

BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH
CNR THOMPSON & MARCUS RDS., LWR TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3107
"The Supremacy of Christ - Studies in Colossians"
Sunday, October 3, 2004 : Study 9 (Colossians 3 ; 1 - 11)
"New People : Breaking With The Past"

Notes by Rev. Gary Lockyer

CONTEXT : Where are we in the Series?

We begin the third section of Paul's Colossian letter : Col 3:1- 4:1 It's sub-structure is :

1. New People : Breaking With The Past : (3 : 1 - 11)
2. New People : New Values : (3 : 11 - 14)
3. New People : Lasting Effects : (3 : 14 - 17)
4. New People : New Relationships : (3 : 18 - 4 : 6)

Today's Study

CONTEXT .. of the Passage in Colossians

Section 1 : celebrated the supremacy of Christ and the sufficiency of the Gospel (1:1-2:7)

Section 2 : confronted and rejected the alternative religious philosophies and practices that vied for the Colossian Christians' attention . (2:8-23)

Section 3 : A challenge to the Colossian Church to be the people that God had called them to be.

In a crowded market place of religious rituals and philosophies, the Christians : "cupboard" looked exceedingly bare : all they had was faith in Jesus! Yes, that is all the Christian has; but to have Jesus is to have everything - and this theme Paul repeats over again. (1:12-27; 2:2-3, 9-15)

Paul also dismissed the idea that slavish adherence to petty rules and regulations indicated religious maturity or answered the deep longings of the human heart for intimacy with God. Nor could it restrain the wrong that arose from the human heart. (2:20-23)

If in Jesus we have everything needed and necessary; everything that God has to give

and if following a harsh system of rules and regulations
is not the answer to restrain the wrong that we do

how then do we *"live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way?"* (1:10; Eph4:1)

A. FIRSTLY, ACKNOWLEDGE OUR POSITION IN CHRIST.

1. *"For you died"* (3:3a) *"You have been raised"* (3:1)

Past tense - the issue is SETTLED

We are : RESCUED - Members of his Kingdom, forgiven, redeemed (1:13-14)

RECONCILED - with God; at peace with him. (2:19-20, 22a)

2. *"Your life is now hidden with Christ in God"* (3:3b)

Our POSITION (before God) - SECURE in Christ

Our LEGAL standing is as an "adult son", with full rights as an heir, to all that God has promised. (Gal3:26-29, 4:1-7 cf Rom8:14-17). We are said to be *"seated with Christ in the heavenly realms"* (Eph2:6)

As "sons", Col 1:22 tells us that we are, *"holy in his sight without blemish and free from accusation."*

As "sons and heirs" we *"share in his glory"* (Rom8:17) In this context, because God has marked us for a future, *"nothing is able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus."* (Rom8:39b - see the context from v28)

3. *"When Christ appears then you also will appear with him in glory."* (Col 3:4)

FUTURE expectation - CERTAINTY about the outcome.

Note that in Romans 8, the "sons of God wait to be revealed" (8:19) and that "Glory will be revealed in us" (8:18). John also speaks of our standing as the "children of God" in connection with Jesus' Return and our "being like him." (1Jn3:1-3)

In both Gal4:6-7 and Rom8:14-17, it is the activity of the Spirit of God that makes us "sons." And it is his presence in our lives that is "God's deposit;" the guarantee of our inheritance in Christ until we receive it fully when he Returns. (Eph2:13-14, see also 2Cor1:21-22)

"He who begun a good work in you will bring it to completion on the day of Christ." (Php1:6)

B. SECONDLY, ADJUST OUR ATTITUDES AND PRIORITIES

"Set your hearts on things above." "Set your minds on things above, not earthly things"
"Christ ... your life" (Col 3:1,2,4)

As Chapter 3 develops, Christians are encouraged to rigorous self-discipline, forgiving love toward others while living in community, and transformed relationships in the home:

.....These commands are not an encouragement to WITHDRAW from the world or its concerns. Nor do they teach that its problems and pain are not REAL

In view of the description of the sins in verse 5 as *"earthly things"* we may justly see the list of qualities starting from verse 12 as *"things above."* not a question of "geography" but of :

PRIORITIES : *"Seek first the Kingdom of God...."* (Mat6:33; 2Cor5:15)
ATTITUDES : toward sin (*"put to death"* v5, *"God's wrath is coming"* v6)
: toward right living (*"clothe yourselves with compassion ..."* v12)

Our vision in this world should be controlled by the spiritual realities that remain after this world is no more : *"... since everything will be destroyed, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God ..."* (2Ptr3:11)

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* Romans 12:2

C. THIRDLY, ACTIVELY REJECT SIN

"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature." (3:5)

Why? Because the Christian has a new life and these belong to the old. (3:7)

Notice that Paul addresses his appeal to the will.

1. A Change in the Will's abilities:

Once, the will was in BONDAGE to sin but is now set free. (Rom6 : 15-18)

Our new freedom is to be used to SERVE God. (Rom6:18; Gal5:1)

2. A Transformation In Our Lives (Col 3:9b-10)

This passage is the basis of the moral transformation encouraged in verses 5 - 9a

a. *"Have taken off ... have put on"* - Past tense - The new life in Christ does not come as a RESULT of change, but is the basis for it

b. *"is being renewed"* - Present continuous - ongoing PROCESS (2Cor3:18)
- Passive voice - the renewal does not result from our efforts, but God's work in us. (Eph2:10; Php2:12-13)

So, we are not left to our own devices to "walk worthy." But the presence of Christ in a persons' life MUST (and always does) show itself in transformed living :

"Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus walked." (1Jn2:6)

" No one who is born of God will continue to sin." (1Jn3:9)

(Note : John is not teaching "sinless perfection" {see 1Jn1:-10, 2:1-2} but that no one can claim to be Christ's if their life's sinful pattern, and the heart's attitude to it, remain unchanged.)