

Sermon notes – Colossians 3 ‘Death to an old life and alive to a new one’

Introduction:

1. Paul says we need to first recognise who we are if we are to live a new life. This is inextricably linked to Christ. In Col. 2:20-23 Paul first draws out the implications of having died with Christ, ‘since you have died with Christ ...’. If you have died with Christ you are holy (see Col. 1:1 and also 1:13-14). Dying with Christ means being forgiven by God (Christ’s death removing the penalty of our sin) and able to be in fellowship with Him – so He declares us holy.

2. The Colossian believers and all subsequent believers are therefore already holy – this is their standing or position before God (see Heb. 10:10; 1Cor. 6:11). Believers are holy because they have been rescued by God through Christ, ‘who died for us’ (Col. 1:13-14, that is, he took our place, endured our penalty and died our death). Believers are those who have trusted in Jesus and so have received, by faith, the benefits of Christ’s death- forgiveness and rescue from the power of sin, and therefore fellowship with God. This Paul describes as ‘dying with Christ’ (2:20, dying to our sinful life). Believers are to now live this new life with the risen Lord who makes it possible, ‘since you have been raised with Christ’ (3:1). As members of God’s new family believers are now to live as members – live the new risen holy life.

3. As holy people we are to live holy lives (our calling to live holy lives refers to our condition (1Thess 3:13; 1P 1:15-16)– i.e. forgiven sinners being made like Christ = holy). We are to practice – to learn to be - who we are. Christians are to actively resist attitudes and behaviour which belongs to this earth (to the old life see 3:5-10) and to actively pursue those attitudes and behaviours which characterise the new risen life (Christ-like actions – see 3:12-14). 6. The new community. 3: 9-10 ‘Put on the new self’. Here is a picture of a new and very different type of community. This community is made of people who daily seek to live a new, alternative life. This community will be used powerfully by God to bring healing, comfort and new life to those who are convicted by God. Through the Spirit they recognise their own sin and their need for forgiveness and healing. So, this will be an attractive community to those whom God is choosing and who respond to his call.

Text Col. 3:1-4; 12-17. ‘For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ’

1. **3:12** Paul says, ‘as God’s chosen people holy and dearly love, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience’. Paul describes very practical attitudes and behaviours by members of this new community.

2. **3:13-14** How can we practise forgiveness? (see Mt. 18:21ff & Jn 14). Jesus promised his Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to strengthen us to forgive as the Lord has forgiven us (see Jn. 14&16). ‘Put on Love’ - Christ-like love is to dominate the attitudes and actions of believers.

3. **3:15-16** ‘Let the peace..’ i.e. actively allow Christ to bring his peace and his word into our lives, to both challenge each other in love and to teach and build each other up. Praising God with gratitude.

4. **3:17** ‘let the message of Christ’ - in all our words and actions we are representatives of Christ, through whom we have fellowship with God the Father. For this we should always give thanks to God.

Response/reflection. Knowing who we are in Christ, because of what he has done for us, is the motivation for living a new life. As a Christian community how are we showing our new life to others and the hope we have in Christ? BB