. Of course, a couple of months later, I went home to visit and the first thing my little brother does is run up saying, "I found your keys!"

Have you ever had to look for something like that? It can become consuming. You forget about everything else you were doing. All of the distractions disappear and you become laser focused on seeking it out. It feels a lot like setting your heart and mind on something. And I think that's the word picture Paul is creating here.

In our text, "heart" equals our affections and "mind" is our directions.

When we set our hearts and minds, our affections and directions, on the things of Jesus, everything else fades away. A heart and mind set on Christ, seeking him, won't get caught up in the things of this world. Won't get lured in and entangled by its practices and

arguments and divisions, because we're seeking something more. The Gospel raises our affections for Jesus and sets the direction of our life towards him. I think that's when we really start living in the new life we've received in Christ. It's when we seek Him more than anything else this world has to offer.

So, what are you seeking in your life, and how's it working out for you? Are you setting your heart and mind on things above and allowing God to chip away at the places in your life that don't look or act like Jesus? Are you becoming more like who you were made to be?

Or, are you seeking the things of this world, trapped in the brokenness and pain of it? Do you put your wants and desires above anything or anyone else? Do you filter everything through how it affects you and find yourself angry all the time *because it just seems like people don't think about you as much as you think about you!*? Do you find yourself putting up walls between others and being able to justify it?

Paul gives a blunt warning against this in our text. In verse 6 he says...(READ vs. 6)

We hear the word "wrath" and think of anger, but in the book of Romans, Paul describes the wrath of God as Him just turning us over to ourselves. It's allowing us to experience the full consequences of our sin. The full pain of our brokenness. In a way, God's wrath is Him allowing us to "self-destruct." It's allowing us to be punished **by our sin**, not for it.

And, in that way, the nature of God's wrath is actually incredibly redemptive. When we walk away from God and experience the pain and brokenness of it, God's waiting for us to return to Him. Not so he can punish us, but so he can point us in a different direction. So He can make us new and start chiseling away all the things in our life that don't look like Jesus. All the things that only served to add to our brokenness and pain.

The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus paid the price for our sin on the cross. And when we put our faith in Him, God makes us new and then slowly starts to chip away at the old. If you're ready to step out of the old and into the new, out of death and into life, we want to come alongside you.

(Response)