

Sermon Outline

BAPTIZED NATION

PUT TO DEATH: FORMING THE BAPTIZED SELF, I (COLOSSIANS 3:5-10)

I. Being the Right Person for the Job

II. Therefore Put to Death (Colossians 3:5)

- A. Paul already assumes that the Colossian Christians have been joined to Christ and his Kingdom (Col 1:13).
—Whatever instructions Paul gives to them has to be read from this perspective.
- B. Because the Colossians have died with Christ and been raised with him, Paul calls them to “*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you...*”
- C. “Put to death” is a violent and aggressive phrase. It suggests that in some sense, Christians are called to be killers.
- D. But what are Christians to kill?
—They are to kill certain attitudes of the mind, habits of the heart, dispositions of the soul, and practices of the body.
- E. Christians are to kill “sexual immorality” (*porneian*).
 - 1. Why is sexual immorality the first on Paul’s list?
 - a. It’s not because sexual immorality is the worst possible sin.
 - b. It’s because sexual immorality is the most visible expression of a person who is ruled by his or her own appetites.
 - 2. Sexual immorality includes all sorts of extramarital sexual behavior (adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, incest, etc.)
 - 3. Sexual immorality was rampant in the Hellenistic culture of the Colossians.
 - 4. In our own day, sexual immorality has become increasingly socially acceptable.
- F. Christians are to kill “impurity” (*akarthasian*).
 - 1. “Impurity” can include sexual immorality, but is much broader.
 - 2. Impurity is the necessary condition for immorality.

—People don't do other sexually perverse things unless they are themselves are already swimming in impure thoughts.

3. Impurity is actually encouraged by the world today.
 - a. Fashions have become much more immodest.
 - b. Advertisements use sexiness to sell their products, everything from fitness to F1 racing.
 - c. Literature and film praise and further inspire such behavior.

G. Christians are to kill “passion” (*pathos*).

1. In our modern use, the word “passion” is usually a good word.
2. But “passion,” *pathos*, can also have a negative sense.
—It can be a strong emotion for what is evil and forbidden.
3. Sexual immorality and the impurity cannot exist unless there is first of all a passion for such sins.

H. Christians are to kill “evil desire” (*epithumian kakēn*).

1. This is a desire for what is wrong.
2. Evil desire generates the passion that leads to impurity and immorality.
3. At this point, God is no longer simply condemning those who do sleazy things. He is speaking to anyone who wants to do anything that is forbidden.
 - a. The child who wants to snatch a toy from another child.
 - b. The man who wants to badmouth his rival.
 - c. The woman who wants to jump a queue.

I. Christians are to kill “covetousness” (*pleonexia*).

1. “Covetousness” is (a) being greedy for more, and (b) being willing to sin to get what we want.
2. Paul does not necessarily say that the thing which we desire to have more of is necessarily bad. But what transforms this desire for a good thing into a bad desire is precisely that we want more of it.
3. Paul equates covetousness with “idolatry” (*eidōlōlatrīa*)

Covetousness/Idolatry → Evil desire → Passion → Impurity → Sexual immorality

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What are Christians to “put to death”? (2) What are the meanings of the different sins used by Paul? How does each differ? How does each overlap? (3) How does each sin derive from the next on the list? (4) Why is covetousness/idolatry the root of all sexual sins? (5) Which sin in this list do you have the most problems with?

III. The Wrath of God Is Coming on These Sins (Colossians 3:6)

- A. God is not going to sit back and allow these sins to continue forever.
- B. Christians must kill these habits and practices in themselves because God himself will be killing these things when he comes.
- C. Putting sin to death is an important way by which we as Christians imitate God.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What does God think of all these sins? (2) How is the wrath of God against sin an example for Christians in killing sin?

IV. The Christian Must Put all These Evil Deeds away (Colossians 3:7, 8)

- A. Before coming into the Kingdom, the Christian may have actively practiced all those bad things. But that is no longer the case now.
- B. Although the Christian is still sinful, there is a difference: He or she is no longer under the rule of these sins.
- C. The Christian is a person under new management, and must live accordingly.
- D. So Paul says in verse 8: “But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.”
- E. Christians are to kill “anger” (*orgēn*) and “wrath” (*thumos*).
 - 1. These are emotions of hatred toward someone.
 - 2. Paul is talking about the anger or wrath that comes when one’s idolatrous desires are not met.
- F. Christians are to kill “malice” (*kakia*).
 - 1. Malice is ill-will.
 - 2. Do you see how covetousness/idolatry leads to malice?
 - a. We want more and more good for ourselves at the expense of others.
 - b. Since others tend to get in the way, we want more and more of what is bad for them!
- G. Christians are to kill “slander” (*blasphēmia*).
 - 1. To slander is to falsely accuse someone of doing wrong.
 - 2. Slander is both a form of lying as well as a form of bloodless murder.

- H. Christians are to kill “obscene talk” (*aischrologia*).
1. This covers any kind of foul speech, ranging from dirty jokes to racist words.
 2. In God’s estimation, *aischrologia* is any kind of talk that dehumanizes another human being who is made in the image of God.
—“You stupid idiot,” “you useless moron,” etc.

Covetousness/Idolatry → Anger → Malice → Slander and other forms of foul speech

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What are the sins that Paul lists in 3:8? How is each different? How does each overlap? (2) How is covetousness/idolatry still the root of this new list of sins? (3) Which sin in this list do you have the most problems with?

V. Do not Lie to One Another (Colossians 3:9)

- A. On this note of sinful speech, Paul comes to one of the most foul forms of speech: *Lying*.
- B. We lie when we (1) fabricate facts, (2) praise others insincerely, (3) exaggerate our own strengths while downplaying our weaknesses, and (4) slander others.
- C. Lying is a form of evil speech for several reasons.
1. It is what Satan does (Jn 8:44).
 2. It quietly destroys the unity of the Church by eroding its relationships.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How do we lie? (2) Why is lying a form of evil speech? (3) How does lying erode the unity of the Church? (4) What are you most tempted to lie about in your life?

VI. Self-Worship, the Mold of the World, and the Image of Satan

- A. What does our heavenly Father want us to see in these lists of evil deeds?
1. They all emerge from self-idolatry.
—Sin comes when we have exalted our desires to the point where there is no more room in our lives for God and our fellow human beings.
 2. They are the mold of the fallen World.

—The self-worshiper may think he is free, but is only following the way of the World. No real originality there!

3. They are the image of Satan, the prince of this world (Jn 12:31), who has been trying to remake mankind into his own ugly image since the Fall.

B. In order to form the Baptized Self, we need first to recognize the Anti-Baptized Self for what it is—it is a gross distortion of God’s image in man.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What are three ways to view these lists of sins? (2) Why is the mold of the World the image of Satan? (3) Why is talking about sin an important part of forming the Baptized and Christian identity?

VII. Form the Baptized Self by Killing the Old Self (Colossians 3:10)

God calls his forgiven and holy ones to put to death the Old Satan-looking Self and its practices in them. We increasingly do this by siding with the hatred of God against our sins (Col 3:6); embracing our New Self freely given in Christ; and practicing that New Self and its ways (Col 3:10). In order to form the Baptized Self, we need to kill the Old Self. But to kill the Old Self, we need to be actively cultivating and practicing the Baptized Self. Both movements go hand in hand in the process of sanctification.

A. To form the Baptized Self, we need to progressively kill the Old Self.

B. We kill the Old Self and its ways by siding with God’s hatred for sin (Col 3:6).

1. God wants his children to hate what he hates.

2. God invites his children to stand with him against his enemy—sin and Satan.

C. We kill the Old Self and its ways by embracing our new self in Christ (Col 3:10)

1. This means acknowledging that in Christ, God has fulfilled us.

a. Because Christ is our all-treasure, we don’t need to be covetous or angry anymore.

b. Because Christ is our delight, we do not need to find pleasure in immorality.

c. Because Christ is our righteousness, we don’t need to lie to make ourselves look better, or to put others down.

2. The superior glory that we have in Christ Jesus can snuff out the temptation of sin.

D. We kill the Old Self and its ways by practicing our New Self in Christ (Col 3:10)

1. This means living out of our new and righteous identity.
 - a. When we are in the habit of seeking the glory of God, we train our minds to think in a new way.
 - b. When we are in the habit of practicing God's commandments, we form new habits in life.
—The collective effect of (a) and (b) increasingly weakens the Old Self and its habits.
2. Until Christ comes, we will always struggle with sin. But we can gain increasing victory over it.
3. Forming the Baptized Self is similar to an actor's getting into character.
—The main differences are that we stay in character all our lives, and we increasingly become our character.

E. We will look more intensively at the content of the New Self next week.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How do we increasingly put the Old Satan-like Self to death? What are three movements involved? (2) Why is it an honor to side with God's hatred for sin? (3) How does embracing Christ quench the temptations of lust, anger, covetousness, and deceitfulness? (4) How does practicing the New Self kill the Old Self? (5) How is forming the Baptized Self similar to an actor's getting into character?