

“The Old Man”
Colossians 3:5-11
(Preached at Trinity, August 12, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As I've stated, Epaphras told Paul of two dangers that threatened the Church of Colossae. One was the danger of false doctrine. The other was the danger of compromise, of being influenced by their former pagan ways.
 - A. In Chapter 2 Paul focused on the matter of the false doctrine.
Colossians 2:8 NAU - "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."
 - B. Beginning in **Chapter 3** Paul turns his attention to the Christian way of living. **Chapters 3-4** are very practical. **Verses 1-4** provide the framework of the Christian life. Christians are in union with Christ. They have died to their former life and have been raised up with Christ. Paul admonishes the Colossians, and us:
Colossians 3:2 NAU - "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."
Keep your mind fixed upon eternity.
John writes in his First Epistle:
1 John 3:3 NAU - "And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."
2. Paul begins **Verse 5** with the familiar "therefore." What are the consequences of **Verses 1-4**? What are the consequences of our union with Christ, of being raised up with Christ? What are the consequences of having died with Christ? What are the consequences of our expectation of being revealed with Christ in glory?
3. From **Verse 5** to the sixth verse of **Chapter 4** Paul is going to describe the essence of Christian conversion. What effect does Christ have upon those who follow Him?
 - A. Paul describes it as putting off the "old self."
Colossians 3:9 NAU - "since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,"
 - B. This is in contrast to the "new self" that characterizes Christian conversion. It is the new life that flows from regeneration.
 - C. The word is actually *ἀνθρωπον* which is the Greek word for man. I'm going to use the literal translation, "old man" which is how the CSV and KJV translate it.
4. From **Verse 5** to the end of this section in **Chapter 4:6** Paul is going to describe the great contrast between the old man and the new man.
For the Christian the "new man" is the present reality of our life.
We *have* died with Christ and we *have* been raised with Christ.
In these verses Paul reminds his Christian readers that they must put off the old self and put on the new self.

- I. First, I want to bring some clarity to the “old man” “new man” paradigm
This has been a place of great confusion and misunderstanding
- A. What does Paul mean by the “old man?”
1. The “old man” describes our unregenerate, lost condition bound by sin
The “old man” lies in contrast with the “new man”
 2. In **Romans 5** Paul made the contrast between being “in Adam” and being “in Christ.”
Romans 5:19 NAU - "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."
 - a. In Adam we died – both physically and spiritually
Romans 5:12 NAU - "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned"
 - b. In Christ we are made alive – the effects of sin have been reversed
Sin and death have been defeated - grace and righteousness reign.
Romans 5:17 NAU - " For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."
Romans 5:21-6:1 NAU - "so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. "
 3. By referring to the “old man” Paul is not talking about our flesh with all its lusts that we continually war against. He is talking about the old you – that which you were in Adam when you were dominated by sin.
It describes your former life—what you were before you came to faith in Christ. It describes your life in when you didn’t care about Christ.
 4. You are now a new creature in Christ. Your attitudes have changed. You now hate sin, you strive against sin. And you love Christ. This is a great transformation from what you once were.
- B. The “old man” has been put to death
Romans 6:6 NAU - "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin
1. Paul says, “our old self was crucified with *Him*” – that is, with Christ.
“was crucified” – This is in the aorist tense just like the other verbs in this section of Romans signifying completed action in the past.
 2. Sin no longer reigns over us. The “old self” that was captivated to sin no longer exists.
This is something we know, we receive by faith. We are no longer what we were.
- C. This is where confusion sometimes exists
1. Some insist that the Christian life is a battle between the old man and the new man. They believe the old man is continually seeking to satisfy the flesh while the new man is continually seeking to glorify Christ

2. I used to know a man that continually described his life in those terms
“I’m really struggling with the old man today.”
 3. In this view sanctification is gaining control over the old man
 - a. The old man must grow weaker and the new man must grow stronger
 - b. Those who hold this position are at work trying to mortify or kill the old man, trying to put the old man to death.
 4. They use in support of their view such passages as Eph. 4
Ephesians 4:22-24 NAU - "in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and put on the new self,"
- D. We must understand that the old man is dead
1. The old man describes our unregenerate state. We cannot both be regenerate and unregenerate at the same time.
 2. Look at **Verses 9-10**
"Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, ¹⁰ and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him"
“laid aside” – CSV, ESV, KJV – “have put off”
ἀπεκδυσάμενοι – aorist middle participle – “you have put aside”
 - a. The Christian has already put off the “old self” – the “old self” is dead.
 - b. The old man is dead
Romans 6:6 NAS - "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin
 3. **John Murray** – “The old man is the unregenerate man; the new man is the regenerate man created after in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is no more feasible to call the believer a new man and an old man, than it is to call him a regenerate man and an unregenerate. And neither is it warranted to speak of the believer as having in him the old man and the new man. This kind of terminology is without warrant and it is but another method of doing prejudice to the doctrine which Paul was so jealous to establish when he said, ‘Our old man has been crucified.’”¹

¹ Murray, John, *Principles of Conduct*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), Page 218.

- II. If our “old man” has been put to death and we are now new creatures in Christ why do we still sin?
- A. The “old man” describes the man in Adam
1. The “old man” describes the man under the reign of sin. He sins by nature and he cannot help it.
 2. The “old man” describes our old life. It describes the old you. It was a life of sin. Paul is talking about our life under the dominion of sin. This life is gone forever.
 3. The “old man” as describing our life under the dominion of sin is destroyed in regeneration. The new self is alive in Christ.
2 Corinthians 5:17 NAU - "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*"
 4. The Christian cannot be both regenerate and unregenerate. We cannot say that the “Old man” or the “Old nature” survives because these are terms used to describe the unregenerate man
- B. Yet, we still have remaining infirmities of the flesh
1. Paul speaks of “worldly desires.”
Titus 2:11-12 NAU - "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age"
 2. Although the old man is dead there remains some remnants. It is the indwelling sin that still remains even in regeneration. It won't be finally destroyed until our glorification.
 3. In **Romans 7** Paul explains it as a “principle” or a “law” - νόμος
There is a sin principle remaining in the believer.
Romans 7:21 NAU - " I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good." (ESV & KJV – “law”)
Romans 7:23 NAU - "but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members."
 4. **John Calvin:** “Sin ceases only to reign; it does not also cease to dwell in them. Accordingly, we say that the old man was so crucified, and the law of sin so abolished in the children of God, that some vestiges remain; not to rule over them, but to humble them by the consciousness of their weakness.”²
 5. John Murray writes: “The believer is a new man, a new creation, but he is a new man not yet made perfect. Sin dwells in him still, and he still commits sin. He is necessarily the subject of progressive renewal; he needs to be transfigured into the image of the Lord from glory to glory.”³

² Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, vol.1, Book 3:3*, Edited by John T. McNeill, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), Page 602.

³ Murray, John, *Principles of Conduct*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), Page 219.

6. Although we are not delivered from all of the effects of spiritual death in this life we are delivered from the bondage of sin and are raised up to live in holiness.

The full effect of spiritual death will not be annihilated until the resurrection and glorification—when we appear with Christ in glory.

- C. We sin because the total effect of the fall has not yet been removed. This is where sanctification comes to play. Sanctification is a work of God in us that demands diligence from us. It is progressive and will not reach its consummation in this life.

1. Regeneration does not destroy every remnant of sin but we are progressively growing in holiness.
2. The believer is a new man but a new man not yet made perfect
 - a. There is still sin and corruption dwelling in us
This is where the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit is essential.
 - b. We are being progressively renewed more and more after the image of Christ.

III. What is Paul is commanding in this passage?

- A. The NASB in V5 does not reflect well the original – “therefore consider”
 1. The word is Νεκρώσατε. It is an aorist imperative from the verb νεκρώω which mean “to put to death” or “to kill”
 - a. Paul isn’t commanding us to put to death the old man. He is commanding us to put to death or kill what is worldly.
ESV: “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you”
CSV: “Put to death whatever in you is worldly”
KJV: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.”
 - b. Paul is giving clarity to **Verses 1-2** – “Keep seeking the things above.” “Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on the earth.”
 2. We are to continually put to death the remaining sin in us. We are to mortify the remaining sin that tempts us.
- B. Paul is telling us here is to put to death all of the sin that once characterized us when we were lost.
 1. These are the sins that have brought the lost man under God’s wrath
Colossians 3:6 NAU - "For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,"
 2. These are the sins that once characterized us
Colossians 3:7 NAU - "and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them."
 3. These sins are to no longer mark our lives.
John Owen wrote in “The Mortification of Sin” –
“The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.”

4. Paul gives details of the sins that we must put to death. They once marked us but no more.
 "immorality (πορνεία - sexual sin), impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (covetousness), which amounts to idolatry."
Colossians 3:8 NAU - "But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth"
Colossians 3:9 NAU - "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,"
4. We must be vigilant against any remaining remnants of these sins (and every other sin)
- C. While putting off our former sins we must live according to our new life in Christ
 1. Remember **Verse 1** – we have been raised with Christ. The resurrection is an ever-present reality in our lives.
 2. **Verse 9** - We “have put off” the old man
Verse 10 – We “have put on” the new man
 3. Our new life in Christ is continually being renewed. We are being progressively sanctified.
Colossians 3:10 NAU - "put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him"

Conclusion:

1. In this life we will never fully comprehend what it means to be free from sin. We'll never fully comprehend what it means to be perfect in holiness.
But we will. When Jesus appears in His fullness we shall appear with Him. That which is hidden will be fully revealed.
Colossians 3:4 NAU - "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."
1 John 3:2-3 NAU - "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."
1 Corinthians 2:9 NAU - "eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And *which* have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him."
2. Can you see how such thinking will help you to set aside any notion of compromise?