

# Be Who You Are

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you, Elliot. It is a treat for me to be here. We'll see how long. Elliot keeps saying it's a treat to have me speak. I have had a couple of people this morning ask me how long it's going to be. I don't know, that's not a good sign. I mean, how long are you going? Are we getting out by lunch? All right. So, but it is, it is a great privilege for me to be here. Again, my name is Kirk. I'm one of the pastors here at City Grace.

And we're continuing on in our sermon series on Colossians. And Colossians is deep and it's rich. And there's a lot in there. And this morning is no exception. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and pull them out to Colossians. It's going to be great for you to reference it as we go along. I'll be skipping in and out of different verses and moving through the passage. If you have the app on your phone, something like that, that'd be helpful for you.

Just a quick intro. And I have some slides up here to show you. I'm a map guy. I love seeing where things are at. But these towns of Colossae, Laodicea, and Heropolis, they're very close actually. And there are some distinctive features in this area that made them wealthy, well off. It was a trade route. You can see on one of these maps, the trade route that goes right through between where these cities are and goes out to the sea.

There's a river there called the river Lycus. And that produced a lot of chalk, which is not great for vegetation, but it was used in dyes and making dyes for cloth. It also had made these natural sculptures that were really beautiful. And people came to that area to see these sculptures.

[ 1 : 32 ] This area was also famous for earthquakes. Again, it's not always great in certain ways, but that volcanic ground, it's very fertile. And so it was amazing for shepherding and flocks. And they could feed off this ground.

And so Laodicea became one of the places that was known in that time for garments that were high quality. And then Colossae actually was where the dye was made. And there's one that was named after Colossae.

But over time, Colossae started to diminish in power and status economically. And actually, its counterparts became more famous.

Laodicea became the political and the financial headquarters of the area. And then Heropolis is interesting. And it's mentioned, you know, you think later when Paul talks about water, sorry, John talks about water in Revelation, when he talks about hot water, cold water, Heropolis was known. And it thrived because it was a huge center of tourism. It had these volcanic hot springs. And people would come for the hot springs, not only for leisure, but also for the medicinal qualities of the water.

[ 2 : 38 ] And in modern day Turkey, you can see a picture there of what it might look like today. So I wonder this, as Paul's talking to the people in Colossae, I wonder this. I wonder if they struggled feeling less important as they watched their town and their economy diminish.

Did they struggle with jealousy or greed, covetousness, like, man, I wish we could still have what those people have. Did they want to go back to the good old days when life was full and rich? Maybe a little bit easier, maybe a little less complicated and we had everything we needed. I really don't know for sure, but what I can say is this. Paul is writing his very personal letter to this church of people who are grappling with real life.

I believe if we listen closely, we can find ourselves in the same struggle as our friends in the church in Colossae. So with that, with that in mind, let's jump into the passage here. And if you have it again, open it and we'll start in chapter 3.

If then, or since then, the NIV says, if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

[ 3 : 47 ] Set your minds on things above, not on things that are on earth, for you died and your life is hidden with Christ and God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, covetousness, which is idolatry.

On account of these things, the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked when you were living in them, but now you must put them all away. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

Do not lie to one another. Seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge, excuse me, renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here then, there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised, uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another.

[ 4 : 56 ] And if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. And above all these things, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Amen. It's the word of the Lord. Amen. Well, I'm going to start with a couple of illustrations here before we get into this, because that's a lot, right?

There's a lot happening here. I know sometimes Paul, he just, man, he hits you with it. You're like, whoa, that's a whole lot. And as we break this down, I want to give you a couple of illustrations, partly because my brain thinks in pictures, okay?

So this is how I need to understand it. So hopefully this makes it clearer for you and not more muddled. But I want to give you an idea of this paradox of the Christian faith, on things that are fixed and then things that are not so fixed, but they're in a process, okay?

[ 6 : 08 ] And I'm going to use the illustration of bound sets and centered sets, all right? So a bound set is something that's fixed, okay? It's used in mathematics, maybe like numbers between zero and one.

I don't know why that is, because there's no numbers between zero and one in my mind, but to some people there are. So three's not in that, okay? That's a bound set. In law, there might be a certain agreement.

You say, this is binding. This is a non-disclosure agreement or non-compete. And it's like, this is the parameters here. In geography, it could be a place. We have political lines.

So we have geographical areas that, unless you're going to cross that, there must be really, there must be some intentionality put in why and how you can cross that. You can't just go across and outside these boundaries. And people, so you have people groups.

There might be a bound set, okay? You say, for instance, maybe there's people born in Texas, okay? And they're going to let you know. And there's the rest of us. Okay, no, I'm just kidding. I love Texas. I've been there a few times. Great people. I've had amazing experiences in Texas, right?

[ 7 : 03 ] But either you're born in Texas or you're not. You're in or you're out, all right? Now, you're like, why are you talking about this, bro? What is happening? All right, here we go. Paul says, chapter three, verse one, NIV is, since then, or if then, you have been raised with Christ.

Okay, so for Paul, there are things that are fixed. In chapter two, he says, you died with Christ. Boom, dead. Not like partly dead or mostly dead, like dead.

You died with Christ. And now in chapter three, he says, you have been raised with Christ. So if you want to think in terms of like this idea of like salvation and the Christian life, it's very, very clear for Paul.

He's like, this is a done deal spiritually. We're good. But chapter two that Jesse spoke on last week, he says, the written code was canceled. Like this law thing of just like, there was a written code and that's actually been crossed out.

It's done. It's over. Now for the Colossian church, I believe Paul is moving into these things because they're maturing as a church. They're moving past basic belief, immaturity, toddler stage of spirituality.

[ 8 : 11 ] And they're facing some higher level spiritual threats. And now he's urging them into this process of the life of Christ. Okay. And this can seem confusing to us. At least when I used to read Paul, I get really confused.

I'm like, Paul, what is happening here? Because he starts using terms like in verse five, Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a second, Paul.

You just said you died. Why are you now saying put to death? Like, which is it? Which is it? Is my sin and my earthly nature and all that, is it dead or is it still dying?

And Paul would say, yes. So here's the concept of a centered set. It's helpful. A centered set, in a centered set, the value isn't necessarily on the boundary.

Okay. In fact, there's not necessarily a boundary. And you have to think about that. It's actually how close one object is to the object in the center. And I would add which way an object is moving. Is it moving towards the center?

[ 9 : 08 ] Is it moving away from the center? As we study Colossians, do you get a feel for what Paul would say is in the center of life, in all of existence, for everything, everywhere, for all eternity?

Christ. Like, Paul is saying Christ is at the center of everything. And last week, I mean, if you haven't picked up on that, it's okay.

Last week, Jesse said, how can we live in reference to Christ? And in chapter three, here's where he's going. He's going to move into this. So I want to look at this real quickly. Three, one through five. If you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, everything that is earthly in you. For Paul, everything we desire, everything we hope for, everything we fear, everything we think about, everything we experience, everything we want, it has to be confronted with this reality that Christ is seated.

[ 10 : 20 ] Right now, Christ is seated at the right hand of God. And Christ has victory. Christ is on the throne. I have this little plant in my office, and it sits on my windowsill.

It's a jade plant, so they're like a succulent, but it's very cool. Every week, I have to turn it, because as it sits on my windowsill, it starts to lean, starts to lean towards the window, until it'll touch the window.

And then I turn it. I just give it a half turn. And then next week, it starts to lean back towards the window. My little jade plant, 93 almost million miles away from the sun, is leaning towards the sunlight.

The sun blows my mind that it's the center of our solar system. Everything in our solar system yields to and thrives off the power of the sun. And here's my little plant.

Just one tiny piece of this whole thing is leaning in towards the sun. That's centered set thinking.

Am I leaning in towards Christ? For Paul and the Colossian people, he's trying to get this into our minds.

[ 11 : 29 ] Christ is the source. Christ is the sun. Christ is the center. So the question for us today is, am I moving towards Christ? No matter how far away I am, okay, it doesn't matter. You could be close or far, but like, am I facing the right direction?

No matter how far away I feel, am I facing the right direction? How can I, along with my brothers and sisters in Christ, okay, don't miss that. It's not just you. How can we set our minds, our hearts on Christ and live our lives as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved?

All right, here's why I'm taking the time to explain all this before jumping into the rest of chapter three. The Christian life, it's both a fixed reality and it's an ongoing process. Paul says, work out your salvation.

Wait, Paul, am I saved? Yes. Am I being saved? Yes. Is the kingdom here? Yes. Is the kingdom coming? Yes. And both are true.

Because that's what, and I hope this is encouraging because that's what I experience, at least in our daily life, that's what we experience. Look at verse 10. Again, you have put on the new self,

fixed, which is being renewed process in knowledge and the image of its creator.

[12:39] Church, I hope you've all experienced the love and saving grace of Jesus in your life. Maybe there was a fixed moment when you were convicted of your sin and you repented to the Lord, and hopefully you've had many moments along the way when you felt that, that nudge of the Holy Spirit or God drawing you towards him, drawing you to like live life the way he has you, empowering you by the Holy Spirit.

That process is called redemption. And that's what God's doing to make everything right, make it all beautiful and perfect again. And we're part of it. And Paul's saying, here's how we do it.

All right. So let's get practical. Here we go. For the Colossian church, here's the next steps. Paul's saying, here's what you do now. This is the way. Let's look at verse 5.

Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, covetousness, which is idolatry.

All right. These are the earthly things, okay? These are the things that are like more death-like than alive-like. He's like, you died with Christ. So when we have these things going on in life, we feel it. There's something not, there's something off.

[13:50] There's something not right. These are not the raised with Christ things. These are sort of, I would say, like your car. I have this, I have this car. It's a little old. And all of a sudden, these lights come on sometimes. I'm not sure why they come on.

They just come on and then they go off. I don't know if it's good or bad. Doesn't seem good, but they eventually go off. But there's little check engine lights that come on. I get a little nervous. You know? It's like, is my engine going to blow up?

Is it fine? Is it just a fuse? But these are the things that show us, they kind of, they kind of nudge us to be like, hey, you're not, you're not moving towards the center. Like my jade plant, leaning away from the sun.

Imagine that, right? This is the thing. So Paul gets right here to the heart of our deepest desires and emotions. Let's look at his list in verse five. Sexual immorality. Hey, we all have human desires. We all have sexual desires. And he's saying like, this actually honors Christ on the throne. If Christ is on the throne, our mind's there. Do you know that actually human sexuality and the covenant of marriage, biblically, it's so important.

[14:48] And the world doesn't understand this. It's kind of this throwaway idea. And it's like, we'll do whatever you want with whoever you want. As long as, listen, this is like, this is a picture of Christ in the church. That's why it's so sacred for us. So Paul's saying with all your desires, is Christ on the throne or are you on the throne?

Are you the king of that kingdom, the queen of the kingdom? And then he moves into impurity and lust. We want more. Lust is just wanting more. I continually want more.

Guys, this is the reason Amazon exists. Amen. It's like, you have one, but there's another one.

There's a better one. I'm like, I just got it. There's a better one. Paul's saying if you continually want more, guess what happens?

It will turn evil. Even if it's just a lot of good things. Like if you continually want more things, it'll turn evil 100% of the time. That's why it moves into evil desires and greed or covetousness.

I don't only want more. I want more than you. Or I may want what you have. Wow. Check engine lights popping on there. I'm facing the wrong direction.

[15:55] Meaning now I can get it if I want. And if I start to get everything I want on my own, even if it means the cost of you, then I'm providing for myself. And I become my source.

I don't need this son anymore. I become my own son. I'm on my own throne. What's that called?

Well, I'm God. And that's idolatry. I'm like, wow. That's why he goes there. Okay.

Thank you, Paul. I feel convicted already. But wait, there's more. All right. Verse eight. Check this out. But now you must put them all away or get rid of NIV says anger.

Wow. Why do you start with anger? Come on. That's my basic go-to, Paul. That's like, and hey, don't, don't beat yourself up. This actually isn't like outburst. It isn't just like I got angry, right? That's human emotion. Okay. Let's don't beat yourself up yet.

But actually this is like, the idea is to swell. It's that like over time, the Greek word means that over time I stand, I just continually stand in opposition to others or God's will.

[16:51] Like this, this, this fighting deep seated, like I'm just against. And then that turns into what? When it's unchecked and unchecked, it turns into rage. And that actually does mean what we

also use the term for rage.

The word has to do with like passionate breathing, like this, ah, you're just raging. Have you ever been in that place in life where, man, something doesn't go your way? And then a lot of things don't. Or just you have a lot on your mind. Like, and before you're just redlining and you're like, I just feel kind of angry all the time.

And then you get triggered and, you know, people bumping into you. You're like, yeah, I got kids. That's my life. I get people bumping into me all the time. I'm triggered all the time. Right? And then Paul's like, something's, something's off.

We're not leaning towards the sun anymore. We're not, we're not looking towards, but we've forgotten that Christ is on the throne. And then he has malice, which is an evil that's often unseen. Okay. Malice is sort of this thing that's like, it's hidden, but it's, it's there. And if unchecked, if I allow that, it becomes outright slander. Wow. Slander.

[17:54] The way I use my words, I pick out the flaws of others. I had this moral high ground. And I start making judgments and then it comes out my mouth and I say whatever I want. And I'm just demeaning the other people God's created and put me here with.

Y'all, I work at a school and students, let me just a little heads up. Teachers can hear you when you're talking by the locker. I often think that like, people don't know that we can hear each other, but we can.

It's a little bit discouraging. I had a student say to me once, we were talking about mental, emotional health and safety in our schools. And they said, you know, the hallways are brutal. I said, the hallways are brutal.

Like, it's like a war zone. And when you walk by, I realize more often than not, when I see people by the lockers, they're just talking. They're talking about other people. And I like to say it's good. Man, did you see that great outfit she had on? Did you see that thing he said in class? That was really smart. But the case is usually not. What's coming out of us? We're leaning away from the sun.

[18:53] It's brutal. And Paul is saying to the Colossian people, you used to do this like it was just normal, but now that's not the way you live anymore. Don't do that.

Okay. For the sake of time, I'm not going to go through the whole list. But here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you some homework. Okay. Again, I work in a school. I work in a school. Some of you are out for school for the summer, but too bad.

All right. Here's your homework. All right. I'd like you to go home. And there's two lists here. And so I want you to take this first list. And I want you to go over this list. Starts in verse five.

And this first list, I just would like you to pray over it. And if you read over it, and I guarantee you, if you ask the Holy Spirit, like, Holy Spirit, just bring to mind something here that I need to work on. Something, maybe there's something here I need to take off.

Lord, what needs to be put to death in my life? If I died with Christ, and that's my reality, then in this process here, what am I not dying to? What needs to die? And then, if you really want to work on this, if you want this to change your life, confess it to a trusted brother or sister in Christ, and ask for healing.

[20:03] I'll make you an example from my own life. When I used to be a missionary, we lived in countries where there were developing countries. Okay. So we had plenty.

In fact, sometimes more than our counterparts in the countries lived in. But whenever I came back to the United States, I always felt like I had a little bit less. Does that make sense? And so I'd start to desire things that other people had.

And I remember when iPhones first came out, and it just was, that was amazing. And I was like, wow, only people in the U.S. can have iPhones. You know, I just didn't see anyone else with iPhones.

And then I'd start to come back to the U.S., and I'd see, like, iPhones laying around in people's houses, right? And they're like, oh, that's just in my kids, like, toy basket, because we don't, that's an old one. And I'm like, oh my gosh. Like, because in the reality that was in, that I was in, like, an iPhone was not thinkable for me.

It was just where we were at in life. Again, we were doing fine in the world we lived in, but we came back to the U.S., it's a different world. And I started to, this thing started to grow in me. A little bit of greed, a little bit of covetousness, like, I wish I could have that.

[ 21 : 12 ] Or people started talking about their houses. They're like, we're building this equity. And that's no big deal when you're 20, and you're adventuring the world and a missionary. And then you start to get to be 30, and you realize, I don't have equity.

And you're 40, and like, huh, I wish I had that. And this started to grow in me a little bit. Fast forward 10 years. We moved back to the U.S. Now I have a house.

I've got a grill, and a motorcycle, and a tortoise. And I open my drawer one day, and guess what I see? Some old iPhones. I have more than I've ever had in my whole life at that point, and guess what I want?

I want more. I want what someone else has. You got another house? Dang. You got another car? I mean, whatever it is, right? I had to confess to a brother or sister.

Say, hey, I need to confess this. This isn't the life I think Christ has for me. I need to be content. I don't have it. But I know something's off. And I feel it. That death-like, the earthly things Paul's talking about that's drawn my heart to just look down here in the dirt.

[ 22 : 22 ] I had to confess that to a brother in Christ and pray over it. God, help me with that. I can't help myself. Just want things. Amazon is too easy, right? It's like, whatever.

It's right there. I need God's help. So take that list home. Get together with someone this week. And look that over and just kind of go, God, what needs to die in me?

Let's sunlight it. Here we go. Hey, before we get into the good stuff now, because don't worry. Take heart. Paul's going to give us some good things here. The life-like things, the centered on Christ things where he's seated on the throne to replace those death-like things we thought were normal. But I want to give you another perspective. And again, this is just something that helps me think in my mind, in my heart. It helps me not get too consumed by earthly things. And I believe this illustration came from Pastor Francis Chan.

If you've watched Francis Chan at all, he has such a strong grasp on eternity. He lost people when he was young. He lost a lot of people in his life when he was young. So he grew up dealing with this thing of life and death, the reality of like, we're not here forever, okay?

[ 23 : 32 ] I'm going to ask Zach to come up, and I don't know if you want to pull anyone else up here. But he uses illustration, I think, or something like it. And so I brought a rope with me today. It's just a rock climbing rope.

That's not a flex, because I haven't used it in like two decades or something. I'm one of those people that gets excited. You know, I try rock climbing once, and I'm like, oh my gosh, I need to do that.

So I get all this stuff. And you know, anyone else? I don't know. Maybe you're like that. Maybe it'd be a lot easier if they're cheaper habits. Like, I like to draw. Like, pencils are cheaper. All right, Zach, my man.

All right, Zach, I'm going to keep this side. I really don't know. And we're just going to, we didn't practice this. I think if you just go some way, and maybe you on the aisles could kind of help hold this for him.

And then if we could just stretch it down and maybe out one of the doors, guaranteed to work. Don't let it hit the floor. I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding. You got one job, Zach.

[ 24 : 29 ] You're like, wow, this guy's serious about his illustrations. All right. So while this is happening, I want you to imagine this rope, okay?

And this rope is your life. This rope is your life, okay? And we can do this. And Paul says, Paul's saying, all right, set your mind on things above, okay?

Our life, our life, all right, it's hidden with Christ. This is our current spiritual reality, okay? But then it goes for all of our whole reality, for eternity, where Christ is on the throne.

Okay, this rope represents all of that life, all right? Now, hold on to this. I want you to imagine this. Oh, it is long enough. I'm so excited about this. I don't think it's going to work. But let's imagine that this rope extends, not only is it all the way outside yet?

Almost. Zach's almost outside. Awesome. So it's going to be hot out there, but that's on you. You volunteered. No, I'm just kidding. All right. So he's going to, let's say it goes out the door here. Let's imagine that this rope, it stretches all the way across New Bern, and then across the earth, and then just straight out into, what's that called, space?

[ 25 : 42 ] Okay. I know there's like layers, guys. I don't know the layers. The atmospheres and the stratospheres and this like, okay, he's in eternity. All right. Space, the universe, many universes. It

just keeps going, okay? And here it is, right here.

Into space, into eternity. All right. Keep that in mind. That's your, that's your whole life. Because you're eternal. Now, the Greek word for earthly things here, okay?

When Paul says, don't keep, don't set your mind on earthly things, you know, Christ, earthly things. That word earth, it actually, it's not cosmos. It's not like the world and the system. It's actually earth. It means soil, land, or like a province, an area, like this area, okay?

With the Hebrew counterpart for that word, if the word's used figuratively, okay, earth, figuratively, it means arena or theater. The temporary, hold on to this.

The temporary space we operate in and we live in, in which God prepares us for eternity. All right. Think about a first century arena. What are they doing?

[ 26 : 43 ] Maybe there's games happening or there's like practice fights going on or fighting. It's not really the real life in war, but they're practicing. It's an arena in the dirt. They're practicing for the war, the victory that will happen in real life.

Or a theater, right? This place we're on the stage or in this theater, if it's outdoor, whatever. Or like there's something happening that mimics the beauty of life. It's not real life, but it is life.

And they're practicing and showing this. And it's what depicts the beauty of real life. All right? This is probably actually too big.

This little piece of tape on the end of the rope here. That's why I bought this rope. I had tape on it. No, I'm just kidding. I put that on. All right. This tape right here. This is your earthly life.

This is the arena. This is the theater. Maybe 50 years. Maybe 70 years. Maybe 90 if you're blessed. This is the theater.

[ 27 : 41 ] This is the temporary space compared to the rest of your life stretching into eternity. It is so short. That is so tiny compared to even the rope that's here in the church.

Psalm says that we are like fleeting grass. Like, you know, grass that grows up and then just dies. Like wildflowers. You drive by it one day. Hey, look at those flowers. The next day, the sun hits it and they're gone.

That's our life. It's so short. It's so fleeting. Sadly, some people like live like this is it. All their energy, all their time, all their money, all their relationships.

It's all building this short little paradise that is just a temporary mist. It feels great and then it's gone. And because they live in reference to themselves in this temporary arena, like this is actually the real life.

It's just that. It's temporary. It's meaningless. All right. Here's what we must hold on to. Paul is not saying, hey, this doesn't matter.

[ 28 : 47 ] It's just a throwaway. Like do whatever you want. It's all going to burn. Like that's not what Paul is saying. He's actually saying this matters greatly because it's part of everything that's coming. Like you're practicing for eternity and you're in it now.

Christ is on the throne now. Even though you're physically in this arena, like this counts for eternity if our hearts and minds and what we do here mimics and honors King Jesus who's on the throne now and for eternity.

Church, we can live our lives with our eyes on the dirt here like this is it. You know, getting everything I can for my family or myself without regard for the king and the kingdom.

Or I can use this time, my resources, everything I have purposefully. It can all count. Your relationships, your stuff, how you spend your time, the way you treat people, it all glorifies Christ now and into eternity.

If, like Paul says, verse 17, we do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Giving thanks to God and the Father through him. Let me tell you a silly story.

[ 29 : 55 ] One of my daughters works at a restaurant and there's a lady who often needs a ride home. And I remember the first time she told me like, oh, I gave this lady a ride home. She's a little older and just doesn't have a car. That's a very simple thing.

But then I started thinking about it. I'm like, well, why did she ask you? She must see some compassion in your life. She must know that you're a kind person that would probably say yes or be willing to. And not only just willing to. That act of compassion and kindness, driving a car, it turns a resource, it's just a car.

But it turns that resource into something I use for the king. Some of you use your cars to deliver meals to people, to visit people in hospitals, to take parents through. People need to go to the

places.

You help people. It's just a car. But that's the arena you're in. But it counts for eternity when you do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul says, this is our life. This is arena. But it matters. And here's how we live it.

All right. We can. I'm not sure what to do with the rope. Didn't think that far ahead. If Zach's, do you just throw it back? Maybe just shuffle it back or Zach could pull it up or something. All right.

[ 30 : 59 ] Here's how we live it. All right. The next list. I want you to look at verse 12 with me. He says, put on, therefore, verse 12, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with these things.

Okay, now I'll pause just for a second. I love that Paul's using metaphors for us because that's how my brain thinks. In verse 9 and 10, he says, take off the old self and then put on the new self.

Literally, Paul is using the idea of new clothes. Okay, quick story. I'm not proud of it. But in high school and college, y'all, when I wanted my favorite shirt, I'm like, oh, man, I'm going with friends. There's going to be some cute girls there or whatever. This is before I met my wife. Okay. But like, there's going to be some people I want to impress or whatever. And I couldn't find my best shirt. You know where I looked? That big old dirty laundry pile in the closet, right?

You're like, oh, maybe, oh, it's still in there. It's in the, oh, it's in the dirty laundry. And what do we do? Guys, you know, like, oh, come on. I'm not the only one here. Yeah. You smell it. You're like, oh, it's okay. I think it's okay. You shake it a few times.

[ 31 : 56 ] Remember, shake it. Put it in front of the fan. You know, you put a little cologne on there. Or like, you do like the, what's like the freshman in high school. Freshman in high school shower. You do the axe body spray. And you just walk through it.

You know, you're like, good. I'm good. You know? Paul's like, no, man, that's disgusting. Don't do that. Like, you took that off. Leave it off. Don't put on old clothes.

It smells, right? He says, put on something new. So what do you say? Verse 12. Compassion. Man, you took off that anger. What do I replace it with? Compassion.

Be compassionate towards yourself. Christ is on the throne. Right now, he's a compassionate king. Receive his compassion. And then you won't feel so angry. You'll experience being chosen and dearly loved.

And then you can pass that compassion on to your brother and sister in Christ. Wow. That's like a brand new shirt from Belk or TJ Maxx. It's the only place we have a new burn to shop. Right? It's compassion.

[ 32 : 55 ] That's the shirt you're going to be wearing for all eternity. So put it on now. Start practicing in the arena. Start practicing compassion now. Same is true for kindness. When you feel like you're wearing those stained jeans.

Again, of lust, greed, covetousness. Right? You're like, man, someone's like, you got stains on your jeans. Remember, Christ is on the throne right now.

He's kind to you. He can provide what you really need. His provision also is accompanied with what's next. Humility, gentleness, and patience.

And then you can pass these on to our brothers and sisters in need. Right? I put on that new thing. I put on kindness. God's kind to me. I don't need to fight for what I have. Wow. It feels great.

Now I can be kind to you. And I'm not losing anything. I'm actually gaining because now we both are receiving kindness. It's like a new shirt. It's like a new pair of jeans from Crabtree Mall. The only other place we go in New Bern when we get out of here and go to Raleigh.

[ 33 : 54 ] Okay. Here's your homework for the next list. And again, I'd love to go through all of these things because it is a beautiful list. And I'm going to talk about a little bit of some of the things. But here's the next homework I want to give you is just like as you go home this week and you look over this list, say, okay, Lord, what do you want to give me to replace what I don't need?

Now, what does it, what does he want to give me like instead of that anger, instead of that courage? And then I want you to share that with a brother and sister in Christ. And it says here, be grateful, right?

Then be grateful, like thank God for that. And then pray for more of that. Quick summary, verse 12 through 17, if you want to look at it. Just take a look at that, that list right there.

He says, forgive. Not an option. It's a command. Am I holding on to the sin of unforgiveness, even if I feel right? Is there something in my heart?

I need to let that person go. I need to let that offense go. Why? Because Christ is on the throne. He can take it. So we pray, Lord, give me a heart of forgiveness.

[ 35 : 01 ] Then he talks about peace. Let that peace rule in your hearts. Wow, God, I've been anxious. I just need to sit with you and I need to accept your peace. Being grateful, he talks about thankfulness. Wow, maybe I need to start my morning instead of going over my list of all things I need to do and like remembering all the garbage from yesterday.

Like, I just need to start my morning being grateful. Teaching and admonishing one another, using the word. That takes a lot of wisdom and courage. I want to tell you, like, we really need this. I need this. I need my brothers and sisters in Christ to come alongside me and go, hey, I see something there.

You know, something doesn't smell right. Something doesn't look right. Anyway, let's look at the word together. Let's pray together. I want to encourage you in this.

I think God has something for you that's lifelike. These are all the things we experience when we start to center our life on Christ. When we start to lean towards the sun. Man, this stuff fills our life. Hey, there's singing too, right? Oh, I missed that. Sorry, singing. You know, he talks about singing hymns, the spirit song. You know, that's something the church has always done. It's always done that. You're like, why do we sing in church? The church is always sung. Like the truth of God, that's what they've done.

[ 36 : 03 ] That's how they worship the Lord. Maybe some of us need to pray. God, I need some joy. Not for singing lessons. That's okay. Like, not for joy.

Like, help me sing. I just don't feel like singing. I need your joy. I had a friend named Guy. And when he was a little guy, he's older than me. When he was a little guy in church, someone, this old lady turned around and criticized his singing because he was kind of loud.

And he wasn't a great singer. And he said, I didn't sing for years. He was telling us this when he gave a speech to the seniors who graduated from the school I was at. He said, I haven't sung for years.

But he said, I decided that that is the gift God gave me. If I don't have a great voice, I'm going to sing because I want to worship God. I don't care about what people think. And then he sang this song, like, to the seniors. I was like, oh, my gosh.

This guy who hasn't sung for years sang a solo. It wasn't great, but it was okay. I'm like, wow, maybe I need to sing. God, give me joy. These are the things he's offering us. And then as we do this long enough, guess what?

[ 36 : 58 ] Whatever we're doing, like he says in verse 17, we start being mindful. Ah, God's on the throne. Whatever I'm doing, taking care of my family, going to work, studying, getting together with friends, helping a neighbor out, et cetera, et cetera.

In word or deed, we start finding that we're doing it for God's glory. Thinking about him on the throne and how we're going to spend the rest of our lives. All right, I'm going to close here as the band comes up.

And as we think about getting in communion, just final thoughts. Again, I want to encourage you to want to connect with a friend this week. Pray over these lists in Colossians 3.

Maybe even when you come to communion here, it doesn't have to be heavy. It doesn't have to be huge. Like, God's not... He's not the type of God that enjoys weighing people down.

Can I put it that way? Like, when we repent, we turn towards him. Man, he lifts us up. So what do I need to confess? What do I need to be healed from? Even when I have communion here. What do I want to ask God to receive?

[ 38 : 01 ] Like, what can I receive from Christ? How can I be more like Christ? How can I turn the right direction here? Now, if you're struggling with the fixed realities, and there's going to be a prayer in the screen later that you're like, man, I don't know about this.

I don't even know if I've ever experienced salvation. There's a prayer you can pray later, or you can come up and ask anyone here. You're like, I don't know about this. But if you struggle with that, I know a lot of Christians don't have this fear. It's like, I don't know. Am I saved?

Am I not saved? Am I alive in Christ? Am I not? Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of the salvation, the redemption paradigms of Scripture. There's so many different paradigms in Scripture.

In the prophets, it says, God has us written on his hands. Like, our names in the book of life. Our sins were like scarlet, and they've been washed. And now it's like snow.

Man, I lived in Minnesota. That snow was white. So ask God to confirm that in your heart. And then if you're struggling with this process part of it, like this continual process of life, and you're struggling to know, like, has God really chosen me?

[ 39 : 01 ] He's loved me. Maybe you're struggling with guilt or lies in the enemy, which, guys, that happens a lot, man. Listen, I want to give you this. God is not finished with you. All right, some of you wives are like, praise him.

I'm thinking about my husband right now. God is not finished with that guy. Teenagers. You're like, oh, that explains it. That's why my parents are the way they are. All right, God's not finished with you. And listen, he is fully committed to the process.

All right, we're kind of up and down. We have good days, bad days. All right, that's right. He's committed to the process. So when you struggle, you still have that guilt along this process.

Like, I just had a bad day. I realize I'm turning. I want to give you a couple more verses here.

Romans 8.1 says this. When the enemy tries to tell you, like, are you really facing the right way?

Are you really following Jesus?

Are you really alive in Christ? Romans 8.1 says this. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I throw that one at the enemy. Like, I don't know what you think you have against me, but listen, this says there is nothing against me.

[ 39 : 58 ] I was in the courtroom. Jesus took my place. I walked out. The ledge is blank. And then if you still feel doubts in your heart, because I know people like, I just had this deep-seated doubt in my heart.

I want to give you this verse from John that's been very encouraging to me. 1 John 3.19 and 20. You can meditate on this when you go to communion. This, then, is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us, for God is greater than our hearts.

And he knows everything. God's got you. He's got the process. He's fixed things that need to be fixed. Let's pray.

Lord, as we move into this time where we just remember you, we receive the body and blood of Christ, wow, that reminds us that you went through death for us.

You came to life for us. And you're now seated on the throne for us. And that's our reality. It's our reality now and into eternity. Help us by your Holy Spirit to see the areas that we can become more like you, Jesus.

[ 41 : 04 ] We can receive your gift of life now. Bring those to light. And then, God, give us what we need. We can replace in our hearts as we think about this, as we come to you. Give us those things that compassion, kindness, patience, gentleness, the joy, joy to sing even.

Lord, I pray that over our church, over your church this morning, God. We would receive that from you. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.