**Above All Put on Love**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Colossians 3:9-16**

**Wednesday Evening**

**August 18, 2021**

**Colossians 3:9-16**

9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

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

**9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,**

Saints, because Jesus Christ is “the truth” (John 14:6), believers ought to practice truth in all areas of life.

**John 14:6**

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Believers should not lie to each other. Lying to others disrupts unity by destroying trust. It tears down relationships and may lead to serious conflict in a church. Lying can take place in words said as well as words left unsaid.

Believers should not exaggerate statistics, pass on rumors or gossip, or say things to build up their own image at others’ expense. Instead, because they have stripped off the old evil nature and all its wicked deeds, they should be committed to telling the truth.

**Proverbs 6:16-19**

16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.

**Proverbs 12:17-22**

17 He who speaks truth declares righteousness, But a false witness, deceit. 18 There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, But the tongue of the wise promotes health. 19 The truthful lip shall be established forever, But a lying tongue is but for a moment.

20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of peace have joy. 21 No grave trouble will overtake the righteous, But the wicked shall be filled with evil. 22 Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal truthfully are His delight.

**Proverbs 19:9**

A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies shall perish**.**

Saints, the “old nature” was each person before he or she came to know Christ. The person was enslaved to sin, bound to the earth, without hope. But believers have clothed themselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed.

The “new nature” from Christ frees us from sin, sets our hearts on “things above,” and gives us the hope of eternity. Paul was appealing to the commitment the believers had made, urging them to remain true to their confession of faith.

Every Christian is in a continuing education program. Renewal is constantly needed in the believer’s battle against sin and the old nature. What we learn is personal knowledge of Christ who created this new nature within us.

The goal of the learning is Christlikeness. The more believers know of Christ and his work, the more they are being changed to be like him. Because this process is lifelong, we must never stop learning and obeying.

**11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.**

There should be no barriers of nationality, race, education level, social standing, wealth, gender, religion, or power.

**Galatians 3:26-29**

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

**Galatians 6:15**

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation”

Paul pointed out four groupings that were of particular importance in the Greek culture:

1. Racial or national distinctions, such as between Jew and Gentile. The spread of the Greek culture and civilization meant that a Greek person (regardless of his or her country of origin) could feel pride in a privileged position and would look down on the Jews and their persistent clinging to an ancient culture. The Jews, meanwhile, would look down on Greeks as heathen, immoral, and outside of God’s grace for the chosen nation.

2. Religious distinctions, such as between those who have been circumcised (Jews) and those who are uncircumcised (Gentiles). Circumcision, the physical mark of the male Jew, was prized as part of the covenant of God with his chosen people.

If practiced at all by Gentiles, it was as part of a heathen cult; most often, the Gentiles were uncircumcised, and they mocked the seriousness of the rite for the Jews.

3. Cultural distinctions, such as between barbaric or uncivilized peoples (contemptuous names used for people unfamiliar with Greek language and culture) and cultured peoples.

4. Economic or social distinctions, such as between a slave and a free person. Slavery was common in the ancient world. Paul would have special words for the relationships between masters and slaves.

How could these barriers possibly be removed? Paul’s answer:

because Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. The Colossian church was probably made up of all kinds of people. No believer should allow prejudices from pre-Christian days to be carried into the church.

Christ broke down all barriers; he accepts all who come to him. Believers, as Christ’s body, must do the same. Nothing should divide believers; nothing should keep them from experiencing unity. Each believer is responsible to get rid of the sinful practices of whatever life he or she led and become a new person in Christ.

Then, as part of God’s body of believers on earth, each person should work as part of the whole to advance God’s Kingdom.

**12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;**

Saints, In the Bible, God’s holy people are chosen by God for a specific purpose or destiny. No one can claim to be chosen by God because of his or her heritage or good works. God freely chooses to save whomever he wills.

**John 15:16-17**

16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.

**Galatians 1:15**

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace”

Saints, the doctrine of election teaches that it is God’s sovereign choice to save us by his goodness and mercy and not by our own merit.

To have received such incredible grace from God ought to cause all believers to gladly lay aside their sinful desires in order to clothe themselves with a nature that pleases God.

In contrast to the vices listed above, Paul offered a list of virtues to be adopted as believers’ strategy to live for God day by day in the social activities of life. These include:

**13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.**

Saints, Clothing ourselves with the new nature affects how we treat others. Paul called the believers to make allowance for each other’s faults. To forgive implies continual, mutual forgiveness of the problems, irritations, and grievances that occur in the congregation.

Saints, the church had enough enemies and troubles dealing with the outside world; they didn’t need infighting or energy wasted on grievances or grudges (either held over from pre-Christian days or arising in the church) that could be worked out with forbearing and forgiving. The key to forgiving others was for the believers to

1. Remember how much the Lord forgave them!

2. Realize the presumption in refusing to forgive someone God had already forgiven!

**Mark 11:25-26**

25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

**Matthew 6:14-15**

14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Remembering God’s infinite love and forgiveness should help the Colossian believers and us to love and forgive one another.

**14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.**

Saints, all the virtues that Paul encouraged the believers in Colosse to develop were perfectly bound together by love. As they clothed themselves with these virtues, the last garment to put on was love, which, like a belt, binds all of the others in place.

Love pulls together the other graces in perfect, unified action. To practice any list of virtues without practicing love will lead to distortion, fragmentation, and stagnation. In any congregation, love must be used to unify the people and build them up. Those who would desire to be mature in Christ must make love a top priority.

**Proverbs 10:11-12**

11 The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked. 12 Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.

**1 Peter 4:7-10**

7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

**15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.**

Saints, putting on all the virtues, with love binding them together, would lead to peace between individuals and among the members of the body of believers.

**John 16:33**

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

**2 Thessalonians 3:16**

“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all”

**Isaiah 26:3**

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you”

**Matthew 5:9**

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

**Philippians 4:6**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

**Romans 12:18**

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all”

**John 14:27**

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

Saints, the Colossian Christians should let the peace that comes from Christ rule in their hearts. To live in peace would not mean that suddenly all differences of opinion would be eliminated, but it would require that they work together despite their differences.

This kind of tranquility and cooperation can’t come from mere human effort. It requires God’s help to arbitrate and enable people to get along.

**16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.**

Saints, the words of Christ referred to the message proclaimed by Christ (the gospel). For us, this means the Bible. This teaching should live (reside permanently) in believers’ hearts by their study and knowledge of God’s word, making them wise.

To teach and counsel refers to the whole congregation and their responsibility to teach the Word—including the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus Christ—as a means to warn and correct one another.

**1 John 2:27**

“But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him”

The psalms, hymns and spiritual songs were a vital part of this teaching and admonition. Although the early Christians had access to the Old Testament and freely used it (thus, Paul’s reference to “psalms”), they did not yet have the New Testament or any other Christian books to study.

Their stories and teachings about Christ were sometimes set to music to make them easier to memorize and pass on from person to person. Grounded in God’s word and correct doctrine, music can be an important part of Christian worship and education.

While music can teach, its primary function may be to praise God. As believers sing, they ought to do so with thankful hearts. Again, the word “heart” refers to a person’s entire being. Gratitude to God overflows in praise.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**