

Some Things Just Need Killing (Colossians 3:5-15)

It seems like we human beings have a tendency to go from one extreme to another. The Apostle Peter is a great example. Do you remember the scene where Jesus was washing the disciples' feet? When He came to Peter, Peter said "Hold up there, boss!"

"You shall never wash my feet!" (John 13:8)

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." (John 13:8)

Peter was completely wrong in not wanting Jesus to minister to Him, but when he was corrected, he went to the opposite extreme.

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" (John 13:9)

I envision our Lord rolling His eyes at this point. And He corrects Peter again:

"He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean..." (John 13:10)

Whenever we wind up in a doctrinal ditch, we tend to overcorrect. From the ditch on one side of the road, we cross over to the ditch on the other side of the road. When it comes to our view of salvation, we too often make just this mistake.

Paul has demonstrated in the Book of Colossians that we are saved by God's grace alone. There is no way you can be saved by your good works. You can't get to heaven by keeping the Ten Commandments because you are completely incapable of keeping those commandments to the degree that is required by God. So salvation is not of works. Salvation is by God's grace alone through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone.

Those who try to justify themselves by their pious living are in the ditch called **legalism** and unfortunately, those folks are quite interested in dragging others in with them. Listen, if you are counting on your legalistic, self-righteous piety to get you into heaven, you will stand before Christ and say:

'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' (Matthew 7:22)

And Jesus will say "I don't know you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness."

So we need to avoid legalism. But there is also a ditch on the other side of the road. It's called antinomianism. The idea is that since I have been saved by grace, I am released from any responsibility to live by God's moral law. In other words, it doesn't matter how I live. I believe in Jesus! I have my ticket punched to heaven so now I can sin with impunity.

That is just as wrong and Paul speaks to this attitude in Romans.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (Romans 6:1-2)

Yes, you have been saved by grace alone. You do not earn your salvation; Jesus purchased it for you. But it does matter how you live.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

There are behaviors and there are attitudes and there are lifestyles that are completely antithetical and contrary to a Christian lifestyle. They are completely contrary to Jesus Christ. If you are in Christ, these things need killing. With the help of God the Holy Spirit, you need to put them to death.

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)

“Therefore” is there for a reason and the reason is found in the first three verses of this same chapter. We covered them two weeks ago, but let’s just take another quick look.

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3)

When you declare Jesus as your Lord and believe God raised Him from the dead, you identify with Christ in a profound way.

... our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. (Romans 6:6)

So as a result, we need to kill the stuff that is characteristic of our old life. In verse five, Paul mentions fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness. All these things are forms of idolatry. Anything you put ahead of Jesus is an idol. These things just need killing! You need to nail those things to a cross.

In verses 6 and 7, Paul explains why:

Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. (Colossians 3:6-7)

Listen to me; God’s wrath is every bit as pure as His love. Trifle with Almighty God at your own peril.

For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:30-31)

It is a fearful, terrible thing to be judged for your sin and you sin, because you are a sinner. All have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. (Romans 3:23) Your sin is going to be judged – the penalty will be paid. That’s a guarantee from the word of God. The wages of sin is death – and it is an eternal death, an eternity of torment enduring all the agonies of hell.

The gift of God is eternal life ... if you allow Jesus to be your substitute. He has paid for your sin. I pray that you have because the alternative is not pretty. Reject Jesus and the wage will be paid to you. The wrath of God will be poured out on your head. You do not want to be one of the sons of disobedience!

Now, if you think you can simply make an empty pledge to Jesus and then continue living a self-centered life, you are disregarding God’s holiness and disrespecting His offer of grace. The evidence of authentic salvation is a changed life. It doesn’t happen all at once and you will not get anywhere close to perfect obedience while you’re lugging around that body of flesh. But your desire will be to please your Lord. You must want to

glorify Jesus in all that you do and you do not glorify Jesus if you are living for the passions of this world.

That's the way you lived before you knew Christ. But now that you have called Him Lord, you must strive to do the things He tells you to do.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. (1 John 5:3-4)

Jesus wants us to love with a pure *agape* love. We're to love God with everything we've got: our heart, soul, mind, and strength and we're to love our neighbor as ourselves.

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. (Colossians 3:8)

See, those are the things that need killing. You need to eradicate them. They have no place in a Christian life.

I know, if you're a Christian, this is a tough world to live in. People do things you don't like. People treat you badly sometimes. But how are they going to see the peace of God if you refuse to demonstrate it for them? If you react the same way they react, why would they be curious at all about your faith? They will not want to know about the hope you have if you fail to demonstrate that hope.

Paul said:

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (Romans 12:14)

It's hard for me to listen to the hateful speech that comes from the mouths of many professing Christians today. On one level, I get it. It seems so easy to adopt the tactics of the world, but if you slander somebody, do you really think God would honor you for it? Who is the father of lies, anyway? Evil speaking is not of God. Anger, malice, wrath are not things you should harbor. It is God's place to execute judgment, not yours. It is blasphemy to set yourself in the place of God.

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, (Colossians 3:9-10)

Jesus is the way, **the truth** and the life. We have access to His truth because this Bible is His very word. Christians have no business being in the business of spin.

I've just got to say this: If you come across an Email or a Facebook post that says something derogatory about a political leader, or anyone else for that matter, do not forward it unless you have thoroughly checked it out and know for certain it is true. We are so prone to simply believe anything bad about someone we don't like and so much of what we see is based on lies and half-truth. In fact, you probably shouldn't forward that stuff at all. What good does it do? Is Jesus being glorified by passing along gossip?

If you are truly a Christian, you bear the image of Christ.

... where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. (Colossians 3:11)

We're really good at putting people in boxes, aren't we? We label people as good or bad based on all sorts of artificial criteria: their nationality and where they come from,

whether they are democrat or republican, whether they are liberal or conservative, whether they are male or female, even their race ... although we generally know enough to deny it in polite company. But there are only two categories of people in God's economy. There are those who know Jesus and there are those who need to know Jesus. Those who know Jesus need to be about the business of spreading the Gospel to those who need to know Jesus. We are certainly not to hate them. Your hate is one of the things that needs killing!

I have to say, this has been a pretty negative sermon so far. But you know, if this offends you, maybe you need to be offended. Maybe there are attitudes and behaviors in your life that need killing. Thankfully, I get to end on a positive note because there are attitudes and behaviors that need to live. You need to feed these things, nurture these things so they will grow in your life.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 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. (Colossians 3:12-13)

Returning good for evil isn't natural, is it. Exactly! It's not natural but it is Christ-like!

See, if you have trusted Jesus for your salvation and named Him Lord of your life, God has favored you; He really loves you. You are the elect of God. You have been made Holy by the blood of the Lamb. You are the most privileged class of people anywhere because you are God's kids and heirs of His kingdom. That's why you need to display a family resemblance. That's why you must do your absolute best to emulate Jesus. Be merciful. Be kind. Be humble, meek, longsuffering. Be forgiving. Jesus said:

"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:43-45)

That's the attitude you must nurture and it isn't easy. In fact, it's absolutely impossible without the Holy Spirit to help you but it needs to be what you are striving for.

But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. (Colossians 3:14)

This love is *agape* in the Greek. It's the purest form of love. It's the sort of love God demonstrates toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. It's a love that provides whatever is needed regardless of whether or not it is deserved.

And Paul says this love is our bond of perfection. It is the very thing that draws us all together in Christ. It is the underlying grace of all graces. It is our goal, our objective, that thing we all must strive for. Because perfect love brings perfect peace.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

You know, I think everybody wants to be content. And pretty much all human striving is an effort to reach a state of contentment. Too often we think that money or things or relationships with other people will allow us to reach a state of true contentment, but that stuff always falls short. True contentment, true peace only comes by living in Jesus Christ. If you are stressed about anything, it's because you're not close enough to the Lord.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7)

If you find your life in Christ, the things you want will be the things He wants you to have. You'll ask, and you will receive and boy, is that a good place to be. I could be content with that! Of course, In fall short. We all fall short. We stumble. We fall. We get distracted by the darkness that swirls around us. But you can always return to Christ. Just repent of your unbelief. Ask for forgiveness, because.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

And that is something for which we truly can be thankful.

So I'm going to make a bit of a New Year's resolution this morning and I invite you to join me. You won't be able to keep it on your own, so you better be praying for forgiveness and grace every day. Here it is:

I resolve to do my utmost to put to death those things in my life that need killing and I resolve to feed and nurture those things that draw me closer to Christ.

and [may] the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding ... guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)