

## Colossians 3:12—17

November 10, 2019

Our purpose as a church is to fix ourselves upon Jesus. Among other things that means we love the people and things that Jesus loves. There are many ways we seek to put that love into action but one is by caring for orphans. Dean Adamek leads Rancho 3m, an orphanage in Guadalupe, MX.

We love the Ranch and Dean. And Dean is here today.

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:12-17

Richard Wurmbbrand was imprisoned by communists for years. As a Christian, he saw his incarceration to be his mission field. Wurmbbrand would give up what he had to others in need. Coat, food, medicine whatever.

*Josif said, "We have read nearly everything Jesus said now, but I still wonder what he was like to know as a man."*

*"I'll tell you. When I was in room 4 there was a pastor who would give away everything he had—his last bit of bread, his medicine, the coat from his back. I have given these things also sometimes, when I wanted them for myself. But at other times when men were hungry and sick and in need and I could be very quiet; I didn't care. The other pastor was really Christlike.*

*You felt that just the touch of his hand could heal and calm. One day he talked to a small group of prisoners and one of them asked the question you have asked me: 'What is Jesus like?' I've never met anyone like the man you describe, so good and loving and truthful.'*

*And the pastor replied, in a moment of great courage, simply and humbly, 'Jesus is like me.' And the man who had often received kindness from the pastor, answered, smiling,*

*'If Christ is like you, then I love him.'*

*The times when one may say such a thing as that, Josif, are very rare. But to me that is what it means to be a Christian. To believe in him is not such a great thing. To become like him is truly great."*

To become like him is truly great. I don't want to pit belief in Christ against growing in resemblance to Christ but his point is well taken.

It is a good thing to believe in Jesus and a great thing to become like him over a lifetime.

The world we live in does not define greatness that way. Greatness does not come by way of—

- Fame
- Money
- Power
- Influence
- Position

But by becoming more like Jesus. To be great is to become more and more like Jesus. This is not reserved for a special, small, select class of Christian but for all of us.

Every man and woman here who bears the name of Christian is called to become more like Jesus. We must be a church fixed on Jesus so that we grow in the likeness of Jesus Christ and so that when people interact with us they say, "If Christ is like you guys, then I love him (or love him more) too."

PROP: Be more like Jesus.

Colossians 3:15-17 shows us three ways to grow in Christlikeness together. We grow to be more like Christ through—

The Peace of Christ

The Word of Christ

The Name of Christ

### *1. The Peace of Christ*

Vs. 15,

**"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful."**

Paul is not talking about an internal individual sense of peace. He is not helping us make life decisions by showing us that if we 'feel a peace' that we have made

the right decision. Rather, he is saying, "The peace you have been given through Christ—let that peace govern in all your interactions with other people in your church."

This is not just other people in general but other people we are in community with. See it? 'You were called in one body.' We should let peace govern with everyone but especially in the household of faith. Especially here.

Each of us must let peace govern all that we say and do in this church. We have been granted peace with God through Jesus Christ. God offered up his beloved son as a sacrificial lamb for our benefit. God made war on Christ to give us peace.

And that peace we have now with God we **MUST** express that kind of peace to others in all we say and do. Do you see? The determining factor in what you and I say or do must be to foster peace and harmony amongst the church.

Q. Is what I am about to say or do promote peace and harmony or strife and tension? Do my actions bring peace or division? Do my words foster peace or suspicion?

Often, I've heard Christians quote Ephesians 4:15, "Speak the truth in love..." and then go on and say anything they want in a profoundly unloving way. It becomes a verse that people use to say whatever they want, whenever they want, to whomever they want.

Let the peace of Christ rule your words and your deeds.

Those that have the peace of Christ ruling their words and deeds do not shy away from speaking hard truths. The difference is they speak these truths for the benefit of others and NOT out of frustration. Those that let peace rule speak truth for the benefit of others and not because someone is a nuisance.

Does your pattern of speech reflect peace? Here are some questions for consideration:

- Do people experience peace or strife when you talk to them?
- Are you more apt to use your words to complain to someone else or build them up?
- Do your words build people into a big God or a bunch of big problems?
- Do you offer kind words in response to mean ones?
- Do your words sow suspicion of others?

- Do people interact with you and walk away encouraged? Or torn down?
- Do your words prompt hope or hopelessness?

Jesus always has a kind and word for his stumbling, fumbling, contrite followers. Remember the words of peace that we heard last week and saw again this week in verse 12,

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved...”

Before we are told how to change we are reminded how we have already been changed. You are chosen. You are holy. You are loved. Go be different.

That fosters peace.

It is a good thing to believe in Jesus and a great thing to become like him over a lifetime.

Look again at verse 15,

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

“And be thankful.”

Can sound like a throw away sentence. A tack on. It is not. Thankfulness is the soil that peace grows in.

We followers of Jesus ALWAYS have a reason to be thankful. Always.

Ransack the scriptures to give you reasons to be grateful. Being thankful does not just happen. It takes a lot of work.

I wonder if thankfulness is one of the most overlooked of the Christian virtues. The NT pulsates to the rhythm of thankfulness, yet it seems that gratefulness in many quarters is derided as gullibility or polyannish. A simple thought on gratefulness: Being grateful does not make one gullible or naive.

Many who foster suspicion and lob accusations can accuse the grateful as simpletons because don't freely share critiques to any open ear. A grateful Christian rings with the authentic tone of the gospel. It does not take less discernment to be grateful, but more.

It is not as if grateful people are unable to see weaknesses and problems but they choose to overlook those and instead focus the active power of grace. Gratefulness is the peace in action.

Anyone can be a critic, but it takes a Christian to be



grateful. Our world is coming apart at the seams as we hurtle toward Jesus' return. Even still, the Lord is working even in dark places. When we see the shimmer of grace it is incumbent on us to celebrate it.

We are going to have to look past weaknesses and flaws in others to find something to be grateful for. Expressing gratefulness for others does not mean they have nothing in their lives they need to work on.

Can't wait for perfection in someone to express gratefulness.

That is NOT the way the Lord interacts with us. He sees our every weakness but does not show them to us all at once. If he treats us that way, surely we can treat others like that.

From the soil of gratefulness grows every Christian virtue. The grateful live closest to Jesus.

Let the Peace of Christ rule in the soil of thankfulness.

It is a good thing to believe in Jesus and a great thing to become like him over a lifetime.

How else are we to become like Jesus?

Let peace govern and

## *2. The Word of Christ*

The people of God are to be marked out by the peace of Christ AND ALSO the Word of Christ. His word must dwell in us. How does that happen?

**<sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."**

How does the word of God dwell richly in the people of God?

Teaching/Singing

The goal of our gathering each week is to let the 'word of Christ dwell in you richly.'

Wonder why or where we pick our songs? Does their content cause you the word of Christ to dwell more or less in you? Not everything played on the Christian radio station causes the word to dwell in your heart richly.

We count it a holy thing to put words in your mouth with music. We have to be very careful. We want the

word of Christ to dwell in you richly therefore we are going to try and put Christ focused songs in your mouth.

What you sing will inform what you believe.

Think about the song that we sang this morning—All I Have is Christ

### **VERSE 1**

I once was lost in darkest night  
Yet thought I knew the way  
The sin that promised joy and life  
Had led me to the grave  
I had no hope that You would own  
A rebel to Your will  
And if You had not loved me first  
I would refuse You still

Do you see? This mirrors the scripture's teaching that we were dead in our transgressions and sins. We were running from God and didn't want anything to do with him before we met him.

### **VERSE 2**

But as I ran my hell-bound race  
Indifferent to the cost  
You looked upon my helpless state  
And led me to the cross

And I beheld God's love displayed  
You suffered in my place  
You bore the wrath reserved for me  
Now all I know is grace

The cross of Christ is the best display of God's love.  
God the son died in our place. No more punishment.  
We will not now nor ever be treated as our sins  
deserve. That's grace.

### **CHORUS**

Hallelujah! All I have is Christ  
Hallelujah! Jesus is my life

All I have is Christ. We might have other things but  
Jesus is all that matters. Jesus is my life. I hope so. Is  
he my life? I want him to be my life.

### **VERSE 3**

Now, Lord, I would be Yours alone  
And live so all might see  
The strength to follow Your commands  
Could never come from me  
O Father, use my ransomed life  
In any way You choose  
And let my song forever be  
My only boast is You

We are purchased with a price and he is free to use us as he sees fit.

Songs like this and many others we sing with the aim of the word of Christ dwelling in us richly. And as we sing together we are proclaiming the Word of Christ to each other. We are teaching and admonishing each other in all wisdom.

Becoming like Jesus means letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly. This also happens during preaching.

The goal of preaching is not to try and give you tips on how to be successful. Or be some kind of life coach. It is not to equip you to have a successful Thanksgiving. The point of preaching is not to encourage you to make the most of your talents.

But to point you to Jesus and his word.

It is true the more you know Jesus the more you will know how to navigate this difficult life. But the point of preaching is that you might know him. Not merely know about Jesus but really know him.

Did you ever know that there is a difference between knowing him and knowing about him?

This is what JI Packer warns us in his seminal work, "Knowing God."

*"One can know a great deal about God without much knowledge of God. I am sure that many of us have never really grasped this....yet (an) interest in theology, and knowledge about God, and the capacity to think clearly and talk well on Christian themes, is not at all the same thing as knowing him. We may know as much about God as Calvin knew---indeed, if we study his works diligently, sooner or later we shall---and yet all the we may hardly know God at all." J.I. Packer*

"A little knowledge of God is worth more than a great deal of knowledge about him."

Yes. Our goal in preaching is that we would be acquainted with Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Just because you know truth about Jesus does not mean that you really know Jesus. Preaching is meant to be a weekly re-introduction of Jesus Christ.

You might wonder—what does it look like to know about Jesus but not really know him?

You all sorts of truth things about Jesus without letting that truth impact your life.

How frightening.

- You might understand that Jesus saves but yet not love him as your savior.
- You might be able to defend the resurrection yet not live for the resurrected Jesus.
- You might be able to explain the promises of Jesus without being able to take comfort in those promises.

But we want to be more like Jesus. So we don't merely want to know his word but we want his word to dwell in us richly.

It is a good thing to believe in Jesus and a great thing to become like him over a lifetime.

Look again at verse 16,

**<sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."**

We all have the responsibility to teach and admonish one another. This is not just the job of pastoral leadership. This happens when we gather and sing to

the Lord and each other but also it must happen when we are scattered through the week.

Vs. 16,

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

As in the prior verse HERE again we are directed to be thankful.

See?

It is not enough that the Word of Christ dwell in us richly but also that we have thankfulness toward God. The bare facts are never enough we must be thankful for all that God has done for us.

In other words, we are not going to be able to have the word of Christ dwelling in us unless we have thankfulness in our hearts toward God.

Be like Jesus.

It is a good thing to believe in Jesus and a great thing to become like him over a lifetime.



### *3. The Name of Christ*

<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Whatever we say or do—do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. Everything.

Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

To do something in the name of Jesus is to represent Jesus in everything we are and do. Verse 17 is telling us to represent Jesus always and everywhere.

Do you see?

Whatever you do in word or deed we must act to represent Jesus Christ. Following Jesus is not a matter of ritual or tradition or praying the right kind of prayers or just on Sunday. But everyday all the time.

And further—we are all called to serve Jesus in whatever we do. It is not as if only pastors are in ministry. We all are.

We all are those that **MUST** represent Jesus.

In all you say or do you represent Jesus—When?

Everyday all the time.

When you are only with your family and no one else is around—whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When you are slogging away at work—whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When you are toiling at school— whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When you are trolling on Facebook— whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When you are at the grocery store— whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When you are celebrating Thanksgiving— whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When you are happy— whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When you are in pain— whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

There was never a moment that we don't represent Jesus. This is true for us individually but also of us as a church. As a church we must understand ourselves as a representation of Jesus Christ in our world.

We will never be perfect—but we must be authentic. We will never be all that we should be—but we can be faithful.

Look again at verse 17,

**17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

Giving thanks! Are you sensing a theme?

Do you hear the drumbeat of thanksgiving here in verses 15 and 16 and 17?

We resemble Jesus as we—

Let the peace of Christ rule

Let the word of Christ dwell  
Do all in the name of Jesus

But HOW matters too.

Do you want to resemble Jesus?

Be thankful.

Some signs of the grateful—

Thankful people are better at remembering blessings  
from God than the slights of others.

Thankful people speak blessing to others more than  
spouting complaints at others.

Thankful people express and don't presume their  
thankfulness.

The thankful don't live as if they are owed from other  
but that they owe others.

The Thankful pray things different instead of trying to  
complain things different.

The thankful always resemble Jesus.

It is a good thing to believe in Jesus and a great thing

to become like him over a lifetime.

And that is our purpose as a church. We want to be the kind of people who represent Jesus to our community no matter who they might be. No matter what they may say about us.

We want to be a church fixed on Jesus so that we become more and more like Jesus so that others might interact with us and say—

*'If Christ is like you, then I love him too.'*

PRAY

1 Thessalonians 3:12

[12] and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all...