

Well, good morning. How is everyone? Good? Yes, everyone's good. How you guys doing over here?

Good. How about over here? Sun is shining. It's a beautiful morning. I love it.

We didn't get a ton of snow, which is a little bit disappointing, but snow versus sunshine. I'm going to take sunshine. At this point in time, we're in the middle of a series called All Things New, and we're looking at the book of Colossians. We're this section now that put me in mind of my life for the last ten years. I've moved a lot.

How many of you guys are big movers? You like to move. You love moving. New things, new opportunities. You're all in.

How many of you guys, if you had your druthers, would still be living in the house that you grew up in? You do not like to move at all. It's too much trouble. It really is. The last time I moved, I thought, okay, this is it.

I've got too much stuff. One of the reasons I like moving, however, is because of all that stuff. Every time you move, it's an opportunity to sort of reinvent who you are and who you want to be. And so the new house and the new place has some limitations. You can't take it all with you, but it also has some new opportunities, things that you will need here that you didn't need there.

And so it's an opportunity to get rid of stuff. Cookware. You guys have way too much cookware. Okay. Yes.

I'm not the only one. Furniture. Stuff that it's like, okay, this has seen its day. It's time to let it go. This is a controversial one.

Books. How many of you guys are bad about getting rid of books? I'm horrible at getting rid of books, but I've got books that need to be. Just moved on. Okay, clothes.

How many of you guys still have clothes? Okay. Yeah. Clothes that you're like, why do I still have it? I still have it because when I was in high school, I had a great experience in this pair of shoes.

So I'm holding on to these. I looked good that day in 1972, and I'm going to live with that memory forever. There's stuff we find in the boxes I'm still unpacking from the last move. And I'm like, why did I feel like I needed to bring this with me? I've not used it at all in the last year.

You see, too often we want the newness of life without letting go of the oldness of life. Sometimes it's just easier to keep the old stuff. It's hard to get rid of old stuff. Today we're going to look at how the gospel calls us, however, to get rid of the old stuff, the old life stuff, so that we can fully embrace the new life that Jesus has for us. So if you have your bibles with you or you got your bible app, you can turn to Colossians.

We're going to be in Colossians chapter three today. If you're reading out of an old timey bible with the little thin pages and the leather binding or the pleather binding, then you're going to look for Colossians towards the end of the book. There's Corinthians, there's Galatians, there's Ephesians, there's Philippians. Those are short little books. Then you're going to come to Colossians, then you get to Thessalonians.

If you got to Thessalonians, you're too far. Backtrack a little bit. Open up to Colossians chapter three. I'm going to pray and we'll get started. Heavenly Father, this morning we thank you for this newness of life that you invite us into.

Lord, sometimes it's like we're being drugged, kicking and screaming into this new life that you want us to enjoy and be part of. It's hard for us to wrap our minds around what exactly the newness of life looks like. So we hold on to the past. We hold on to the hurts and the habits and the hangups of the past, just things that slow us down and diminish the quality of life in this new place. You've called us to be.

Father. This morning, as we open your word, we pray that you would speak to us and call us into this new place, allow us to reject and put aside the old so that we can fully embrace the new. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen. Our passage that we're looking at is Colossians chapter three, verses one through eleven.

We're going to just kind of walk our way through the passage here this morning. So we're just going to read the first few verses just to get our minds around this. But why don't you read it with me, please? Since then, you have been raised with Christ. Set your heart on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. You died, Paul says, I helped out with the Dane Carter funeral home for a while last year, in the last couple years. And you hear a lot of euphemisms for death, don't you? There's the very gentle and almost, shall I say, lovely euphemisms for death.

Resting in peace. I mean, how many don't want to rest in peace? About 06:00 every night. You just want to rest in peace. They passed beyond the veil.

We don't use that one as much, but have you heard that one before? They passed beyond the veil. Pushing up daisies. That sounds lovely, doesn't it? Spring things coming up.

Oh, they're pushing up daisies. How lovely for them. There's the vaguely agricultural euphemisms for death. They bit the dust, they kicked the bucket, they bought the farm. Anyone heard that one?

There's the travel themed one. I'm a particular fan of these euphemisms. They passed on. They're in a better place. Yeah.

Where are they? Did they go to the south of France? No, they departed. There's the ominous ones. They shuffled off this mortal coil.

They met their maker, they gave up the ghost. And then there's just the old. Euphemisms for death. Cash in your chips expired like milk in the fridge. Or pop your clogs.

Has anyone ever heard that phrase? They pop their clogs? Let's just say it together because it's fun. They pop their clogs. It's a Britishism, I believe.

Death has lots of euphemisms, but Paul doesn't use any of them. He just says, straight up, you died. Wow. Paul says kaput. Time's up.

Your old life is done with forever, and now you are resurrected in Jesus. He says, the life you now live in is maybe properly known and maybe in some respects, could be called the afterlife. And he describes this afterlife in a very particular way. He says, you are hidden in Christ. It's a very interesting term.

I don't know if you have kids that play hide and seek. I think we all played it at some point in our lives when we were kids. You hide and someone comes and finds you. If you're a parent, maybe you hide snacks from your kids so that they don't find all the good stuff. If my granddad, he hid cash in various places, I will tell you, if you're one of those people that hide cash in odd places, could you let someone know where you are hiding that cash?

Because if you pop your clogs and that cash is hidden in something that may get tossed, it does no one any good if you don't know who to tell where you've hidden your cash. I volunteer to hold that information securely. When the Bible talks about hidden, specifically hidden in Christ, it's this idea of being protected. You are protected in Christ. You're dwelling now in a new place that is secure.

This idea of hidden in the Bible, you see it first. Remember Adam and Eve, when they sinned against God, rebelled against God. They hid to protect themselves from God's presence. They hid their nakedness with fig leaves to sort of protect them against that exposure. In revelations, the scriptures say that the wicked will try to hide themselves in the caves and under rocks, protecting themselves from God's judgment.

In the middle of the scriptures, we have the cross, however, and Paul says that in the cross we have a covering for our sin. We are hidden now, away from judgment. We don't need mountains and stones to protect us. We don't need fig leaves to protect us. God, Paul says, hides us in himself.

We are hidden in Christ. Jesus says, the life you now live is not just about me. The life you now live is me. I am living in and through you. Paul says, you died.

It's over. But you have a new life in Christ. So live this new life. Too often we want the newness of life without letting go of the oldness of life. What did Elsa say?

She did. That's exactly what she said. Elsa said, let it go. She's right. Let it go.

Set your mind and set your heart. Paul says, on things above. Let's read on colossians three, verse five. So, put to death, therefore. Let's read it together.

Put to death, therefore. Whatever belongs to your earthly nature. Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed. Paul says, greed, which is idolatry. It's just not a capitalistic impulse.

It's just not you trying to take care of you and yours. Greed is idol worship. It is idolatry. Let's keep going. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

You used to walk in this way. I'll read by myself. In the life you once lived. But now you also put them all aside. Anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive speech from your mouth.

Do not lie to one another. Since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices. Wow. Paul does not hold back on this part, does he? He lets loose.

Here's what Paul wants everyone to know. God will judge something we don't talk about a lot. God's judgment. We like to talk about God's mercy, his compassion. But the scriptures are clear.

God will judge God's judgment. God's wrath is different than ours. However. Have you ever thought about that? God's wrath flows out of who he is.

Ours does the same. But who God is and who we are are two different. Two different things. You see, God's wrath flows out of his love. John tells us in no uncertain terms that God is love.

And so if God demonstrates wrath, it must flow through his love. When you demonstrate wrath, it flows through your carnal nature, full of self interest and pride and hurt and all the stuff that comes along with it, and it gets ugly. God's wrath is different. God's wrath flows through who he is, his love. Wrath isn't part of his character.

He can be wrathful, but the scriptures never say that God is wrath. He can be angry, but the scriptures never say that God is anger. God is love. And so his wrath, his judgment, comes through his love. Now, what provokes it then?

Well, the scriptures are clear. Evil provokes God's wrath. And even then, God's wrath is slow. His judgment is slow. He is delaying his judgment, the scripture says, because he so loves the world that he doesn't want anyone to perish, but all to come to a knowledge of Jesus, all to have everlasting life.

His wrath and his judgment is slow. And still you experience it in small doses. It's called pain. Pain is useful to God in that it aids us in letting go of the old life so that we can fully embrace the new life. Someday, God's patience will run its course.

And with perfect love and justice, God will finally and fully deal with the problem of evil. Every eye will see it, the scripture says, and every knee will bow when they see God express in his glorious love righteous judgment. It will be a day. The day of the Lord will be an awesome and fearful day for many. But for those of us who are hidden in Christ, that day has passed.

Our sins were on the cross. They have been judged by Jesus. They have been carried by Jesus. They have been cleansed and wiped away by Jesus. And now those of us who are in Christ, who have said yes to Jesus, live within him.

We do not need to fear the day of the Lord. It is a day of wonder and beauty for us when we reject the old life and say yes to the new life. The scriptures say, we are reckoned. That's an old word. We are reckoned dead to sin at our baptism.

Those are the words we use. Dead, buried, raised to walk in the newness of life. We are new creations. Our life is new in Christ. So Paul says, with that in mind.

With that in mind, get rid of the slimy residue of death on you. Get rid of the sexual immorality. Get rid of the impurity. Get rid of the lust and the greed. Those things are death.

They're rot. And get rid of the stench of the old man. I don't know what you know about death, but it stinks. Anyone know this? It stinks.

Someone who has died will begin to stink really quickly. Paul says, you are dead. Don't get rid of the stink. Walk away from that. Walk away from anger and wrath and malice and slander.

That's dead body stench. You are new. Leave that behind. Strip off everything that belongs to the dead man. Too often we want the newness of life without leaving behind the oldness of life.

But it's got to go, because the newness of life will not fit over the clothes of sin and death. Paul says, you laid aside the old verse ten, Colossians 3:10. You've laid aside the old and you've put on the new self, who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him. Now, what is this true knowledge? What is this image of the one who created him?

What does that look like? What looks like life in the spirit? It looks like life being led and directed by the Holy Spirit. And what is the fruit of the Holy Spirit? This is a verse that if you don't know it, you need to memorize it, because this should be the governing character of our lives now that we are new creations in Christ.

The fruit of the spirit. Let's read them together. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Self control. That's a big one.

I'm all good with love, joy and peace. The self control bit is a little bit harder. Anyone? Give me an amen on that one. Self control.

And what does that look like? I think Paul alludes to it here. It's setting your mind and setting your heart on things above. That's what it is. In Philippians.

He reminds us of this. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, let your mind dwell on these things. Let your mind dwell on these things. Do you see these two things that are happening?

Die and dwell. Live in this new place. Calls to mind this idea of a new home. The old stuff doesn't fit. You bring new stuff in.

And Paul says, live here in this new place. Hang up. What is noble? On the walls. Furnish your house with that which is right and pure.

Lay down things that are lovely and admirable, paint the walls with the excellent and the praiseworthy, and then live here.

So often we focus on getting rid of everything. And Paul says, yes, but don't forget to dwell on the new.

Colossians 3:11 tells us that this is a place for everyone. This dwelling place that God has for us is for everyone says, as a renewal. This new life is a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, scythian, slave and free man. But Christ is all, and Christ is in all.

It's this beautiful picture of the place that God has called us to live, where no distinctions are made between our various antecedents, where we came from, what we've gone through, how we identify ourselves, what our history is, what our employment is, what our ancestry is. None of that matters in Christ because we are new creations. After church today, we're going to have a class. If you've not signed up and want to do it, we've not ordered pizza yet. We can grab you onto this, but it's just a class to sort of explain who we are.

And I'm telling you, we want to be a church for anyone who is willing to say yes to the new life that Christ offers and to step away from the stench and the stink and the slime of the old life. We skipped over verse four. Did you notice?

We're supposed to set our heart and our mind on things above. But verse four reminds us that we should also set our hope on things above. Colossians 3:4 says, when Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. Jesus is returning, Paul says, and every eye will see, and every tongue will confess, every knee will bow. And the life

that is hidden in Christ, the life that is reckoned by God to be holy and pure and righteous, even though you may feel like it's far from that.

God says, if you are hidden in Christ, when Jesus is revealed, that life will also be revealed, what is reckoned will be made real. I love that someday we will all pop our clogs, we will cash in our chips, we will shuffle off this mortal coil, and we will meet our maker. And if you are hidden in Christ, you're going to meet Jesus looking a lot like Jesus. You will be as God has declared you to be since the very moment you said yes to him. But until then, this newness of life is something that Jesus wants us to walk in, in the here and the now, in the dust and the dirt of this life.

He says, it can be yours, but you've got to let go of. You've got to remove yourself. You got to wipe that stuff away. You've got to strip it off, anything that drags you back to the death life. So let's set our hearts and our minds and our hope on things above.

Let's put off the oldness of life so we can experience the newness of life right here and now. And if you have something that is keeping you from that, a practice, a habit, an attitude that keeps you tied to your old life, then as we prepare for this time of communion, we just acknowledge it to God. Say, lord, I am yours. But in many ways I am holding on to stuff from the past. I have not stripped it away.

Acknowledging it before Jesus is the first step, and then confess it. Receive the forgiveness and cleansing that he offers, and then consider yourself dead to it. Don't walk back that direction. Instead, set your heart, set your mind, set your vision on things above you are in Christ. And now Paul says, we must live differently than we did before to truly experience the newness of life.

What must we do? We must let go of the oldness. So as we come to this time of communion, you're going to take the cup and you're going to take the bread. And I just want to tell you right now, do not approach this time with guilt. Do not approach this time with shame.

Jesus took all those things on the cross. But I do ask that you come to this time with humility. Say, Lord, I am not yet where you want me to be. I still am holding on to things that I don't want to hold on to. But I know that you have promised to lead me where you've called me, and you have promised to help me in areas where I am weak.

And so in this area, I pray for your provision and I pray for your leading. Jesus says, if you ask, I will answer. If you seek, I will help you find. And if you knock, I'm going to open the door for you.

Heavenly Father, this morning we thank you for the cross. We thank you that on the cross you reconciled all things, including us, back to yourself. And you are in the process of bringing us fully into this new relationship. We are reckoned holy. We are reckoned justified and redeemed.

But there's still parts of our lives that bear the stench of death. We want to walk completely and fully into this new life. We want to live it to its fullest. But we confess right now that we still carry and hold close some hurts and habits and hangups from our old life.

This morning, as we take the bread and we take the cup, those things that represent your life freely given for us so that we might have new life, we do it with a sense of humility, knowing that we cannot do this on our own. But we need you. Help us to set our hearts and our minds and our hope on things above so that we can walk into the new life that you've called us. Thank you for hiding us in you. We give thanks and praise in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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