

# Sermon Notes

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## FULL-TIME MINISTRY (COLOSSIANS 3:17)

### I. When Heaven Steps In

### II. Setting Our Minds on Home

- A. In the section of the letter, Paul has already preached the Gospel and is now spelling out the implications of being united to Christ.
- B. The Christian life flows *out* of Christ.
  - 1. The Christian life that is lived out on earth by each believer is itself the product of Christ who is in heaven.
    - Col 3:1-3: “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup>For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”
  - 2. The Christian’s *real* life is no longer on this earth. Instead, it is located in the person of Jesus Christ himself. We are so completely bound to Christ that Christ can be said to be our life.
    - Col 3:4: “When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”
- C. Since Christ is our life, and Christ has been exalted to the highest heaven, we who are in Christ ought to be setting our hearts (our hope, our affections) on the things of heaven, where Christ is.
- D. If we are assured that heaven is our final home, we would naturally want to set our hearts on that home.
- E. From Colossians 3:5-17, Paul shows us what setting our minds on heaven produces in us.
- F. To set our minds on heaven and on Christ and God *produces two movements in us*.
  - 1. A *putting to death* of the old ways by which we used to live.
    - Col 3:5-6: “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”
  - 2. A *putting on* of a new identity; which includes the new beliefs, and values, and practices that we find in Christ.

- Col 3:9-10: “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”
  - Col 3:12: “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience [.]”
  - Col 3:14: “And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”
- G. Setting our minds on things above is about *keeping the Lord Jesus Christ at the forefront of everything that we do*. It’s about living with the awareness of the all-pervading presence of Jesus in his church. We are to...
1. let the peace of Christ rule our hearts (v 15).
  2. let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (v 16).
  3. “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (v 17).

### III. “Whatever You Do”

- A. “Whatever you do, in word or deed” contains any number of legitimate activities.
- B. “In *word* or deed” indicates that verbal activities are included as well.
1. The thoughts that we contemplate, the words that we speak or write—these are all part of the “Whatever you do” that this passage is talking about.
  2. Therefore, even our thoughts and words are part of the good works that God creates in us after he has saved us from our sins and reconciled us to himself.
    - Col 4:6: “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”
- C. So “whatever you do, in word or deed” encompasses any number of legitimate activities, whether verbal or physical. It can include...
- Preaching the Gospel and teaching the Scriptures
  - Buying a toy for your child
  - Reading a good novel, enjoying a movie, or a glass of wine
  - Distributing meals to elderly folks
  - Speaking words of kindness and encouragement to your spouse or colleague
- E. “Whatever you do” encompasses the totality of all life.

#### IV. “In the Name of the Lord Jesus”

- A. The high point of the verse: “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
- B. Since a person’s name represents that person himself, to do all things “in the name of the Lord Jesus” is to do all things “in the Lord Jesus.” Union with Christ is in view here.
- C. Therefore, to do all things “in the name of the Lord Jesus” is to do all things...
  - 1. with the awareness/realization that we are bound to the Lord Jesus, that our lives are hidden in Jesus, and that Jesus is our real life.
  - 2. realizing that Jesus desires to show his grace, goodness, mercy, and kindness in what we say and do to others.
  - 3. as an offering of love to Christ and God.

#### V. A Summary of the Christian Life

- A. Verse 17 is a summary of the Christian life as it is lived out in this present age.
- B. If we are to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, it means that the Christian life can, in fact, look very *ordinary*. This is because the Christian life encompasses everything from missions trips to waking up at 3 a.m. to feed a newborn baby.
- C. The truly “radical” Christian life is the whole ordinary life lived out *in, through, and for* the Lord Jesus.
- D. Christ has called us to serve him *wherever* he has placed us at the moment.
- E. We serve Christ, among other things, as...
  - as students
  - as national servicemen
  - as creators of art (artists, actors, novelists, painters, filmmakers, songwriters, musicians, etc.)
  - as health professionals
  - as teachers
  - as menial laborers
  - as husbands and wives
  - as human beings
  - as church members
- F. Everyone who bears the name of Christ is *in* full-time ministry, full-time service to Christ.
- G. When we serve our fellow human beings, and do these good works out of the awareness that you are fully loved by Christ and out of a desire to offer your love back to Christ, you are serving Christ.

## VI. Christian Spirituality—Not *Super-Spirituality*

- A. Colossians 3:17 shows us quite clearly that setting our minds on things above does not mean...
  - 1. seeing visions of heaven or angels.
  - 2. shunning all contact with the world in an attempt to get closer to God.
  - 3. serving only in “professional” Christian ministry.
- B. If anything, Colossians 3:17 shows us that the Biblical concept of “full-time ministry” is way bigger than what we think. It is giving our whole lives unto Christ anywhere and everywhere.
- C. Don’t let anyone put guilt on you for doing too much “ordinary” work and *not* spending more time in this or that ministry.

## VII. Jesus Christ Is Always with Us

- A. But the Lord Jesus is not just the Lord who commands our service. He is the Lord who saves us from our sins and continues to pardon us even when we do not serve him as we ought.
- B. The commandment of verse 17 is founded on the Gospel promise.

**We are able to everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, because God has *joined* us to the Lord Jesus. God has cancelled our sins by placing the atoning blood of Jesus upon us. God has set us free from the curses of the Law (and the Law as a covenant of works) by joining us to the atoning death of Jesus. God has secured our salvation by raising us in the resurrection of Jesus. And through the sacrament of baptism, God has clothed us in the very name of Jesus.**

### Questions for Reflection

- 1. Was there anything in particular about today’s sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
- 2. Was there anything with which you disagree or found difficult to accept?
- 3. What does “And whatever you do, in word or deed” encompass?
- 4. What does it mean to do all things “in the name of the Lord Jesus”?
- 5. Where is the Gospel in the command of verse 17?
- 6. Some practical recommendations. Before beginning any work, entrust your work to the Lord. Pray: “In the name of Jesus. Amen.” Or, “Heaven Father, I offer this work to you as an offering of love through Jesus Christ my Lord.”