
ALTERNATIVE REALITY

Part 4 - Alternative Lifestyle

Context

Today, we turn to the third chapter of Colossians, where we will learn about an alternative lifestyle that followers of Jesus are called into as participants in this alternative kingdom and alternative story. In other words, what does the story of Jesus have to do with how we live?

Paul himself had not ever been to this church and he writes this letter to encourage these believers that Jesus is enough! As we come to Chapter 3, we are challenged to live a transformed life, in God's Kingdom.

Raised To Life

Paul is drawing the Colossians' attention back once again to Jesus because He is enough. But now, it goes beyond the theoretical and this time it impacts the identity of the believer so much that all they can do is set their hearts and minds on things above.

Beautiful Exchange

Jesus became a ransom for your debt, a great substitute for your sin, and a great redeemer of your life. But it doesn't stop there! Your failing, broken and dirty life is exchanged for His perfect, whole and holy life.

As Paul has already explained back in Chapter 1, "for He has reconciled to himself all things, whether on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:20). This is the beautiful exchange! This is the heart of the story of Jesus!

Hidden With Christ

What does all of this mean? It means you are 'Hidden with Christ'. When the Father looks at you, He sees the cross!

Now Paul ties the identity of the present generation of believers to their participation in the story! In other words, you are now a main character in this alternative story.

He says:

- You have died.
- You were buried with Him.
- You are raised with Him.
- You set your hearts and minds on Christ, seated at the right hand of God, and
- You will be revealed with Him.

Death, burial, resurrection, ascension and even second coming.

The story of Jesus is meant to form the very lives and hearts of the people who call Jesus Lord.

Put to Death

Paul addresses many sins here, but they can be broken into two main categories: sexual sin and social sin.

And this is the point he's making: all sexual sin ultimately comes from a place of selfish greed that has the control and consumption of the other person as its ultimate desire.

Sexual sin isn't sin because it's sexual. It's sin because it's greedy. It's sin because it breaks the very thing that Jesus came to save and build – His church and His image bearers.

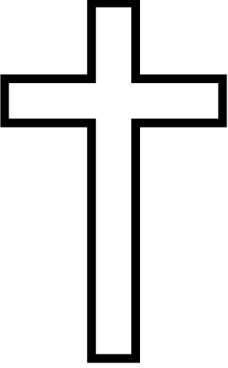
Secondly, Paul lists social sin.

Interestingly the Greek work for slander here is *blasphemia*. To bear false witness against someone, or to cast a whole community in a negative light, is blasphemy, because it slanders people who are also created in the image of God! When we slander people, we are blaspheming against God.

Paul is showing us what an alternative lifestyle looks like in the community of believers.

Jesus has united all people! Slave and free, Gentile and Jew, because Christ is all and is in all.

Put these things to death, before they kill you, and before they kill this community.

PUT TO DEATH	HIDDEN WITH CHRIST	PUT ON THE NEW SELF
Earthly Nature		Chosen People
Sexual Immortality		Holy
Impurity		Compassion
Lust		Kindness
Evil Desires		Humility
Greed		Gentleness
Idolatry		Patience
Wrath of God		Bear with each other
Anger		Forgive
Rage		Love
Malice		Be thankful
Slander		Teach
Filthy Language		Admonish
Lying		Sing Songs

Put on the New Self

The solution is to “put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge in the image of its Creator.” (v.10)

This is an individual responsibility, but it has a corporate consequence.

This is exactly what Jesus did in the grave, for when Jesus rose from the dead, He left the graveclothes behind. It’s the same with Lazarus in John 11 when Jesus says “take off the grave clothes and let him go” as the dead man came back to life!

Deep compassion for those around you, kindness through deeds, humbly thinking of others before you, and being gentle and meek, which leads to forgiveness, which comes from love.

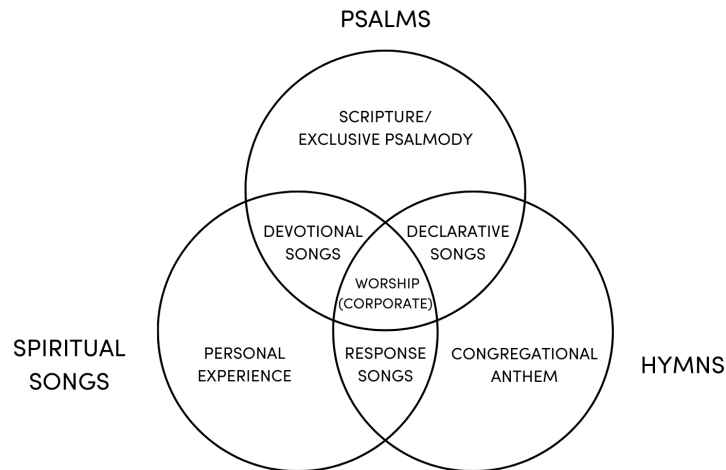
Your life is hidden with Christ. Your old life is dead, and now, through a transformational work of God’s presence, you can put on the new self!

It is Right to Praise

Worship is the right response to the revelation of Jesus.

Notice here Paul’s use of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs.

- + *Psalms* – Songs based predominantly from the Psalms, but perhaps other Scripture as well
- + *Hymns* – Generally poetic material that is either recited or sung, that speaks of doctrinal truth
- + *Spiritual Songs* – Songs based in personal experience sung from the spirit of the individual



Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever considered that Jesus created an opportunity for a 'Beautiful Exchange'? How was this made possible?
2. How do you see your life, "hidden with Christ". What does that mean for you?
3. Have you ever considered that an individual's sin could have an effect on the wider community?
4. Colossians 3:10 says, "which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator". How do you see your life being renewed at the moment?
5. Paul describes corporate worship by talking about Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs. Which type of worship song do you prefer? Why is that? Do you think you could grow in worshipping in other ways?
6. Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Is there any part of your life that you are unable to 'do in the name of Jesus'? What would it look like to do everything in the name of Jesus?