

Only Jesus Can Rule Your Heart with Peace

Colossians 3:12-17

This morning we continue our study called “Only Jesus.” Throughout the past few months we have seen, over and over again, that Jesus is all that we need. Through Jesus alone we can be reconciled to God the Father. Only through Jesus have our sins been redeemed. Only through Jesus can we be raised to new life. Jesus alone can root us in the faith, and one day Jesus alone will reveal us in glory. Praise the Lord for the wonderful things that He has done for us. Two weeks ago we saw the powerful exhortation of **Colossians 3:1-3**. Clearly God says that we have died and our life is hidden with Christ. Paul could relate to this. In **Galatians 2:20** he personally confessed, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” Paul is saying, “I have died with Christ and the life that I now live is lived for the Lord.” It is this same reality that he is calling us to today. Don’t live for yourself, but live for the Lord. From that point in Colossians 3:5-11 Paul explains what this crucified life looks like. Remember the context is that we have died and our life is hidden with Christ. As a result, we are a new creation. We are not to feed the desires of the flesh. We are not to live like the old man that we were. Pastor Scott did an excellent job last week of calling all of us to turn from the things of the flesh. Verses 5-11 lists all of these aspects of the old man – immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, greed, anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, lies – and says consider yourself “dead” to these things. In other words, crucify these things. These temptations should have no power over the life of a believer. Paul then gives the image of clothing. He says in verse 8, that we are literally to put these things off. Like an old filthy coat these things are no longer appropriate or fitting for the believer. ****ILL: Hockey players at Liberty getting fed up with the smell of their equipment.** God is calling us to get fed up with the old man, to put off these things of old.

Now, I think it is important for us to remember that God’s commands to us are not because He is overwhelming or trying to spoil our fun. Every command God gives, He gives for His glory and our good. Think about this initial list for minute. Immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, and greed – how do these affect our relationship with God? How do they affect our relationship with man? Surely these things hinder our fellowship with God, but they also cause contention and division among men. Think about the next list – anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, lies – how do these affect our relationship with God and with man? Do they not cause distance, division, and usually destruction? None of these things are healthy or good. However, God has not left us without help or instruction. He has given us His Word and His commands that we might please Him and experience His peace in every situation that we face. That is exactly what we read in these verses today.

Jesus wants us to have peace. In **John 14:27** He clearly stated, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” The question then for so many of us is “Why aren’t we experiencing this peace?” In our time together I want us to see four key elements to living with peace:

I. The Wardrobe of Peace (vs. 12-14)

If we want to experience peace in our lives God lays out some things we must understand and apply. We start this morning with our wardrobe. That may sound strange to us, but I call it a wardrobe because God literally says we are to put on some things. Yes, we must put off the old man with its sinful and destructive ways. But we must also put on the new man and live for Christ. Please understand clearly that I am not suggesting that if we just put these things on then we will all of a sudden experience peace with God. Many men have tried to be religious and have attempted to be good and moral. In fact, there were many false teachings that had infiltrated the Colossian church. Many were creating their own laws and religious rules and were promising that they would bring peace and a full life. However, there is nothing that man can do in his own power or his own ability to be at peace with God. The only way that we can be at peace with God is to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior. **Rom. 5:1** says, “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” **Eph. 2:14** “**He (Jesus Christ) Himself is our Peace.**” To know Jesus is to know peace. He is our peace. Paul understood that it is only through Christ that we can experience this peace.

Notice clearly who he prescribed the wardrobe for. He prescribed it for those who are chosen of God, beloved of God, and holy. In other words, for every person who has heard the gospel of Jesus and has believed, then you have experienced the love of God and you have been set apart for Him. You have been positioned in Christ. You have experienced peace with God, but now you must live it out. We walk this out first by putting on the wardrobe of peace. ****ILL:** Now let me give you simple clarification of this truth. In 1986, I trusted in Christ for salvation, and positionally I became a child of God. Now, the real test of my life and the proof of my profession, is that it will manifest itself. If there has been a transformation in one’s life there will be a manifestation of the new life in Christ. So, Paul says there are some things that we must put on.

A. Put on Goodness (vs. 12)

Look carefully at these words. All of them – compassionate, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience – describe how we are to relate to other people. Someone might argue, “But, pastor, doesn’t the Bible say that there is only One who is good? And isn’t that Jesus?” I would agree that this is the case. In fact, when you study the life of Christ we see that He was indeed good. But how do we know that? We know that by how He treated others. He treated others with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Read **Romans 12:18-21**. He is the perfect example of each of these attributes. Consider them for a moment:

Heart of Compassion = A deep level of affection for others. This word implies that we feel the pain and turmoil of others. We must have a heart of compassion. We must not forget that God loves people more than anything and so, too, should we seek to show care and concern for others.

Kindness = Grace in action. It means a sweetness of disposition. It is so important that in Galatians 5 it is listed as a fruit of the Spirit.

Humility = the quality that causes us to see ourselves as objects of divine grace. John Flavel once said, “They that know God will be humble, and they that know themselves cannot be proud.”

Gentleness = This is the same word that we get our word “meekness” from. It means “power under control.”

Patience = It means “long-tempered”. The short-tempered person speaks acts impulsively and lacks self-control. When a person is long-tempered it means that they are not easily provoked to anger. We are to be gracious and patient with others even as Christ has been towards us.

B. Put on Grace (vs. 13)

This is clearly showing us that all who have received grace from God should be faithful to show that same grace to others. I remind us all that grace is not something that is earned or deserved. It is something that God freely and bountifully showers upon us by His mercy. We must treat others in the same way.

Bearing with one another = The word literally means “to hold up” or “to hold back.” Just as God holds back His immediate judgment so, too, must we patiently minister to others not making quick and hasty judgments.

Forgiving each other = In Col 2:13 it’s the exact same word used to describe when God forgave us of all our sins. It’s the gracious removal of sin and the gracious treatment of the sinner who is unworthy to receive it. The question we must often ask ourselves is “Why are we not willing to forgive people of so little when God has forgiven us of so much?” And notice, to what extent should we forgive? To the same extent that Christ has forgiven us. In **Matthew 18:21-22** Peter came to Jesus with a sincere question. He asked, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” His point was not that we should keep track of how many times we have forgiven, but simply that we should continue to forgive even as we have been forgiven. Go read **Matthew 18:23-35** this week and learn about the consequences of unforgiveness.

C. Put on Godliness (vs. 14)

What is the chief attribute of God? Surely it is love. **1 John 4:7-11**, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, **for God is love**. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” Love is not simply what God does. It is who He is. It is His chief attribute and the description that is most fitting. This word “love” is “agape love” or Godly, pure, sacrificial love. The kind of love that took Jesus to the cross is the same type of love that we are to be clothed in. This is the most important of the Christian virtues.

This passage says that it is love that is the **bond** of unity. ****ILL:** This morning I got up showered, put my shirt on, pants on, and put my belt on. Why? Because a belt binds everything together. What Paul is saying is that love binds all the other virtues together. Each of these areas of character that Paul has named are aspects of true Christian love. **“When love rules in our lives, it unites all these spiritual virtues so that there is beauty, harmony, and peace.”**

II. The Workings of Peace (v. 15)

Now that we have intentionally put on the wardrobe of peace, notice what happens next. We have the peace of Christ in our lives. The Bible didn't say put on the peace of Christ. It is suggesting that when we are filled with the Holy Spirit of God and are clothed in these attributes then we will experience His peace. Please note that “peace” doesn't mean the absence of circumstances or trials. Peace means calm and serenity regardless of the circumstances or trials we face. It is an attitude of rest and security. One of the great promises of the Word is in **Phil. 4:6-7**, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. The word “keep” means to guard. It's a military word that means “garrison”. It means that when a man is controlled by the peace of God, God sets up an army about his heart and mind so that peace overwhelms him regardless of the circumstance and situation.

Here in Colossians Paul refers specifically to the “peace of Christ.” Knowing that Paul is referring to the peace of Christ brings everything into clear focus. Can you recall the peace that Jesus demonstrated when He walked on this earth? He walked in peace as a young boy when his parents one day left Him at the temple. His parents panicked when they realized they had forgotten Him, but when they arrived they found Him peacefully teaching the leaders. He was perfectly at peace when the Pharisees continually came against Him trying to trap Him and kill Him. He was at perfect peace when the demons of hell screamed out against Him. He simply cast them out of the demoniac and they fled to some nearby pigs. Jesus was at perfect peace while in the midst of the storm that caused the most experienced fishermen to fear for their lives. He simply rebuked the wind and waves and they obeyed. He was at perfect peace as He faced the cross, knowing that this was the very reason He came. This is the peace of Christ. And this peace can be ours today.

As you read through the book of Acts it becomes very clear that the peace of Christ can be ours today. In Acts 6:15 we see the peace of Christ shining on the face of Stephen as he faced his attackers who wanted him dead. In Acts 12:6 we see the peace of Christ as Peter is calmly asleep after he has been imprisoned. We see the peace of Christ in Acts 16:23-25 when Paul and Silas had been beaten, they sang songs of praise to the Lord. In Acts 27, Paul is shipwrecked, but he wasn't alarmed because of the peace of Christ. What about you? Do you have the peace of Christ? Do you need the peace of Christ? Do you desire it? Notice what the peace of Christ does in our lives.

A. It's Rule

The word “rule” describes the activity of an umpire in an athletic contest. It is ruling and leading and calling the shots in my life. ****ILL:** Illustration of the need for an umpire. There are two perspectives, two views, two differing opinions and the emotions that come along with it. The only way to determine which way the call should go is to bring in the umpire. The umpire has watched the play, he knows what is going on, and he has the authority to act. We must look to the umpire for the proper call. In the same way, we are to let the peace of Christ be the umpire in our lives. It is showing continuous action which means that it could be translated, “Let the peace of Christ keep on ruling, acting the umpire, in your hearts.” Commentator John Phillips summarized it well, “Two conflicting sets of emotions or two opposite opinions each clamor for control. We look to the Lord. We let Him be the Umpire. His peace settles disputes.”

B. It's Relation

It is very important for us not to miss this next point. I have known many people who have said, “Well, I am so thankful for the peace of God, but that doesn't mean that I have to be peaceful to other people.” By their actions they are saying, “I am so thankful that God has been gracious to me, but that doesn't mean that I have to get along with people.” Notice the relation of Christ's peace ruling our hearts. When the peace of Jesus rules our hearts He clearly directs us to others in the body of Christ. Paul said, “**TO** which indeed you were called in **one body**.” This peace that God has given you, He has given for a reason. Listen to the words of **Romans 15:4-7. 2 Corinthians 1:2-5**, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.” When the peace of Christ rules in our hearts God immediately points us to others that we might encourage and help them.

C. It's Result

Make no mistake about it, God calls us to be a thankful, grateful people. Unfortunately, that's not what the world sees of most of us. Some Christians can whine, moan, and complain with the best of them, but that should never be the attitude or behavior of a child of God. We should be thankful. We must choose to be grateful. We all face challenging situations in life. We all face hurt, heartache, heartbreak, and heartburn. We all face sadness and grief. We face them all, yet notice the focus here. We are to give thanks and be glad in the Lord.

III. The Word of Peace (vs. 16)

I believe that this verse shows us the main key to experiencing the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ isn't found in our noble intentions or good feelings. True peace isn't found by us trying to tune out our feelings or by ignoring our problems. We come to know the peace of Christ as we

know the Word of God. The psalmist certainly found this to be true. Read **Psalm 119:25, 28, 50-52, 92-93, 147-149, 162-165.**

A. We must Seek the Word

The verse says that we must let it “richly dwell within” us. It literally means “to dwell or to feel at home.” When you’re at home you go in every room as you want to. Why? Because, it is your home. Here it’s the idea that we are to read God’s Word, memorize, study, and meditate on it and let our lives be its home. It means that we invited God through His Word to have free access to every part of our life. We must extend a warm welcome to God’s Word in our lives. Sadly, there are many saved people who can’t honestly say that God’s Word dwells in their hearts richly because they don’t take time to read, study, memorize, apply, etc.

We are to take it in “richly”, which means abundantly. We are to take the Word in an abundant way. ****ILL:** Going to the homeplace. I took in food abundantly. It was great. I loved every bite of it. It is the same way with God’s Word. We should take it in abundance. The more we get of God’s Word the more we long for. And this knowledge of God’s Word has a direct impact on me experiencing the peace of God.

B. We will Share the Word

We share it by Teaching and Admonition. If you are spending time in the Word and the Word is getting into you, then it will change you. When we’re equipped with the Word of God we are in position to be a blessing to others. The Scripture is showing us that when the Word of God is in us it will come out. We can’t help but share it. At times it will be instruction. At times it will be admonition which is warning of consequences. But as a believer if the Word of God is being put in your heart, God will put you in situations with people where you will share those truths with others.

We will share it by Singing. When the Word of God has free access to every room in my heart then it will lead us to want to sing. When we get into God’s Word and begin to grasp all that He is to us and all that He has done for us, how can we not sing? **Psalm 103:1-5**, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities; Who heals all your diseases; Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; Who satisfies your years with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle.” Right there in those five simple verses we see that the Lord is our Pardon, our Physician, our Protector, our Provision, and our Prize. I’m telling you that He is all that we need. Friend, when we look to God and see what He has done for us it makes us want to sing. I love the way David said it in **Psalm 40:2-3a**, “He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock, making my footsteps firm. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.” If you have been saved by God, there should be a song in your heart that can’t be silenced.

IV. The Ways of Peace (vs. 17)

Here is a final word about experiencing the peace of Christ. How do we experience His peace in our lives? By putting on the wardrobe of peace, by letting His peace control our thought and actions, by receiving the Word of peace and by walking in the ways of peace. When I am confronted with a decision or a course of action, God has given me a wonderful test to determine if the situation will bring peace. According to this verse, all that I say and do should be associated with the name of Jesus Christ. By my words and actions all that I do should bring glory to Him. So here is the test. When faced with a decision I simply need to ask, "Can this be done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." If the answer is "no" then I have absolutely no reason pursuing that action.

According to this verse, the greatest way for me to praise the Lord and declare my gratitude is to live my life for Him. The scripture says "Do all in the name of the Lord, giving thanks." I believe what the Scripture is saying to the believer is that our actions should be conveying our peace in the Lord and our praise to the Lord. ****ILL:** Exchanging Christmas gifts with nieces and nephews. My niece Madison received two gifts from us. The first she opened, said "thanks" and then tossed it. The second gift she opened, and immediately began playing with it, and then came over to me and hugged me and said "thank you muncle matt." Let me ask you, "which gift do you think she was truly thankful for?" How do you know? Her actions. Let me ask you, "What are your actions saying about your gratitude for the Lord? You say that you're thankful that Jesus died on the cross, but do your actions show that? You say that you're thankful for all that God has given you, but what are you giving back to Him? You say that you're thankful for God changing life, but are you still following Him in every area of your life?"