

September 1st, 2019

Colossians 3:12-4:1 NKJ ¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 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. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 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. ¹⁸ Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²² Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, 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. ^{NKJ}
4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Why did the chicken cross the road? Because that is what chickens do, apparently.

Why did the prince climb the castle, slay the dragon, and rescue the princess? Because that is what princes do.

Those examples are of course jokes and fairy tales, but it is still true that so much of what we do is based on who and what we are, or who and what we perceive ourselves to be.

This is very obvious in India. If your parents are rat chasers then that is what you are, and you spend your life chasing rats out of the rice fields. If you are born to a basket weaver then that is who you are.

We like to think that here in the US we can be whoever we want to be, but once again we very often react and act according to the way we perceive ourselves. When we think we are alone and unloved we get angry and depressed.

Just yesterday there was yet another shooting in Texas. Why do people do that? Because they think they are alone, or unloved or some other reason.

For this reason Paul begins with this one statement which is meant to be the basis of all that follows:

as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved - Colossians 3:12

You are holy. You are chosen. You are loved.

This is the core foundation of everything that follows. Paul does not say if you are loving and forgiving then God will love you and you will be holy. No he says you are already holy. God already loves you. You are elect.

When you are tempted to be angry because other people insult you, when you feel all alone and are depressed, when you are afraid that you aren't worth anything. Paul says go back to your baptism, know this truth. God chose you. You are worth a lot to him. God made you holy. God loves you with an undying love.

Because this is who you are, how is this going to change your life? And here Paul is going to show us three ways in which this will change our life

First it will change your heart. Christ has forgiven you. Christ has loved you, so why are you angry resentful, hateful. Get rid of the sinful desires and replace them with forgiveness and joy and love and the peace of Christ.

Second, because you are holy and because you are filled with the peace of Christ, therefore your heart, soul and lips will sing the joy of Christ.

Third, when you have this joy in your heart carry it through in everything you do.

First then you are loved you are forgiven - forgive and love in return

Colossians 3:12-15 NKJ ¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 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. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

We saw last week how the only way we can put away the sin and evil desires, covetousness, lust etc is through the power and the promises that are ours in our baptism. But now Paul encourages us to go one step further, not just to put away covetousness and lust but to then fill the heart with selflessness and humility and love.

Instead of coveting more for me consider what does my neighbor need? How can I give more instead of how can I get more?

Instead of getting angry when someone does something against us be longsuffering, patient, bear one another's sins. Wouldn't it be great if you mess up and another person forgives you without even thinking about it. But now we have to be careful with this one because sometimes we think, I won't say

anything but we are not really forgiving. We are just letting it stew in our hearts and build up. Paul says, "Do not let the Sun go down on your wrath." So we want to learn to forgive but if we can't we need to talk, politely and lovingly but we still need to discuss it.

And humility - What is humility? Humility is not the degrading of myself. it is not a denial of my own value and my own talents. If God has blessed you with a gift we can acknowledge that and thank God for that gift. So humility is not the debasing of myself but instead it is the lifting up of others.

Philippians 2:3 NKJ in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

This is the goal not to deny our value but to lift others up and esteem them and build them up. Most of the time we like to tear others down so that we in comparison look better. Replace that desire to always tear others down with a desire to always build others up.

We can forgive because we are already forgiven. We can love because we already love and we can have peace with others because we already have peace with God.

When we learn to love instead of hate, to forgive instead of anger, to give generously rather than covet selfishly. Then we live with the same peace that Christ gives to us. Doesn't that sound so much nicer than always living in anger and resentment?

Secondly Paul says, because we have the peace of God ruling in our hearts we can wander this earth singing in our hearts

Colossians 3:16 NKJ 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.

A recent survey found that the number one indicator of whether a child will remain in the church after he has grown up is if his father was active in the singing at the church.

I don't really think it's about the singing. I think it about the attitude. When we know that love of Christ which He has shown to us. When we know the peace that comes from the forgiveness of sins, our hearts will respond to that message with joy. The joy will flow from our hearts in song. Our sons will see that joy and it will be impressed upon them.

Many of us are not that great at singing and perhaps we are embarrassed for others to hear us. But the thing is that most of us are not that good, so it doesn't really matter. Sing out.

I love it every year when the Nauman's come to hunt and they fill the church with their singing. They aren't that good at singing but they don't care. They sing because they are delighted to hear the gospel and respond with thanksgiving to God. And consider how encouraging that is to hear them. Sing out loud, no one here is judging you.

I love what Luther said about this, and here I paraphrase, "if the musicians and composers knew what we were doing to their hymns, they would cry. But we are going to sing loudly anyway."

But of course Paul isn't talking about only Sunday morning. He says that we should let that song fill our lives. Just like Snow White or Cinderella always singing.

Now because we live in a sin filled world we are going to get depressed. Our hearts are not always going to be joyful. Therefore return to the Word, let the Word of Christ dwell in you. Go back and read again of what Christ did for you. How he divided the red sea. How he saved the three men in the fiery furnace. How he rose from the dead. How he forgave your sins. Let this word dwell in your hearts and you will learn to sing again.

Everyone has these devotion books, and those can be good. But don't let them be an excuse not to read God's word. Go back and read all the wonderful things Christ has done for you. Continue to live in that word until the peace of God dwells in your hearts and that peace causes your hearts to sing with hymns of joy.

This leads us to the final section we have for today

Colossians 3:17-4:1 NKJ 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. ¹⁸ Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²² Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, 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. **4:1** Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

We don't really have time to go through each and every thing Paul lists here. Each verse can easily be a sermon by itself. But notice that it all boils down to one thing: if you have that peace of God which

causes you to sing in your heart, then whatever else you have to do in life, you can easily do it joyfully and with your whole heart.

This list that Paul has here is going to just annoy everyone.

Women will read it and think why should I submit to my husband? I know more than he. I'm just as good as he.

Husbands will read it and think, how can I stop being bitter, my wife won't stop nagging me.

Children will read it and think, I'm not going to listen to my parents, they don't know what they are talking about. Its my life.

Employees will think why should I listen to my boss, the guy is an fool.

But Paul reminds us we are not doing this because our husbands, or our fathers, or our bosses are worthy of such respect. We are doing it because God created the world to have order, and when we don't have order we don't have peace, only war and hatred.

We are doing it because Jesus who loved us and died for us has asked us to.

This is a good passage to look over and remind ourselves what it is that God has asked us to do. This can be your homework for the week. Look over these verses. Ask yourself which ones applies to me, for most of us more than one will. Ask yourself what is God asking me to do? Not what is God telling my wife to do, but what is God asking me to do? Then do it

But do it with joy and a song in your heart to the Lord.

Wives submit to your husbands with joy and thanks to the Lord who died for you

Husbands love your wife, put their needs above your own, and do it with joy for the Lord who died for you. etc

Of course you will find you haven't done this. But we go back to the beginning. You are chosen. You are loved. You are forgiven. It always comes back to this, what Christ has done for me.

Because of what He has done for me I am forgiven and can forgive other.

Because of what he has done for me I have peace and can live in peace with others.

Because of what He has done for me I sing in my heart.

Because of what He has done for me I do all tasks whatever is mine to do with joy and thanksgiving in my heart.

Amen