

# **Colossians 3:12-17**

## **Worship Together**

**1/13/19, Clint Pressley**

*<sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

(Pastor prays)

Once again we find ourselves on a rainy Sunday and it looks like the same thing might happen next week. And if you're a preacher, you dread a rainy Sunday—especially when it gets close to freezing— because people will start seeing icicles where icicles do not exist. Or they will start seeing freezing rain were freezing rain does not exist.

Why then do we care? What is it that makes us as Christians put all our emphasis on gathering together? Why do we believe that we should not stay home and watch church on Facebook? Why do we at Hickory Grove believe that we should not have an online campus?

We believe that because the Bible tells us not to forsake the assembly. You were not saved to be an individual as a Christian, wandering alone. You were saved to be a part of a body of believers and to be a part of the body of Christ.

So why do we do what we do? Well, as we look at the little book of Colossians, it is not written to the individual. It is written to a body of believers to teach us how to worship. And with that there are great privileges and real responsibilities. We believe that there at the cross of Jesus, after living perfectly, and dying sacrificially, God raised Him from the dead, He ascended into heaven and is Lord of all. And we believe that because of

that day— Sunday—that's when we gather to celebrate what the Gospel has done for us and is doing in us.

### **Worship: A Life Lived in the Shadow of the Cross**

There are a couple of things I want you to see in this passage. I'm going to take verse 12 and go all the way down to verse 17 and just pull out some things about worship. Let's see if you can see them as I go along. Here's the first one.

### **Worship Reminds Us Who We Are**

In verse 12 and 13 you see Paul saying, "if you have been made new, you been changed. Take off that old rag of the filthy life you used to have and you put on something else." Notice who he is addressing in verse 12 and the three things he calls them. <sup>12</sup> *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,* God's chosen, holy and beloved.

**Chosen** - If you are a Christian, this applies to you. If you are not a Christian, that means you are outside the circle. For right now, all you can do is watch. Chosen One. All through the Bible we see the word "chosen." Ephesians I - chosen. I Thessalonians 1:4 – chosen. 1 Peter 2– chosen. That means God is the one doing the choosing. It is God making the initiative. It is God picking you. Don't think you are smart enough to pick God. He picked us when you and I were in our sin. Even while we were sinners, Christ died for us. That is grace and that's the word I would write down there beside the word "chosen."

It is by God's grace that He has saved any of us. We talk about God's grace and Him saving thousands and millions of people. If all of us are born into sin and were born sinners, we come into this world and when we are able to, we start to sin and deserve to go to Hell. It's God's grace that even one of us is saved. We shouldn't ask why it is that God doesn't save everybody. We should be asking: why does God save me? Here's the beauty of grace found at the cross of Jesus. Look what Grace does.

**Grace crushes my pride.** When I realize that God has saved me through Jesus, I'm not prideful. There's no way you should think that you're better than anybody else if you understand grace. If you understand that you were not smart enough to choose God but He in His love chose you. Grace crushes pride.

**Grace exalts God.** When we think about being chosen, this takes from us our ingenuity to become better people, to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and one day

become more like Jesus. No, this instead, exalts God. God, who looked on us, dead in our sin, deaf to goodness, blind to His love, and He made us alive in Jesus. Grace exalts God. It crushes pride. And it produces joy. When I understand that God in Christ, chose us, it makes it so that I have cause to celebrate. Even when I understand my own sin, what I deserved.

We sing the songs that show us that worship is about God and what God is doing for us. So regardless whether you like the style or not, or maybe you want a banjo or something up here, regardless of what it is, you can sing with joy. Grace reminds us of joy, it crushes pride and grace gives me confidence. When I know that it is God's doing, that my identity is in Christ because He's the one who saves me and not me trying to work out and become more religious. It is what God has done in me that gives me confidence to face today. Understanding that you were chosen by God in Jesus, if you're a believer, it helps me to forgive people. When I understand how much grace it took to actually save me, when I confront my sin, it makes it much easier for me to forgive other people. I realized I was chosen. There's a whole lot wrapped up in that little word.

But notice verse 12 says that we are not only God's chosen ones... but keep going. There is a second word and it is the word "holy." You see that He has made us holy. One of the good ways to remember who we are is that not only were we sinners, but when Christ changes us, we now become saints. We are the children of God bought by the blood of Jesus and that made us saints. You might not feel like you are a saint, but you are if you are in Christ. And it's good for you to understand who you are. That you are made holy not by your legalistic living. You are made holy by what Christ has done. Holy. Sanctified. It's a great way to understand yourself. That word "holy" also means to be "set apart." When He saw you and your sin and choose you in Christ and saved you, He set you apart for a purpose. He not only didn't just put you on a shelf. What He did was He chose you out and put you on a path and set you apart for a purpose.

There's another word there that talks about our identity. It's right there in verse 12, as God's "beloved." To **be** loved. One of the greatest things you can remember as a Christian is that you are loved by God. One of the greatest confidence builders is to know that you are loved. The human love here on Earth pales in comparison, but if you are married to someone who loves you, and that person is very good at showing it, you know what it feels like to actually *be* loved by someone. Now if you could multiply that by billions upon billions, that's what God's love for you is in Jesus. If you're a Christian,

it's good to remember as God the father loves God the son— if you are in God the son— that's how He loves you. One of the greatest things, one the most freeing things for you will be to understand who you are. That you are chosen by God and Jesus, that you are made holy in Jesus and that you are loved. This is a safeguard for anybody who might try to pursue twisted love in simple ways here on this Earth. Worship reminds us who we are.

But not only that, worship should remind us how we are to live.

### **Worship Reminds How to Live**

Now in verse 12 notice there are five things. All five are internal and they speak to, now that you are redeemed in Jesus, this is how you live. In fact, the language that Paul uses in verse 12 is the language of putting on a garment. See the phrase – “put on.” It's like this morning when I got up and got dressed, I put on this suit. Just like that, what are we to put on? Notice the five things. Let's look at the first two words – “compassionate heart.” In Greek it is *splagchnon*. It means “guts.” When you see something happen and it breaks your heart. How you feel in your gut. It's like you're watching a “girl movie” and something emotional goes on and you feel it inside and you cry. This is a compassionate heart. This is the gut feeling. And part of being a Christian means that there is an emotion involved. It is not that God has given us stoic information. It is the fact that God is giving us soft hearts. That we empathize with people. That we weep with those who weep. That we feel what they feel. We are people who are connected together by the blood of Jesus and we care for one another. Put on compassionate hearts.

Compassionate heart and kindness. Kindness is connected there. It feels like patience. It means treating people better than they deserve to be treated. It is a word that carries with it long-suffering. What else do we put on? Kindness and humility. Humility was not a virtue in the ancient world. John MacArthur said that it took Christianity to come on the scene to make humility something that is worthwhile. Thinking more of other people than you think about yourself is part of being a Christian. These are the “clothes” that we put on.

Let me give you another word. Meekness. Meekness is often equated with weakness, but it is not weakness. The word “meekness” means to be more and more like Jesus.

Here is another word. Patience. Everybody knows that patience is a virtue. Did you know that it was a Christian virtue? It means that you don't get easily angered, you don't fly off the handle. But that is what the cross does to us. We crucify our pride. We go to the cross and it changes us. It changes how we live, how we worship and it is important because it brings us together to be reminded of these things. If you live an individual life by yourself and never gather with people who are different from you, you don't have to be patient. You know why you have to be patient? Because you are around people who are not like you who are doing things you don't understand. Patience. Worship reminds us how to live. You know what else worship reminds us?

### **Worship Reminds Us What to do**

It reminds us what to do. In other words, three means of identity, and five virtues are in verse 12 and now I'm going to give you three actions to take. You'll see it in verse 13.

The first one is *bearing with one another*. And if anyone has a complaint against another, here's a second one, *forgiving each other* as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. And above these, put on—here's the third one—love. It's the belt binding everything together in perfect harmony.

Let's talk about these three. The first one - to bear with one another. That means to tolerate. Sometimes that's just what you do with people. Sometimes you just tolerate things when you don't understand why they're doing that. It makes no sense to you, you are much more organized than that and what they're doing is something you may normally be offended by, but instead you are patient and loving and kind. You put up with it. What we do as Christians is we put up with things. We gather together and we're not seeking our own preferences; we learn to submit to one another and to love each other. But not only that, more than tolerate, there's another word that's built on top of it. Forgiving. Let's read the text and see how it's explained. Bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another—this is inside the church— we forgive each other. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. Forgive. In fact, how that word “forgive,” is used here, comes from the word “grace.” If you read it in Greek, the actual punctuation is reflexive. That is to say *forgive yourself*. Paul is talking to the church members collectively. He said it must be a place of forgiveness. Do you know how we forgive? I'll give it two ways. One is we have Jesus as our model. It says it right in the text: you forgive just as the Lord has forgiven you. So He points to Jesus. Think about the prayer of Jesus as He died on the cross: Father forgive them.

So Paul says you need to learn how to forgive. Look how Jesus forgives people. But not only that, Jesus is not just our model, 'He's our motivation. It helps me forgive other people when I understand how God has forgiven me in Jesus. What it took for me to be forgiven as an unbelieving, God-hater, as someone who sinned against God and God forgave me in Jesus. Understanding God's grace makes me want to forgive.

One of the hardest humps you'll have to get over in Christianity is learning how to take the grace God is giving you in Jesus and extend that to other people. But that's what we're called to do. That's how we're called to live, in forgiveness.

So you've got tolerance, bearing with one another, forgiveness and— notice that third thing in verse 13. It's the belt. *bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.* <sup>14</sup> *And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.* And above all of these put on another piece of clothing; put on love which binds everything together. Think about it like putting on a belt. That belt, love, around you holds everything together. By the way, that word “love” there is “agape”, the word God used throughout the Bible that speaks of sacrificial love.

Here is what the cross does for us. We learn to come together and we learn how to live because we tolerate and we forgive and we love each other.

Let me give you a fourth thing. Number four reminds us who is in charge.

### **Worship Reminds Us Who is in Charge**

Do you see it down there in 15? Verse 15 and 16 are similar in that they have the same kind of sentence structure, but notice the **who** in verse 15. Here's a command: <sup>15</sup> *And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.* There's a lot there in verse 15. The peace of Christ is ruling in your heart, you are one body, you've been called to it and you live with thanksgiving. That word “peace” is not the word “shalom.” It is the word, *eiríni* in Greek. It is the peace that Christ gives when you turn from your sin and in faith turn to Jesus. It's the peace that Paul said surpasses all understanding. It is the peace that Christ gives. It is the peace that He brings and, notice in verse 15 what that peace does. Let the peace of Christ rule. It's not rule like a king, it's rule like an umpire. Let the peace of Christ rule in such a way that it is guiding your decisions and how you make decisions. You make decisions based on the fact that you been changed by the Gospel. You were able to move

forward and God has given you a certain peace. That peace is found in Christ and it rules your life.

Let me just say this as a pastor, I know this to be true: people who are most at peace with God will bring the most peace in a church. People who are at the most peace with God will bring the most peace. And let me just turn that coin over: people who lack peace with God, bring the most corruption. Worship binds us together, reminding us who is in charge.

So I'll give you a fifth point.

### **Worship Fills Us Up with the Gospel**

Let's break it down just a little bit. Verse 16, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.* The word of Christ, that's the Gospel, dwells in you richly to such a degree that it touches every piece of who you are.

Put all that together. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. How did we do that? How do I make sure that the Gospel permeates everything, your life and heart and mind, everything that goes on here at Hickory Grove? How does it permeate every aspect of a teenager's life? He tells us right there. How do we do it?

The first word is “**teaching.**” Teaching is information so that worship engages the mind. We sing songs of substance on purpose because singing helps us remember truth. So we have teaching but teaching is not enough. There must be **admonishing.** Teaching and admonishing one another. Admonishing is different from teaching, because admonishing is taking the truth that you heard and say you need to do something about this. Admonishing is saying, “Hey, you've been lazy, you've been laying out, you can do better than that. This is gonna be trouble in your life.” Admonishing is taking truth and then applying it to individual lives. You see after teaching and admonishing, we are singing but notice what the text says. Teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing. So you're singing songs hymns, and spiritual songs pertaining to the Old Testament Psalms and probably hymns are more structured arrangements of singing about the goodness of God. Spiritual songs have a more emotional feel. You put all that together. When you sing in church you need to

make sure that your songs are not secular songs. We don't sing songs that you hear on the radio. We sing songs about exalting God. The emotion there is that you are singing these songs and you do so with thankfulness in your heart. Music has been designed by God to take the truth of the Bible and inserted into our hearts. Music is the vehicle by which a message is delivered. The music is not the message; the message rides on the music. Why do we use music here? Music teaches. Music prompts recall, it helps you remember things. God is giving us this tool to help us remember. When it's applied rightly and we are singing together congregationally, it's encouraging. It is something to be singing with other people about the goodness of God. We sing songs because they comfort us. When you go through hard times, you want to sing songs that remind you of the goodness of God and who He is. When we sing together on Sunday morning and often people are standing and have their hands raised or their eyes closed, why is that? It's not because the music is so inspiring, it is because the words inspire us, and you want to sing that song and you do it with thankfulness in your heart. I'll give you one more thing about worship.

### **Worship Becomes a Lifestyle**

Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Worship is focusing on God. Verse 17 gives us a second Golden Rule. Verse 17 is the most basic rule of thumb for Christian living. If you ever wonder “should I do this or should I not do this?”, you can go to verse 17. Am I doing this and if I do, can I do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, and can I give thanks to God?

Whatever you do in word or deed, whatever you do, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God. Our life is driven by worship. Worship is a life that is overshadowed by the cross.

*(Pastor prays)*