

Sermon, April 22, 2012
“Put On the New Self” - Colossians 3:1-17
Pastor Thomas P. Bellhy

The 27 Books of the New Testament

- Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- Early Church: Book of Acts
- 13 Letters of Paul: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, **Colossians**, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon
- 8 General Letters: Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude
- Prophecy: Revelations

Overview of Colossians:¹

- This letter was written to the believers in Colosse.
- The church there had been planted by Paul’s coworker Epaphras (1:7; 4:12), who joined Paul while he was under house arrest in Rome (4:12; Phm 23; see Ac 28:16–31), during which time the apostle likely wrote this letter, around 60-62AD.
- Epaphras had just brought a report to Paul on the situation of the churches in the Lycus Valley. Although much of the news was good, certain matters concerned Paul.
- A brand of false teaching had arisen in Colosse, but it is unclear whether this was a unified body of false doctrine or an amalgam of errors, superstitions and misunderstandings.
- Elements included taboos about food and holy days, devotion to angelic beings and a pseudo-sophisticated theology that may have had something to do with the later Gnostic heresies (ch. 2).
- A large portion of the letter, however, is taken up with general exhortations to Christian living (chs. 3–4).

General Outline of Colossians:

- I. Greeting, Thanksgiving and Prayer (1:1–14)
- II. Christ Is Supreme (1:15–23)
- III. Paul’s Ministry (1:24–2:7)
- IV. Freedom From Human Regulations Through Life in Christ (2:8–23)
 - A. Warning Concerning False Teaching (2:8–15)
 - B. Ritual and Asceticism Not Standards of Maturity (2:16–19)
 - C. The False Practice of Asceticism (2:20–23)
- V. Rules for Holy Living (3:1–4:6)
 - A. Put to Death the Old Self and Put On the New Self (3:1–17)
 - B. Rules for Christian Households (3:18–4:1)
 - C. Further Instructions (4:2–6)
- VI. Final Greetings and Conclusion (4:7–18)

Major Themes of Colossians:²

- A warning against heresy. Paul labeled the Colossian heresy a vain deceit based on human tradition and the “basic principles of this world” (2:8, 20). It denied Christ’s sufficiency and belittled Christian hope in his finished work on the cross.
- The supremacy of Christ. Paul affirmed that: (a) Christ is God (1:15; 2:9); (b) he is the Creator of all things (1:16); (c) all the fullness of God dwells in him (1:19; 2:9); (d) Christ is superior to the angels (2:10, 15); (e) Christ is the head of the church (1:18), through whom believers have “fullness” (2:10); (f) in Christ all the requirements of the Mosaic Law have been met (2:11, 16–17); (g) asceticism has no value (2:23), while a life “hidden in Christ” (3:3) brings glory (3:4); and (h) Christ himself is the “mystery of God” (2:2; see 1:25–27; 4:3); no other secret knowledge is necessary.
- Christian living. Paul insisted that the believer’s union with Christ (3:1–4) results in holy living. He outlined clear standards (3:5–17) that prescribe attitudes that are to govern relationships within family and church. Leadership is to be exercised, but domination is unacceptable.

¹Kaiser Jr., Walter C.; Garrett, Duane (2010-10-19). NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture (Kindle Locations 109015-109019). Zondervan. Kindle Edition..

²Kaiser Jr., Walter C.; Garrett, Duane (2010-10-19). NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical History and Culture (Kindle Locations 109575-109577). Zondervan. Kindle Edition..

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In your new life in Christ, God commands you to “put off” your old self of sin and disobedience and “put on” the new self...know who you are and where you live!

1. Christ is God who rescues you. Christ is all sufficient and cancels your debt.

- The first chapter of Colossians explains Christ as God, eternal, the creator of all things, condescended to become a human being, and suffered death on the cross to rescue you from your sins, revealing the mystery of God... *“Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (1:27)
- The second chapter condemns man-made philosophy and warns against false teachings that lead you away from the word of God. You are not bound by sets of rules of tradition or other man-made rules to free you from sin, only Jesus can set you free. (2:13-14); Chapter three commands you to “put on” the new self...

2. The first step in understanding your new relationship with Christ is to know where you live...(3:1-4)

- Since you have been spiritually positioned in the heavenly realm, think heavenly thoughts.
- You are actually, literally part of the Kingdom of God so you must start behaving like you belong there.
- God commands you to **“set your mind** on heavenly things...”

3. You will be drawn back to that which was once comfortable to you...put them to death! (3:5-8)

- The comfort of your “old self” will want to draw you back to behavior that is not appropriate for the Kingdom of God.
- God commands you to **“Put them to death...”**
- You are in a new land; learn the customs and get rid of your old ways...
- Begin to recognize your location, your surroundings, who and where you are...a child of God in the Kingdom of Heaven!

4. Dress yourself the right way! Not your body, but your heart. (3:8-11)

- You are forever in the presence of your King. Dress your heart accordingly.
- Take off the old, dirty, stinky clothes of your old heart and put on fresh, clean, fragrant clothing
- Cloth your new heart in the righteousness freely given to you by faith in Christ.
- Be proud of your new home but remember where you came from. This renewal is not one in which you hold yourself out to be holier than thou that is the essence of being hypocritical,
- **Jesus parable of the Pharisee and tax collector...Luke 18:9-14**
- Your new clothes make you unique and put you in the same Kingdom as other believers.

5. Be in unity with others in your new Kingdom. One who has put on the “new self” in Christ knows the deprecation of the “old self” filled with sin and death and will. (3:12-17)

- The “new self” in Christ truly knows the deprecation of the “old self” filled with sin and death
- The Lord desires peace, unity and purity in His Kingdom not conflict, chaos and contamination.
- Be forgiving of each other just as the Lord has forgiven you.

Conclusion:

- You are no longer paupers in worldly kingdom, slaves to traditions of men, worshippers of academic pride, partakers in philosophical musings, participants in all sorts of evil behavior that falls short of the glory of God...SIN!
- A genuine heart of faith in Jesus Christ is convicted of the “old” and longs for the “new”
- Be encouraged, be who you are, know where you live!
- You are children of the Living God!
- You live in the Kingdom of God!
- You are part of the body of Christ, the church of God!