**BCM Bible Study - February 15-16, 2022**

**Colossians 3:1-17**

Now that Paul has thoroughly covered Jesus and the freedom which he offers Christians he shifts into a more positive light. This passage contains some significant commands from Paul on the ways that he hopes to see the Colossians behave in love as Christians.

What is the strangest place your thoughts have wandered in class recently?

On Things Above: **Read Colossians 3:1-4**

* What does being ‘raised with Christ’ here refer to?
* Paul calls the Colossians to set both their “hearts… and minds on things above.” (The repetition here is also meaningful.) Why does Paul call for both their hearts and minds?
  + Are there any practices that you can think of to help you with this process?
  + Oftentimes when we try to overcome a sin or avoid a behavior we know is wrong, we will set our mind far more on that thing than on God (which v. 2 references). How can we as believers make sure that our focus is a love of God and not just avoiding sin?
  + Verses 3-4 describe the past, present, and future of all believers. Which is most remarkable to you?
    - Garland describes this as: “Paul reassures the Colossians that they already have completeness in Christ, but its full demonstration awaits Christ’s return.”
    - How does this impact how you view yourself and other Christians? What might living like this cause you to change within your own life?
* **Read Romans 8:18-25** How does this help build out the tension between us continuing to be on earth and having a mind set on what’s above?
  + Concerning our present sufferings, does this offer you any hope or consolation?

Things To Put to Death**: Read Colossians 3:5-11**

* The phrase “put to death” invokes imagery of execution, of a sudden and unceremonious occurrence. Why is such severity and seriousness needed as we think about sin within our lives?
  + What sins have been put to death in your life since becoming a follower of Christ?
  + **1 John 2:15-17** In light of these verses, why are the sins listed in Col. 3:5 so significant?
* What is wrath? How do you understand God’s wrath?
  + “God is unswervingly just. But what is his disposition? What is he on the edge of his seat eager to do? … If you catch God off guard, what leaps out most freely is blessing. The impulse to do good.” - Ortlund in *Gentle and Lowly*
* Paul suggests that the work of the Colossians is not finished as the sins which they should address expand in v.8-10. What can we learn from the increasingly inward-focused nature of this removal of sin?
  + “The humanity which has been straightened out according to the perfect model, that of Christ has no excuse for such behaviour. The standard now is the life of heaven. They do not behave like that there.” (Wright)
* Verse 11 features Paul explaining how these different cultural categories pale in comparison to Christ and what the Christian community changes. How does this connect with anything else that Paul has been talking about in this passage?
  + **Read Acts 16:1-5** Paul still thought there was value in Timothy being circumcised. How can we reconcile these two different passages? What does this suggest about how we should interact with different cultures and groups then?

Things to Grow In: **Read Colossians 3:12-17**

It can be easy for us to glaze over lists within the Bible, perhaps even more so positive lists as we feel like they do not or could never be accurate of us. Everyone go ahead and close your eyes while I **slowly** read through the call placed upon Christians in v.12-14.

* Which of these adjectives or commands comes the easiest to you? Which sounds the most difficult?
* What do you do when as a Christian you doubt that you are chosen, holy, and beloved?
  + “Having taken off the shabby ‘clothes’ appropriate for the old age, the Colossians are to be fitted out with beautiful new robes, appropriate for their new position. They are not accustomed to such finery, but God’s loving and gracious choice of them make it fitting that they should now wear it.” (Wright)
* Who are some people or groups to whom you are not showing one of these 5 “graces”, particularly fellow believers? (Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.)
* How can we let the peace of Christ (the Gospel of Christ) rule in our hearts?
  + **Read Romans 8:26-27** What comfort and confidence do the Holy Spirit’s interceding offer you in your faith?
* How many times does Paul command the Colossians to give thanks, and do you find that number significant? What are you thankful for today?
* Verse 17 is often quoted. How does the context impact how we should apply this verse?

**Read Romans 12:9-21**

* How does this passage help you to understand the love talked about in Colossians?

Challenge: Which of the five graces do you desire to grow most in right now? (Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.) Spend time over the next week praying, drawing near to God, and seeking to grow in this area. What might be other practices to help grow in this?

Extra Notes:

Some versions have slightly different wording in v. 6 as the CSB adds “upon the disobedient.” While this isn’t a major distinction, it is an interesting translation note.

* (In case anyone is interested: Barbarian = non-Greek speaking or culturally Greek; Scythian = lowest kind of barbarian who was probably also a slave).