

We need to start incentivizing these front rows right here. I don't know what we do. Do we offer, like, little envelopes underneath and you pull it out and you win a little cash prize or a magic morning gift card? I don't know. But these are great seats.

You get to be so close to me, and that's always a perk. So. Yeah, so those seats right there, they're not off limits. They're not reserved for special people. Anyone can sit there.

So just know that in future, last Sunday, it looks like this Sunday is going to turn out to be the same way. Last Sunday. Beautiful weather. Yes. So after church, we went out to eat, and then we were trying to figure out what the day was going to look like.

So we ended up going down to my folks house. I have a pond down there with some boats and a couple of paddle boats and just mud to play in. So we went down there and spent a long time, and my sister and brother in law came down. We built a little campfire and did some marshmallows and hot dogs. It ended up being a great day.

Monday morning, I go out and get in the car, and I have to open up the trunk, and there is mud everywhere now, not like people smeared and threw mud, but just around the door latch. And then I looked around at the door handles, and there's mud there. And of course, you look in the backseat and on where the shoes have hit and there's mud there. Anyone lived in that world before? Yes.

So I'm thinking, oh, my word, what am I going to do? I got to do something about getting this car cleaned up. Well, thankfully, the weather lasted one day, and then we had a week of rain and dismal stuff. And there's an amazing thing that happens when it pours down rain. Mud sort of dissolves and washes off.

Now, sometimes it leaves as much of a mess in the dripping than it does in the actual caking. But over the course of the week, a lot of that mud sort of vanished and went away. And you could actually see the color of my car underneath. Today we're going to be looking at in the Book of Colossians, where we've been for a while. We're going to be looking at this idea of the newness of life, and we're going to be looking specifically at how it impacts not just the church community, which we talked about last week, the family of God, those of us who are redeemed and now in Christ.

But we're going to look at how that sort of plays into our families as well. And Paul is going to use words, I'm just going to warn you ahead of time, Paul is going to use words that have a lot of the world's mud caked on them. And so when we hear words that we're going to use today, sometimes what we see is the mud. We don't see the word underneath the mud. And so we're just going to pray that the Holy Spirit washes us with his word and we are able to see his heart behind some of these words that can be real trigger points for a lot of people.

Words like submission, words like obey, and even words like love. We're going to pray again that as Jesus comes in and the Holy Spirit fills this place, that we see God's heart behind these words that are too often caked up with mud and dust from the world around us. So, heavenly Father, this morning, as we open your word, we pray that again we would see not just the words, we would not just hear words, but we would be drawn into you and your heart would bring us close to you and we would know you in a deeper and better way. Speak to us that way. Holy Spirit, reveal these things in your word.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen. We're in the book of Colossians. We've been there for a while and we've got a little bit more to go, but it's been good. I've enjoyed it a lot.

Last week we talked a little bit about how we are to look within the context of the Holy Spirit working through us. And again, none of us are perfect yet. I mean, I'm not, and I know most of you and you're not either yet, but we have those moments where we're confronted with our own imperfection. Sometimes our response as christians can be like, I'm a horrible Christian. I'm a failure.

I'm a miserable excuse for someone that God can use. And we just said, no, this is just part of the transformation process, that we are learning to walk according to the Spirit. And that is a tension point. But when we get to those points where we feel overwhelmed and definitely not like we're walking according to the Spirit, we just go what we call the Holy Spirit closet and we just say, hey, Holy Spirit, I need to get rid of this thing and put on this new thing. So I'm just feeling overwhelmed and anxious and impatient.

And I need you to clothe me in something new. I just need you to clothe me in trust, in faithfulness, to stay with it when it gets hard. And so this is the place where we're at now. So here's the scripture we used. We drew from this passage.

Colossians chapter 3:12 through 17 says this. In fact, won't you just read it with me? Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another. If any of you has a grievance against someone, forgive, as the Lord forgave you.

And over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. And again, you may be forgiven for thinking that Jesus just intends us to live in this place within the context of the church. He certainly does. This does have a lot to say about how we treat each other within christian fellowship within the body of Christ. But this new life that Christ is bringing us into is not just for Sunday.

It's for Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday and all the stuff that happens on those days. Not only does the gospel transform our lives so that the body of Christ, the elect and chosen, remember, we talked about that. Chosen to declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness into light, not just so that we can

do what we were called to do to bring glory to God. It's within the context of the church. It's also that we can do that in the context of the Monday through Saturday, most notably in our homes and how we engage with those who are closest to us, our family, our spouses, our kids, our parents.

So this is where Paul takes us to now. And so we're going to pick up in Colossians chapter 3:18 through 21. And if they'll put the scriptures up there, let's do the same thing. Let's just read through this. Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children or they will become discouraged. I know early on in our study of Colossians, we had this discussion about, okay, it's all fine and good to say, well, we're in Christ, and Christ is working through us, and there's just grace and love. We are dearly beloved children, but what are our responsibilities?

What are the rules? When the boys came to live with me, one of them said, I need rules. I need boundaries. I function better in boundaries. And I'm like, I do, too.

I like rules. But rather than see these as rules. I want to frame this as sort of contextualized instruction. This is not a rule. This is a contextualized instruction.

You may say, Tim, you are splitting hairs on this. What do you mean by that? Well, here's what I mean by that. Paul has gone through a lot of trouble explaining that how we live amongst each other is really the result of how we are placing ourselves in Christ. We are his.

We are in him. And out of this, in himness, the life of Christ is flowing out of us. And so, within the context of the church, if people are living this way in Christ, allowing the life of Christ to pour out of them, you're going to find a church that is kind and humble and gentle and patient and forgiving and loving. This is the context where the life of Christ is just experienced the most abundantly, where the praises of God flow most freely and easily. In this context, and so Paul says, home should look the same.

This context where mom and dad love Jesus and are in Christ. And so they're not yelling and screaming at each other, children aren't defiant. Wives and husbands are living in this place of harmony. No one is mistreated or demeaned, but they're supported and encouraged. This family is experiencing the newness of life that we've been talking about in Colossians.

And you say, okay, Tim, that's all well and good, but where were you this morning? At my house. I will tell you where I was at my house. I slammed a cabinet door and I raised my voice to a level that I normally do not speak in.

There was a lot of mud at our house this morning.

No family is perfect. Paul makes that clear. But as you allow the Holy Spirit to transform you, you and your family, Paul says, can get to a better place where there's less mud to get there. However, Paul uses some very muddy words. Did you catch them along the way?

Submit, love, obey. And depending on your history, those can be very clunky, awkward, maybe triggering words. Some of these words may make you feel yucky, depending on your experience in this very dirty, muddy world. That doesn't mean we get to avoid them. It just simply means that we wash the mud off and we discover the collar beneath those, beneath those dirty, mucky clumps that are splashed all over them because of the broken world that we live in.

A good example and a triggering word for a lot of people is this word submit. Now, I will be honest with you. I've sat through a lot of sermons where preachers spend a lot of time framing this submission word around women, but I live with two teenage boys and we have submission issues in there. It is not a female only issue. But Paul does say here says you women wives, submit to your husbands.

And that word feels yucky because inherent in that word is the abuse potential. Can I just have someone say, yes and amen, there's abuse potential in that word. This idea of relinquishing control can be very scary. And we all know situations where that has been abused. But that doesn't mean the word doesn't have beauty underneath all that mud.

You see, Jesus submitted to the father and the relationship they had was of such oneness and unity and beauty that Jesus prayed that we would have the same kind of submission to each other. He says, I pray that they will be one as we are one. And so how do we live that way together so that we're experiencing that same kind of Jesus and father unity? Ephesians, Paul. Another letter Paul wrote where he talks about a lot of this stuff.

He says this in Ephesians five. He says, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ living in such a way that Jesus is honored submitting to each other. So what does that look like? We know what it sounds like. We know what we've heard and maybe pictures we've seen or maybe things we've experienced ourselves.

But what is Paul talking about? So here's the word that Paul uses. It has military connotations. And this word submission is about lining up in the order you need to be in for battle.

So when Paul is instructing wives on how to honor their husbands, he says, treat this like a military exercise. And I love that military imagery because it's a war out there. There's a lot of stuff that you have to face down every day. And Paul says, you and your families need to understand that you are commanding officers and you need to be aligned properly so that

you can command the troops that you win that battle out there. Military stuff all relies on a chain of command, and this is the same thing.

Paul says, wives, put yourselves in the proper place in the chain of command. Not so that you can be under someone, but that someone else is going into the battle before you have to. They're going in first. You are protected. Are you less important?

Only to idiots.

A wise husband does not see this that way. A wise husband understands the value of having a supporting and encouraging wife on his team. We all know stories of generals in DC who have no idea what it's like for the guys who actually have boots on the ground in a place of war or crises. But a wise general will listen and understand, seek to understand and respond appropriately, because he understands the battle is lost if that chain of command gets upset or the communication between those places isn't working the way it should. Sergio, who is the pastor of our spanish speaking congregation in Bloomington, I had lunch with him this week, and he was talking a little bit about this.

He was talking about his wife, Sarah, and he said, here's the deal with Sarah. She is the pivot around which our family functions. If she goes off the rails, then it sort of all falls apart. She goes, we depend on her to make sure that this thing gets won. I can't function, and my family struggles if Sarah's got a day where she's not operating at full capacity.

And that sounds wonderful. You're the thing that holds this all together. But that is a lot of pressure for a mom and a wife to carry. Moms and wives, can I hear you say amen? And that's why I really believe Paul says, women, put yourself behind this guy right here.

He's the one that needs to take responsibility for making sure you are prepared for whatever you're going to deal with. He's first in the line of facing the enemy. You come after him. The kids are behind you. This is a picture here.

Now, here's the deal.

We all live this world, don't we? I have someone I submit to. Greg is here this morning. He's one of our elders. I submit to Greg and the elders leadership.

We have a leadership team here. And you know what? I submit to the leadership team. I certainly weigh in. I tell them what I like.

But if there's pushback and there's enough, I'm like, okay, well, we'll hold off on that. We won't move in that direction. We all live in this place where we're not going it alone. We have people who are going ahead of us and making sure that when we get to the place where we need to be, we've got the support we need to be there. And I really think this is what Paul means when he says, submit to that.

Live there in that place so you're not on your own and you're not carrying the burden all by yourself. In Ephesians, Paul says this. Do it, wives. Submit yourselves to your husbands as you do to the Lord. How do you do it to the Lord?

How do you submit to Jesus? That's how you submit to your husbands. And again, this is contextual. This is a place where both of you are following Jesus. And if you're both there, this is going to be a beautiful experience, a place where you can listen to your husband.

You can respect his perspective. You can trust him, because he sees things that you can't see from your position. This is just how it is. The elders see things that I cannot see from my position. You let him go into battle first, and you pray for him, because as you submit to him, as you do to the Lord, you remember that he's not the Lord.

He's a imperfect guy who is trying to follow Jesus. So pray for him. The next thing Paul says is love. He uses this word, love. There's a lot of mud around the word love.

Love covers a multitude of sins, the scripture says, but it's also used to inflict a multitude of hurts. Anyone say amen to that? Yeah. When we have been physically, spiritually, and emotionally hurt by people who claim to love us, that word takes on a very icky feel. We can get suspicious and cynical when people tell us they love us because words get attached to whatever action is associated with them.

So love, ironically, can mean abuse or manipulation. It was the same back then. I think that's why Paul made it clear. Here's what I mean by love. He's going to wash it.

He's going to hose the mud off of this. He's going to bring a renewed understanding to these guys who have seen love and maybe even used the word before, but they now want to use love to point others and bring their families closer to Jesus. So he says, love your wives. And here's how Paul describes what that looks like. He says, don't be harsh.

Don't be harsh in Ephesians. We're going to go back there again. He says, love your wives like Jesus loved the church. How did Jesus love the church? He gave himself up for her.

Jesus surrendered his life to abuse and shame and rejection and death for the sake of his bride. He laid aside all his power, all his authority, and he became a servant. Philippians tells us that loving your wife means honestly surrendering your life to her.

Loving her like Jesus loved the church. He loves us in so many ways. But here's what he never is, harsh. Gentlemen. Jesus loves the church with so much grace and kindness and gentleness and patience.

He is not harsh. He could criticize us. After all, there's plenty of stuff in this church to criticize. He could point out our weaknesses and failures and bring it up all the time

because we've got some weaknesses and failures here. He could condemn us as an unworthy bride, because very often we are unfaithful to Jesus.

But he doesn't. He loves us now. He doesn't ignore the things that need correcting. That's what he does. The Holy Spirit corrects us all the time.

As someone said, he doesn't sweep our issues under the rug, but he does sweep them up in his arms. He takes them to the cross with him, and he gives his life for his bride. He loves us so beautifully. Never harshly, in fact. Jesus says, who will condemn you?

No one. No one will condemn you. Not me. Romans says, there is now no condemnation, no harsh judgment for those who are in Christ Jesus. So, husbands, that's how you're to love your wives.

No condemnation. Our culture tends to idealize women. We make them out to be superheroes and ladies. You're amazing, but you're also just normal people. Yeah.

Moms and wives have their own weaknesses. They get depressed, they get sick, they make mistakes. They have so many regrets.

They get tired. They have their private sorrows. They are inconsistent, and they get irritated. And, guys, a lot of those, you've probably been responsible for yourself. But a good husband loves his bride and loves Jesus.

And those things become opportunities to sweep her into your arms and say, come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and find with me a place of rest. Husbands, you are to be a place of rest for your wife. That's an unmutied love, by the way. That's a wash clean, beautiful love. And then, children, obey.

Oh, my word. My old preacher, he landed a lot on this one. Children, I don't know what was going on in his family, but he thought this was an important verse. But obey is another muddy word. But again, this is contextualized instruction.

Paul is giving this to children who are living in homes where mom and daddy love Jesus, and they are doing their very best to help him love Jesus and grow up healthy and happy and whole. And I'm going to tell you that is a rarity in our world. There are homes where I would encourage a child to not obey what mom and dad tell you to do, but in a home where mom and dad love Jesus and are doing their darndest. Can I say darndest from the pulpit? I'd like to use a harsher word at a stronger word.

Not a harsher word, but a stronger word. But this is a place where mom and dad are intentionally loving Jesus and loving their kids and doing their very best to raise these kids up in honor and respect for each other and for Jesus then in that context, children obey your parents because they have your best interest at heart. That's not always the case. And

maybe you grew up in a home where that was not the case. Mom and dad did not have your best interest at heart.

And for that I say, I am so sorry that you had to grow up that way. I'm so sorry. But you get a chance to do it different. You get a chance to be different with your kids. Now, there aren't a lot of kids in the room, so we're not going to land on obedience for a long time.

But I'm telling you, in homes where there's abuse and neglect, I tell you, Paul would say, kids, just do your best. Just do your best. Love your parents for how you can love them. Do your best. But if there's points where you have to go a different way, please go a better way.

Jesus was obedient to his parents, and again, he had some great parents, I think handpicked by God. Luke says that when he went down to Nazareth with them, he was obedient to them. Children grown or still young, if your parents are following Jesus with the best of their ability, or even with half their ability, do your very, very best to honor and respect them. And when you can obey them, there's a promise there. I won't go into that because sometimes people use it in a threatening way.

But obedience to one's parent is the biblical expectation for children growing up in christian homes. Now here's the deal. Just as wives submit to husbands, husbands have a big command attached to that. They're to love their wives and parents. Your kids are going to obey you.

You have that expectation. But there's a bigger expectation on your end. You know what it is? Don't be jerks. Some of you guys, a little power goes to your head.

I'm saying, guys, I'm going to gender inclusive here. Some of you ladies can be the same way. A little power goes a long way with you. Here's what Paul says. Listen, fathers, parentheses, mothers, do not embitter your children or they will become discouraged.

Don't be jerks. It's antithetical to the kindness and gentleness and patience of the Holy Spirit and what he's clothing us in to exhibit that kind of behavior in the home, that's not your job. Your job is to lead, not to beat. So lead. Well.

Don't be jerks. Paul says they'll just want to give up what kid wants to try. When nothing they do seems to please anyone. They just get discouraged. No wonder they don't want to obey them.

No wonder they want to get out of your house as quickly as they can because you made life miserable for them. Don't do that. The message says it breaks your child's spirit.

I see Darren Melanie back. Can I just tell you, I had lunch with Bode. Bo does not want to move out. He loves living with you. Now Melanie is ready for him to move on.

She wants her house back. Can I share? Is I do not have permission. But my mom was the same way. She wanted me out.

Dad was like, stay as long as you want. I'm like, I love living here. Why would I trade this? This is a good life boat is. He loves you guys.

He thinks you're amazing. You have been amazing parents for that kid. And I'm telling you. What, is he here this morning? He's not here, is he?

Oh, he's sleeping in. Well, you guys weren't jerks about making him come to church. Good job. Good job. He is an amazing young man, and he's got some amazing parents.

Yeah, his spirit. I see Bode's spirit. I didn't mean to talk about him this much. And I feel like I'm violating. But these kids, you just see them come alive in their adulthood and you know, it's because they've had parents who were good parents who love Jesus, and they come into their own.

And this is what happens. Our kids come into their own when we are the kind of parents they need us to be. I've got two boys in the house right now, completely different kids. One is a processor and a tinkerer. His favorite place to take apart a bike is in the middle of the living room on what used to be white carpet.

It is no longer that he is as sharpest attack. He is a great debater, and he is not afraid to use those debating skills on me. And he keeps me on my a game. I love that kid with everything in my heart, but all my words, sometimes I want to. You know what I mean?

The second one is a go. He loves people. He is a people person. Not always. He has his non people person times.

But generally, this kid responds to people around him. He wants to please, and he likes people. And he draws good energy from friendships and group stuff. He's also a handful. But as his social intelligence is growing, I can see that he already knows how to work people and how to work a room.

And I'm praying that he uses that power for good and doesn't start a cult when he gets into his 20s.

These kids are amazing kids, but their spirits are completely different, completely different from mine, which is also a point of tension sometimes, isn't it? My job as a foster parent is to keep them safe and let them know that they're loved. But it's also my responsibility to make sure they understand that who they are in their own weird uniqueness brings value to the world. It brings value to our little family. It brings value to this church.

It brings value to the world around us. This is what Paul says. Our responsibility is not to squash that, not to discourage that, but to give them the skills to hone that and craft that and become the people God designed them to be. And that requires that I care for them with humility, because, again, they're not like me. Gentleness, because I have lived life my own way for a long time.

And patience, because sometimes I just don't understand the way these teenage brains work. Your kids are different than you. They think differently. They respond differently to the challenges than you do. And your job isn't to change that.

It's to encourage them to define it and discipline it, to nurture it, to embrace their unique approach to the world. So you remind your kids all the time that you appreciate who they are, you appreciate their unique nature, and that you love them unconditionally. Matthew says this. Let the little children and the big children come to me and do not hinder them. Do not put anything in their path that is going to keep them from knowing and loving Jesus.

For this is how the kingdom of heaven grows and expands. This is. And these kinds of people with their stuff that they're learning and growing in, they belong to the kingdom and the kingdom belongs to them. This is what it's about. I could expand on this a little bit, and I think I will.

I don't know what we're time at, but we all bring our stuff and we're not there yet. And yet Jesus says, come in. You're close to the kingdom. When you get a few things right, when you start thinking kingdom ways, you part of it, are you? No.

No. But bit by bit, as you just trust Jesus and love Jesus and walk in obedience when you're scared and open places and go into parties where you don't really want to be and your social anxiety is crippling you and you're like, no, I'm going to do it. I'm going to trust. And you walk through it on the other side. And Paul says, and Jesus says, here's this new thing, this new place that I'm bringing you into where you learn new things about me and you learn new things about you, and you become more and more the person that I intended you to be.

And this is the home. This is where the kingdom of heaven really gets some foundation laid for our kids.

When we love our kids, well, we bring them to Jesus. Jesus loves the little and not so little children. He loves the mamas and the papas. But we all bring mud into the situations, don't we? We're all muddy.

We all bring some stuff. And that's why I'm thankful for God's grace. We're going to take communion here. This is about that moment where we recognize that, yeah, we've all got mud. We've been talking about God's ideal.

And if you're like me, I can cast my mind to just an hour and a half ago where we were living in a less than ideal world. When it comes to living in this beautiful place of holy spirit, inspired unity and peace, maybe you can think of those places that were less than stellar in your own family dynamics, maybe in your role as a spouse, maybe in your role as a child, maybe in your role as a parent. But believe me, there's plenty of mud to go around in this room right now. But there's also amazing amounts of grace. And Jesus promises when we bring that stuff to him and say, lord, you see me in my weakness and in my sin.

I freely confess that I slammed the cabinet door this morning and I raised my voice unnecessarily. And I let little things become controlling things with my attitude and my heart. Forgive me and help these boys forgive me. Then Jesus says, you are forgiven. Now go make restitution with those boys.

Let them know that you're sorry and you need and are asking for their forgiveness. In this place of just living here, where we're not holding on to things, we're not resisting the prompting of the Holy Spirit, then beautiful things happen. Jesus says, come to me if you messed up this week, if you got it wrong, if you're feeling weary, if you're feeling heavily burdened, if your Family is not the ideal and you're trying to learn how to be obedient to parents who are just horrible, or you're trying to submit in a situation that is almost unbearable, bring that to Jesus. You receive no judgment from me. Don't want to trust you and the Holy Spirit to work through that stuff.

If you want to talk to someone, though, angel is here this morning. Angel Reese is one of our counselors. She and Greg, do some counseling at Sherwood. And if you're in a situation where you need to talk to someone. I cannot think of anyone better today to talk to than angel.

Raise your hand so people see you. Yeah, right over there. She's a sweetheart. Let's pray. Father, your word says that if we say we have no sin, we actually just deceive ourselves.

But the promise is this, that if we walk in the light, as you are in the light, we will have fellowship with one another. We'll live in this place where we are in good connection, relational connection with each other. And the blood of Jesus Christ, your son, cleanses us from all sins. And for that we say thank you. Yes, and amen.

Jesus, we want to stay faithful. We want to stay connected to Jesus and to each other. We want you to wash the mud off of us. We want our relationships to be healed and restored. We want you to make all things new in our lives.

This morning, Jesus, I pray for those who have never asked you to wash them clean and begin the process of renewing their life in you. If there's anyone here this morning, Lord, I pray that you would draw them to me or someone to pray with. But for the rest of us this morning, as we take the bread and the cup, we again look to you. You love us, even with our

filth, and you wash us clean. And for that, and your amazing grace demonstrated on the cross, we take the bread and the cup this morning in Jesus name, amen.

Amen.

Thank you for listening to this message from Sherwood Oaks Christian Church. Did you know? You can watch all of our video content, both current and past, on our YouTube channel? Visit [YouTube.com slash Sherwood oaks](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8) to watch messages, series and complete worship services.