

Sermons on Colossians-Brian Bell

- Colossians 1:1-14 Faith, Love, Hope
- Colossians 1:15-29 Christ For Me, In Me, Through Me
- Colossians 2:1-10 Fill er Up
- Colossians 2:11-23 Don't Lose Your Head
- Colossians 2:18 -3:4
- Colossians 3:1-11 Up Above the World so High
- Colossians 3:12-17 The Christian's New Clothes
- Colossians 3:18-4:1 Sweet Surrender
- Colossians 4 Vigilant

Colossians 1:1-14+

1. INTRO:

1. **Financial crisis:** Now is the time for the Church to do as it has always done in difficult times:

1. **To reach out** to those who are hurting
2. **To give hope** to those who fear.
3. **To point** to the God who owns *"the cattle on a thousand hills"*

2. Book INTRO:

1. In **Leonardo Da Vinci's** famous painting of **The Last Supper**, our Lord's hands are empty. And therein lies an inspiring story.

1. **Da Vinci** dedicated 3 years to this painting, determined that it would be his crowning work. Before the unveiling, he decided to show it to a friend for whose opinion he had the utmost respect. The friend's praise was unbounded. "The cup in Jesus' hand," he said, "is especially beautiful." Disappointed at once Da Vinci began to paint out the cup. Astonished, the distinguished friend asked for an explanation. "Nothing," Da Vinci explained, "must distract from the figure of Christ." Da Vinci focused attention solely on Christ by removing the distraction of the cup. Having removed the cup, he had to do something with the hand. The **left hand** was already outstretched just above the table, lifting, as if to bless and command. Now the **right hand**, also empty, was also outstretched invitingly.

2. This seems to have been Paul's purpose in this **postcard** to the church of Colosse.

2. This was written during Paul's imprisonment in Rome - Acts 28:30+. [4 prison epistles]

3. Where the book of **Romans** tells us how to **enter** into fellowship w/christ; **Ephesians & Colossians** tell us how to **abide** therein! (*Griffith Thomas; Colossians; pg.7*)

1. 1st we come **out of bondage**, then we are brought **into the banqueting house!**

2. Ephesians & Colossians represent the **highest, fullest, richest** presentation of Christianity!

4. Relationship to Ephesus - As one writer puts it, "Out of 95 verses in Colossians, 78 have a marked resemblance to Ephesians."

1. Difference: In Ephesus the primary subject is **the Church**; while in Colosse the primary subject is **Christ!**

5. Epaphras was one of Paul's converts while he was in Ephesus (3 yrs) founded the church.

6. **Chapters 1, 2** are doctrinal & present Jesus as the preeminent *Creator, Savior, & Lord*. **Chapters 3 & 4** are practical & show how the believer works out the preeminence of Christ in daily living.

3. FAITH, LOVE, HOPE!

1. **GREETING!** (Colossians 1:1,2)

2. (Colossians 1:2) Destination of letter - Colosse, & Laodicea(see Colossians 2:1, & Colossians 4:16).

3. 3 cities were near each other: **Laodicea, Colosse, & Hierapolis**.

1. Like the 3 holes on a bowling ball, these 3 cities lie in Asia Minor (Turkey).

2. **Laodicea** - very **rich** & thus very **independent**.

1. Notorious for its **earthquakes**. It was destroyed a number of times, each time it rebuilt itself w/o the help of Rome.

2. That's why **John** wrote to them in **Rev. 3:17+** Because you say, **I am rich**, have become wealthy, and **have need of nothing**' - and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

3. In **Hierapolis** there was famous Hot-springs, & **Colosse** was known for its pure Cold water. So Jesus uses the analogy w/**Laodicea**, situated between the 2, because you are lukewarm, & neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. (Colossians 1:3:17)

4. All **3 cities** started out with **equal importance** then: **Laodicea** became the political center; **Hierapolis** became the trade center; but **Colosse** was only a small struggling town...that never made it.
 1. Lightfoot said, "Colosse was the most unimportant town to which Paul ever wrote a letter."
 1. An **unimportant town** maybe, but surely not an **unimportant people!**
5. **THANKSGIVING!** (Colossians 1:3-8)
6. (3) Here's one of Paul's run-on sentences! (Colossians 1:3-8)
7. Thanks - With the exception of *Galatians*, Paul's letters always commenced with thanksgiving.
8. With **thanksgiving** came **prayer**. Like the **2 wings** of a bird which are required to enable it to **soar** into the sky.
9. **3 reasons** are given for his thanksgiving & prayer: **Faith** in Christ Jesus; **Love** for all the saints; & **Hope** laid up in heaven.
 1. Paul's **Trusty Triad** constitute the true Christian Life.
 2. Let's first see how he used these in his other writings:
 1. 1 Thes.1:3+ Paul wrote about their "work of faith, labor of love, & patience of hope"
 2. 1 Cor.13:13 now abide faith, hope, love, these 3; but the greatest of these is love.
 1. **Love** is greatest because God is Love!
 2. **Faith** is trust that rests upon evidence, & leads to action.
 3. **Hope** is confidence in the future.
 4. **Faith** w/o **love** is cold, & **hope** w/o **love** is grim. **Love** is *the fire* which kindles **faith** & it is *the light* which turns **hope** into certainty." William Barclay
 5. **Faith** will be replaced by **sight**, & **hope** replaced by **possession**.
10. **[1] Faith** toward **the Lord** - The 1st element of the Christian life, because it brings the soul in contact w/the Lord.
 1. When **John G. Paton** was translating the Bible in the *Outer Hebrides*, he searched for the exact word to translate **believe**. *Finally he found it: the word meant "lean your whole weight upon."*
 2. Most people will say, "you need to have faith" but we must ask, faith in what!
 1. It's not *faith in faith*, but faith in Christ Jesus...only!
11. **[2] Love** toward **each other** - Gal.5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is **faith** expressing itself through **love**.
 1. **Loving God** is seen in how one **loves his neighbor!**
 2. What Is Love? It is **silence** when your words would hurt. It is **patience** when your neighbors curt.It is **deafness** when a scandal flows. It is **thoughtfulness** for other's woes. It is **promptness** when stern duty calls. It is **courage** when misfortune falls.
12. **[3] Hope** toward **the future** - Paul places **hope** last, because he saw **faith** & **love** springing from it.
 1. How does the **hope** of heaven cause **faith** & **love** to come forth?
 1. As pagans, the colossians had been "w/o hope and w/o God in the world" Eph 2:12+
 2. Then came the gospel from Epaphras!
13. Hope is "laid up"(stored away, put away for one's use)
 1. This referred to a Royal Persian custom. Hellenistic rulers would lay up in store goods for faithful servants. [LKGNT]
 2. Spurgeon reminds us, "we can labor w/o ever a present reward for we look for a reward in the world to come."
14. **Faith** rests on the past; **love** works in the present; & **hope** looks towards the future.
15. **PRAYER!** (Colossians 1:9-14)
16. Here's one of the greatest passages on **Prayer Requests!**
 1. C.F.D.Moule writes, "Prayer makes 2 great requests: It asks for the **discernment** of God's will & then for the **power** to perform that will."
 2. Often we seek God's will, but when we **find** it...do we **do** it?
17. **Knowing God's will!** (Colossians 1:9,10)
18. His first request: **that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will.**
 1. In prayer we're not trying to **make God listen**, but **making ourselves to listen** to Him!
 2. In prayer we are not trying persuade God to **do** something, but to find out what He wants **us to do!**
 3. Often we pray to God, "Thy will be **changed**" instead of "Thy will be **done**."
 4. So, the 1st object of prayer is to **listen** not speak.
19. And thus **knowing His will** we'll be able to, "walk worthy, please Him, & bear fruit."
20. To do this we need the **power** to do so!
21. **Doing God's will!** (Colossians 1:11)
22. Life's greatest problem is not to **know** what to do, but **doing it** (putting it into action).
 1. We need **Power** & it comes by **Prayer!**

2. If God only told us **what to do**, this would be frustrating! But He not only tells us **His will**, He also **empowers us to do it**.
23. Through **Prayer** then, we obtain **Knowing God's will** & we receive **the power** to be able to accomplish it!
24. (Colossians 1:12) The rest of this section speaks of **the Father** (Colossians 1:12,13) & **the Son** (Colossians 1:14-20).
25. The Father **Qualified us** - to make sufficient, to authorize (due solely to **God's grace!**)
26. **Conveyed us - Transferred**, brought us over.
 1. A word used in the ancient world when one empire took over another. They would transfer *it lock, stock, & barrel* to the conquerors land.
 2. So we're transferred **from** what, **to** what? 4 ways:
27. **TRANSFERRED FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT!**
28. (Colossians 1:13) **Delivered us** from the power of darkness - (contrast from light in previous verse)
29. Without God you're groping around in the dark!
30. Lk.1:78,79 Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; To give **light** to those who sit in **darkness** and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."
31. Jn 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that the **light** has come into the world, and men loved **darkness** rather than **light**, because their deeds were evil.
32. **TRANSFERRED FROM ENEMIES KINGDOM TO KINGDOM OF THE SON!** (Colossians 1:13)
33. **TRANSFERRED FROM INCARCERATION TO REDEMPTION!** (Colossians 1:14a)
 1. Redemption = complete release, based on the payment of a price.
34. **TRANSFERRED FROM CONDEMNATION TO FORGIVENESS!** (Colossians 1:14b)
35. **Forgiveness** - No longer a **condemned criminal**, but a **lost son** that has **come home!**
 1. **Sir Walter Scott** had difficulty with the idea of "turning the other cheek." But Jesus' words took on special meaning one day when Scott threw a rock at a stray dog to chase it away. His aim was straighter and his delivery stronger than he had intended, for he hit the animal and broke its leg. Instead of running off, the dog **limped over to him and licked his hand**. **Sir Walter** never forgot that touching response. He said, "That dog preached the Sermon on the Mount to me as few ministers have ever presented it." Scott said he had not found human beings so ready to **forgive** their enemies.
 2. **Jesus** has taken every **pebble, rock, stone, & boulder** you've thrown at Him, & still says "*I love you*" & desires to **forgive you**. Isn't it time to stop today?

Colossians 1:15-29+

1. INTRO:

1. Story: **Stalin** was eating a meal when a someone came up & asked him, "how can you inflict such pain on your people?" He continued to eat then said, "bring me a live chicken." He stroked it, then started feathering the chicken. It struggled but he denuded the whole bird. Then he set it down, picked up some bread & walked away from it & stood. The chicken hobbled over to find some warmth between his pant legs. He put his hand down & the chicken started pecking away at the food. Stalin said, "There is your answer!" "If you want a chicken to follow you for life you must **inflict pain** on it, it will follow you for food the rest of its life. **People** are like that **chicken**, you inflict pain on them & they will follow you for food the rest of their life."
 1. Man sure has come up with some bizarre ideas to get men to follow them.
 2. What system of control did God use? Oh He didn't use a system of control & manipulation to get something from man. Instead He did something **for** rather than **to** mankind!
2. Let's read the most Christological statement in the NT. {pick up from Colossians 1:13}
3. **Outline: Christ for me** (is my substitution & sacrifice); **Christ in me** (is my sanctification & satisfaction); **Christ through me** (is my service & sufficiency). (*J. Sidlow Baxter; Awake My Heart; pg.173*)

2. CHRIST FOR ME which is my Substitution & Sacrifice!(Colossians 1:15-20)

1. (15) Image - Copy. In Greek thought an image shares in reality what it represents. (*Linguistic Key to the Greek N.T.; pg.567*)
 1. The word contains the idea of **representation & manifestation**.
 2. Christ is the perfect likeness of God.
 3. He is the **visible** image of the **invisible** God.
 4. Some argue, "if God the Father is the signet ring, then Jesus is the image or imprint of that ring, but not the ring itself."
 1. But, the bible claims the ring is 3-in-1. So it can imprint itself 3 times, if He choose to reveal Himself 3 ways,

but only choose to reveal Himself once.

2. (Colossians 1:15) Firstborn over all creation doesn't mean Jesus was a created being & not eternal God Firstborn from the dead does not mean He was the 1st one raised from the dead.

1. Firstborn is a term of *honor* & means **the highest, of first rank & importance**

2. Jesus was **prior to** all creation; is the **highest in** creation; & He is the **highest** of all who were raised from the dead.

3. (Colossians 1:16,17) Notice the prepositions: **by** Him; **through** Him; **for** Him; **in** Him.

1. Christ Himself is: the **instrument** & **cause** of creation(by); the **mediating agent**(through); the **purpose**(for); & the **sustaining power**(in).

4. He **created** all things (16); He **sustains** all things (Colossians 1:17); He will **reconcile** all things (Colossians 1:20)

5. Creation vs. Created - 2 Box Analogy []-[] (2 squares: in 1 is whoever did the creating; in the other is all of the things created) {no other box? can't be in both boxes}

6. (Colossians 1:17) In Him all things **consist** - to hold together, to cohere.

1. He is the principle of cohesion in the universe. (Lightfoot)

2. Jesus holds all things together, not only the **largest** things in the universe, but also the **smallest** things.

3. Have you seen Louie Giglio's You-Tube on Laminin?

1. **Laminin** is a **protein molecule**. It is a **cell adhesion molecule**. (The rebar of the human body) Google Laminin when you get home & see what it looks like...it's the shape of the cross.

7. (Colossians 1:18) Preeminence - (Moule) "A **Savior** not quite God is a bridge broken at the father end"

8. (20) Peace through the **blood** of the **cross** - 1 Cross + 3 nails = 4given

9. Story of **substitution** & **sacrifice!**

1. During the 17th century, **Oliver Cromwell**, Lord Protector of England, sentenced a soldier to be shot for his crimes. The execution was to take place at the ringing of the evening curfew bell. However, the bell did not sound. The **soldier's fiancée** had climbed into the belfry and clung to the great clapper of the bell to prevent it from striking. When she was summoned by Cromwell to account for her actions, she wept as she showed him **her bruised and bleeding hands**. Cromwell's heart was touched and he said, "Your lover shall live because of your sacrifice. Curfew shall not ring tonight!" [Daily Bread]

1. God the Father told Jesus after the cross "Your lover shall live because of Your sacrifice!"

10. #1 Christ **for** me, which is my **substitution** & **sacrifice!**

3. **CHRIST IN ME which is my Sanctification & Satisfaction!**(Colossians 1:21-27)

1. (Colossians 1:22) To present you holy, blameless, above reproach .

1. John Flavel - It is easier to cry against 1000 **sins** of others, than to kill one of your own.

2. Thomas a' Kempis said, "Be not angry that you cannot make **others** as you wish them to be, since you cannot make **yourself** as you wish yourself to be."

2. (Colossians 1:23) **Hope** is a **foundation** on which you stand when all around you is **shaking**.

1. The city of Colossae was located on an earthquake area, so Paul's admonition was especially meaningful to them. Not moved.

2. False teachers were trying to shift their foundation.

3. Paul pointed them to Jesus Christ who was: **Savior**(Colossians 1:13,14); **Eternal God**(Colossians 1:15); **Creator**(Colossians 1:16,17); **Head of the church**(Colossians 1:18).

1. What a perfect foundation for our **Hope!**

3. (Colossians 1:27) Christ in you = hope of glory.

1. Heaven is more than a destination; it is a motivation because CHrist lives within us.

2. It is a living hope(1 Pet.1:3) that affects how we think & act all day long.

3. Because **Christ** is **within us**, we need not fear what is **ahead of us!**

4. "The One in whom Deity dwells, dwells in us!" *Amazing!*

4. (Colossians 1:27) Christ in you = hope of glory.

1. In the Messianic prophecies of the OT there are many & varied aspects of the coming Christ, but nowhere are we told that He would **indwell** His people.

1. The verse right above this reveals this was part of the *divine mystery*, the sacred secret, hid for ages & generations. But now, the secret is divulged.

5. We must know Christ in **3 ways**: **Christ for me** (Christ dying on the cross); **Christ in me** (living in my heart); **Christ through me** (Christ speaking by my life).

6. **Christ for me** (is my substitution & sacrifice); **Christ in me** (is my sanctification & satisfaction); **Christ through me** (is my service & sufficiency). (*J. Sidlow Baxter; Awake My Heart; pg.173*)

7. **Christ for me** is my only **acceptable standing** before God. **Christ in me** is my only **true victory** over sin. **Christ through me** is my only **real power** for spiritual ministry.◻

8. We need to sustain a **3-fold relation to Christ**, represented by 3 words: ***purchased; possessed; permeated***.
 1. His **dying for me** means that I am Christ-***purchased!***
 2. His **living in me** means that I am Christ-***possessed!***
 3. His **working through me** means that I am Christ-***permeated!***
 9. He died **for** me; I am to **take** Him. He lives **in** me; I am to **prove** Him. He moves **through** me; I am to **transmit** Him.
 10. **#1 Christ for me**, which is my **substitution & sacrifice!**
 11. **#2 Christ in me**, which is my **sanctification & satisfaction!**
4. **CHRIST THROUGH ME which is my Service & Sufficiency!(28,29)**
1. **Him** we preach - I was reading Kelly's last lesson in 2nd Pet, she says, "We can't just have the knowledge of **what's in** the Bible; we have to **know Jesus Christ**, the central theme of the Bible. We can't just know "**of**" Him, we need to know "**Him**."
 1. So its not only **what** we preach, but truly **whom** we preach!
 2. The theme of Christianity is not a **theory**, not a set of **rules**, not simply a **code of morals**, not even just a **system of truth**; but a **living Person!**
 2. To this end - To what end? Presenting every man **perfect!!!** (28).
 1. Here is Paul's *specific object*, his *definite aim*. Why he *preaches, warns, teaches, strives, labors, works*.
 3. Perfect? You mean **sinless**? No way! Men & women are **being** perfected! Moses stuttered; David's armor didn't fit; John Mark was rejected by Paul; Timothy had ulcers; Hosea's wife was a prostitute; Amos' only training was fig-tree pruning; Jacob was a liar; David had an affair; Solomon was too rich; Jesus was too poor; Abraham was too old; David was too young; Peter was afraid of death; Lazarus was dead; John was self-righteous; Naomi was a widow; Paul was a murderer; So was Moses; Jonah ran from God; Miriam was a gossip; Gideon and Thomas both doubted; Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal; Elijah was burned out; John the Baptist was a loudmouth; Martha was a worry-wart; Samson had long hair; Noah got drunk; & Moses had a short fuse.
 1. None of these saints were sinless!
 2. Perfection - never means *sinlessness*. But instead always refers to **maturity, ripeness of character & experience**.
 3. From the moment of our conversion we are to **make progress** until we all arrive at the **full ripeness** of our position in Christ.
 1. Eph.4:13 (Message) until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ. :-)
 4. Warning & teaching:
 1. Warning - Especially necessary for those who have not received Christ.
 2. Teaching - The Christian religion is essentially **educational**. From beginning to end we need road signs of Divine teaching saying *This is the way; walk in it!*
 1. **Biblical teaching** should **inform** the mind & **guide** the soul *in everything*.
 5. In Christ Jesus - We **start** with "Christ in us" & **end** being "in Christ".
 6. Every man perfect? - notice 3x's.
 1. Every man/everybody - the doors are flung wide open & all are invited to enter
 1. This universality of the gospel. All nations, all capacities, rich & poor, old & young, respectable & outcast, peer & peasant. Because amid all the differences there is the same sin, same heart, same need, & therefore the same salvation!
 7. **#1 Christ for me**, which is my **substitution & sacrifice!**
 8. **#2 Christ in me**, which is my **sanctification & satisfaction!**
 9. **#3 Christ through me**, which is my **service & sufficiency!**
 10. F. B. Meyer used to say, In **all** His people Christ is **present**. In **some** he is **prominent**. In a **few** He is **pre-eminent**.
 1. Which of these classifications do you & I belong?

Colossians 2:1-10+

1. INTRO:

1. Just because someone is **sincere** doesn't mean they aren't **sincerely wrong!**
 1. E.g. You might have **sincerely** believed that what was in that bottle marked **Root-beer** was really **Root-beer** before you drank it, but if its contents was **poison** it really doesn't matter how **sincere** you were in believing that.
2. False teachers were trying to convince the Colossians that they were "incomplete!" - "*They lacked a deeper knowledge*"

of God.” [They couldn’t have been more wrong]

1. All believers possess the secret to true knowledge because we have **Christ**, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge.

2. FILLED FULL IN CHRIST!

1. **BE ENCOURAGED!** (Colossians 2:1)
2. Conflict - Struggle. The picture is an **athletic contest** which is strenuous & demanding. (LKGNT; pg. 571)
 1. Colossians 2:2-10 explains Paul’s inner struggle for the believers at *Colosse & Laodicea*.
 1. Note Colossians 2:2 starts with that...
3. **BE ENCOURAGED!** (Colossians 2:2a)
4. There was a story of a man who one morning opened his door to get the **newspaper** and was surprised to see a **strange little dog** with our paper in his mouth. Delighted with this unexpected “*delivery service*,” I fed him some treats. **The following morning** I was horrified to see the same dog sitting in front of our door, wagging his tail, surrounded by **eight** newspapers. I spent the rest of that morning returning the papers to their owners.
 1. A little bit of encouragement goes a long way!
 2. Or, like the **little boy** who said to his **father**, “Let’s play **darts**. I’ll throw and you say, ‘Wonderful!’”
5. **BE KNIT TOGETHER!** (Colossians 2:2b)
6. What is causing them to be knit together?...**love!**
7. **BE KNOWLEDGEABLE!** (Colossians 2:2c,3)
8. (3) It is **in Christ** that all the treasures of divine wisdom & knowledge have been stored up, in hiding formerly, **now** displayed to those who have come to know Christ. (FF Bruce)
 1. They are hidden **for us** not **from us!**
 1. Illustration: Our Dentist growing up was Dr. Rice in La Mirada. I remember walking past **the closet**. See, hidden in the closet was a **basket** full of toys, to which when you were finished, you were able to **pick one toy** from the basket.
 2. It wasn’t hidden **from** me, it was hidden **for** me! :)
 2. In Him there is the union of the spiritual & the material; the heavenly & the earthly; the divine & the human; the eternal & the historical.
 3. What a tragedy that men will build their houses over a **mine of gold** & never realize it is there, & continue to live in poverty & ignorance.
 4. A **poor old woman** was living in poverty & want. A friend, hearing she was in need, went over to **visit** her & if possible **help** her. The old lady complained bitterly of her condition & remarked that her son in Australia was doing very well. Her friend inquired, “And doesn’t he do anything to help you?” She replied, “No nothing. He writes to me regularly once a month but he only sends me some **little pictures** w/his letter.” The friend asked to see **the pictures** she had received & to his surprise found each of them to be 20 pound notes.
 1. The poor old lady did not realize the value of this foreign currency, but had only imagined them to be **pretty pictures!**
 2. Have you just seen the **pretty pictures**, or have you **cash**ed them by faith, & **believed & appropriated** them?
9. Yes, the deeper things are **hidden**, so we must: search, study, pray, commune, trust, yield, obey, prove, pursue, & persist like the **old gold-prospectors** of the Calif gold rush.
 1. He wants to bless us with the **joy** of **continual new discovery & surprise!** :)
 2. Poem: Then let me gratefully **explore**, These boundless riches **evermore**; The fullness of the Christ **divine**, That precious Jesus who is **mine!**
10. **BE ON GUARD!** (Colossians 2:4)
11. **Religious systems** seem so inviting, & their leaders so persuasive. But if you follow them, you will substitute **man’s ideas** for **God’s truth!**
12. **BE ORDERLY & STEADFAST!** (Colossians 2:5)
13. Good order - Orderly. Used in the **military sense** of a rank or orderly array.
14. Steadfast - Firm, hard, solid. Probably continuing the military metaphor & means “a solid front” or “a closed phalanx.”
15. **BE WALKING!** (Colossians 2:6)
16. As you therefore have **received** Christ Jesus –
 1. Receiving is an act which implies the acceptance of a **gift** (opposite of merit).
 2. As the **earth** drinks in the **rain**, as the **sea** receives the **streams**, as **night** accepts light from the **stars**, so we, giving nothing, partake freely of the grace of God. (Spurgeon)
17. Walk - to walk about, to conduct one’s life. [*pres.tense* calls for a continual & habitual action]
18. Because we possess the secret to true knowledge (i.e.) Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge, then all we must do is **walk** in Him!

1. Walking implies **action**. Our religion is not to be confined to our closet.
 2. **Spiritual walking** is the opposite of *spiritual striving*.
 3. Instead of the emphasis being on **our own strength** it is on **Christ's!**
 4. We walk **in Him**, in **His steps**, in **His power!**
 5. *We must **keep** to Him, **cling** to Him, **never let Him go**, but **live & move & have our being** in Him!*
19. **BE ROOTED!** (Colossians 2:7)
 20. Roots have access to moisture . For a tree to bear fruit it must have its feet in the water.
 1. "What's on the **tree above** the ground - reveals what it secretly feeds upon **underground**."
 21. **BE BUILT UP!** (Colossians 2:7b)
 22. The thought is that **Christ** is the foundation of a building, on which the **Colossian Christians** were continually being built.
 23. **BE ESTABLISHED!** (Colossians 2:7c)
 24. Established in the **faith** - **Faith** being *the cement* of the building. (Lightfoot)
 25. As you have been **taught** - It is **not enough** for the evangelist to win men for Christ; they must **instruct** them in those principles of Christian living which alone can safeguard the soul, & prevent it from backsliding. (Griffith Thomas)
 26. **BEWARE!** (Colossians 2:8,9)
 27. Cheat you - To carry off as booty or as a captive. Don't be kidnapped!
 1. Here the thief is *man-made philosophy & tradition*, pleasing to the world but rejected by the Lord.
 28. Fullness - The word **differs** from the expression *Godhead* in that it emphasizes, not so much divine attributes, but **divine nature** or **essence**.
 29. Bodily - In bodily form. Referring to Christ's human body.
 1. **Gnosticism believed...**the spirit alone was **good**, matter was essentially **evil!**
 2. This belief led its followers to 3 main heresy's:
 1. The Doctrine of **Creation**: If matter is evil, God could not have created it.
 2. The Doctrine of **Jesus**: If matter's evil Jesus couldn't have a flesh/blood body
 3. The **Ethical approach to life**: If matter is evil, then our bodies are evil.
 4. If our bodies are evil, then you either practice: **Rigid Asceticism** (self-denial, starve, beat, deny the body) {e.g. Francis Assisi} **Or, Loose Morality** (i.e.) if the body was evil, it didn't matter what you did to/with it, the spirit was all that mattered.
 5. Paul will continue to refute this throughout the book.
 30. **BE FILLED FULL!** (Colossians 2:10)
 31. Title: "Fill er Up!"
 32. If **in Christ** we find "wisdom, knowledge, all the fullness of God, & we find ourselves complete in Him"...Why accept a substitute?
 33. Spurgeon reminds us, "We must **arise** believer, & **behold** the Lord Jesus **yoking** the whole of His **divine Godhead** to the chariot of **salvation!**"
 34. So Christ is to be **received**, & then the Christian is **rooted** in Him, **walking** in Him, & all the while abounding in **thanksgiving**.
 1. So for doctrine & duty; character & conduct; life & labour; thought & deed; word & work;**Christ is all, & in all!**

Colossians 2:11-23+

1. INTRO:

1. Illustration: Back in WWII they invented the "*Military Decoy Paratrooper Dummies*", aka **paradummies**.
 1. They've been used as recently as the **Gulf War** where special forces implemented these dummies to distract **Iraqi troops**. They have also been used in **Afghanistan**.
 2. Sometimes these **rubber dummies** have firecrackers to help distract the enemy from where the **real attack** is about to hit.
2. Have you ever been **taken by surprise** by one of Satan's **rubber dummies** in **your life**?
 1. You found yourself fighting the wrong enemy. You were *wrestling against flesh & blood*, & didn't realize you had the wrong enemy in your grips!
3. Greatest Pursuit of **Hebrews** was **Light** [The Lord is my light & salvation]; Greatest Pursuit of **Greeks** was **Knowledge** [These things are written that you might **know** you have eternal life]Greatest Pursuit of **Romans** was **Glory** [We know nothing matched the splendor of Rome; It wasn't built in a day; & all roads led there] (*From Ravi Zacharias Podcast*)

1. Thus Paul inspired by the *Holy Spirit* said For it is the God who commanded **light** to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the **knowledge** of the **glory** of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor.4:6

2. Paul born a **Hebrew**; raised in a **Greek city**; & of **Roman citizenship**.

1. He knew what **their pursuits** were all about, & knew **the answer** for all...was in the face of Jesus!

4. Last week we tackled **Gnosticism**, which believed the **spirit** alone was good; **matter** was essentially evil! (lived out in rigid asceticism, or loose morality)

1. This week we'll hear Paul's warning against other false teachings that crept in to Colosse: *Legalism; Mysticism; & Asceticism*.

5. **The flesh** loves to be **religious**, so long as that religion doesn't have a cross to crucify the flesh!

2. DON'T LOOSE YOUR HEAD!

1. **LEGALISM OR, CLEAN SLATE!** (Colossians 2:11-17)

2. (11-13) The Circumcision of Christ - (Colossians 2:11) is not speaking of His physical circumcision as a child, but rather His death on the cross.

1. His **water baptism** pointed to the symbol of **suffering on the cross** I have a baptism to be baptized w/and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! Lk 12:50+

2. His **circumcision** as an infant pointed to His putting off the body when He **took our sins** on Calvary.

1. Circumcision removes a **fragment of the flesh** from the body, but our identification w/Christ puts off **the whole fleshly nature!**

3. What kind of **forgiveness?** - See Luke 7:42+ (*nothing to pay*) *Wow!*

1. All trespasses - ALL!

4. Wiped out (Colossians 2:14) - washed over & **wiped out**. (i.e. Washing out writing on a papyrus)

1. It was used for wiping out a memory of an experience or for canceling a vote or annulling a law or canceling a charge of debt.

5. Handwriting - it was a written acknowledgment of a debt; an **I.O.U.**; a statement of indebtedness, personally signed by the debtor.

6. Requirements - decree, edict, something decided. A legal obligation which was a **binding law** or edict which was placed on a public place for all to see.

7. Against us - hostile, directly opposed to us.

8. Taken it out of the way - put it out of sight.

9. Nailed it to the cross - the manner in which Christ removed the handwriting (I.O.U.).

1. He nailed the **Mosaic Law** with all its decrees to His cross, & it **died** with Him!

10. Illustration: My speeding ticket in Canyon Lake.

1. It was a trespass (Did you know you were doing 53 in a 35? No way!); I talked with them, Kim talked with them, about the specific ticket because it was \$250!!!

2. We tried to pay it last week, but it had been mysteriously "wiped away!"

3. The handwriting that was against me (my signature, see card!)

4. The requirement that was against me (A legal obligation which was a binding law or edict which was placed on a **public place** for all to see; well not all, but my bro & sis)

5. It was some how taken out of the way (*put out of sight...Praise God!!!*)

1. But Brian you deserve to pay the fine (I know!); you don't deserve grace (I know!)

11. (Colossians 2:15) **Results?**

12. Disarmed - to strip off. As one puts off a garment.

1. Christ divested (*desvistere* des=removal; *vistere/vestis*=garment) Himself at the cross of the evil powers which had struggled with Him so strongly during His ministry in attempts to force Him to abandon the pathway of the cross. (*Linguistic Key to the Greek N.T.; pg. 575*)

13. Public Spectacle - expose; to display as a victor displays his captives or trophies in a triumphal procession. (Lightfoot)

14. Triumphant - It pictures a **victorious general leading** his prisoners in that triumphal procession.

15. (Colossians 2:15) (Message Bible) He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross **and** marched them naked through the streets.

16. So far, the OT Covenant Laws are now set aside; Satan has been completely defeated (Colossians 2:15); therefore enjoy the **liberty** you have in Christ, Let no one judge you (16).

17. (Colossians 2:16a) **Diet** - No one should condemn another believer for what he or she **eats** or **drinks**.

18. (Colossians 2:16b) **Days** - No one should condemn another believer for not celebrating certain holy days

1. Festival/yearly (like Passover, Pentecost); new moon/monthly; & Sabbath/weekly.

2. For these old rules were only **shadows!**

19. (Colossians 2:17) Shadow - OT ritual observances were **dim outlines** of the NT **redemptive truths!**

1. He says, “watch it, you are going out of the **sunlight** into the **shadows**”. (*Warren Wiersbe; Outlines of the NT*)
 2. It’s as bad as a boyfriend who admires his girlfriends **photo**, while he ignores his girlfriends **presence**.
 1. So they had turned from the *fullness of Christ*, to the *ABC’s of the world*(20).
20. **MYSTICISM - DON’T LOOSE YOUR HEAD!**(18,19)
21. (Colossians 2:18) Let no man sit as *umpire* in your life –
 22. False humility - A **counterfeit** that tries to imitate *genuine* spiritual humility.
 1. This word was often used in connection w/ **fasting** which some believed this *ascetic practice* was an entrance into the heavenly realm.
 23. **Mysticism** teaches that God can only be known through 2 methods: worship of angels & seeing visions.
 1. Truth: One can only know God **through Christ** who is the head of the body, the church.
 24. (Colossians 2:19) The Head(Christ) - He is **the Head** we members of **the body**.
 1. A body functions through **nourishment**, not **legislation**.
 1. You don’t tell your body “Start digesting!” or “Stop hurting!”
 25. This is where we witness the difference between **history & the gospel?**
 1. **History** says, “*Jesus died*”; **the Gospel** says, “*Jesus died..for me!*”
 2. **History** says *it really happened*; **the Gospel** says, *it really happened...for me!*
 3. **History** says, “*His death changed history*”; **the Gospel** says, “*His death changed history..for me!*”
 26. Grows - not from a **denial** of **certain foods**, but rather growth comes from **God!**
 27. **ASCETICISM - A SELF-IMPOSED RELIGION!** (Colossians 2:20-23)
 28. (Colossians 2:21) How the flesh loves legalism: fasting, regulations about food, bodily disciplines.
 1. Special religious observances with their regulations make people *feel spiritual!*
 2. Nothing wrong with **spiritual discipline**, in the spirit, to the glory of God; but when it is done in the **flesh** & for our own **praise**, then it becomes **sin!**
 3. Giving up certain habits or pleasures doesn’t automatically make you spiritual!
 1. E.g. Fish on Friday during Lent(fast from meat).
 2. Like **Carnival & Mardi Gras**. They’re Pre-Lenten festivals, last opportunity for excess before Lent begins.
 4. Obeying man-made religious regulations might **impress** some people as **spiritual**, but Paul states clearly that these practices cannot **control** or **overcome** the flesh!
 1. They might seem to help us develop **piety & superior spirituality**, but they are **useless** as far as God is concerned.
 29. Asceticism teaches that one can purify the **spirit** by punishing the **body**.
 1. But the spirit can’t be purified by punishing the body. Why? Because his body is already **dead**(died w/Christ,vs.20) how can beating a dead man help you?
 30. So Paul you’re saying, all the believer needs is Jesus Christ? **Yep!**
 1. Paul says don’t fall back to “**Kindergarten living**”; we must **graduate** into a higher level of Christianity.
 2. It is impossible for the flesh to control itself, better itself, or perfect itself.
 1. Having begun in the **Spirit**, are you now being made perfect by the **flesh?** Gal.3:3
 31. **The Cross:** where **Truth** met **Love**; where **man’s worse** collided with **God’s best**; where **righteousness** kissed **Justice**; & where it’s **nothing** you deserve, but **everything** you may appropriate for the asking!

Colossians 2:18-3:4+

1. Intro:

Correction – Blood.

Last week – Coach Paul blew the whistle on 3 warnings: Deceive you(persuasive words), Cheat you(philosophy & traditions), & Judge you(diet & days)!

This week – Cheat you of your reward.

2. FALSE HUMILITY & ANGEL WORSHIP! (Colossians 2:18,19)

Gnostics – “We’re not good enough to go directly to God, so we begin humbly going to an angel, & if we are in the rt. spirit, our requests will go through the hierarchy to God.”

Colossians 2:18 – They had special visions. “This was a technical phrase referring to someone being admitted

to a higher grade in one of the mystery religions.” (Bruce)

Learning the secrets of the sp. are enticing still today for millions (Tarot cards, Astrology) {Luther/Esau & Jacob, born same parents, same time, under the same planets, but their nature was wholly different. Astrology is a science???

Puffed up – 1st century airhead!

They advertised humility but were filled w/huge conceit!

Vs.19 – “you’d loose your head if it wasn’t screwed on”. They had lost their connection!

3 REGULATIONS! (Colossians 2:20-23)

Sp. discipline is good – extreme is bad.

Church history is full of ascetics who deprive themselves of good things in the pursuit of God! {marriage, sex, children, beauty}

The black shadow of asceticism spread over the sky of the Puritan Fathers. Given two coats, they chose the ugliest one. Given two colors for the woman’s garb, they chose the saddest and somberest. Given two roads, they chose the one that held the most thorns and cutting rocks. Given two forms of fear and self-denial, they took both. The favorite text of asceticism is “deny yourself.” The favorite color of asceticism is black; its favorite music, a dirge; its favorite hour is midnight; its favorite theme is a tombstone. The mistake of asceticism is in thinking that it has a moral value. [1]

“Asceticism feeds the flesh by starving it!” (Bruce)

4. Intro to Colossians 3:1-4

Seek, Set, Hide, Appear!

Reminds me of volleyball: “Pass, Set, Crush”, or “bump, set, spike.”

5: SEEK! (Colossians 3:1)

“Raised w/Christ” – Co-resurrection!

“Seek” – a continuous ongoing effort is required.

Persistently seek the things above!

“Things above”? – Gods throne? Physical things of heaven? - NO! His character, his presence, his heavenly joys!

Don’t seek heavenly geography but the one who dwells there! (Hughes)

Prov.15:24 “The way of life winds upward for the wise, That he may turn away from hell below.”

Prov.23:5 “Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.”

6. SET! (Colossians 3:2) “Set” = A deliberate act of the will. (ED: But one enabled by the Spirit giving the DESIRE and POWER - Php 2:13NLT+)

“Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. When a man does not know what harbor he is making for, no wind is the right wind.” Seneca

“Not on things on the earth”!

Material things – Ps.23 “The Lord is my banker, my credit is good. He giveth me the key to his strong box. He restoreth my faith in riches. He guideth me in the paths of prosperity for his name’s sake.{Oz Guinness/Grave digger files}

Not on things of the Earth!

Immaterial things also– earthly honors, position,advancements.

We ought to pursue excellence in any field we are in. “The difference is the Christian no longer sees these as “the only thing that matters!”

Paul’s mindset was dominated by things above –Set yours there & keep it there!

Growing up I had a neighbor who had a dobie that did a 360 everytime it barked, played, woke up, ... breathed!

His mind seemed to be set on doing 360's! [& he seemed to enjoy it?]

"What we set our mind on determines our seeking & thus the direction of our Christian lives!" (Hughes)

One ship drives east and another west, with the self-same winds that blow; 'tis the set of the sails and not the gales that determines where they go. Like the winds of the sea are the ways of fate, as we voyage along through life; 'tis the set of a soul that decides its goal-and not the calm or the strife. Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Q: If your mind could be autopsied, what would the outcome be?

A: Things above or things below?

Computers have a "history file" what would I find in your minds history file?

Here's an exercise to practice to see if your holding on to things w/clenched fist – "give something away which you value!"(not your kids)

7. HIDE! (Colossians 3:3)

Past (Colossians 3:3), Future (Colossians 3:4).

Our Past – we are Hidden in Christ

The tense is imperfect, which stresses "ongoing effects".

Our lives have been hidden & remain hidden.

Since we are in Christ, & Christ is in God, we are "doubly secure" & "doubly inseparable"!

Hidden suggests 3 things:

[1] Secrecy – When the believers life is nurtured by secret springs.

[2] Safety – "w/Christ in God" makes a double protection(Mac. nut).

[3] Identity – The believer is identified w/the risen Lord.

8. APPEAR! (Colossians 3:4)

Our Future - Right now our lives are hidden, but one day will be revealed!

[1] Newell Dwight Hillis

Colossians 3:1-11+

1. INTRO:

1. Many stories circulate regarding the **Sanci(y) Diamond**: It was named after a French nobleman named Sanci, who sent the gem by a messenger to Henri IV of France; but the messenger was assassinated while on his journey. The corpse was afterward found & opened whereupon the diamond was discovered **in the stomach**, having been swallowed by the faithful servant!

1. Mere **religion** is like carrying a gem **on one's person**, and there are many robbers! But those who possess the **inliving** Christ have the glorious Jewel of the ages actually **within them!**
2. The life is hid within us; it is also hid with Christ in God; so we're **doubly safe!**

2. We now move from **doctrine** to **personal application**.

1. As Truth is something to **live** as well as to **learn!**
2. All that Paul has said about **Christ**, & our **relationship** to Him, **our lives should be different!**
 1. **How** are our lives made different?
 1. In Our **Minds**(1-4); In Our **Bodies**(5-7); In Our **Attitudes**(8-11).

2. UP ABOVE THE WORLD SO HIGH!

1. **IN OUR MINDS!** (Colossians 3:1-4)
2. Spiritual maturity begins in the **mind**, where our **priorities & perspectives** are formed!
3. (Colossians 3:1) Co-resurrected.

4. If we've **died** to our *old life, old ways, & old self*, & have been **raised** to our *new life, new way, new purpose*; **then** the new life should have the focus of our attention.
 1. We must Seek & Set!
 2. Lightfoot put it, "You must not only **seek** heaven; you must also **think** heaven!"
5. If your focus is on things **heavenly**, you will obey God in things on **earth**.
 1. We belong to **the realm** where He is, & we must focus our hopes, desires, & ambitions **on that realm!**
6. (Colossians 3:1,2) Above...above - A small girl was watching her mother working among the flowers. "Mother," she said, "I know why flowers grow; they want to **get out of the dirt!**"
 1. What is the mysterious force which causes a **sprouting seed** to grow **up** instead of **down**? You plant a bulb upside down in the ground, but it always comes out "right side up."
 2. It's obviously the **sunlight above** which attracts the plant to itself!
 1. Plants always seek the **sunlight**. (ex: **house plants** turn & bend to reach the light from the window; **sunflowers** trace the sun's path East to West; **Dandelions** open only on sunny days, but remain closed on dark days) It's the power of the sun!
 2. Ever throw a **rug** or **sheet of plywood** on your lawn & forget about it for a couple days? You remove it & notice the lawn turned a sickly yellow, which takes a few weeks for it to recover.
 3. As a **plant**, so are **we** to seek those things which are **above**.
7. (Colossians 3:3) Hidden - The idea of life being hidden in God suggests **3 thoughts:** (*Linguistic Key to the Greek NT; pg.578*)
 1. Hidden in **Secrecy** - the believers life is nurtured by secret springs.
 2. Hidden for **Safety** - *Christ in God* marks a **double protection**. (doubly safe)
 3. Hidden in **Security** - we are hidden/**secured** w/Christ.
 4. And get this...the **perfect tense** views the completed state arising from a **past action**.
 5. We talk as if **living a sanctified life** were the most **uncertain & insecure** thing we could do. Yet it is the most **secure** thing possible, because it has Almighty God **in & behind** it.
 1. The most **dangerous & unsure** thing is to **try to live w/o God**. (*My Utmost for His Highest; Dec.24*)
8. Illustration: The **sun** is 93 million miles away from a **flower** on earth; yet is **in** the flower, or, the **sun's life** is **in** the flower!
9. (Colossians 3:4) Christ who is our life - He is the **source** of our life, the **substance, sustenance, & solace** of our life.
 1. Robert Murray M'Cheyne used to say, "**For every look you take at your sinful self, take ten looks at Christ!**" {If you forget everything else hear this!}
 2. People are not changed by imposing *legalistic restrictions* on what they eat or drink(2:16). They are changed by the **power of Christ!**
10. A believers 3-directional promise: Past (you **were** raised in Christ); Present (you life **is** hidden in Christ); Future (you also **will** appear with Him in glory).
11. (Colossians 3:4b) When Christ...appears - Someday when He returns, our true selves "will be revealed w/Him in glory", & we will step into the world of which we've only **dreamed**.
12. **IN OUR BODIES!** (Colossians 3:5-7)
13. **First** we saw spiritual maturity began in the **mind**, where our **priorities & perspectives** are formed! **Now**, Paul moves from the mind to the **body**.
 1. And he demands its **mortification** & nothing less!!!
14. (5) Put to death - mortify, or reckon as dead.
 1. If you want to **grow in Christ** you **must** take God's view concerning **immoral practices** & *put them to death!*
 2. Death to self in order that sin might be rendered ineffective in the believers life
 3. Rom.6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of **sin** might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.
15. Put to death you members - according to the Rabbis, there are as many commandments & restraints in the law, as the body has members. (S. Schweizer; LKGNT)
16. **Suckers** on fruit trees must be constantly **pruned off** if there is to be **fruit!** (grow from base)
 1. Thus the same tree may bring forth **2 kinds** of fruit, **wild & tame**.
 2. The **more** the tree produces of one kind, the **less** there will be of the other.
 3. We too are trees. By nature we are **wild**, due to our birth from father **Adam**.
 4. When we are **born of the Spirit**, a bud-graft of the divine life is introduced within us. This enables us to produce the **fruit of the Spirit**
 5. The old nature is still there, & if left without pruning will stunt the new growth & render it fruitless.
 1. This is the reason for **the battle** in the Christian life(both natures in same body/plant).

2. The **secret of victory** is getting rid of the suckers...i.e. the *works of the flesh*!
17. These 5 are sins of personal aggression. The individual who commits them thinks more of **himself** than he does of **others**. (Shepherds Notes; pg.60)
1. Then Paul gives **2 reasons** why Christians should never practice them:
 1. They bring the wrath of God(6);
 2. They characterize the former life of sin & rebellion(Colossians 3:7).
18. When we talk about **God's wrath**(Colossians 3:7) we mean something different from **man's wrath**(8).
1. **Man's** passionate anger is immediate & strong.
 2. **God's** wrath is more settled in the long term. {suggests the continuing revulsion of the holiness of God against sin}
 1. **Man's** is like a firecracker w/a short fuse; **God's** is like slow boil/water on a stove.
19. **IN OUR ATTITUDES!** (Colossians 3:8-11)
20. **First** we saw spiritual maturity began in the **mind**, where our **priorities & perspectives** are formed! **Second**, Paul dealt with the death of the members of our **body**. Now, he addresses our **attitudes!**
1. Like **clothes**, some **attitudes** belong to the wardrobe of the old-self; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, lying.
 2. Paul says, toss those old rags aside because, when God united us with Christ, **He updated our style!**
 3. He has given us **new clothes** to wear: tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness longsuffering, forbearance, [forgiveness](#), & the golden crown of **love!** (see Colossians 3:12)
21. Like Lazarus(Jn.11:44) you must get rid of the **grave-clothes** that belong to the old life.
1. Put off the **old sins** that bound you. Christ has set you free.
 2. God wants you to wear the **grace-clothes**, not the **grave-clothes!**
22. (Colossians 3:11) Christ is all & in all - not like in some new age sense(*God is in everyone & everything*) but He is, in all His fullness, in each of those believers, in the categories just mentioned.
1. He is everything to us amid life's **disappointments**, amid **sickness, trial & trouble**. He is in every time of **temptation** & most of all in the **hour of death!**
 2. He is both **loving & almighty**. There are those who are **loving** but not **mighty**; & those who are **mighty** but not **loving**; but Jesus is both.
 3. His is **love to the utmost**, & His is the **power** which upholds the very universe! Yes, "Christ is ALL!"

Colossians 3:12-17+

1. INTRO:

1. What is the identifying mark of a **Hindu**? (Bindi/u; "a drop/dot"; Forehead decoration; Forehead is the exit point for *kundalini energy*; thus wear Bindi to help **retain energy & strengthen concentration**; & protect from demons & bad luck)

What is the identifying mark of a **follower of antichrist** in trib? (mark on forehead) What is the identifying mark of the **144,000**? (seal on forehead Rev.7:3) What is the identifying mark of a **Punjabi/Sikh religion**? (Turban) What is the identifying mark of a **pious Jew**? (phylactery on forehead) What is the identifying mark of a **Mormon**? (name badge w/1st name "elder") What is the identifying mark of a **JW**? (Watch Tower magazine) What is the identifying mark of a **Christian**? (wears a cross? bumper sticker?) What is the identifying mark of a **Genuine Believer**? (Love!!!)

2. Not only is the believer to **put off** the evils of the old life(Colossians 3:8,9), he is to **put on** the graces of the new life.
 1. Do we ever get past the **putting off**? We seem to only define ourselves, or be defined by, what we've **put off** & not by what we **put on!**
 2. We've advertised to the world what we "don't **do**, don't **see**, don't **read**, don't **say**". Can we start showing them what we've **put on**? What we do...do!

2. THE CHRISTIAN'S NEW CLOTHES!

1. In 1837 **Hans Christian Anderson** wrote "*The Emperor's new clothes*" about an emperor who unwittingly hires two swindlers to create a new suit of clothes for him.
 1. This cloth, they told him, is **invisible** to anyone who was either **stupid** or **unfit for his position**. The Emperor cannot see the (non-existent) cloth, but pretends that he can for fear of appearing stupid; his ministers do the same. When the swindlers report that the suit is finished, they dress him in mime. The Emperor then goes on a procession through the capital showing off his new "clothes". During the course of the procession, a **small child** cries out, "*But he has nothing on!*" The crowd realizes the child is telling the truth. The Emperor, however, holds his head high and continues the procession.

2. I believe **name only Christians** have tried to promote the **same fraud**. They prance down the runway of life, telling everyone they're wearing **new spiritual clothes**, but no one can see them!
3. Paul gives us the ability to spot **The Christian's New Clothes**.
2. **Outline: Our Position; Our Principles**(*The New Clothes*); **Our Process; Our Progress**.
3. **OUR POSITION!** (Colossians 3:12a)
4. These 3 descriptions tell of what the Christian **is** in the sight of God.
5. **Elect**, chosen of God! & **Holy**, consecrated for God! & **Loved**, by God!
 1. And all these come from our union with Christ!
 2. We belong to His **redeemed community** because of **His saving initiative**.
 1. So we must be clothed with a **new kind of life**.
6. **OUR PRINCIPLES!** (Colossians 3:12b-14)
7. Often **clothes** are an indication of **personality** [Overly baggy pants; surf clothes; business suit; western; mini-skirt; Muslim women's burka], so the impression & expression of these graces will show **whose we are & whom we serve!**
8. **Tender mercies** - a heart of compassion.
 1. Because with the affections right...everything else should follow.
9. **Kindness** - opposite of **harshness & severity**.
10. **Humility**-recognizing of ones own weakness but also the recognition of the power of God.
11. **Meekness** - **gentle attitude, kind acts towards others**, often in the face of opposition.
12. **Kindness** - opposite of everything **rude & overbearing**.
13. **Longsuffering** - a **long holding out** of the mind, before it gives room to action or passion.
 1. Those who are **humble in mind** will naturally be **slow to resent wrongs** & will won't **contemplate revenge**.
14. **Bearing with one another** - to endure, "to put up with someone".
 1. Every **social group** has its *set of problems*, & **the church** is no exception!
 2. We must have **Christian graces** that enhance our relationships.
15. **Forgiving one another** –
 1. In all matters of complaint & blame, this *readiness to forgive* should be shown.
16. **Love** - *above all these things put on love*.
 1. Love is regarded as that which holds together the various Christian graces already mentioned.
 2. **The unbeliever** makes himself the center of his life; **the Christian** makes "others" the center of his life.
 3. **Love** is the identifying mark of the genuine believer!!!
17. What a wonderful picture of Christian living here!
18. **OUR PROCESS!** (Colossians 3:15,16a)
19. **The Peace of God rule** in your hearts! (Colossians 3:15)
 1. Rule = peace is to be the **umpire** or **arbiter** deciding & ruling the life.
 1. It settles the differences, especially where there is any **conflict** of thoughts & feelings.
 2. Under such circumstances *the peace of Christ* is to decide!
 3. It stresses harmony **in the group** rather than personal peace! (15)
20. Be **thankful** - (Lightfoot) "forget yourselves in thanksgiving towards God".
 1. How do I deal with our **economy**? "forget yourselves in thanksgiving towards God."
 2. How do I deal with **doubts & fears**? "forget yourselves in thanksgiving towards God."
 3. How do I deal with our **future**? "forget yourselves in thanksgiving towards God."
 1. And what a great week to do it! (Thanksgiving) :-)
21. **Be thankful** - (Pres. tense) "a continual action pointing to a habit of life."
 1. Can you say you're **habitually thankful**?
 2. {Invite out for Thanksgiving Eve Service}
22. **The Word of Christ dwell in you richly!** (16)
 1. Yes, the Scriptures are derived from the inspiration of the **H.S.**, but they are full of **Jesus' person, character, sufferings, & glory!**
 1. He is the **author & subject** of their contents.
 2. Jesus told the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms **concerning Me**."
 3. Take **Him** out of the **bible** & you take the **sun** out of our **world**, & the **soul** out of the **body**. (William Jay; *Morning Exercises*; pg.401)
 2. It's not enough to be **taught** the truth; we must **possess it** as a *present personal experience!*
 1. Not just **learning about** God, but **how to walk** with Him!
 2. We about helping people become **more Christian** or **to get to know Jesus better?**

3. Do we obligate people to a **meeting** rather than equip them to **live in Him**?
4. Church life is not about an **institution** but about a **family**!
5. Church life must not be about **managing the machinery** but about **equipping followers**! (by helping them find a **real relationship** w/the **living God**)
3. **The Word** is to be **in** us as abiding there, **dwelling in us** as **in a home**.
4. It should not be treated as a **stranger** or **slave**, at a distance; but received as an **intimate guest**. (Griffith Thomas pg.101)
5. Its to abide in us plentifully(*richly*).
6. Its to abide in us "in all wisdom" - so that we ma know how to help others live!
 1. Some put the punctuation(;) after *one another*; to separate it out.
23. Teaching(central form the beginning of Christian history); Admonishing(Christians have a responsibility for the moral & spiritual lives of one another; we can't say "I'm not my brothers keeper" like Cain); Singing(expression of gratitude & worship).
 1. It shows our **response, Our Progress**...
24. **OUR PROGRESS!** (Colossians 3:16b,17)
25. Psalms - Psalm with instruments.
26. Hymns - Christian compositions.
27. Spiritual songs - This word is a *general term* including the other 2, but goes further in referring to **all forms of songs**..so long as they are **spiritual**.
28. Singing with **grace** in your **hearts** to the **Lord** - Here is our deepest challenge.
 1. Speaks of our inner life **in-tune** w/God; our soul's **personal fellowship** w/God
 2. When we put on love, have the peace of God, & have the Word of Christ hidden in our lives, the result...singing w/grace in our hearts to the Lord.
29. **The Name of the Lord Jesus do all!** (Colossians 3:17)
 1. Now he takes it **outward** to our **entire life! Everything is included in this!**
 2. Christianity is a religion of **principles**, not **rules**, & everything is to be done to the glory of God. [1 Cor.10:31 Therefore, whether you **eat** or **drink**, or **whatever you do**, do all to the glory of God]
 1. Illustration: I have a friend that installs flooring. The wood of the flooring went bad on a job. The manufacture wouldn't take responsibility. He replaced the whole floor himself. There's a man who doesn't work for the almighty dollar, but works for His God...to bring Him glory! And, he won a beautiful friendship out of the job.
30. Invite up worship team: focus, "singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Colossians 3:18-25

1. INTRO:

1. **Intro:** A man once asked, "Is so-and-so a Christian?" & the reply was given, "I don't know, I have never lived with him!"
 1. Christian commitment affects **every** area of life including **family**, or especially family!
 2. So Paul gives **concrete advice** about **Christian living**. Relationship Responsibilities!
2. "**Order** is heaven's first law" in every sphere of life. [Griffith Thomas; pg.104]
 1. 1 Cor.11:3 But I want you to know that the head of every**man** is **Christ**, the head of **woman** is **man**, and the head of **Christ** is **God**.
 2. Paul believed there was an **order** to the family, & in society; and that this order was **God-given!!!**
3. I make one apology: Time won't allow me to hit on every marriage/family relationship.
 1. Please use your own **imagination & reasoning skills** to apply these points to your unique & specific situation. Grab the principles. Seize the standards.
4. In 1975 **Paul Simon** wrote "**50 ways to leave your lover**". It was after his divorce from first wife **Peggy Harper**. He wrote it to take a "*humorous*" look at ways to end a relationship: You just slip out the back, Jack; Make a new plan, Stan; You don't need to be coy, Roy; Just get yourself free. Hop on the bus, Gus; You don't need to discuss much; Just drop off the key, Lee; And get yourself free.
 1. There's even more than 50 ways to **leave** your lover; **but a Christian** only needs 1 reason to **stay with** his/her lover, *the analogy of Christ & His church!*

2. SWEET SURRENDER!

WIVES! (Colossians 3:18)

Submit - to submit one's self.

Submission for Paul is a voluntary submission based on one's own recognition of God's order.

Fitting - an expression of necessity, obligation, or duty.

Between you & God; not you & husband.

"We must never be naive enough to think of marriage as a safe harbor from the fall...the deepest struggles of life will occur in the most primary relationship affected by the fall: marriage." (*Dan Allender & Tremper Longman III*)

Not "**desperate housewives**" but **devoted** housewives.

Enable & Encourage your husbands leadership!

How you **look at** your husband will determine how you **live** with your husband! Respecting and submitting reflects how you look at him!

Here's an example: Do you look at your husband as someone that God has placed in your life as the **leader** of your family, that you're going to **respect** and that you're going to **follow** regardless of, or in spite of all his **faults**, or do you look at your husband and say to him, "I will respect you and I will follow you **if** I think you deserve it, or **if** you meet certain conditions!"

HUSBANDS! (Colossians 3:19)

Love - The pres. Imp. calls for a **continual attitude & positive expression**.

Love them: spiritually, sacrificially, sensitively.

Agape - never occurred in secular households. The command was a distinctively Christian element of the marriage commitment.

It is a love that is not mere feeling but **fact**; not emotion but **devotion**; not attitude but **action**; not sentiment but **sacrifice**. [Griffith Thomas; pg.105]

Men have meant to attack their wives by saying, "*I never loved you!*" But if Jesus called us to love the *unlovable*, even our *enemies*, thus a man who says, "*I never loved you!*" is simply saying, "*I have never acted like a Christian.*"

Do not be bitter - being sharp, harsh, & bitter. [perpetual irritation, fault finding]

The pres. Imp. w/the neg. **forbids a habitual action**.

Sounds like its highly possible to become **bitter** or **harsh** toward them if we're warned against this.

If you don't **love** properly, the marriage relationship can become an **irritant**.

If you can't respect **this** spouse because she is prone to certain weaknesses, you will never be able to respect **any** spouse. (*Gary Thomas; Sacred Marriage; pg.69*)

I must die to what **I want from her**, so I can center on **what God wants from me**. I must forget **my expectations of her**, and focus on **God's expectations for me**.

Marriage: a portrait of **His love** for **His glory!**

Marriage is the operation by which a **woman's vanity** & a **man's egotism** are extracted without anesthetic. Helen Rowland

"One of the best wedding gifts God gave you was a *full-length mirror* called your spouse. Had there been a card attached, it would have said, "Heres to helping you discover what you're really like!" Gary & Betsy Ricucci (*Rick-ussi*)

The German philosopher **Friedrich Nietzsche** suggested that marriage is a "**long conversation**," urging us, therefore, **to marry a friend**."

Book: Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas

What if God designed marriage to make us **Holy** more than to make us **Happy**?

"If you want to be free to **serve** Jesus, there's no question - stay single. Marriage takes a lot of time. But if you want to become **more like Jesus**, I can't imagine any better thing to do than get married. Being married forces you to face some **character issues** you'd never have to face otherwise" (pg21)

It looks **beyond marriage**:

Spiritual growth is the main theme; **marriage** is simply the context.

Just as **celibates** use abstinence & **religious hermits** use isolation, so we can use **marriage** for the same purpose - to grow in our service, obedience, character, pursuit, & love of God. (pg.26)

CHILDREN! (Colossians 3:20)

The thought of **giving pleasure to Christ** is an incredible & inspiring reason for children/ youth to obey their parents.

FATHERS! (Colossians 3:21)

Do not provoke - irritate, exasperate, excite, embitter, undue hardness.

Discouraged - to be w/o courage or to become spiritless; to lose heart;**leading to despair**.

They will give up because they **can't please you** or because they feel they are **not worthy** to anybody.

SERVANTS! (Colossians 3:22-25)

Eyeservice - going through the **outward** movements of the work w/o a corresponding keenness of will behind them. (LKGNT)

Men pleasers - one who tries to please men at the sacrifice of principle.

(Colossians 3:23) Whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord, & not to men - Believe that?

One sailor in the **British Merchant Navy** turned **potato peeling** into an art. He was a man who believed in doing his best, no matter what the task. Finding himself on KP and facing a huge mound of potatoes, he peeled those potatoes with all the care of a sculptor carving in wood. The eyes and bruised spots were carefully cut away. Cooks on the ships he served began to boast about the clean, smooth spuds he peeled, until his reputation spread throughout the shipping lanes. The ex-sailor became a **small businessman** in London, supplying select potatoes, peeled to perfection, to the best restaurants in the city. His name will not go down in history. He may never enjoy more than a small but profitable business. But of the millions who have peeled potatoes all over the world, **Gerald Pereth** was one who saw his opportunity for achievement in **doing the job better than anyone else**.

Do you think God cares about peeled potatoes? He absolutely cares about **"whatever you do!"**

MASTERS! (Colossians 3:4:1)

Just & fair –

The most striking feature of all of this is the way in which **everything** is related to **God**:

7 times everything is done in His sight:

Wives submit "in the Lord";

Children obey "in the Lord";

Servants "fear the Lord"; "work as unto the Lord"; their reward is "from the Lord"; serve "the Lord Christ";

Masters are reminded they have a "Master in heaven".

Jesus gets candid! (*by me*)

Wives, you're going to have a problem submitting to your husbands, because more often than not "your right & he's wrong". You'll feel a strong sense to lead, steer, or pilot the ship yourself, because you know you can. Plus, he's been wrong before, and often you're flat out just plain old smarter than him. But, I'm teaching him to lead. It will be a long process, a life-long process, but I know what's best & you don't. My order is right & fitting...even if you don't understand it. You focus on the individual matter at hand, I see the big picture. I know what's best for your marriage, & the portrait I seek to show the world, of a husband & wife. Matter of fact, I hate the idea of the Church leading My Son Jesus, but that is the picture of a wife leading her husband. And stop being so tricky, pretending to let your husband lead. He hasn't figured it out yet, but do you know you've never deceived Me! Submit to him, even when it's terribly hard.

Husbands, I tried to make it really easy with one monosyllable word...love. Of course there will be times you won't feel like it, but I don't base My love towards you on feelings, but on action. I want you to love her

spiritually, sacrificially, sensitively, just as I displayed. You are going to want to hold things against her. Let them go. Don't breed bitterness, it will only eat you up from the inside out, & it's pretty ugly when it comes out. Oh she's irritating, look in a mirror. Why have you made fault finding a sport? Do you not trust that I can reveal those things to her on My own? Do you really think you can do a better job than Myself? Husbands, just love.

Children, I know you think you understand it all already, but you have a long way to go. I know your parents seem outdated & antiquated, but they've walked many miles in their moccasins. I've personally shown them a lot of life lessons over the years. I have chosen your exact parents as a perfect fit for all I have planned for you. You won't understand it all now, but be obedient to them. If for no other reason...because it puts a smile in My heart & you don't need any other reason than that.

Fathers, what often starts as merriment ends in discouragement. You say you were just playing, but at someone else's expense. Mine! You offend me when you discourage My kids. Remember they are my kids. At their baby dedication you understood they were only *yours on loan*. Kind of a manager over them, but they are truly Mine. Encourage, don't discourage. Your job is to inspire, motivate, cheer on & spur on, stir up & fire up, stimulate & empower them. Teach them how to live, how to dream, how to risk, & how to truly live...for something bigger than themselves.

Employees, show Me you know how to take directions from someone else. Show Me you are humble by taking orders & carrying them out. Show Me you're aren't so small as to only be able to take directions from someone older, wiser, & in higher rank than yourself. And did you know it's pretty embarrassing explaining to all the angels what you're doing when you only work when being watched. If you don't love your boss, how can you say you love me? Remember you serve Me! That ought to get you through anything your boss throws at you.

Employers, Do the right thing. Be just & fair with every employee. If they're not performing deal with it *with them*, not by talking about it with others, or ignoring it, or by being bitter towards them. Did you know I desire to use you & your company in teaching them how to serve, & obey, & follow, so they'll know how to do it spiritually with me. Yes, your business is simply a practical application to spiritual life. How you treat your employees is how I'll treat you. Love them. Show them servant leadership.

End Prayer: We are all in the **gutter**, but some of us are **looking at the stars**.

Colossians 4

VIGILANT PRAYER!

PRAY! (Colossians 4:1-6)

(Colossians 4:2) Prayer consists of a persevering will(earnest), an alert mind (vigilant), & a grateful heart (thanksgiving).

Pray continually with mental alertness. And let thankfulness be your environment for good informed praying, concerning what God has done, is doing, & is going to do.

Whatever the attitude of the body, the soul should always be on its knees. (Maclaren)

Vigilant - implies alertness, avoiding all drowsiness & sleep. Watchfulness.

We are not to watch ourselves (that would be depressing); We are not to watch Satan (that would be distracting);

We are not to watch our sins (that would be disheartening); We are to keep our gaze fixed on Christ.

(Colossians 4:2-4) Pray also for us! - Let's move from the church of Colosse to the church of Murrieta.

PRAY for us!

(Colossians 4:3) Paul prayed not for an open prison door, but an open door of ministry.

We're not seeing the answer as a big fat check to meet the needs; we're asking God to help us get to that

place where He wants us in reference to stewardship.

So Colossians 4:2-4 have covered, Be Prayerful; Watchful; Thankful; & now Fruitful.

(Colossians 4:5) Watch your walk! (then, Watch your mouth!)

Walk in wisdom means to live a life of conduct in such a way as to impress & win them that are without.

The Christian is the world's bible. They're watching to see whether there is any reality in our religion.

Those who are outside - The unsaved are outside the family of God, & it is our task to bring them in.

Effect witness involves walking wisely. Be alert to every opportunity.

Redeeming the time - "buying up the opportunity". Letting no opportunity be lost, using every occasion wisely to impress & if possible lead them to Christ.

(Colossians 4:6) Watch your mouth!

Be careful what you say & how you say it.

Your conversation is to be suited to each person.

It calls for Christian graciousness & sensitivity to the specific person & situation.

Seasoned with salt - it should have such a spiritual flavor that it will never be bland, but forceful & telling, wholesome, free from all harm, & capable of inspiring others with moral & spiritual blessing.

:- (Bland Christian speech! - spiritual platitudes, lines that have been used too often, it has become dull, "have faith", "God knows", "it's a God thing".

Jesus didn't use these! Have content, depth, salt!

CO-WORKERS! (Colossians 4:7-14)

Aristarchus - There's a time to be active for Christ, & other times "sitting in prison cells of inactivity".

An old woman, full of action & activity, was laid aside, & her friends wondered how she could possibly bear the inaction after her constant restless service. When they asked about this, she replied, "When I was able to do it the Lord said, 'Betty, go here,' & 'Betty, go there,' but now He says, 'Betty, lie still & cough.'"

Paul names 6 men who were working at his side & encourages them in the Lord.