

Week of February 26, 2012 *Christ – the Center of My Life*

Passage Outline:

1. **Cultivate a Christ-Centered Character** (Col. 3:5-10,14-15,17)
2. **Have a Christ-Centered Home** (Col. 3:18-21)
3. **Be a Christ-Centered Witness** (Col. 4:5-6)

What This Lesson Is About:

Who Christ is and what He has done for us should shape our character, guide our homes, and direct our interactions with those who do not believe.

How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:

This lesson can help you live a Christ-centered life.

1. Cultivate a Christ-Centered Character - Colossians 3:5-10,14-15,17

Colossians 3:5-10, 14-15, 17

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator... ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful... ¹⁷ 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.

- A. At conversion and Baptism, believers have died to their old way of life and were raised to new life with Christ.
- B. Because believers died with Christ and were raised to new life with Him, they were to divest themselves of (literally put to death) whatever belonged to their earthly nature. Four standards of behavior:
 - i. Sexual purity – Our lives are to be free from any illicit sexual behavior, filthy thoughts and uncontrolled desire for sexual pleasure.
 - ii. Godly attitude toward wealth and possessions – Our lives are to be free from covetousness, greed and selfishness, which Paul believes is as serious as idolatry.
 - iii. Loving control of our emotions – Our lives are to be free from anger, rage and malice (a hateful disposition).
 - iv. Loving control of our tongues – Our words are to be free from slander, filthy language and lying.
- C. All these sinful attitudes and actions are part of the **OLD SELF**, which they have **Put Off**, like old and dirty clothes.
- D. The Christian life and ways of living are part of the **NEW SELF**, which they have **Put On** Christ Jesus, like brand new or washed clothes.
- E. Over everything that is happening in your life in Christ **Put On Love**, and this is what unites us as

Christ's people. This is the over-coat of our lives – Love.

- F. Let Christ's peace ... rule (umpire, arbitrate, rule, be the decider over) their hearts. We are to live in the solid confidence of Christ's presence and allow Him to umpire conflicts in His body, the Church.
- G. Believers were to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. To do something in a person's name was to act in accordance with that individual's purpose and plan. Believers' words and deeds were to reflect their relationship with Christ.

Will Jesus be Attending the Voter's Meeting Next Sunday?

Can you imagine Jesus Christ attending our Voter's Meeting next Sunday and casting His vote? He will be there! Since Jesus is living in each one of us, I think Jesus will be attending next Sunday, through us.

Paul encourages us to be mindful that how we act, talk and treat one another reflects the quality of our relationship with Jesus Christ. We must do everything, including our Voter's Meetings, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything short of that is just plain **WRONG!**

What can you do now to ready yourself to do everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus?

2. Have a Christ-Centered Home - Colossians 3:18-21

Colossians 3:18-21

¹⁸Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

- A. Paul urged wives to willingly submit to their husbands. The basic thrust of the phrase *to submit* is assuming one's role or responsibility because it is the right thing to do and being ready to forego some minor things for a higher good. Paul is NOT saying that wives are to be obedient to their husband's every demand. Wives are to be submissive to their husbands just as the Church is submissive to Christ.
- B. Paul urged husbands to love their wives. This love was to be sacrificial, self-giving love that kept the wives' best interests at heart. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her
- C. Children were to obey their parents in everything. Children were to recognize and respect their parents' authority. This kind of obedience was well-pleasing to Jesus Christ.
- D. Fathers, (better translated "Parents") were not to be so heavy-handed with their children that the children became exasperated—provoked, irritated, or embittered. Overbearing demands could drive children to despair. They could become discouraged—disheartened and broken in spirit. Parents were to avoid demanding so much of their children that the children give up all hope of ever being able to please their parents.

What is the Atmosphere Like in Your Home?

Take time this week to complete the following sentence:

My home would be more Christ-centered if I _____

Take that completed sentence to the Lord in prayer, asking Him to empower you to be more Christ-centered in your home life.

3. Be a Christ-Centered Witness - Colossians 4:5-6

Colossians 4:5-6

⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

- A. To live wisely was to apply daily the spiritual understanding to offer a positive witness concerning Christ's transforming power.
- B. Believers were to make the most of every opportunity to impact unbelievers for Christ.
- C. "Making the most of the time" literally is "buying up (redeeming) the time" and described purchasing items in the marketplace. The word time is used two different ways in the Bible:
 - i. Time as in the passing of time on a clock, minutes, hours, days months and years.
 - ii. Time as referred to an opportune season or moment. Believers were to seize every teachable moment to influence people with the gospel.
- D. A vital Christlike behavior was disciplined speech, appropriate expressions of their relationship with Christ and therefore helpful in attracting unbelievers to the gospel.
- E. "Seasoned with salt" indicates the Christians' witness for Christ was to be interesting, inspiring, and even witty—not bland.

What is your "Speech" like to Unbelievers?

As we encounter unbelievers in our "marketplaces," we are to be courteous and gracious in the manner we speak to them. If we do not do so, our message will be ineffective.

Check which of the following best describes your witness "toward outsiders" who do not know Jesus.

- Counterproductive Nonexistent Weak Mixed Signals Pretty Good
- It's Why I am Alive Growing and Improving Something else? _____

Today's Biblical Truths in Focus

1. Every Christian's character is to reflect Christ's character, marked by God's kind of love and moral purity.
2. Believers are to be aware that wholesome relationships in their families demonstrate the quality of their relationship with Christ.
3. In the course of daily living, Christians are to seize every opportunity to tell others about Christ, and to do so thoughtfully, attractively, and graciously.

Special Assignment for this Week

On the bottom half of this page you will find a circle that represents your life. In the circle draw a cross to represent how Christ-centered your life is: closer to the center for more Christ-centered, and closer to the edge for less. If you, and more importantly God, are not pleased with the position of Jesus' cross, ask Him to make your life more Christ-centered and allow Him to make it so.

