

Colossians Study Week 3 Part 1

Paul now turns the Colossian Church to how they should live as Christians. It's no good believing or speaking about the truth if we do not demonstrate it.

Our Focus should be on Jesus verses 1-4

1. Where is Jesus now? *"Christ sits in the place of honour at God's right hand."* V 1

This is a place of authority. A place of ruling power.

Satan might try and fool us into thinking that he is in charge, but it's a lie!

Remember what Jesus said *"I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth."* **Matthew 28:18**

2. Where are we now? *"Since you have been raised to new life with Christ"* v 1

Jesus is seated in a place of authority, and we are "in Christ", so we are now sharing in the closeness that Jesus has with His Father and we share in His authority.

*For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and **seated** us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.* **Ephesians 2:6**

We saw this last week in Chapter 2

For you were buried with Christ when you were baptised. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. **Colossians 2:12**

We need to understand that the act of baptism does not save us from our sin, but it is a living picture of what has happened to us when we trusted in Jesus to forgive us of our sin. It's *with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God.*

3. Centre our thinking on the realities of heaven. *"set your sights on the realities of heaven"* v1 *"Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth."* V2

We are sons and daughters of the King of Heaven so that is where our thinking should be.

There are many pressures living on earth, but our thinking should be focused *"on the realities of heaven"*. If we pursue a deeper knowledge of Jesus, we can live for Jesus here and now. That's why Jesus taught us to pray *"May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."* **Matthew 6:10**

4. Who am I? *“For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.” V3*

Our identity determines our behaviour and our thinking. If we think the way people who are not followers of Jesus think, our actions will be like them.

We live in a self-obsessed age, and we are constantly being told to have a healthy “self-image”, or to follow the advice of people who teach about “positive thinking”. As Christians, we have to be very cautious about this as it continually points us to ourselves.

When we became Christians, our old life identity died. Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth to remind them of this. *“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” 2 Corinthians 5:17.* We must not just admire or quote verses like this, we must own them and believe them.

Our true identity, our “real life” is “hidden with Christ in God.” If we grab hold of this and believe it to be true, we will cease to worry about what other people think of us. The devil will always try and remind us of our past or present failings, but we **MUST believe** what the Bible says of us, and not go on our feelings. The devil is “the father of lies”, but our God is the God of truth.

For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. ⁶ Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the Lord with music. Psalm 27:5-6

5. We have a great future. *“And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.” V4*

Eternal life is Jesus Christ himself. He is our life that never ends. *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life. 1 John 5:12*

We are dead to sin and alive in Jesus Christ. *So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. Romans 6:11*

For Paul, Jesus Christ was his whole life. Can that be said of us? *For to me, living means living for Christ. Philippians 1:21*

Jesus is coming back! Hallelujah! He will not return as a baby but as a mighty King. He is coming to bring an end to this world’s control and take us home to be with Him.

We will have our bodies transformed from a decaying one, to one that will never decay!

But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! ⁵² *It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.* ⁵³ *For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.* **1 Corinthians 15:51-53**

Death will be defeated, and there will be no more pain, heartache or suffering. Paul carries on in verses **54-57**, *“Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”* ⁵⁶ *For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power.* ⁵⁷ *But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The last few words in our Bible shows us how we should be longing to see the King face to face. Jesus spoke prophetically to John, who wrote the last book in the Bible, **Revelation**. *“Yes, I am coming soon!”* John’s reaction was *Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! v20*

Take Off the Rubbish - Verses 5-9

In these verses, Paul is reminding the Christians at Colossae what should be removed from their lives. They are new people in Jesus, so they need to live this truth out in daily living. He wrote this type of reminder to many of the Churches he cared for. For example.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! **2 Corinthians 5:17**

In the list that Paul gives of wrong behaviour, they all rely on making a decision, making a clean break from our past life. An act of the will, not just a feeling. Every time we fail, and that will happen because we are human beings living in a sinful world, we need to renew our decision to act differently and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit.

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. **Philippians 4:13**

1. Wrong desires

“So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.” **Verse 5**

How we see ourselves is key in helping us make the right decisions. If we see ourselves only as products of our background, we will make decisions based on the understanding that we can’t help it. If we see ourselves as dead to the power of sin, it will help us to reach out to the God who has given us new life.

Paul wrote to the Romans to highlight how we should see ourselves. *“So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. **Romans 6:11***

Put to death. This is serious language. We often have to take severe measures to conquer sin in our lives.

Jesus used strong language to warn us about sin being a powerful weapon of the enemy, the devil. *“Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!” **Matthew 26:41***

Jesus warns us to take radical action. *“So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your hand—even your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **Matthew 5:29-30***

Have nothing to do with: - In other words, don't play around with sin, it can bite back very hard. Sin does not achieve anything good. Your heart will either turn harder so it's easier to sin next time, or you will be left with the burden of guilt. Both will seriously damage your walk with God unless you deal with it quickly. We have to repent (turn away from) and ask God's forgiveness. Thank you Jesus for your amazing forgiveness.

Paul then lists two areas of sin.

(a) Sexual sin verse 5 *“So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires.*

We live in a world that has become obsessed with sexual freedom. This is causing so much harm around the world and leads to people trafficking, broken children etc. Paul highlights the two main areas of temptation.

Wrong thinking like “lust” and “evil desires”. So much sinful action follows wrong thinking. The Greek word used in the original text is “porneian” from which we get our English word “pornography”. The internet has led to an explosion of pornography that can be so easily accessed, even to children. Don't play around with it, it will bite you back hard.

Wrong actions. Homosexuality is a really hot topic today, and any criticism of it can lead to big problems. Paul makes it clear.

That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. ²⁷ And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

Romans 1:26-27

It is sad that in this free country that we enjoy, children are taught that only one way of thinking is acceptable. We must not reject or hate anyone who is a practising homosexual or is struggling with the desires. We love them because they are just like us, sinners who Jesus died for.

Sexual immorality is any sexual encounter that happens outside of marriage. There are no big sins or small sins. Again, this is now a fully accepted practise in the world we live in. It was no different in Paul's day and he urged Christians to run away from all types of sexual sin. It is very easy for Christians to criticise wrong relationships, but it is often complicated and will take time for new Christians to work this through.

The message is clear. Run from all wrong sexual thinking and actions.

(b) Greed verse 5 *“Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.”*

Greed covers every area of our lives including money, possessions, food, promotion in our careers etc. We live in a very greedy world where you are thought of as wonderful if you have all the things mentioned and a failure if we do not. Greed leads to jealousy, broken relationships and mental health issues as people grapple with the feelings of failure. Being greedy for food seems to be a major problem as people ignore the need to eat healthily, and eat whatever they “feel like”. The health issues from this has led to a bad health explosion, particularly in the western world. It is deeply saddening that many people over eat or eat unhealthily while so many people around the world are starving for the basic food to keep them alive. As Christians Jesus is our Lord, not food.

Paul makes it clear in this verse, **“greed is idolatry”**. He also makes clear what idolatry is? **“Worshiping the things of this world”**. There is only room for one Lord and master in the life of a Christian, **Jesus**.

If you are struggling with any of the issues mentioned in verse 5, talk to God about it and reaffirm your commitment to Him as Lord and King. If you still need help, give your life group leader a call, and if you need further help, call one of the elders. The key thing is; **Don't leave it, deal with it.**

2. God can get angry!

“Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. Verse 6 We can develop a very sloppy attitude about sin and take the view “Oh well, God will forgive me.” It was sin that put Jesus on the cross, so we have to take it seriously.

After giving a similar list of sins that God's people had to run from, Paul wrote *“Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him.”* **Ephesians 5:6**. Because God loves us, He will discipline us when we carry on ignoring Him, and that can be painful!

3. Sin is no longer your master.

“You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. Verse 7 “for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.” Verse 9b.

Paul is constantly reminding them that this was their old life in action. They have a new master now, Jesus, and they don't have to give in to the old temptations any more. We need to be reminded that our old life has died to the power of sin over us, and the devil is no longer rules over us. We have a new owner! Hallelujah!

*We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. ⁷ For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. **Romans 6:6-7***

4. Sins of reaction

*“But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behaviour, slander, and dirty language. ⁹ Don't lie to each other”. **Verses 8-9a***

Paul now turns to sinful behaviour that can affect those around us. As Christians, how we react to each other is very important because we are a body of people with Jesus at the head. Many people have left churches because of this kind of behaviour, so we need to be on our guard.

- (a) Anger.** None of us has the right to play god and try and dominate people by anger. It belittles people and can either crush or alienate others. The person affected could end up leaving the church or be crushed by fear. Think before we speak.
- (b) Rage.** Out of control behaviour that has bitterness at its root. Sudden and uncontrolled bursts of anger that can only be destructive. There is no place for it among God's people.
- (c) Malicious behaviour.** This is an attitude of ill will towards other people. It is a kind of pride coming from insecurity. We live in a “me centred” culture and it's only too easy to be obsessed with ourselves and what others think of us that we react when we are not the centre of attention. Be Careful!
- (d) Slander.** Again, often based on insecurity and pride. We can spread stories that make others feel bad about them. We get sad when they are successful and happy when they hit problems. It can easily be covered up as a “spiritual concern”, but our motive is ungodly. If we have a deep seated bitterness toward someone, it can often come out by taking every opportunity to say something bad about them.

(e) Dirty language. This can very easily creep into the Christian's life as it is all around us constantly. On the TV, work, YouTube, friends etc. We are different, we are new people with a new King so we should speak like we are children of the King of Kings. This can be a witness in itself, but we must never show a judgmental attitude towards non-Christians who do swear.