

G'Day church family

We're continuing our series on the Apostle Paul's letter to the church of the Colossians. So please have your Bibles turned to Colossians chapter 3 - we're looking at verses 1 to 17.

Let me ask God to help us in our understanding of this passage.

Let's pray...

### **Intro/Recap**

Back in 2009 the Bible Society launched a campaign "Jesus all about life"

[PowerPoint 1-JAAL]

The goal was to create conversations about Jesus, utilizing the different Church denominations to bring the Gospel message to NSW. The campaign leveraged the media in an integrated, modern way to spark a conversation.

In just 8 weeks, 67% of people in NSW experienced the campaign in some form and the campaign achieved its goal of getting NSW talking about Jesus once again.

I pray our look at this passage today might spark more conversations about Jesus!

The book of Colossians is like the Apostle Paul's version of the "Jesus All about Life" Campaign...

Last week we said that we had freedom because believing in Jesus death and resurrection means...

### [PowerPoint 2-Recap]

Jesus has fixed our sin and our death

And so our lives are not so much about following a whole bunch of rules (even though we need rules) - but our lives are now about a new way of living with freedom because of Jesus

This freedom from Jesus - allows us to live a life where we want to love God, want to love Jesus and want to love others - and we'll WANT TO do this - rather than HAVING TO - because the rules say so!

Because of what Jesus has done for us - we'll want to live a life that pleases God and brings glory to Him

(Like wanting to come to church - not having to - but wanting to - so we can say thank you Jesus)

Sometimes we'll hear people say:

Music is my life

Or Sport is my life

Or so and so lives for their work

Such a person finds life and all that it means - in music, or in sport or in work, as the case may be.

### [PowerPoint 3-Col 3:4]

Now this week Paul goes as far as saying in verse 4 of chapter 3 - not only do we have freedom in Jesus Christ - in fact - ***Christ is OUR LIFE***

[A bit like the JAAL campaign]

In today's passage from Colossians

The Apostle Paul describes what this new life we have in Jesus looks like - in chapter 3 verses 1 to 17

So in verses 1 to 4 of chapter 3

Paul first explains

*How we have new life in Christ...*

[PowerPoint 4-How?]

**How we have new life in Christ (vv1-4)**

[PowerPoint 4a-reborn]

- Paul says - as we believe in Jesus - it's like our old sinful life has died with Jesus on the cross and we now have a new spirit-filled life because of Jesus' resurrection - we are born again - born from above - baptized and filled with God's Holy Spirit as we become a believer in Jesus

[PowerPoint 4b-baptism]

- Paul describes this new spirit-filled life in terms of Baptism - something he did earlier in chapter 2 verse 12

In Baptism it's like a person's old-self dies under the water and then their new-self rises again as they come out of the water. As the waters close over them, it's as if they were buried in death; and then they re-emerge

from the water as if resurrected into a new life. That means a Christian rises from baptism as a changed person

So because they are a changed person - Paul says - they now think differently - and so Paul says - set your heart on things above (v1) - and set your minds on things above - not earthly things (v2)

It doesn't mean a Christian withdraws from all work and activities of this world and does nothing but contemplate on eternity in Heaven. {As Paul goes on to talk about a whole bunch of ethical principles in the next few verses}

No - it means a Christian will view everything against the background of eternity and will no longer live as if this world is all that matters.

Therefore there will be a new set of values. Things which the world views as important - like ambitions, status and esteem - will no longer have power over a Christian.

A Christian will set giving above receiving, serving above ruling, forgiving above taking revenge. A Christian will have a heart for those lost from God. A Christian's standards will be God's standards not human standards. A Christian's life is now hidden in Christ (v3) - not hidden in the earth like someone does when they die and are buried = and not hidden in the wisdom of secret books of the Gnostics - but hidden in the wisdom of Christ and in the treasure chest of His Holy Word!

- And don't forget - Paul says in v4 - when Christ appears (that is when He returns) - we have the promise that - not only will we see His glory - but we also will appear with Him in this glory in Heaven - in God's glorious presence.

In the meantime - Paul says Christ is seated at the position of power and authority at the Father's right hand - in glory - in Heaven and He's interceding for us constantly

Also, in the meantime - we have to live our life on Earth

Paul uses the analogy of living this new life in Christ - as being like changing our clothes

Now we can't put new clothes on top of old dirty clothes - can we?

So we need to get rid of the old dirty clothes first

The old clothes represent our old sinful life

When the early Christians were baptized - they took off their old clothes when they went down to the river to be baptized and then they went down under the water - when they come up out of the water - they put on a new pure white robe - to represent being washed clean of their sins

That's kinda of the picture Paul's painting here

The old clothes have to come off first - see verses 5 to 10...

### **Old Life - Old Clothes (vv5-10)**

Old clothes which represent things that are against God and offend God and keep you from pleasing God and fulfilling His will for us

Old clothes are like grave clothes

[PowerPoint 5-Old clothes]

Old clothes = to do with our actions and thoughts

Old clothes = sexual immorality (*sexual relationships before marriage and outside of marriage*), impurity (*physical uncleanness or immoral behaviour*), lust, evil desires and greed (*literally the desire to have more and more which =idolatry because we end up worshipping ourselves and the things we crave for instead of God*).

Old clothes also = anger, rage and malice

And old clothes to do with our speech = slander, filthy language (potty mouth) - [first thing I noticed when becoming a Christian was my language changed] - and also lying to each other.

Before we speak - ask ourselves - is it true, is it necessary, is it kind?

Paul warns that keeping these old dirty clothes on will get us the wrath (the anger) of God in v6

Old dirty clothes and dirty life are not fitting for someone who is being renewed by the Spirit of God - into the image of God the creator. Plus we must understand, as Christians, our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19).

**Challenge:** Are there some old dirty clothes we need to take off?

(pause)

### **New Life - New Clothes (vv11-14)**

One of the great effects of Christianity is that it destroys the barriers of this world

[PowerPoint 6-New Clothes]

That's why Paul says in v11 - there are no barriers in this new life of a Christian.

Gentiles (non-Jews) and Jews are equal

Circumcised and uncircumcised = equal

Barbarians (uncivilized people) and Scythians lowest of barbarians - nomads from Iran = equal

Slaves and free people are = equal

IN Christ all these barriers were and are broken down

Barriers to do with our birth place, our nationality, our race, our traditions, our cultures and our status and our class - don't matter - when we believe in Jesus

We are all Jesus' family here - all brothers and sister in Christ - from different nations, different cultures, different socio-economic circumstances - but we're all one in Jesus

So Paul says to put on new clothes for a new life - a new life in Jesus - in vv12-14

Why?

Because we are God's chosen people, - holy and dearly loved (v12)

These words "God's chosen people - Holy - and dearly loved" were once spoken about Jews - now because of faith in Jesus - these words are spoken of all

Christians

Being forgiven Christians

When God looks at us - He sees Jesus and His righteousness - and not our sinfulness

So these new clothes we put on - need to represent Jesus and they represent the changed/transformed life we have in Jesus - and they are the clothes that Jesus Himself wears!

These new clothes = are all to do with relationships with others

These new clothes = compassion (*giving love and help to those less fortunate, those in poor circumstances, those who are poor, widowed, lonely, those with mental health problems*), kindness (*where a neighbour's well-being is just as important as ours*), humility (*being aware we are God's creatures and not God - and the awareness that we are all God's creatures and there is no room for arrogance - we're all equal in Christ*), gentleness (*Literally self-controlled because we are God-controlled*), patience (*not letting people's foolishness or unteachability drive us to being cynical or despair. Not letting insults and ill-treatment drive us to be bitter. Human patience is a reflection of Divine patience - which bears with all our sinning and never casts us off*)

Forgiving like the Lord forgave? How? The same way Jesus forgave on the cross - "*Father - forgive them they don't know what they are doing*". Only those who are forgiving can be forgiven by God (Matthew 6:15)

**Challenge:** Are there some of these new clothes in our wardrobe that we haven't put on yet?

(pause)

Overarching all these new clothes is LOVE -

Love is like the glue that sticks all these new clothes together

Our OT reading from Deuteronomy 6:5 - says:

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Not so we can achieve our salvation (because only Jesus can do this)

But follow this command - to live a life that is pleasing to God and brings glory to Him

Deut 6:6 - Says this command of Love should be in and on our hearts

Deut 6:7 says - to impress these commandments on our children - the application for this is: SRE in our schools, Sunday School, at Home, with our grandchildren, at Jaffa and Xcelerate

How can we actually get dressed in these new clothes?

Through the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit:

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)

How can we actually get dressed in these new clothes?

In Jesus' strength - not our own

I can do all this through him who gives me strength. (Phil 4:13)

How can we actually get dressed in these new clothes?

Step by Step - baby steps - then strides - then walking - then running

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25)

## Results of Life in Christ (vv15-17)

The results of life in Christ - and wearing these new clothes of Christ - Paul gives in verses 15-17

### [PowerPoint 7-Results]

First - See V15 - *The Peace of Christ ruling our hearts*

The Greek word for rule here means to arbitrate. Whenever there is a doubtful issue to be decided, and one course of action may lead to our peace being wrecked, whilst by another course of action, peace may be maintained, we should choose the things that make for peace, whether for ourselves or for others. Let God's peace act as the umpire in our decisions. That's what Paul means here.

And always be thankful always - counting our blessings

This Peace is accomplished in v16 by letting Jesus message live richly in us - Jesus' message of - loving God and loving others - Let His word teach us and tell us off when we get it wrong - always relying on God's wisdom

2<sup>nd</sup> result - see v16 - *the proper worship of God* - in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs - again always being thankful

3<sup>rd</sup> result - see V17 - *Everything we do - with our words - or with our actions - we're saying and doing it in Jesus' name.*

Ask ourselves?

Would Jesus say this? How would Jesus say this?

Would Jesus do this? How would Jesus tackle this?

Again being thankful always.

## Conclusion

So the bottom line is: Jesus is our life

[PowerPoint 8-Conclusion]

Paul says Phil 1:21

<sup>21</sup>For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Paul also says in Gal 2:20

<sup>20</sup>I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

As Paul sees it - to the Christian, Jesus Christ is the most important thing in life; in fact, Christ is our life

Let's pray...