

Colossians Chapter 3 v 12 - 17

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[0 : 0 0] Hello, this is Adrian Brixey down in Gloucester. Just wanting to send greetings from Antonio and myself to you.

Well, we live in difficult and challenging times. As I speak to you now, I reflect what might have been. We would have been planning and getting ready our luggages as we were preparing to drive up to visit you to Whitby, to come personally up there and share with you God's Word and some of our news.

But unfortunately, we have to stay where we are. But I wanted to bring this message of encouragement to yourselves and to the church. So I'm going to be speaking from the letter to Colossae from Colossians chapter 3 verses 12 to 17.

I'm just going to read that to you now. Colossians chapter 3 verses 12 to 17. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another.

And if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so that you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

[1 : 3 1] Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you are called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

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.

What a wonderful passage that Paul writes, encourages us. And I just want to share a few thoughts, primarily based around verse 15.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you are called in one body, and be thankful. So I'm just going to share three points with you from the passage.

Point number one, peace of Christ. Number two, called as one body. And number three, be thankful. Paul writes to the church at Colossae from a prison cell, not from the comfort of his own living room, from a place of distress and discomfort.

[2 : 5 6] He'd never been to Colossae, but the gospel had gone to Colossae from most likely Epaphras, who'd heard the gospel from Paul while Paul was spending his time in Ephesus.

The gospel was then taken to Colossae and Laodicea, and this letter was written by Paul to encourage the Christians at Colossae to follow on and live in Christ.

One of the primary reasons that Paul writes to the church is to address heresies that have come in amongst the church. And then in chapters three and four, he teaches the believers what it means to live a life as a believer, as a follower of Jesus Christ in this world, consistent with the teaching of the word of God.

As it says in verses one to three, if then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Paul reminds the church that they are in Christ and that their daily life should bear out witness and testimony to this.

[4 : 23] So first I want us to focus on the words of Paul when he says, The peace of Christ rule in your hearts. We live in days globally where so much has been transformed in such a short period of time.

If you listen to the news or the radio or the internet, you hear harrowing stories of suffering and pain across many countries affecting many people.

It is truly tragic that there are many grieving families these days, many nations struggling to cope with the impact of this virus.

Many living in fear and in grief and despair. How can we talk of peace in times of this?

Well, Paul reminds us that in Christ, no matter what our circumstances, no matter what we are facing, we can know the peace of Christ in our hearts.

[5 : 35] We can have that peace dwelling in the very centre of us and in fact ruling us. So though the circumstances may come upon us, though we are affected, though we may grieve, though we will suffer, though we will shed tears and feel fearful.

Deep down we have the peace of Christ dwelling in us, ruling our hearts and our minds at the very core of our being. And ultimately, we have the peace of Christ because we have received peace with God.

Christ can give us peace through the work that he has done on the cross. And as we approach the story of Easter, as I speak, we can recognise that Jesus' life, death and resurrection has brought peace for us with God.

Though we were far off, we have been brought near to God, at peace with God. We have been forgiven. We have been received in God's loving arms.

We have been saved. I can remember in my own life, at the age of 18, having never been to a church, never hearing the gospel, and yet being witnessed to by Christians and drawn to hear of the word of God, the wonderful gospel.

[7 : 08] And I remember receiving Christ and feeling that sense of peace. The restlessness that I struggled with all my life had gone, and I had peace with God.

And even to this day, despite all that is going on, I know that peace in my heart. I trust, Christian, for yourself, even in the midst of all that is happening, may you rest in the peace of Christ, as described here.

Secondly, Paul writes, I'm standing here in Gloucester.

You're listening to this in your own home, most likely. We are not gathered at the church building. We are in separate places, and yet we are one body.

All over the world, there are Christians who are worshipping and praising God, praying to the risen Saviour.

[8 : 23] They are part of us, and we are part of them. We are one body in Christ. Paul speaks in this letter so lovingly, so thoughtfully, because he and the believers in Colossae were one in the Lord.

And in times of challenge and distress, we ourselves can take comfort that we are not alone. We are not just isolated spiritually.

There is that spiritual connection between one and another. Right across this land, Christians are praying, calling on the Lord as one body.

The church, calling on God to have mercy, calling for repentance that this nation may bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as the one body, we need to support one another. I know that here in Gloucester in our church, many are telephoning each other up.

[9 : 31] Many are connecting by internet and Facebook and other social media, sharing tokens of love with one another, sharing the word of God with one another.

So may it also be so with yourselves. Encourage one another.

In Christ, brothers and sisters united in true faith and hope. And finally, for this short message, the final part of that verse.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you are called in one body, and be thankful. Are you feeling thankful today?

Well, for myself, amidst all the challenges that we face, I am thankful to God. Thankful for my family, for my friends, for my Christian brothers and sisters.

[11 : 01] Thank you, God. But most of all, thank you that I have a faith in a God who cares. A God who loves.

A God who is compassionate. But most of all, a God who is sovereign over all things. God has ordered the days of my life.

I am his, and he is mine. And I can rest in the knowledge and thanks that God is with me. I am not isolated from my God.

I am not quarantined from my Saviour. He is with me and my family. And he is with you. And for this, we can give eternal thanks.

For this is our eternal state. That we will be with God. He is our God. And we are his people.

[12 : 07] May we give thanks. And as it says at the end of the passage I read. Whatever you do, in word or deed. Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Giving thanks to God the Father through him. So as we continue on through this trial. May Christ's peace rule our hearts.

May we recognize that we are one body in Christ. And may we be a thankful people. May you be blessed.

And may the day come soon. Where the Brixies can come up to visit you. Face to face. Up there in Whitby. God blessing upon one and all.

And may the Lord Jesus Christ. Guide us and bless us and keep us. In these days and the days to come. Amen. Amen.