

“Rhythm, Blues & Allegro”

Devoted to God

Colossians 3:1-17

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Jeff: You know, I’ve got to tell you that when I first got here and I heard the kazoo whistle, or whatever that was, I knew I was home. (*Laughter*) I thought, “This place is just for me.” And when I got home and told my wife, she agreed wholeheartedly. Well why don’t we pray? And Don, would you help us to get into an attitude of that? (*Music*)

Heavenly Father, we are thankful for the day. We’re thankful for the many gifts and the blessings that You give to us. We are thankful for family and for the jobs that you give, and for the way in which You provide for our many needs. But Father, most of all we are thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ, and we’re thankful for every spiritual blessing poured out upon us in Him. Father, we’re thankful that we are being day by day and moment by moment conformed to His image. And Father, we pray that the work that we do in Your word, a work which we’ve been enabled to do by Your Spirit, will indeed have its effect, Lord, because You are gracious. And so, Father, we pray that as we spend time in Your word, that it will be different, even that time this morning before we arrived. And we pray, Father, that You will continue to do Your work in us, that it might be brought to completion. And Father, we pray and we think about the various people who need prayer in our group and beyond. But we think today about Bruce. We pray for his continued recovery. We’re thankful that You brought him through the surgery. And yet we pray that You would alleviate the pain in his body, and we pray that You would give him both health in his knee and in his back. And Father, we think about Noah, one so young and yet with so many difficulties in life. We pray for him. We pray that You will indeed through not only the doctors but through supernatural intervention, if You so choose to exercise it, that You would bring health to this young man. And Father, we pray that this would really be a bump in his life that he will overcome by Your grace, and one that he’ll be able to look back on even with gratitude as he grows older, knowing that these are the kinds of things that create strength in us of character and faith. And we pray, Father, that You’ll do that for Noah. Father, his name means rest, and so we pray that You would give him rest from this particular hardship in his life. Father, now that we turn our attention to You and Your word, we pray that You’ll bless us. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. Well today we are going to think about continuing on in the book *Devoted to God*, Ferguson’s book. And today I just want to give you the outline of what we’re going to do, and you have it on the website. It’s getting the relationship right. We’re going to be moving toward the door and we’re going to consider the work of rebuilding. Those are ideas that we’ll unpack as we go.

But again I want you to understand that when we think about this particular outline one of the things that we ought to remember is that this first point has been unpacking some of the concepts that we’ve been engaged with throughout the time of our study that

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we need to think about in order to move on into the next couple of points and learn what’s going on there.

So you’ll remember again that I think that the best way to think about sanctification is to think of it as a mixing bowl. And all of the ingredients are there. And they’re happening in our lives simultaneously. Sanctification is not really a step-by-step process where you say, “Now you’re going to do this next, and you’re going to do this next.” You may explain their prayer time to someone and how it is a step-by-step process—now you pray and now you read the Scriptures. But the actual growth in grace process, the actual growth in holiness, is a bit different. All kinds of things are happening at once. We’ll see those kinds of things as we look at our first point today. But we’ll need those things that we look at today as we move forward.

Well today we’re going to be looking at Colossians chapter 3 and verses 1-17. So that’s just the beginning of it. I’d like to read that entire set of verses. So who’s got a big booming voice so he can read all seventeen verses? Don, it looks like you’re the man again.

Don: Okay.

Jeff: So 3:1-17, if you would.

Don: Okay. *“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. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry. 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.

“But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 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, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, nor barbarian, Scythian, slave or free. But Christ is all and in all.

“Therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, 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.

“But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body. And be thankful. 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. 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.” This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: Okay. So we are going to think first about *getting the relationship right*. Thanks for reading that, Don.

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Don: You’re welcome.

Jeff: Getting the relationship right. I’ve subtitled this “Know thyself.” And the reason I’ve done that is because identity is so important when we think about our Christian life in Jesus Christ.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: I had a friend that I graduated with from high school. We became quick friends after we graduated. We had a little bit of a bump in the road. We got into a fight on the railroad tracks down behind my house when he was a senior and I was in eleventh grade. But we quickly overcame that after we both graduated. And we started lifting weights together and we developed a friendship. I was in his wedding and he was in mine.

And while he was still living in this area he had a little bit of a bumpy marriage. He ended up moving out West with his family. And while he was out West his father started to have a bumpy time. And in just a second you’ll see that it was a little more than a bumpy time.

His father shared his name, or I should say that he shared his father’s name. And his father started to deal in the family business in ways that were less than aboveboard. And he, the father, started to identify himself as his son.

And it wasn’t long before bill collectors were calling the son. The father had skipped town, and the son was entrenched in a mess. He came back and I visited with him during that time and I said, “What are you going to do?”

And he said, “I went to see a lawyer, and the lawyer counseled me to change my name. He said, “That’s the best you can do in this situation because you are that far in it.” He had to change his identity in order to divorce himself from his previous problems.

And I want you to understand something. Christ understands this. He is the One who has changed our identity. Now that we are in Christ, we possess new attributes and virtues by virtue of Him. We are new.

You know, the trouble though, our problem is that we often live like the Ugly Duckling. We think that we are just ugly ducklings when, in fact, we are swans, beautiful swans in Jesus Christ. You know that story, don’t you? And so part of the problem with the Christian life is the renewal of our thinking. It always comes back to the renewal of our thinking and getting our thinking straight about who we actually are, about what our identity actually is.

And the world doesn’t help us, and oftentimes the church doesn’t help us, because the church oftentimes wants to identify us, even Christian people with past sins, they identify us and say, “Well this is who you are.”

But Christ would have it differently. Christ says, “No, no, no! You’re none of that. I’ve forgiven you of that.” You are now in Jesus Christ. And certainly it’s like we talked about the last time. That corpse and that black dog is rotting inside of us. The old man is dead within us. He has no power, but he does have a presence. And because of that presence in us we struggle with sin, the sin that remains.

But there’s a new identity that is ours in Jesus Christ. That’s important. That’s fundamental.

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But not only that. We need to understand that union with Christ brings with it privileges and benefits. We already prayed like this earlier this morning. But let me just take you back to the book of Ephesians. Just back up a couple of books back from Colossians to the book of Ephesians. Let me just read a verse to remind you of something. It’s in verse 3 of chapter 1. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”*

And then he goes on to talk about some of those blessings. He talks about how He chose us, how He predestined us, how He loved us when we were yet unlovable. And he goes on to talk about justification. He goes on to talk about growth in grace. All of these things belong to us by virtue of being in union with Jesus Christ. And so our new identity is founded upon our union with Jesus Christ.

Now when we think about union with Christ we obviously need to think about indicatives and imperatives, but first of all about indicatives. We need to remember, remember, remember that our new identity has been granted to us by virtue of our union with Christ. All of the blessings that are in Christ are ours because of that union. And—here’s the indicative—Christ has done it all for us.

In other words, when we talk about the indicative as it relates to our union with Jesus Christ, we’re simply talking about what God has made true in us and about us by virtue of His Son Jesus Christ. So the indicative tells us who we now are by virtue of our relationship with Jesus Christ.

But we also need to think about—and this is what we’re thinking about in regard to being devoted to God—we’re thinking about the imperative. You see now how the imperative flows out of the new identity, the union and the indicatives of God. The imperative flows out of that. The imperative says that, now that you are this, be this. And you have to keep a balance.

But before I show you the balance, let me just say this. Here are indicatives and imperatives in our very text.

Now look at the indicative. The indicative is *“if you have been raised with Christ.”* The imperative is *“then seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”*

You see, the indicative is that you’ve been raised with Christ. The imperative is now to seek the things that are above.

Now you say to yourself, “Wait a minute! If I’m already raised, why am I supposed to seek, because I’m already there.” And you see, that’s the *already* but *not yet*. That’s the indicative, the imperative relationship. That is the relationship that says this.

Do you remember what we said about the zygote? The zygote is fully human, all forty-six chromosomes. But it’s growing into the fully human person that it already is. That’s the Christian. The Christian is becoming what the Christian already is.

Okay. So these are the foundational concepts that we need in order to press forward. But I want to impress this upon you because I think this is so important. You know, as I’ve pastored in the church I’ve discovered that this relationship, this union with Christ, often gets skewed. And I’ll tell you what happens. I’ll tell you what happens even among knowledgeable people.

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What begins to happen is this. The knowledgeable person says this. He starts to feel as if he’s becoming a little lax. And if you’re becoming a little lax, what’s that called? You’re becoming a little lax. You’re complacent. There’s a theological name for that complacency. It’s called *antinomianism*. Okay, maybe it’s not as funny as I thought it was. *(Laughter)* But he’s in a car driving like a maniac, and it says, “Beware the lawless antinomians on the road of life.” *(Laughter)* Thank you, Sig, I appreciate that.

Sig: It’s a hard to view it from back here.

Jeff: Okay, all right. That’s good. Beware of the lawless antinomians on the open road of life. And when I get lax, what happens? I say, “Well I’m feeling as if I’m not being obedient lately. I’m feeling as if I’m not quite doing what I ought to be doing.”

So how do I remedy that? Well the person who is not thinking correctly says, ‘I remedy that by moving over to a works-focused life in Christ.’ And I say to myself, “Look! I’m getting too lax. So I need to come over here to the works-based life.”

But John Calvin reminds us. “*I don’t always preach works, but when I do, it’s Christ’s work.*” Stay Reformed, my friends. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Don’t you love it!

Jeff: Thank you, Don. I appreciate that out of you. All right, so you get it. Now we need to have a balance when it comes to the indicatives and the imperatives. The indicative says this is what Christ has done for you. Now let your life flow from that.

But what’s the solution when I feel like whatever? You know, I’ve not been prayerful, I’ve not been reading the Scriptures; I’ve not been doing what I ought to do. Is the solution to inject a little legalism into my life? And when I’m feeling a little legalistic, is the solution to inject a little antinomianism into my life? No! It’s all about union with Jesus Christ and thinking rightly about all of these concepts that we’ve been thinking about. I remember that because I’m united to Christ I have a new identity. I remember that this identity is granted to me by God. And I remember then—ah, there’s the bishop!—it’s Christ that I’m to follow. And what would Christ have me to do on the basis of what He has done for me?

So all of these things are really important, I think, when we think about what we’re going to think about next. And I threw that up there, but I think I’m going to pass over that slide today. And I want to talk about moving toward the door because I think we have enough background to get us moving forward. Ted?

Ted: Jeff, I understand what you’re saying about getting lax because that happens to me all the time. And you were just saying that the way you do it is to find out what Christ wants you to do. I want to quote you correctly.

Jeff: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ted: So it’s almost like saying, okay. When we get lax, we don’t go back to works. But we do what Christ wants us to do, which really sounds like works.

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: So I don’t know if the solution—and I’ve struggled with this for a while!—maybe the solution is perseverance and persistence, staying on things that may not seem very glamorous. We underestimate the role of the church, the body of Christ, in keeping

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us from becoming lax. We stay engaged with them, as opposed to starting off and trying to resolve the problem on our own. Those are my thoughts.

Jeff: No, I think those are good. And I think that we’ve been thinking about sanctification from a more individualistic perspective. But I think you’re really nailing something that we will touch on later today. But we’ll not stay with it like we probably ought to stay with it. I think you’re right. I think that the community of faith, the church, it really has the means of grace that we need for the Christian life. And so we need to access those things. And I will talk more about those things later today. But you’ve really hit it right on the head.

Ted: That’s why I’m an Anglican. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Now come on! You don’t have a corner on the church. *(Laughter)* Your worship might be prettier, but you don’t have a corner on the church. *(Laughter)* Yes?

Participant: Since this is an ecumenical group, with the feelings you’ve been talking about, the Baptists would say you’re backslidden.

Jeff: Yes. I’m okay talking about being backslidden. The Puritans used to talk about partial apostasy. You know, it depends on what group you come from. But you know, in terms of just talking about the regular Christian life,—and this goes back to what you said earlier—I think that I would talk more about the Christian life simply as faithfulness. Am I being faithful to Christ? And I think then it takes into account what it is that I think about Christ’s work on my behalf. Am I being faithful to think about that? And am I being faithful to follow Him in it?

And I think that when you think about the Christian life as sort of being conformed to the image of Christ, you think about His life as being in two estates, humiliation and exaltation. And if you think about it in terms of what God does in the Christian life—He brings me through the state of humiliation and He exalts me at the proper time—then it’s for me to understand that through this life I’m going to engage in following Christ. I’m going to get glimpses of exaltation, what is for me in the end. But it is really for me to experience life and be faithful, remembering what it is that Christ has done for me, and that I’m to follow Him faithfully through this kind of humiliation.

Participant: Ted, going a little bit back to what you were talking about last week and going along with what you said, I think we need to be faithful day to day. If you look at 1 Peter 4:10, we’ve been gifted in certain things.

Transcriber’s Note: 1 Peter 4:10, NKJV. *“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*

Participant: And with what I do we teach timing the process, not the outcome. So if we’re timing the process, abiding in Christ, being in Christ, putting the gifts that He’s given us on display, being faithful, executing day in and day out as faith acts with those gifts and trusting Christ with the rest, I think that’s it. I mean if faith is just trusting and relying on Christ’s work alone and not our own, it’s just being faithful and executing that day in and day out, no matter how we feel.

Jeff: Yes. I think that is really true. And you mentioned 1 Peter, so I’ll go there. That’s exactly the book I was mentioning or thinking about when I was talking about humiliation. If you want to just go there, I’ll be going through this really quickly. But if

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you go to 1 Peter 1, notice what it says. And it may be different in your translations. But in 1 Peter 1, and I think it's verse 12, --no, it's verse 11, the last phrase—it says, “*the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories*”, or “*the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.*”

Now that's the first part. I think this book is really built on that inclusio. If you go to chapter 5 and look at verse 1, Peter says that he is “*a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed*”, or “*the glories that are going to follow.*” And so this book is built on the suffering of Christ, the humiliation of Christ, and the glories, the subsequent glories to follow.

And the interesting thing about this is what he says in 5:6 outside of the inclusion, near the end of the book. He says, “*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you.*” The idea is, then, that our lives follow the pattern of the humiliation and the exaltation of Christ.

Here's the interesting thing. If you look throughout this book, there are three places in this book where he talks about suffering for doing good, and that you will be blessed. And then he says, “*So also Christ.*” And the idea then is that your life follows closely along with that of Jesus Christ in terms of its unfolding according to the humiliation of your Savior, and then the expected exaltation that's to come. In other words, I think that it goes back to what you're saying. If you see yourself as in Christ—His death your death, His resurrection your resurrection, and His life your life, and His life being a humble life, a humiliated life, and you see your life as being such—then what you begin to do is to create what? You have this renewal of thinking, that life in Christ is this way and I'm following faithfully in this way. And then it doesn't become, am I too legalistic? Am I too lax? No, it becomes a matter of faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

And I think that's the idea. So now we've talked about concepts, and you know this. We've talked about concepts for a while here. For some of us the question then becomes, are we ever going to get to anything practical, as if this hasn't been practical? But you have to think through these concepts.

But here, in this particular part of our study, we're going to see some very practical things. We're going to talk about two very practical things. I put it as moving toward the door. But the Bible puts it this way: *putting off the old*. We need to put off the old.

Now we need to think about some things when we think about putting off the old. First of all, we need to think about the root of the problem. If you look in verse 5, the root of the problem is in us.

It used to be that the root of the problem was flesh against flesh. You remember how we talked about that before, where if we had a temptation, again outside of Christ. If a pretty woman walked by, we might think a lustful thought about her. But we would resist that. Why would we resist that? Not because we loved Christ, but we might resist that because we love our wives. And so it becomes me against me. I can't follow that temptation because I value my relationship with my wife. But I'm still fighting against myself and my true desires. The problem is in me.

But once I come to the Lord Jesus Christ, then the battle is not flesh against flesh. Then the battle is Spirit versus flesh, because what does Paul say? He says that he

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distances himself from the things that he does. Remember, “the sin that is in me does it. But I want to do what the Spirit wants to do.”

What is he trying to communicate to us? He’s trying to communicate to us that he’s no longer identifying himself with the worst part of himself. He’s identifying himself with the saving Spirit of God and what He wants. And so he says, “That’s not what I want anymore. I still do what I don’t want to do. I’m forgiven for it. But it’s the wretched man that is in me that does that sort of thing.” It’s the dead carcass, the black dog that’s dying and dead within me, that presence of sin which remains and makes me do what I don’t want to do. But I can overcome it by the grace and the power of God.

But we need to understand that the root of the problem is in me. Then we need to understand this, and this is important. If you read through this text, you’re going to find, when he talks about things that we need to put off, he’s going to talk about walking. He’s going to talk about living. He’s going to talk about practicing. And here’s the thing that we need to understand. We need to understand that because of the presence of sin that remains in us, we will have failures this side of heaven.

I used to pastor in a church. This guy used to come to my bible study on Wednesday nights. And he used to say to me, “I am perfect.”

His wife used to call him “her little perfect man.” (*Laughter*) And so I used to talk to him and in the course of the Bible study I used to say, “Talk to me about what sin is. Define sin for me.”

And what we found out together was that he was defining sin in such a way that it was so narrow that he could never engage in it. But you and I know what John says. “*All wrongdoing is sin.*” And we can commit sins of omission, where we don’t do what the Law requires, and we can commit sins of commission and we can commit those things that are directly against the commands of the Law.

And what we are thinking of here are patterns, not incidents. In other words, what we need to focus on putting off are the destructive sinful patterns that are in our lives. That’s what we need to focus on.

And I think that when we think in that way we begin to get a right perspective on what this whole topic of sanctification and growing in grace is. Go ahead.

Dale Thurston:

Human strength and human greatness

Stem not from life’s sunny side.

Heroes must do more than building on waveless tide.

Jeff: All right. Amen. (*Laughter*) Very good. I’m going to go on. (*Laughter*)

Let me just say that there is no silver bullet to put patterns to death. Patterns are put to death by the enabling power of the Spirit who enables us to work hard in our lives. There is no silver bullet for putting a pattern to death.

Let’s say that your pattern is pornography. There is no silver bullet that is going to take care of pornography. What’s going to take care of pornography is how you limit yourself in your computer activity when no one is around.

Participant: Amen.

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Jeff: What’s going to limit your activity, what this is going to take is hard work. There are no two ways about it. And it’s work that we’ve been enabled to do. There is no silver bullet. And I think that we need to keep this in mind because I think that we think that it’s just going to happen. But that’s not what the Scriptures teach. The Scriptures teach that we need to put off these patterns. We need to put them off.

Now I think that brings us to the next thing. This is so vital for us that we need to remember it, because we’re going to talk about *putting* on next. It’s a good gardening principle, really. But it’s also a good principle that we get from “Calvin and Hobbes.” And I hope you like this one better than the last cartoons. (*Laughter*)

So Calvin jumps out of bed and he says, “Every day it’s the same old thing, but not today,” as he takes off his bed clothes. He walks out the door naked and his mother is behind him, reaching for him. (*Laughter*) And he’s back in his room, saying, “Everybody is a slave to routine.” He basically says, “I’m not following routine. Off with the clothes; I’m out the door naked.”

That’s putting off without putting on, right? (*Laughter*) We’ve got to put off. But we’ve also got to put on.

Participant: I was talking with a guy last week who works with people on skid row.

Jeff: Yeah.

Participant: He made an interesting comment. I’d never really thought of it this way. He was saying that the people who are addicted and involved in pornography or whatnot, their lives have very many patterns to them. They are very ritualistic. And he was saying that worship as well as reading the Scripture needs to be something ritualistic for the men, changing from the old ritual to the new ritual which will help them in Christ. And it was intriguing me because I hadn’t really thought of it that way before. They need to replace their old habits and patterns that they’re accustomed to.

Jeff: You’re absolutely right. My brother was in Chester Prison several years ago. And he was in there because had a meth lab. And he was himself addicted to OxyContin. And he would melt it down and inject it. And I was visiting with him one day in the waiting room. It was just the two of us, and there was a TV in the waiting room. And it was that show—“Intervention” I think it was. And it was quite explicit. I have no idea why they would put it on in prison, because this was like a pharmaceutical recovery prison, you know?

But here it is, and it’s on. And he’s been in prison now for two years and I’m sitting there visiting with him. And they show somebody on the TV tying off their wrists to shoot up. And he said, “I can’t watch this because I start to get the shakes. I start to want this.”

Participant: Wow!

Jeff: “These things make me want that.” And flesh against flesh was real to me at that point. Here was a man who was not in Christ who was battling against himself. The great thing about it was that at that time he had the prison. For us it would have been the Holy Spirit. But for him it was the prison. He couldn’t get to that stuff, and so that was his Holy Spirit. But once he got out he was clean for three years and then he got back into it. He eventually hanged himself.

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Participant: Oh!

Jeff: But we must put off, but we must also put on. When you think about it, this isn't complicated stuff. This is just common sense stuff. What I'm saying to you is this. You can't put on virtuous godly habits and say, "I'm going to keep the ungodly stuff. I'll just balance out the two."

One time I actually had a guy said to me, "I went to a nudie bar the other night."

And I said, "You've got to be kidding me! Aren't you a professing believer?"

And he said, "I'm going to read the Bible for the number of hours that I was at the nudie bar." (*Sighs and laughter*) No, I'm not kidding! I wish I were joking. But that's a foolish idea of putting off and putting on. It's keeping on while putting off.

Participant: Sometimes you get the sense that we're to walk in the Spirit, and that this is going to be really easy and because we're walking in the Spirit that this isn't going to be difficult. But in reality the putting off, that's the battle, right? I mean that's where you are fighting. This is war, and you have to be a warrior with discipline in that area. You should be able to put on, wouldn't you say?

Jeff: Well I want you to think about how many people are lax in their prayer life and in their reading of the Bible. That's putting on, and that's a battle, too. I think that it is really a battle on both sides. I think it's a more glorious battle in the putting on side, because think about the putting off. The putting off often feels like the C.S. Lewis book where Eustis is the dragon, remember? And he goes to shore and Aslan says, "You can peel it off." And he tries to peel it off and he can't peel it off because it keeps growing back on. And Aslan takes his claws and shoves them into Eustis and rips off the dragon flesh that's on him, and he describes it as painful. It is painful for us to put off.

But it's a glorious thing for us to put on. We may trip and fall while we're trying to put on. But there's something that feels refreshing every time we pray, even after it's been a couple of days that we haven't prayed. There's something that feels like I'm home when we pray. Or there's something that feels good when we open the Scriptures because we haven't read the Scriptures for a few days, something that feels like I'm reading what I ought to be reading, that sort of thing. So it's a battle. But I would say that it's a more glorious battle. So we need to put off, but we also need to put on. And that's the work of rebuilding. We need to put on Jesus Christ.

Now I want you to think about this. The new self is "*renewed in knowledge.*" That's what this text tells us. This text tells us that we are renewed in knowledge.

Now think about this. We studied Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2 together. Remember what we said. All of these things are together in the mixing bowl when we think about sanctification. And when we pull out the chocolate chip that's covered with dough, that's what we have here. The renewing of the mind that we found in Romans is here. And so there's a sense in which, when we think about putting off and putting on, a lot of this battle begins in the mind. And we need to remember that.

But we also need to remember that it's about following Christ and putting on His graces. Verse 12 has the graces that we need to put on. Now let me just read this to you. Look at Colossians 3:12. And if you don't think that this is a battle sometimes, you've not really been engaged, because I want you to think about how hard it is sometimes to put

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on “a compassionate heart, kindness, humility, meekness, patience.” How hard are those things?

I mean we’re men, right? Those things are really difficult, putting on meekness and compassion. I mean our culture, for one, tells us that we’re supposed to be—well, not today, I guess. Today we’re supposed to find our feminine selves, right? (*Laughter*) And so what do we do? We react by being men, right? It’s difficult for us to be Christian men because the world sees it as this. Oh, now he’s finding his feminine self. And the Christian brother sees it and he says, “What have you given over to the feminization of the church?”

And we say, “No. We’re just trying to follow Jesus Christ.”

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: That sort of thing. We need to follow Christ by putting on His graces.

I want you to look at this. Calvin’s got his shirt out. He puts his shirt on his bottom. He puts his pants on his head. And his mom says, “What are you doing? You’re going to be late for school. Hurry up and put your clothes on right.”

And as he’s walking away, taking them off so he can put them on right, he says, “It’s sad how some people can’t handle a little variety.” (*Laughter*)

Now listen to me. I simply want to say this. I give you that cartoon to say that there is a mixing bowl mentality that we have here. But in a sense there is an order to what it is that we’re doing. We are to put off and we are to put on. And that ought to be the pattern that we follow.

Now it may be that you’re struggling with something that I’m not struggling with, and I’m struggling with something that someone else is not struggling with. So our putting off and our putting on are going to look a little different. We’re going to have different priorities in our lives.

But there is a basic pattern that we follow. We put off the old man and we put on the new man. And that’s pretty basic. And if you want a pattern that’s a step-by-step pattern, that is it. We put off the old man and we put on the new man, and oftentimes that happens simultaneously.

But we need to recognize something else. We need to recognize aright.

Now here we go back to what you said earlier, Ted. And it’s this. I need to think rightly about not only me—and that’s what we’ve been talking about—but I need to think rightly about you. Now I want you to think about that just for a minute.

I don’t know about you, but I think we are in a day of fragmented Christianity, where everybody has a criticism for everybody else. And oftentimes it’s not to their face; it’s on the Internet.

And here’s what I want to say to you. I learned this from Dr. Ferguson. I learned this from him, from being in class with him. And here’s what he said one time. He said, “If you do not recognize Christ in another brother or sister first and foremost, but recognize in them a problem instead, then it says more about your sanctification than it does about theirs.”

Participant: Amen.

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Jeff: And I thought to myself, “Boy, that’s true. And it’s really hard to follow.” But when I go into a church and, for instance, I engage in the Lord’s Supper,—and I know that we all practice this differently. Some people have a table up front and some people pass the elements. But I want you to think about this. When Jesus gives them the bread so the disciples can pass it to one another, what are they doing? They’re taking the cup of forgiveness. And as they pass it to their brothers, they are saying, “Receive the forgiveness that I’ve received.”

What does Jesus say in Colossians? “*Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*” “Here, brother, receive the cup of forgiveness that I have received. Here is the broken body of Christ that I’ve just supped on. You take it. And remember the forgiveness of your sins, his body broken for you.”

I cannot think of a more dramatic image that communicates the grace of God and the forgiveness of sins, and living in community more than that. And then the indwelling Word. There’s a component of teaching and admonishing the Word that comes here to one another in singing. And again there’s the communal aspect, that this is not just the preaching of the Word. This is the singing of the Word and teaching and admonishing through it to one another. And then, “*whatever you do, do it in the name of Christ with thanksgiving.*”

Well we are at our time. Let me pray really quickly, Sig, and then we’ll—

Sig: Can you clarify what you were saying about looking at your brother and seeing his sin as opposed to seeing the person?

Jeff: Yes.

Sig: I think I know what you mean.

Jeff: Shall I do that before I pray or after?

Sig: Can you just help me understand what that point was?

Jeff: Yes. So, for instance, I think today that we are in a theologically fragmented world, okay? So I think that today, when someone looks at another person,—and I’m going to use a crazy example but a true example!—when somebody looks at somebody today—and it could be a famous person or somebody not so famous—they go, “Oh, he’s a supralapsarian!” (*Laughter*)

Transcriber’s Note: Referring to a theological position in Reformed theology regarding the decrees of God in relation to the fall of man into sin.

Jeff: They’re looking at him and they’re judging him on the basis of his theological position. For instance, if I said this—and I don’t know if this is true or not; I don’t think so. Forgive me if it isn’t. But what if I said to you, Sig, “I want to introduce you to my friend Sig. Don’t trust everything he says because he’s an Arminian.” (*Laughter*) That sort of thing, right?

Sig: How did you know? (*Laughter*)

Jeff: But do you see what I’m saying?

Sig: Yes.

Jeff: And that’s the way that—

Sig: As opposed to seeing him as a person struggling with his trash just as I am.

Jeff: That’s right.

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Sig: I thought that was what you were trying to say, but I just wanted to make sure. That’s very good. That’s very helpful.

Jeff: Okay. Let me pray and if you have other questions, we can talk about them. Father in heaven, thank You for this day, for the time You’ve given. Thank You, Lord, that You remind us that we need to put off and put on. And thank You that You have reminded us again and again that these are things that we’re enabled to do by Your Spirit and not in our own strength. And Lord, thank You for the opportunity to learn that again. We pray it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Men: Amen.