

Christ in you...

The message of Colossians



Week 8: *What Not To Wear*

INTRODUCTION – Subversive Ethic

The Kingdom of Christ (**Colossians 1:13**) is a deeply relational way of living – one that guides our relationships with the King, other subjects of the kingdom, and other kingdoms.

DINE IN – Studying the Text in Context

Colossians 3:5-11

- **PUT TO DEATH:** Since we have already died with Christ, we should put to death what is not part of the Christ-like life. We are responsible to make experientially real what we already know to be spiritually real.
- **EARTHLY NATURE:** Those attitudes and actions that are part of the earthly kingdom rather than the kingdom of heaven.
- **SEXUAL SIN:** Invades and erodes us at the core of our God-image.
- **GREED AS IDOLATRY:** The Greek for greed (*pleonexia*) means “the desire to have (*echein*) more (*pleon*)”. It runs contrary to thanksgiving, which should be fundamental to our Christian attitude (**2:7; 3:15-17**).
- **ANGER/WRATH:** Rarely viewed as a Christian characteristic, since anger/wrath is linked with judgement of another, which is God’s jurisdiction.
- **VERBAL SINS:** Like James in his epistle (see **James 3**), Paul highlights the potentially destructive power of words.
- **BARBARIANS & SCYTHIANS:** Barbarians were anyone who wasn’t cultured enough to speak Greek or Latin. Scythians were who even the barbarians considered barbarians.
- **TRIBALISM UNACCEPTABLE:** Paul highlights racial, religious, cultural, and economic divisions. Other ways we might divide people up today might include male/female, married/single, gay/straight, cool/_____.
- **CHRIST IS ALL:** Surprise...! It’s all about Jesus.

TAKE OUT – Applying the Text in Our Context

TAKE OUT #1: REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE.

Our ethics should grow out of our identity and our place in the story of God. You are more than the sum total of your passions, desires, and habits (Lit, your “earthly members/parts”). You are the spirit behind all of that – the will who can observe, identify, and act. All that other stuff is just your clothing. You have the power to make different choices.

TAKE OUT #2: GREED VS. GRATITUDE.

We become like what we pursue. Greed/Lust increases our dissatisfaction and co-dependence on things. Gratitude turns our attentions to God and makes us happier, more content, centred people (**2:7; 3:15-17**). Are you giving your energies to what you want to become like?

Psalms 115:8

TAKE OUT #3: USING OUR WORDS WISELY.

Be mindful that words are small bursts of energy – creative or destructive power – which shoot out of our mouths and into the hearts of others. We should find creative ways to practice authenticity and honesty at all times (e.g., learning the difference between honesty and openness, appreciating the beauty of plain speech in a culture of sarcasm, etc).

CONCLUSION – Choosing the Kingdom of Christ

Choosing one path invariably requires rejecting other paths, and it is impossible to walk on more than one path at once if you are actually trying to get somewhere.
~ Brian Walsh

Mark 1:15

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. After briefly reviewing this week’s message, share one thing that most challenged, puzzled, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

2. Read our key text and beyond (**3:1-17**) in a variety of translations if possible. a) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? b) Why do you think Paul highlights sexual and verbal sins? (Which are harder for you to put to death?) c) How is greed idolatry? How idolatrous is our society? What are some practical ways we can shun the idolatry of our culture? Share ideas that have worked for you. d) Thinking of **verse 11**, if you have a copy of *The End of Religion*, answer question #1 on page 119-121.
3. Do you tend to think of Christianity as a) a way of behaving (ethics), b) a way of believing (theology), or c) a way of belonging (community)? How might you argue from Colossians that, above all, Christianity is a way of being?

SO WHAT?...

4. Can you remember a time when you were behaving a certain way (perhaps doing or expressing something you knew wasn’t right) while at the same time having the conscious awareness of observing yourself behave that way? When this happens, God is giving you the power to choose a different path. Talk about examples in the past. Discuss strategies for the future. Pray.

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, March 30, 2008