

Imperatives of Crucified Living-3

Putting to Death the Old Life

Colossians 3

One day the great Church leader Augustine was walking down the street when one of the prostitutes of his past life spotted him and ran to him calling out his name. He turned and looked at her straight in the eye and said, "That man you seek—has died!" That is the change of life Paul writes about.

As Paul sat to write to the Colossians, he was writing to a group of saints swimming each day against in the strongest imaginable currents of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Colosse in Roman Asia was at the cross flow of every type of sin. What was Paul's answer to their needs for growing in that environment? He challenged them to make daily choices to sanctify their attitudes and behavior.

As we read this passionate letter to the Colossian saints, we hear Paul plead with them to allow Christ's work to be unleashed into their lives. It would be wise to ask ourselves the same questions.

Do you have a habit of crucified living? Do you know what it means? Have you started a hit list? Do you have targets that you want to give to Christ to put to death so they stop their growth in your life? Colossians lists target areas we must bring to the Great Physician like pockets of pride, lust, selfishness, anger, untruthfulness, and uncleanness.

- What are we consciously putting to death of our old life today?
- Can we name the area we are holding out to Christ our "oncologist"; an area affected by sin that we want Him to remove it's deadly work from our life.
- Have we examined our lives against this Scripture and agreed with God about surrendering specific areas of our life to Him?
- What comes to your mind as I say those words? If nothing springs to your mind—you are probably not living a crucified life. Paul said that every day I live, I live by faith that Christ is crucifying my old life.

This morning we are examining the heart of Biblical sanctification. Sanctification requires our participation, our obedience, our responses—and that is what Paul lays down before us in Colossians 3.

Just before we read what Paul wrote, may I again remind you of the two sides of the coin of salvation. We could call the two sides faith and works as James does. Another way would be to use Paul's words from Romans—justification and sanctification. To best understand what Paul is asking us to do in Colossians let me contrast and explain justification and sanctification.

- **Justification** is what Christ did for me on the cross--**sanctification** is what Christ is doing in me because of the cross.
- **Justification** is immediate and was completely finished in me the instant I was saved—**sanctification** is an ongoing process never completed on earth until I meet Jesus face to face at death or His coming.
- **Justification** is activated the moment I trust in the Person of Christ Jesus and His finished sacrifice of the cross—**sanctification** grows with each obedient choice I make empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- **Justification** is my position declared right in God's sight—**sanctification** is my practice made right by becoming more conformed to s image.

Listen to Paul say that because you are saved (justified) this is how you should live (sanctified), as we stand and read Colossians 3:5-17 and then pray.

Be careful what you read as a teen! I was given several books as a teenager about the lives of Hudson Taylor, C.T. Studd, and George Mueller—and they have become life long heroes in my life.

I have often shared with you my amazement at the ministry of the pioneering, church planting evangelist by the name of CT Studd. This morning I'd like to share his story again only emphasize something you may not have heard before—what happened after CT Studd's death in 1931.

Did the incredible life changes go on in those jungles? What was the long term effect of those simple Bible Truths he taught, believed and disciplined those thousands of savages to believe? To find out, I read the volume this week that chronicles the next 20 years of ministry carried on with those very people C.T. won to Christ. The lesson—they stayed true, kept growing and sent out hundreds of missionaries, evangelists, pastors and teachers in those two decades from 1931-1951.

CT Studd was born in 1858 to an incredible successful English family with vast real estate and business interests all over the British Colonial Empire. Saved while in college, C.T. was disciplined in the truth of crucified (sanctified) living. This truth impacted him deeply to the point of profound choices.

When his father died in the 1880's, he inherited a substantial amount of money—several hundred thousand dollars in his day, tens of millions in ours.

On January 13th, 1887, he wrote nine checks and gave away his fortune as carefully as a business man invests in some 'gilt-edged' securities. He chose safe and high yielding securities in the Bank of Heaven. This was no fool's plunge on his part. It was his public

testimony before God and man that he believed God's Word to be the surest thing on earth. God promises a hundredfold interest in this life, not to speak of the next.

Think about what came out of the gift of his life to Christ: through the fortune C.T. Studd gave to Christ, Hudson Taylor was helped in the founding of the China Inland Mission, George Mueller's orphanages were expanded in London, great Salvation Army extensions were made, and the founding of the Moody Bible Institute was carried along.

When he had given all his money away, he packed up his new bride, they went to China as missionaries for the rest of their days. His ambition¹ and prayer had always been to die a soldier's death on the field of battle, and not be a drag on his fellow-workers through months or years as an invalid. C.T. was a museum of diseases when he left China, and was afterwards hardly ever free. He had a life long battle with asthma, recurring malaria and dysentery as well as the chills and pains of gallstones ever with him in varying combination. Yet God enabled him to go on working not 8 but 18 hours a day, addressing, often for hours, thousands of his fellow-creatures in the heart of Africa's darkest jungles, telling them of Jesus Christ and the wonders of His Love-and this to the very end of his days.

C.T.'s end came in the hot, steamy summer days of July 1931. There in front of him sit 5,000 former headhunters. Now their oiled bodies, formerly the habitation of dark, foul fiends from the pit are temples of the Living God. Once naked and grossly immoral lovers of darkness, now not only clothed in Christ but also modestly clothed in banana leaves. Before their beloved father in the faith they sit in an immense sea of white-toothed smiles. With faces turned heavenward they sing of the sweet by and by and that beautiful shore they will someday see.

Passed now are the years of darkness and savagery. The former enemies sit shoulder to shoulder. No weapons of war are left, only the bond of love. This would be the last sight of his dear saintly converts Studd would see. After his message uttered between gasps for air, with every ear strained to catch each word, he is carried back to his hut. Exhausted, he rests; though only his Savior knew it was his last.

In the night the Faithful Shepherd who had led him to China, then India and finally to the very heart of Africa - took CT home. In the morning only the shriveled earthly tent was left. But around that hut and to the furthest reaches of the jungles and on mission stations around the world, the footprints of this giant can be found today.

In Africa at his death there were 30,000 born again, baptized and disciplined pygmies whom C.T. found in 1910 as naked, murderous, grossly immoral cannibals butchering each other in the darkest jungles of Africa. Today they sing around the Throne of the Lamb, clothed in white raiment and worshiping Jesus--those C.T. won to Christ, disciplined and served.

C.T. Studd lived a crucified life, surrendering every thing to Christ. And in return he lost

¹ Norman Grubb, CT Studd, p. 216-217.

nothing. This morning join me in Colossians 3, as we see the action we must take to live the life of killing our flesh, mortifying our flesh—and living the crucified with Christ life!

As we were saved only by the accomplishment of Christ's sacrifice on the cross—so we live each day 'by faith' (the same faith by which we were saved). We are always dependent upon Christ's gracious death upon the cross that saves and keeps us!

*“**Sanctification** is a process—the process of becoming more like Christ, of growing in holiness. This process begins the **instant you** are converted and will not end until **you** meet Jesus face-to-face. Through the work of His Spirit, through the power of His word and fellowship with other believers, God peels away **our** desires for sin, renews **our** minds, and changes **our** lives. Sanctification is **about our own choices and behavior**. It involves work. Empowered by God's Spirit, we strive. **We fight sin. We study Scripture and pray, even when we don't feel like it. We flee temptation. We press on; we run hard in the pursuit of holiness.**”²*

Colossians 3 is built around 14 imperative commands. Remember that **God never commands me to do what He hasn't already given me the grace to accomplish by faith through His Spirit!**

*“Our participation in the process of **sanctification** comes only after we've been totally accepted and made right before God through faith in Jesus. **So yes, we work** hard at obeying God's word. **We** read our Bibles. **We** pray. **We** meditate on Scripture. **We** memorize Scripture. **We** share the gospel. **We** serve in our church. **We** fast. **God commands us in His Word to do many things, and our obedience is both pleasing to Him and brings His blessing to our lives. But not one adds to our justification, our standing before God, our eternal life. Only grace sustains lasting change and sanctification**. Through the cross we overcome not only the guilt of sin, but the power of sin as well”³.*

Let's walk back through this chapter, see what Paul relates to us from the Lord, and then pause and ASK the Lord to unleash these powerful spiritual qualities in our lives today.

If then you were raised with Christ (justified),

- **seek those things which are above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.
- v. 2 **Set your mind** on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.
- v. 5 Therefore **put to death your members** which are on the earth: **fornication**

² C. J. Mahaney, The Cross Centered Life, Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2002, p. 31-34.

³ C. J. Mahaney, The Cross Centered Life, Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2002, p. 31-34.

(NIV sexual immorality), uncleanness (NIV impurity), passion (NIV lust), evil desire, and covetousness (NIV greed), which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

- v. 8 But now you yourselves are to **put off all these: anger, wrath (NIV rage), malice, blasphemy (NIV slander), filthy language** out of your mouth:

Paul says that there are certain things of which the Colossians must strip themselves. The word he uses is the word for putting off clothes. There is here a picture from the life of the early Christian. When the Christian was baptized, he put off his old clothes when he went down into the water and when he emerged he put on a new and pure white robe. He divested himself of one kind of life and put on another.

- v. 9 **Do not lie to one another,** since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all:

SALVATION brought a complete change in our personality. We put off the old self and put on the new self, just as the candidate for baptism puts off his old clothes and puts on the new white robe.

Barbarians were those who were not Greeks, those whom we would call heathen today. The Scythian was the worst kind of barbarian. Scythia was north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the area around the Caucasus Mountains. The people who lived there were probably the most barbaric the world has known. You talk about pagan, heathen, brutal, and mean! They would take their enemies and scalp them; then they would use the skull as a cup and drink the blood of their victims out of the skull! I cannot think of anything more heathen than that! Did you know that the ancestors of many of us who have white skin came from that territory? We are called Caucasians after the area where these barbarians lived.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me live the truth. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now live through me so that I do not live a lie by talking the talk but not living the truth.**]*

- v. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on (NIV clothe yourselves with)**

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me wear the truth. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now clothe me with your personality—and what is that? The areas that follow.**]*

- **tender mercies (NIV compassion):**

The KJV bowels of mercies means "heart of compassion." How heartless this

world is today. How indifferent and mechanical it has become! a heart of pity. If there was one thing the ancient world needed it was mercy. The sufferings of animals were nothing to it. The maimed and the sickly went to the wall. There was no provision for the aged. The treatment of the handicapped was unfeeling. Christianity brought mercy into this world. It is not too much to say that everything that has been done for the aged, the sick, the weak in body and in mind, the animal, the child, the woman has been done under the inspiration of Christianity.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me feel His compassion. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now clothe me with your compassion.**]*

- **kindness:**

*This kindness means gentleness (*chrēstotēs*). Trench calls this a lovely word for a lovely quality. The ancient writers defined *chrēstotēs* as the virtue of the man whose neighbor's good is as dear to him as his own. Josephus uses it as a description of Isaac, the man who dug wells and gave them to others because he would not fight about them (Genesis 26:17–25). It is the word used when Jesus said, "My yoke is easy." (Matthew 11:30). Goodness by itself can be stern; but *chrēstotēs* is the goodness which is kind, that type of goodness which Jesus used to the sinning woman who anointed his feet (Luke 7:37–50).*

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me have His kindness. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I want Your kindness in my life.**]*

- **humility:**

*Paul's emphasis is "humbleness of mind." (*tapeinophrosune*). It has often been said that humility was a virtue created by Christianity. In classical Greek there is no word for humility which has not some tinge of servility; but Christian humility is not a cringing thing. It is based on two things. First, on the divine side, it is based on the awareness of the creatureliness of humanity. God is the Creator, man the creature, and in the presence of the Creator the creature cannot feel anything else but humility. Second, on the human side, it is based on the belief that all men are the sons of God; and there is no room for arrogance when we are living among men and women who are all of royal lineage.*

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me humble. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I humble myself in your sight. Clothe me with humility.**]*

- **meekness (NIV gentleness):**

Here the emphasis is meekness of spirit (praotes) The man who has praotēs is the man who is so self-controlled, because he is God-controlled, that he is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now control me. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your meekness and gentleness to be mine.**]*

- **longsuffering (NIV patience):**

Longsuffering is the Greek word makrothumia, which means “long-burning”—it burns a long time. We shouldn't have a short fuse with our friends and Christian brethren. We shouldn't make snap judgments. This is the spirit which never loses its patience with its fellow-men. Their foolishness and their unteachability never drive it to cynicism or despair; their insults and their ill-treatment never drive it to bitterness or wrath. Human patience is a reflection of the divine patience which bears with all our sinning and never casts us off.

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me patient. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your patience.**]*

- v. 13 **bearing** with one another: and **forgiving** one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

The Christian forbears and forgives; and he does so because a forgiven man must always be forgiving. As God forgave him, so he must forgive others, for only the forgiving can be forgiven.⁴

*[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me put on Christ's love. Close your eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your love to be mine so that I treat others as You treat me.**]*

- v. 15 And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Rule means “to umpire.” The peace of God should govern our hearts.⁵

[Because of Christ's death on the cross—He can now make me peaceful. Close your

⁴ Many definitions above adapted from Barclay, William, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians (Revised Edition)*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2000, c1975.

⁵ Some definitions above adapted from McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

*eyes, look up at the Lord and say, **Lord Jesus right now I ask for Your peace to rule my heart—not anxiety, not fear, not turmoil, but peace.**]*

- v. 16 **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly** in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
 - “Let” means “allow, invite, welcome, give yourself over to.”
 - “The Word of Christ” can be a word, a verse, a chapter, or a Book.
 - “Dwell in you richly” so beautifully means “to overflow like a bathtub; to spill forth like a fountain; to drench and soak like a heavy rain; to permeate like water into a soft absorbent cloth.”
 - “In you” means in your mind, in your thoughts, in your life, in your plans, in your world—your marriage, your family, your home, and your job.

When we “allow, invite, welcome, and give ourselves over to” a verse, a chapter, or a Book, a portion of the very Word of Christ spills forth into our lives, drenching us—absorbing into our souls and changing every aspect of our lives—our marriage, home, life, and all! **That is the Word-filled life!** (It is also the Spirit-filled life, as Ephesians 5:18 affirms.)

When we have a Word-filled life it means that we are: inviting God to speak; seeking His guidance; seeking divine help, godly wisdom, supernatural involvement; and cooperating with the Holy Spirit. This amounts to plugging in the power for life, using the map God has provided, following the directions in His Book, and listening to the instructions He has left us for daily living.

A Word-filled life is inviting God to speak; welcoming His help; seeking His input; wanting His advice; getting His help; showing we honor Him; partnering with God in parenting; and **unleashing Him into every corner of our lives.** We must start each day seeking to be emptied of self, with His Word read, our God sought, and His Spirit invited—to work in us so that Christ is honored.

When we walk in the Spirit every dimension of life is transformed. When we allow the Great Physician to amputate any sinful manifestation in our hearts, minds, and actions at home and work everything is touched by the power of the Spirit and the blessing of God! Note each area Paul points to.

- **18 Wives, submit to your own husbands**, as is fitting in the Lord.

This was “a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and

carrying a burden”.

- 19 **Husbands, love your wives** and do not be bitter (NIV harsh) toward them.
- 20 **Children, obey your parents in all things**, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
- 21 **Fathers, do not provoke (NIV embitter) your children**, lest they become discouraged.
- 22 **Bondservants, obey in all things your masters** according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.
- 23 And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men**, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. NKJV

How do we all take a big step forward in our spiritual lives? Systematically work on what we've learned with someone else.

From Colossians this morning, find something in God's Word that you have been able to take hold of and see God use in your life, then share with someone close to you.

- If you are ***married to a believer***, pick one put off or put on as Paul calls them and share with them what you have asked the Lord to do—and ask them to pray for you and ask you how you are doing.
- If you ***live at home with believing parents***, pick one put off or put on as Paul calls them and share with them what you have asked the Lord to do—and ask them to pray for you and ask you how you are doing.
- If you ***aren't living with a believing husband or wife, or parents***—then you need a godly accountability partner. If you can't think of one, your elder of your flock would prayerfully help you find one. Then pick one put off or put on as Paul calls them and share with them what you have asked the Lord to do—and ask them to pray for you and ask you how you are doing.
- For practice, try prayerfully working through one area this afternoon and then tonight at communion think about how you would share that truth that God is at work in your life!

#206 There is a Redeemer

#203 And Can it be