

# Paul's Practice 3: Embracing Heaven (Col. 3:10-17)

## I. Introduction

### A. This morning, we are continuing in the third section of Colossians with Colossians 3:12-17

1. But, again, before we start, I want to remember what Colossians is about and how Colossians is organized
2. So, we'll start with our purpose statement for Colossians: Colossians calls us to see how truly glorious Jesus is and to root all of our hope in Him knowing that He is true wisdom to meet our every need. This will prevent us from instead pursuing the hopes and purposes of this world and being captured by worldly wisdom.
3. And the outline we're Colossians, we are looking at Colossians in four parts:
  - a. Rooted in the Gospel (~ chapter 1)
  - b. Refusing Worldly Wisdom (~ chapter 2)
  - c. Renewed in Christ (~ chapter 3)
  - d. Relational Truth (~ chapter 4)

### B. For the last couple of weeks we have been in the third section of Colossians: Renewed in Christ

1. This section is the positive response to Paul's warning to the Colossians - if chapter 2 is what the Colossians should not get trapped in, should not pursue, then chapter 3 is what the Colossians should devote themselves to
2. So several weeks ago, we looked at Colossians 3:5-11 and saw that Paul's practice is to forsake earth - to put to death that which is earthly in you, to kill off those things that are contrary to Christ, whether they be Christ-dishonoring hearts, Christ-dishonoring relationships, or Christ-dishonoring community
3. And last week, we focused in on Colossians 3:9-11 and saw that Paul's practice is centered on a corporate recreation that is reflected in the local church - the group of people who together are being remade into the image of Christ for the glory of Christ
4. This week we are going to get to the positive side of Paul's commands - if we are to put to death earthly things, forsaking the things of earth, what should we be putting on, what should we pursue
5. And Paul's answer is simple and straightforward - if we have forsaken the things of earth, then we should be pursuing the things of heaven

### C. In fact, these verses are the culmination of Paul's thought that started back in verse one of Colossians 3

1. In verses 1-4 Paul told us to look away from earth and toward heaven - *set your minds on things above, not on things on earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God*
2. In verses 5-9 Paul fleshed out what the first part of that command looks like, to not set our minds on things on earth, and told us to therefore get rid of the earthly - *put to death therefore what is earthly in you*
3. And in verses 12-17 Paul is going to flesh out the second part of that command, to set our minds on things above, and will tell us to pursue the virtues of heaven - *put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved*
4. But where do we do this? Where do we take these steps away from earth and toward heaven? - Paul will tell us that we make our move away from earth and toward heaven in the midst of the heavenly embassy, the foretaste of heaven displayed here on earth, so Paul sets these commands on the backdrop of verses 9-11, the local church
5. And so these commands are going to have to do primarily with how we act in the context of the local church - what should our community together look like? How should our new communal identity act? How do we pursue heaven together?
6. Now, I'm not saying that these verses only apply to our interactions with our own local church, but it is within our own local church that these verses find their first and most important application - it is through pursuing these in a local church, growing in these as a local church that these attitudes and actions then spill out into all of our lives
7. But that's how Paul wants us to be thinking - we have this new community created by Christ to glorify Christ, how should we live in this community?

### D. So let's read our passage this morning - Colossians 3:12-17

### E. Proposition: If we have been raised with Christ, then we must put on Christ. Our community should be founded on the image of Christ and we must be seeking Christ together.

1. The Underpinning of Sanctification
2. The Identify of Sanctification
3. The Attitudes of Sanctification
4. The Actions of Sanctification

## II. The Underpinning of Sanctification

### A. As we start this section, the main command of this section is the first words of Colossians 3:12 - 'Put on'

1. This command reflects what Paul said just a few verses ago, Colossians 3:9-10 - *seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*
2. Like his previous command to put to death, Paul is calling us to live as what we are - we did put off the old self in death with Christ and put on the new self in resurrection with Christ
3. But I think Paul uses this concept of 'putting on' because it has a rich history in Biblical literature - one significant story line of the Bible is a longing for new clothing

### B. We can go to the very beginning - the very first story of the Bible culminated with new clothing

1. Genesis 3:7, 21 - *Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ... And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.*
2. From the first story of the Bible, the theme of redemption was pictured in new clothing, clothing provided by God

### C. As we go on, the prophets start to develop this theme: redemption would be a new set of clothing for a redeemed people

1. For time's sake we'll just look at one example this morning, Zechariah 3:3-5 - *Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by.*

### D. So, it is no surprise that Jesus describes His work in the New Testament as a ministry of clothing

1. So he tells the parable of the prodigal son, which culminates in a new set of clothes, Luke 15:22-24 - *But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.*
2. And new clothing is required, Matt 22:11-14 - *"But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness.*

### E. By Revelations, the symbolism of new clothing is made completely clear

1. Revelation 7:9-10, 13-14 - *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ... Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*
2. Throughout Scripture, clothing comes to represent the chance to set aside all that we were in favor of putting on what was provided for us, the righteousness of God provided in Jesus Christ
3. So clothing is a representation of the gospel - to be clothed is to be in the gospel, to bear the righteousness of Christ

### F. But, if being clothed is a representation of the gospel, then it is both passive and active

1. Throughout Scripture we see that we must be provided a new set of clothes by God, our robes must be washed in the blood of the lamb, it must be given us to clothe ourselves in righteous deeds - these things don't come from us
2. But also, if we have been given a new set of clothes, then we must put it on, as the New Testament repeated says:
  - a. Romans 13:14 - *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*
  - b. Ephesians 4:20-24 - *[you were taught in Christ Jesus] to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*
  - c. And our verse, Colossians 3:12 - *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts,*
3. If we've been given life in Christ, we must put it on - it's Paul's foundational theology - we need to be what we are

### G. So even the first word of this command holds significant meaning

1. The command to put on is wrapped up in the gospel. It signifies that we take that which is not ours and make it ours. Specifically, we take that which belongs to Christ and live as though it truly belonged to us. This can only happen through the gospel, as God gives us a new self in Christ, and it is the practical application of the gospel in our lives - we put on Christ. We live as though we really were new in Christ - sanctification happens in the gospel.

### III. The Identity of Sanctification

#### A. As we continue on in verse 12, Paul inserts a phrase that isn't strictly necessary to the flow of thought

1. Paul's command is to 'put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience...'
2. But he says - *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,*
3. Before Paul can get to the meat of his command, first he reminds the Colossians of their identity - who they are in Christ: they are God's chosen ones, they are holy and beloved
4. And Paul inserts this phrase here, because their identity in Christ is central to sanctification - they can't just put these things on, they must put them on as those who have already been redeemed by God

#### B. So Paul starts this section by reminding them of their identity

1. And he describes their identity with three statements: they are chosen, they are holy, and they are beloved
2. First, they are chosen - this is an incredible statement and really could deserve its own sermon - God had chosen them before the creation of the world, He had set His love on them, He had redeemed them and made them His own apart from any merit of their own - they occupy the most desirable position in the universe, they are God's chosen ones
3. But not only that, they are holy - God's choosing brought about a definite effect, though formerly they were rebels and sinners, God washed them in Christ, He declared them to be free from sin and removed it's judgment from them, in fact they are now declared to be the opposite, Holy, without spot or blemish, set apart for service to God
4. And they are beloved - God had loved them before the creation of the world, He loves them now and He will always love them, there is nothing that could change that truth - and in His fatherly love, God will always care for them and always work all things for their best in Christ - they are the beloved of God, could there be a better status?
5. Chosen, holy, beloved - this trio describes a gloriously unmerited status that assures eternal joy and peace with God - that's their identity and they need to remember that as Paul starts to work through the commands of sanctification

#### C. But why does Paul feel the need to remind the Colossians of their identity before these commands?

1. I think it's because these commands aren't easy - the commands of sanctification are a call to lay yourself aside, to die to self, to renounce our rights and our strivings
2. But setting aside ourselves, putting aside our rights and our desires, isn't something we can do in our flesh - this is a foreign concept to us, completely impossible and against our nature
3. But, in Christ, we can set aside our rights and desires, we can die to self, because when we die to ourselves we aren't really losing anything losing anything
4. When we give up our rights, when we set aside our desires we aren't losing that which is infinitely more important - because you can't lose the fact that you are chosen, that you are holy, and that you are beloved
5. You stand in the most secure place in the world, a place from which you can be supremely magnanimous - you can die to self because you know that you are complete in Christ - dying to self isn't losing anything, you can die to self because you have so much in Christ

#### D. But that's not the only reason, I think there are two complimentary reasons for this identity reminder here

1. These commands aren't easy because they are a call to die to yourself and knowing your identity is crucial to being able to die to self, to set your rights and your desires aside
2. But another reason these commands aren't easy is because they are a call to treat others better than they deserve - not only do we set aside our rights and desires, we set them aside in favor of others who often don't deserve it
3. So part of what Paul is doing here isn't just reminding each individual who they are, he's also reminding them who the person next to them is - that guy beside you is God's chosen one, he is holy and he is beloved
4. Now remember that Paul's thoughts here are centered on the church - these things start in the fellowship of the local church and grow out from there - so we can rejoice to put others above ourselves and set aside our desires in favor of others' needs because the person beside us is God's chosen one
5. We can look at each other with wonder and awe and serve each other wholeheartedly, because the person next to you bears the stamp of approval from the king, serving the person next to you is serving the king
6. So when it seems hard to have compassion, and to be patient, and to forgive like Christ, remember that person beside you is God's chosen one - when it's hard to be nice to them, remember who's behind them, Christ Himself

#### E. So again, each word in this section is full of meaning

1. We can put on these qualities because we know that we are the beloved of God and that those beside us are also the beloved of God. So we imitate our Father by putting on the image of Christ and treating Christ's people the way Christ treated us. Christ set aside His rights to serve us knowing that He was secure in His Father's love, so we can set aside our rights to serve others knowing that we are secure in our Father's love.

#### IV. The Attitudes of Sanctification

Now we're ready to dive into the bulk of our text this morning, the actual things Paul commands us to. I've split the commands up into two sections this morning and this first set has to do with attitudes that we harbor toward others, ways that we relate to those around us, and I want to look at these attitudes in three groups of three.

##### A. Our first three attitudes are compassionate hearts, kindness, and humility

1. These are attitudes that should describe us all the time, attitudes that should characterize how we interact with others
2. So the first command is compassion
  - a. We might describe this as a heart that is quick to show mercy, or to care about others, others-centeredness
  - b. This is a quality usually attributed to God, for example in II Corinthians 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,*
  - c. But, as a quality of our Father, it should also be reflected in us, Ephesians 4:32 - *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*
  - d. So we ought to consider - how can I understand others better? Am I putting in effort to know others, to know what's going on in their lives and to honestly care about it? Or am I too wrapped up in myself?
3. And then Paul follows that up with kindness
  - a. We might describe this as being full of grace, doing good toward others without respect to their deserving it
  - b. Again, this is rooted in who God is, God showed kindness toward you, Ephesians 2:6-7 - *and [God] raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus*
  - c. And if our Father is kind, we must be kind toward one another, again Ephesians 4:32 - *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*
  - d. So we ought to be looking for ways to do each other good - how can I be a blessing to a fellow member of Christ today? What can I give or do for a fellow believer that would be useful to them?
4. And third, Paul commands humility
  - a. We might describe this as not making much of yourself, minimizing yourself so that you can maximize others
  - b. Again, this is a quality that Christ embodied, as Paul tells us in Philippians 2:5-7 - *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*
  - c. And if our Lord didn't make much of Himself, even when He had the right to, then we should reflect that, because assuredly we are nothing before Him, Ephesians 4:1-2 - *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness,*
  - d. So we ought to be looking for ways to serve others even at our own expense - how can I set myself aside in order to build someone else up? Or do I consider my needs, my schedule, my desires so important that I often fail to seek out ways to serve others? Am I viewing others as more important than myself?

##### B. As we continue in verse 12 and into verse 13, we see three more attitudes: meekness, patience, and readiness to forgive

1. The last three attitudes were characteristic - they described how we are in all of life - but these next three attitudes are more situational - they take the last three and apply them to difficult situations
2. So the next command is meekness
  - a. This is a really hard word to define well, but it seems to be the opposite of violence, and this is how Paul uses it in I Cor. 4:21 - *What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?*
  - b. Or perhaps, positively, we could say it is applied humility - acting with humility in difficult, challenging, even adversarial situations - this is how Paul uses it in II Corinthians 10:1 - *I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ--I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!*
  - c. Again, this is first a trait that Christ embodied, for example, Matthew 11:29 - *Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle [meek] and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* - instead of violently overthrowing us, which was His right, He acted with unnecessary humility towards us, inviting us to take His yoke
  - d. And we must reflect Christ toward others, Ephesians 4:1-2 - *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness [meekness],*
  - e. We are to be meek especially when leading or correcting others, for example Galatians 6:1 - *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.* - or II Timothy 2:24-25 - *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but ... correcting his opponents with gentleness.*
  - f. So we ought to approach challenging situations with humility - when correcting, when leading, when rebuking, how can I do this in a humble way? How can I embody that I value my opponent more than I value myself?
3. Next Paul calls us to patience
  - a. We might call this longsuffering or bearing with one another, refusing to take immediate offense, continuing to show kindness when there would be reason not to - so meekness is applied humility, this is applied compassion

- b. God embodied this toward us, I Timothy 1:16 - *But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.*
  - c. And therefore we must embody this toward each other, again Ephesians 4:1-2 - *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love*
  - d. So we ought to seek not to react in anger, but with compassion in difficult situations. How can I set aside this wrong? Or am I demanding my rights and demanding satisfaction? At some point wrongs must be addressed, but we ought to have an attitude that seeks to bear them until it reaches that point, hoping it never does.
4. And, third, Paul calls us to be ready to forgive
- a. That is, you should be eager to set aside a wrong done to you, you refuse to demand payment, you respond to offense with grace - again, this is an application from the first three, this is applied kindness - it is looking for ways to do good to another, to restore relationship, even when he has wronged you
  - b. And the connection between the fact that God did this for us and we ought to do it for one other is clear here in Colossians and in the parallel in Ephesians 4:32 - *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*
  - c. So we ought not to hold a grudge, to demand payment when someone wrongs us, instead we ought to set aside our list of wrongs and seek restored relationships. Are you actively setting aside the wrongs that have been done to you? Or are you holding a grudge, withholding relationship, failing to be close to someone because of an unforgiven sin? We ought to be eager to forgive, we have been forgiven so much.

**C. Which brings us to our last set of three: love, peace, and thankfulness**

- 1. Paul splits these last three attributes off by themselves and announces them as overarching attributes - these attitudes should be a the core of our being and it is from these attitudes that the rest of this passage flows
- 2. So, in verse 14, Paul says - *Above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony*
  - a. The core attribute that clothes all of the other attributes, from which they flow, is love - love drives compassion and kindness, and humility, and meekness, and patience, and readiness to forgive, these are the acts of love
  - b. But what is love? This is again a word that is really hard to define, but I'll take a shot at it: love is something like: choosing to feel undeserved affection and to show undeserved favor to another even at our own expense
  - c. God modeled love for us in Christ and we ought to imitate Him by loving one another, Ephesians 5:1-2 - *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*
  - d. We ought to love like Christ. Is this how you feel toward your fellow church members? Do you put effort in to feel this towards others and to act this way toward others? Are you reflecting Christ toward those around you?
- 3. In verse 15, Paul says - *And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.*
  - a. So our second core attitude is peace - something like resting in the knowledge that God is not our enemy and therefore we need fear nothing - our spirit is calm within us knowing our ultimate safety is guaranteed by God
  - b. This assurance comes from God and ultimately is toward God, so Romans 5:1 is foundational to understanding peace - *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
  - c. But this assurance must affect how we interact with others, it should be reflected especially toward those who are united in peace, Ephesians 4:3 - *[you should be] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
  - d. And this is what should rule the core of your being - peace, the knowledge that God is for you, rules your heart, so you don't have to respond to every wrong, you don't have to seek your own way, you can make room for love
  - e. And interestingly, this isn't the first time Paul has brought up the concept of what should rule over us: this is in direct contrast to Colossians 2:18 - *Let no one disqualify you (or rule over you), insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,*
  - f. Instead of being ruled by what others think of us, what others insist we do, we are ruled by the assurance that we have peace with God and are united with each other - so we can set aside striving and instead serve others
- 4. And finally, Paul finishes verse 14 - *And be thankful.*
  - a. If you remember several months ago to my introduction to Colossians, I said that thankfulness is at the center of Colossians, Paul sees thankfulness as the attitude from which all the other attitudes spring
  - b. So thankfulness is a glad recognition that we have been given a gift which we did not and could never have deserved, and the only thing we can do is respond with gratefulness
  - c. Thankfulness reorients our heart toward God, recognizing that we don't deserve the grace in which we now stand, and then helps us reorient our heart toward others, recognizing that they don't deserve the grace in which they now stand any more than we do
  - d. A thankful heart isn't focused on self, a thankful heart is focused on God and what He has done, and this frees us to love unconditionally, to sacrifice ourselves, and to serve others - anything I am or have is a gift and I can use it to serve others

## V. The Actions of Sanctification

If these are the attitudes that we should have toward each other, then what sorts of things should we be doing when we gather together? How should we act towards others in a way that fosters these attitudes? How do we spur love and good deeds? That's what Paul is going to describe in verses 16 and 17 - how do we live these out together? Paul describes four ways:

### A. First, we ought to be building our community, our communion, on the Word of God as it reveals Christ to us

1. Paul says - *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly* - and this is a communal command, obviously it has private implications, but it is a communal command, the Word of Christ should dwell in our community richly
2. We ought to love the Word of God, to seek it out, to know it so well that it indwells us individually and as a community, and it should be a rich indwelling - it ought to bear fruit in our lives together
3. Peter would say it this way, I Peter 2:2-3 - *Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation--- if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*
4. Our practice, as individual members of a community and as a community together, should be to joyfully immerse ourselves in the Word of Christ - earnestly studying the Word of God together to see more of Christ allowing it to dwell in us richly, making it the center of our being so that it bears rich fruit in our lives
5. The Word of Christ ought to be the center of everything we do together, it is why we gather and it ought to be what is exalted as we gather together
6. And this starts individually - as individuals, we seek out the Word of Christ, making it the center of our being, through study, through meditation, through memorization, through love, through obedience - and then, as we gather together, we share our love for the seeing the glory of Christ in the Word of God together

### B. Second, we ought to be applying the Word of Christ to each other in our community

1. Paul continues - *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,*
2. As the Word of Christ dwells in us richly as a community, each individual member then has the opportunity and the responsibility to be applying the Word of Christ to other members for their good and the good of the community
3. If the Word of Christ is at the center of our community, then we should want to share it with each other - so it becomes the basis of our words, we speak the Word of Christ to each other in ways that are fit for the situation
4. This ought to affect the topics of our conversations and the purpose of our words to one another - when we are speaking to each other, are we building each other up in the Word of Christ, or are we distracting each other from the glory of Christ revealed in the Word of God by exalting lesser things?
5. Are we seeking each other's good by speaking words of Christ to each other? Or are we seeking our own pleasure and comfort in speaking lesser words to each other? How are our words exalting Christ and building each other up?
6. People ought to come into our community and wonder at how much we love the Word of God and how we use it to build each other up. Our words together ought to be infused with Christ, not lesser things. So look for ways to do that

### C. Third, we ought to be singing together as a community, reflecting our communal thankfulness

1. In fact, this command is probably best understood as a subset of the teaching and admonishing command - one way we apply the Word of Christ to each other is by singing together - *teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, [by] singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*
2. When we sing together, we are addressing each other with the Word of Christ, we are calling each other to be thankful for what God has done for us, and we are displaying to each other the glory of Christ
3. So we ought to love to join together in song and we ought to sing heartily with joy - we get to rejoice together in what God has done for us, we get to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God and we express that in song together
4. And we should take care that our songs together are actually addressing each other with the Word of Christ - that is that our songs are reflective of the themes and glories of Scripture and not diluted with lesser things - in other words, we should sing rich theology together not shallow theology
5. Singing together is one way we encourage the Word of Christ to dwell in us richly - singing helps us to speak, to understand and to love the truths of Scripture, singing is passionate, we should feel the truths of Scripture as we sing - so our songs should seek the rich flavors of the Word of Christ, not the shallow things - we're striving to speak Christ to one another in song
6. And our attitude during song should always be thankfulness - I'm singing with my whole heart and my whole being because of how much God has done for me in Christ - my song reflects my thankfulness

**D. And, finally, whatever we do together ought to be for the glory of Christ and in thankfulness to God**

1. This is kind of Paul's catch all for how we should live together - our communion should be built on the Word of God, should act by speaking the Word of God to each other, especially through singing together, and then whatever else we do should be built on that foundation, whatever else we do should be for glorifying Christ and thanking God
2. So Paul says - *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*
3. Paul doesn't authoritatively describe everything we might do together - there is much freedom in Christ to do many things together as a community and as individuals - but he does authoritatively describe how we ought to do everything we do
4. Everything we do should be in the name of Christ, according to His will for His glory, and everything we do should reflect that we are thankful to God for what He has done
5. And we can take that and measure everything we do against that standard - am I doing this in the name of Christ? Is this helping me and my community pursue Christ together? Is this encouraging thanksgiving in my heart toward God?
6. If the answers to those questions are no, we ought not to be doing those things - but if the answers are yes, then pursue those things. Our lives should be directed, individually and as a community, by pursuing the things of Christ, by seeing His glory and rejoicing, by giving thanks to God the Father through Jesus Christ.

**E. So this entire passage really has one thrust**

1. Our attitudes toward each other are all focused on reflecting Christ toward each other - compassion, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness, love, peace, and thankfulness all describe Christ and as we put those on we reflect Christ toward one another
2. And our actions with each other are all focused on pursuing Christ together - the Word of Christ dwells in us richly, apply the Word of Christ to each other, singing the Word of Christ with each other, seeking Christ in whatever we do
3. So the center of this passage is this: our community is built on Christ, and so our community should look that way - it's what Paul says in Galatians 3:27 - *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*
4. So that should be our pursuit as we join together as a church, how can we put on Christ together?