

“<sup>17</sup> And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. <sup>18</sup> Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them. <sup>20</sup> Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged. <sup>22</sup> Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: <sup>23</sup> And whatsoever ye do, *do it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; <sup>24</sup> Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup> But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. <sup>4:1</sup> Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. <sup>2</sup> Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;” (Col 3:17-4:2)

- I. Review: There are three things essential for the fullness of the Christian life and joy.
  - A. Put off the old and put on the new.
    1. The first Adam is to be rejected, and his deeds are to be put off: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications from our mouths, etc. Lying to one another etc. The new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of God: mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, etc. Above all we are to put on love, because love is the sinew that binds each bone to its fellow in the body of Christ.
    2. Christ did not suffer the horrors of the cross to give you and me license to sin and to validate our wicked lifestyle, but rather we are risen with Christ and sin has no more dominion over us. Our life is hid with Christ in God.
  - B. The peace of God is to rule in our hearts.
    1. Man is to have peace in his heart: His inner state is not to be ruled by ego, by self-indulgence, by malice, by envy, by pride. A bridle is to be put on these; The peace of God is to keep your soul. A parallel passage is in Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understand, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
    2. Peace begins in the heart. The biggest mistake that you can make in your relationship with others is to think that they are the problem. Proverbs tell us, "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."
    3. This peace can only be rooted in thankfulness: it cannot be rooted in self-satisfaction or the pride of man. True peace is the heart casting itself upon God as Heavenly Father, because Christ has died and taken all my sins away. In life or in death I belong to my heavenly Father, and I commit all things into His heavenly care, for He works all things for my eternal salvation and eternal good.
    4. My peace does not depend upon the condition of the body or my status in this world, but on my dear Savior Jesus Christ. So peace and thankfulness go together. When we are agitated and our hearts are full of strife and unrest, it is because we are not content with all the blessings that God has bestowed upon us, and we have departed from Christ. We need to fly to Him, and rest our souls on Him. "Come unto me, He said, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." This has nothing to do with our earthly condition, but with His heavenly promise.

C. The Word of Christ must dwell richly in us. vs. 16.

1. In wisdom: wisdom is the orderly arrangement of the Word. The word of Christ is not some disorderly arrangement of precepts and disjointed doctrines. The Scriptures speak of Christ. It is Christ who created all things; It is promise of Christ that moved the patriarchs and prophets; Christ is the end of the law. All the law and the prophets gave witness of Him. We will find Him on every page of Scripture if we have eyes to see.
2. Teaching and admonishing one another: There is reciprocity in the body of Christ. Everyone teaches and everyone is taught. Everyone admonishes, and everyone is admonished. This does not set aside the specific offices that God has set in the church; but it does show that all the parts of the body and needful--some have more honor and less function, Paul says; some have more function and less honor.
3. Singing with grace in your hearts. (Essential part of worship). Calvin on this place:

"He does not restrict the word of Christ to these particular departments, but rather intimates that all our communications should be adapted to edification, that even those which tend to hilarity may have no empty savor. "Leave to unbelievers that foolish delight which they take from ludicrous and frivolous jests and witticisms; and let your communications, not merely those that are grave, but those also that are joyful and exhilarating, contain something profitable. In place of their obscene, or at least barely modest and decent songs, it becomes you to make use of hymns and songs that sound forth God's praise." Farther, under these three terms he includes all kinds of songs. They are commonly distinguished in this way--that a psalm is that, in the singing of which some musical instrument besides the tongue is made use of: a hymn is properly a song of praise, whether it be sung simply with the voice or otherwise; while an ode contains not merely praises, but exhortations and other matters. He would have the songs of Christians, however, to be spiritual, not made up of frivolities and worthless trifles. For this has a connection with his argument." -Calvin *in loc.*

He does not mean that our teaching one another is to be confined simply to music, but is showing us in what way we are to teach: with joy and gladness, and thanksgiving; with grace in our hearts.

- D. Finally: All of this is summed up in verse 17: Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. All that we do is to be in harmony with the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. He is the standard and He is the end and purpose for all that we say and do. Do not affirm anything; do not do anything that would contradict the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Do not do anything that would skew the Christian message; either by taking attention away from Christ, or by falsifying the record that God has given of His son.

II. Having said these things we are ready for the passage I read: Col. 3:18-4:2

- A. Husband/wives. Be Christian in your home. Put off the old; but on the new. Both of you. Submit, "as it is fit in the Lord." It is becoming to Christ, wives, if you are not contentious and rebellious in your home. In the wisdom of God, according to the Word of God, the woman was made as a companion and a helper to the man.

1. Husbands; don't be bitter against your wives. Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you.
  2. Serve your wives, just as Christ served the church's by loving her and dying for her. Christ is the pattern, and Christ is the end of all you do. Don't contradict the gospel message by the way your family lives.
- B. Parents/Children: Even a child is known by his doings, whether they be good or evil.
1. Our children must learn of Christ very early; Better they learn the gospel. Even in the catechism, the gospel comes before the law. How can they be in subjection to parents if they do not know Christ. "This is well-pleasing unto the Lord." The great motive for children to be obedient is love for Christ. And He is the pattern: He was subject unto Mary and Joseph.
  2. Parents are to tenderly treat their children: don't provoke them to anger; don't discourage them in the faith. Just as our heavenly father is longsuffering and gentle and kind, so we are to bear with our children. Not fault-finding and criticism but nurture and care. Chastisement, coupled with love and explanation, is the key. Not outbursts of rage; not neglect; not deceit or other expressions of the Old Man; but newness if Christ is to be the rule of our families.
  3. Children are to be brought under the discipline of Christ; not the discipline of the law. The discipline of the law energizes the old man; Christ nurtures and renews.
- C. Masters/Servants: Once again, the three things I mentioned above must rule labor relations: Putting off the old man/putting on the new; Mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiving---these things are to rule labor relations just as they rule all other relationships.
1. Those in subordinate positions:
    - a) Masters according to the flesh: Your true master is in heaven: We are all under authority, acting in different capacities.
    - b) Not eyeservice: not just to be seen of men; but before the eye of our Heavenly father; Don't deny the gospel by your words or behavior.
    - c) Not men-pleasers: You are to please God and be gospel-witnesses.
    - d) Singleness of heart: Not double-minded. You be good workers because of your Father in heaven; you are not pleasing your boss, but pleasing God. It doesn't matter if your boss doesn't understand this.
    - e) Do it heartily: from the heart; not grudgingly: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do; do it with thy might." (Joseph in Egypt)
    - f) reward: inheritance: Ye serve Jesus Christ. The biggest mistake you can make is to think that some man is your boss: Christ is your boss. Christ is your master.
  2. Masters, give what is just and equal. Christ is your master, too. No one is an absolute master, and no one is an absolute servant. We are all servants of Christ; and Christ does not abolish relative ranks among men. Everything said to servants above applies to management as well as to labor. There is no respect of persons with God.
- III. Summarizes with his theme again: Continue in prayer and watch with thanksgiving. You can only do these things if your are in fellowship with Jesus Christ, praying and watching, having the word dwell in you richly and being thankful for all things.
- A. Praying and Watching: We cannot live the Christian life in our own strength, for Christ is not commandment keeping. We must draw our life and strength from the

Vine. Without the life of Christ in us because of our connection to Him by faith, we are prey to the Devil and all His devices. He walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and we are not match for him.

- B. His best work will be done in the closest relationships of our everyday life: our family and our vocation. But He is overcome as we put off the old, put on the new; as the peace of God rules our hearts in thanksgiving; and as the word of Christ dwells in us richly in all wisdom. This way of blessing and spiritual prosperity is open to all the people of God.

May God bless you.