

## **EXPOSITORY TEACHING ON THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS**

### **MESSAGE FIFTEEN: THE MORTIFICATION OF SIN [PUTTING SIN TO DEATH]**

**Introduction:** In **Colossians 3:1-4**, Paul speaks about who Christ is, who believers are in Him, and what the responsibility of the believers is. The responsibility continues. *But know our responsibility flows out of who Christ is (He died for our sin and rose from the dead) and our identity in Him (we are dead to sin in Christ).*

#### **SCRIPTURE: Colossians 3:5-7**

- ❖ [5] Put to death [mortify] therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. [6] On account of these the wrath of God is coming. [7] In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.

#### **I. BE AWARE OF THE PRESENCE OF SIN IN YOUR HEART**

**Cancer:** It is reported that lack of early detection is a reason for many to die because of cancer. In the same way, lack of realization of sin in one's heart is a reason for many to live in the bondage of sin.

**John Owen:** Where it [sin] is least felt, it is most powerful.

**Caution:** Self-deception (that you are right) is the worst deception of all deceptions.

Paul acknowledges the presence of sin in a believer's life. **Colossians 3:5**, "Put to death therefore *what is earthly in you.*"

Believers are free:

- from the penalty of sin, (Rom. 8:1)
- from the power of sin, (Rom. 6:11)
- but they are not free from the presence of sin in their lives. There is a [civil] war within.

**Paul says,** "Put to death therefore what is earthly IN YOU."

**Galatians 5:17**, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do."

**1 Peter 2:11**, "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."

Believing in Christ doesn't make you a perfect saint; it makes you a saint who can be sanctified.

## 2. BE VIGOROUS AND RADICAL IN YOUR FIGHT AGAINST SIN

**Colossians 3:5**, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.”

Remember these two facts:

- I. **A believer is dead to sin in Christ:** “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Col.3:2-3) *So, why should we put sin to death?*
- II. **Sin is not dead to a believer:** It is much alive and wages war against your soul. Therefore, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.” (Col. 3:5)

**Comment:** Being dead to sin doesn’t mean you don’t face temptations and struggle with sinful passions. It means you are not in a position of slavery to sin. You are freed by the blood of Christ to walk in holiness. But to live a holy life we must fight against sin every day.

**Observe:** Paul didn’t say, “Push away what is earthly in you”; “Control what is earthly in you.” He used a strong phrase, “Put to death...” In other words, “MURDER SIN”.

**Curtis Vaughan (The Expositor’s Bible Commentary) says:**

- The verb ... is very strong. It suggests that we are not simply to suppress or control evil acts and attitudes. We are to wipe them out, completely exterminate the old way of life. “Slay utterly” may express its force. The form of the verb ... makes clear that the action is to be undertaken decisively, with a sense of urgency. Both the meaning of the verb and the force of the tense suggest a vigorous, painful act of personal determination.

**How do you “Put sin to death”?**

- Strong hatred towards sin (emotion)—“I hate every false way” (**Ps. 119:104**)
- Strong refusal to sin (determination)—“How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (**Gen. 39:9**) – (Emotion and Determination happens in the mind)
- Strong disciplines against sin (action)

**Similarly, Christ said,** “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” (**Matt. 5:29-30**)

**Illustration:** Alexander Maclaren [19th century British preacher] described a man who was working at a machine and got his fingers caught between the rollers. The machine begins to suck in his hand and in another minute his arm and then his whole body will be flattened to a shapeless, bloody mass. The man grabs an axe lying nearby and with his other arm, cuts off his own hand at the wrist. (shared by Steve Cole)

## **Put to death: Radical Resistance**

- If you are addicted to watch porn on phone, throw away smart phone and buy a normal one. That's being radical. If you are addicted to watch dirty things on laptop at nights, don't take laptop to home; leave it with your friend or relative every day and pick it up the next day to take it to work. That's being radical. If you are struggling to watch filthy things on TV, remove the cable connection or throw away the TV. That's being radical. A young Christian man faced a strong, irresistible sexual temptation towards a girl. He resigned his job and started his work elsewhere. That's being radical. A Christian married man was traveling with a woman on his company's project. The woman in the car was sexually advancing towards him. He immediately stopped the car, went to a phone booth, spoke on the phone and returned. The woman asked the reason for his call. The man told her that he called his wife and informed that a woman is sexually tempting him, asking his wife to pray for him. That's being radical. **MAKE SIN STARVE.**

**Reason:** One major reason why we couldn't overcome certain sins is because we are not merciless towards sin, not vigorous against sin, not making sin to starve. Sin is powerful and we have to be more powerful in dealing with sin.

**Prayer is not enough.** To pray and remain passive does not produce victory over sin. You must war against sin and have victory over it by taking radical actions. Prayer is not a substitute for personal action but rather an empowerment to act vigorously to overcome sin.

**Having Bible knowledge is not enough.** We must vigorously fight against sin with God's authoritative Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**John Owen,** *The Mortification of Sin*, "Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you."

**Daily Work:** The mortification of sin is not a one-time event. Sin constantly resurrects, so you must constantly put sin to death.

**Caution:** People who are not serious about holiness, those who don't constantly examine their hearts in the Holy Spirit, those who are prone to be led by feelings, those who do not accept correction, those who often justify themselves, those who do not want to be accountable, those who do not agonize over their sins before God, those who do not fear the holy God, those who eyes are not fixed on Christ Jesus—these cannot mortify [put to death] sin.

**Note:** Vigorously fighting against sin—putting sin to death—is not done in one's own strength:

- ❖ **Romans 8:13-14,** "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.