

Colossians Chapter 3 v 15-17

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 0 0] but you see what I mean. We could read it together, couldn't we? But there's so many translations. Okay, chapter 3, Colossians. Since then you have been raised with Christ.

Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these, anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free. But Christ is all and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. And let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Amen.

We've already read from Colossians 3, but we're going to turn back there and read again, this time verses 15, 16, and 17, which is the passage particularly that we are on at this time.

[3 : 1 1] So Colossians in chapter 3, reading from verse 15. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.

And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. And as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

It seems almost too good to be true. It's incredible. Amazing. England have won six matches in a row of football.

Incredible. Who would think it would happen? Unprecedented. Something which is unlikely to last, of course, especially as we get closer to the European Championships.

[4 : 2 4] The star of the England team is Wayne Rooney. If he scores four more goals for his country, he will become the greatest England goal scorer of all time.

But England's victories aren't just down to Wayne Rooney and his goals. It's got more to do, of course, with the fact that the individual players are operating as a team.

It's not individuals who win football matches, but a team working together in unity. Last week we were challenged in verses 12 to 14 about our individual behavior, our attitudes, and our lifestyles.

And at the end of that passage, verse 14, there are those words, all together in perfect unity.

Those attitudes, those characteristics, those challenges that were set before us about living with compassion, kindness, humility, and gentleness, forgiving one another.

[5 : 41] The arena where those things take place is in the church. The place where we are to be those people who are God's chosen people.

The place where we are to be holy and dearly loved is within the local fellowship of the people of God. And it's to this matter that Paul's words are now directed.

If you look at chapter 3 all the way through, then you can see how he arranges blocks of teaching to deal with different people and different situations. That's more obvious as we go on from verse 18 with families and then with work situations, but especially there in the first part of chapter 3, he's been speaking to individuals.

Notice the very change. In verses 9, he speaks about putting off your old self, singular, with its practices. Put on the new self, singular.

But when we get into verse 12, we have holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with humility, gentleness, and patience. And so we see, as we get particularly into verse 15, and as we look at what we see there, it's obvious that we are to deal with and to apply these things to one another in the local fellowship.

[7 : 02] One body. So the individual qualities that we are to strive after are meant to have effect in the church.

Many books have been written about what is a healthy Christian church or what marks should we look for for an authentic and vital church.

Well, here in verses 15 to 17, we have, I believe, the fundamentals of what those books refer to. Three marks of a healthy Christian church.

Three signs. Three goals, even. Three plans, three desires, three aims that we are to have as God's people as we live together in a local church.

And the first one is there in verse 15. It is that the church of Jesus Christ, the local church, is to be a people of peace.

[8 : 08] That should all knock us back a bit, shouldn't it? A people of peace. Isn't it sad? Yet isn't it true that when we look around about us in the church of Jesus Christ in our world, the absence of peace is startlingly obvious.

See, the synod of the Church of England fighting and arguing over who should be a bishop and who shouldn't be a bishop. We see different fractions of various denominations splitting here and there.

We see even, sadly, evangelical Christians arguing with one another publicly about whether they're using the right version of the Bible, the right praise or hymn book, whether they're using the correct language.

And if we've been a Christian for any amount of time within a local church, we have seen the heartache, the sadness, the sorrow that we have caused, that others have caused to us.

We know that peace is really something which is absent in many a church. Yet, yet, that does not mean, dear friends, that we should scoff at it or ridicule it or think that it is impossible because here we have the instruction, let the peace of Christ rule.

[9 : 38] The church, remember, dear friends, is the bride and it is the creation of the one who is called the Prince of Peace. That's why Graham read as he did from Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, a child will be born to us.

The Lord Jesus Christ, what is one of his titles? He is the Prince of Peace. The mission that brought him into this world from heaven, that brought him into this world that he might go to the cross, was that he should bring peace to a hostile and divided world.

Paul, as he writes to the Ephesians in chapter 2, speaks in this way. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross by which he put to death their hostility.

Christ came to bring peace. All those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and have put their faith in him have entered into a wonderful peace peace by his blood.

We know that from earlier in this book of Colossians chapter 1 and verse 20. Through him, that's Christ, to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

[11 : 09] So, when the Lord Jesus Christ was giving his final instructions to his followers, when he was talking to them in the upper room after he had broken bread and shared with them, he bestowed upon them the blessing of peace.

John 14, 27, peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. In other words, the peace that Christ gives to his people is distinctly different.

Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. Therefore, dear friends, it should not be any surprise to us that if this is the case, that the genuine mark of the people of God, the people of the Lord Jesus Christ, is that peace is there.

Since as members of one body you were called to peace. The peace which Christ has won for us between man and God and the peace which he's brought into our lives must overflow into the life that we share with one another.

Yes, our salvation is a matter of individual faith and personal experience, God's life. But it was always intended that we should be saved to be made into one body, into one community, into one fellowship which is that of Christ Jesus.

[12 : 46] You see, we've been called out of the world. We've been called together into a new family, into a new nation, into a new kingdom.

So much so that we have to say you cannot be a Christian outside of the church. You cannot be a Christian outside of the church because as soon as you are converted you are immediately united with all believers in Christ.

We need to grasp that afresh, I believe, in the world and the society and the generation in which we live where the individual is exalted, where it's my choice about how I want to live my life and I rule over my own decisions.

It's vital, I believe, that as believers in Christ Jesus we grasp afresh that we have been saved together. And that's the very purpose and reason Christ saved us.

There's a spiritual unity which can never be broken, never be taken apart unless Christ can be rent asunder, you and I cannot be rent asunder.

[14 : 13] Unless God can be split, then you and I cannot be split from one another. And the natural and the most normal way to express that personal unity that we have through Christ is for it to be seen in our unity with others.

Do you remember how the book of Acts describes the conversion of people? Puts it this way, the Lord added to their number daily those who are being saved.

Isn't that wonderful? It doesn't just say the Lord saved many, the Lord added, the Lord gave, the Lord placed them one with another daily as they were saved.

God see, to be a Christian and to not recognize that we are part of the team church is about as ludicrous as somebody calling themselves a footballer but never ever playing a match or any other type of sportsman calling themselves a rugby player or a cricket player but never being part of a team.

that the peace of Christ rule in your heart since as members of one body you were called to peace.

[15 : 40] But how do we do it? It's all well and good you saying this Peter, it's all well and good you laying it on thick but how do we do it? how are we to be this people of peace?

In one sense putting the sporting analogy in the same way, who's going to be the umpire? Who's going to be the referee? Who's going to keep us all in order?

Well Paul tells us because literally the phrase that we have here in the English let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts the word that he uses there is let the peace of Christ umpire in your hearts it literally is it's a sporting analogy that he's using there that the peace of Christ be the umpire since you are called to one body our words and our actions and our activities together as a local church are not to be governed by our constitution important though that is and necessary neither are our is our it's the peace that we seek after going to be brought about by us all towing the line by dotting every I was going to say dotting every T and crossing every I but rather the other way around it's not by rules and regulations remember that's exactly the problem with the false teachers they wanted to impose those things upon them but rather we see that the pursuit of peace both within our hearts and seeking for that peace to be in the hearts of others is that which will rule and govern and direct us what robs us of peace why don't we have peace well those things that are listed there aren't they in verses 5 through to 8 they're the things that rob us of peace where they're operating our consciences are troubled and we have no peace with Christ so it is with those that we speak to if we speak with them and deal with them in anger and rage and malice and slander and filthy language then we rob them of peace so we are to constantly judge ourselves by Christ's peace does this word that

I'm speaking give or take away peace do these actions of mine towards others or their actions to me rob or promote peace peace within all and why does Paul add what he does at the end of verse 15 and be thankful surely it's as peace rules there's gratitude for one another and surely as we give thanks for one another peace flows am I thankful for you are you thankful for one another are you thankful for the church of Jesus Christ that you are a part of oh yes oh yes it could be a lot lot better oh but it could be a lot lot worse being thankful to God for the people that he's made us a part of is surely the way of peace it's important as well just to briefly notice that the end of verse 14 and beginning of verse 15 really are one sentence

I know that in the NIV it breaks up but again I'm no Greek scholar but I know that it says it binds them all together in perfect unity and to let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts so we see there's a flowing on flowing on these things go together so that's the first thing the sign of a healthy church healthy church is where peace is the umpire but that's not all is it of course somebody will immediately say ah well of course that means we must never disagree about everything and we've got to all accept everything and we must never ever fall out with one another over truth or the gospel it means we've got to always in one sense have this ecumenical spirit remember that's just the first sign the second sign if I can put it that way the second mark of a healthy church is not only that there is peace but there is peace which comes from preaching let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom it's interesting that Paul uses that phrase teach and admonish because that's exactly how he described his own ministry in chapter one there in verse 28 we proclaim him that's Christ admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom exactly the same words but Paul says here that this ministry of teaching and admonishing with all wisdom is for all believers within the church it's not just the preacher or the pastor or the elders or those who have been set apart or called with those things we are all to teach and to admonish one another it's part of our exercise of peace it's part of our pursuing peace that we teach and admonish well what do we mean by these things well teach teaching means this it means instructing in the truth explaining revealing and sharing with others what we ourselves have learnt we could call this theology but really it's the experience of what

[22 : 24] God's word has done to us being shared with others that's why it's teaching that's to be shared within the whole life of the church and I'm sure that you've done that I'm sure that from time to time when you've had your own quiet time and read a passage of scripture or a verse and it's spoken to you you've gone and shared with somebody about it haven't you I was reading this this morning it was such an encouragement to me it's teaching admonishing that sounds a bit more harsh doesn't it but really what is admonishing admonishing surely is this it's the application of the truth that we know about Christ it's applying what we understand into our lives it means guiding directing yes shaping one another we can call this practice but again

I'm sure that's something that we've done from time to time especially when somebody has come to us and they've said to us I'm really not sure what to do in this situation I'm not sure what choice to make I'm not sure how to act I'm sure there are times when we've said well let's pray about it but I think this is a good way or perhaps you've been able to direct that person to a passage of scripture where there's been some practical application and you need to say to one another yeah this is what happened with Paul he was in that situation this is how he dealt with it isn't that good let's remember that the word of God is greatly practical isn't it so teaching and admonishing let's not let's not get too carried away with them but let's understand that they are be part of the ministry that we share with one another as we exercise peace and seek after peace and the tool of course as we've already noticed the tools by which we minister in this way are the word of

Christ let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom now why does Paul use the phrase the word of Christ people have got themselves caught up with this and say well maybe he's just talking about the gospels about what Jesus said in the gospels or perhaps he's only just talking about the new testament because of course Jesus by the holy spirit taught the apostles and revealed his truth to them in the new testament but really it seems to me it's just another way of talking about the whole of scripture but Paul is using the phrase the word of Christ because again it's the peace of Christ it's the word of Christ it's the church of Christ we know that all scripture points to Jesus don't we Luke 24 that wonderful occasion when Emmaus friends were walking on the road to Emmaus and Jesus speaks to them and we're told that he taught them from all the scriptures about himself and again when he gets back to Jerusalem or rather they get back to

Jerusalem and Jesus appears to the twelve that are there and speaks to them again the same thing is said that he begins to teach them about how the Christ must suffer from all the scriptures the wonderful thing is this that all the promises of God and all the truths of God are mediated to us through Christ it's a lovely verse isn't there 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 20 whatever promises God has made they are yes and amen in Christ that's why as Christians we read the Old Testament and we apply it to our lives that's why we're there in Exodus this morning that's not just the Hebrew part of the Bible for the old covenant people the Jewish people we believe that it is all of ours all the promises belong to us so if we are to minister with peace and this is where of course we step away from ecumenism which says that we just have peace at any price we say that peace in the church can only come as we minister as those within whom

Christ's word dwells Paul and Paul taught and admonished he says with all wisdom and we are to do the same but where do we get that wisdom from we get that wisdom not from our education Paul didn't get his wisdom from pharisaic teaching and training not from his great mind and he probably had one of the greatest minds of any man he got it from the Lord God as he writes in 1 Corinthians 1 30 he has made him that's the Lord Jesus Christ our wisdom James says if anyone lacks wisdom let them ask God who freely gives and where do we find wisdom we find wisdom of course in the word of God let the word of Christ dwell in you do we want to have wisdom to teach one another do we want to have wisdom to pursue peace do we want to have wisdom to admonish and help one another practically then what we have to do is imbibe of Christ's word we have to take it into our very hearts it has to become that which rules over our lives so that we are changed by it so that we are fruitful notice let it dwell richly for the word of

[28 : 21] Christ to dwell richly does not mean that we just have an understanding of the whole bible or can quote passages but rather that the word of Christ within us is bearing fruit and it is changing us and there is a richness about our lives because God's word is impacting us it's helping us to subdue sin in our own lives it's producing a spiritual harvest like the one spoken of in Galatians 5 the fruit of the spirit love joy peace oh yes that's one of them as well isn't it the word of Christ is that which creates peace the word of Christ in us is what gives us wisdom and the word of Christ bearing fruit in our lives means that we are then able to teach and admonish one another there's one more thing isn't there one more mark here particularly of the life of the church it is a church which is marked by peace the pursuit of peace is a church which is marked by preaching again the desire for the word of Christ to be lived out proclaimed declared shared but also we see that it is a church which is praising sorry about all the peace they never stay on your fork do they peace they always roll around and get everywhere let the word of

Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs part of our teaching it seems comes about when we sing together do you notice that admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing it seems to me that as we teach one another as we sing we encourage one another we help one another as we sing it's not an unimportant part of our worship in fact this passage really reflects what Paul says in Ephesians it's a very similar thing he speaks with similar words Ephesians and chapter five speak he says to one another with psalms hymns and spiritual songs sing and make music in your heart to the Lord speak to one another as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs when we sing we're not just singing to the

Lord unless we're all by ourselves alone well of course we are but when we're in corporate worship when we're together and singing we are singing to the blessing of one another I'm sure that's the case for you isn't it when we're singing a hymn and standing with others and they're singing there's something that happens and it's not just emotional feeling we know about that we know what froth is and we know what emotion is but there's something our spirits are lifted and we mustn't underestimate the singing of hymns during the 19th century it's been recorded that when there was liberal teaching beginning to creep into the bible colleges and the seminaries and therefore sadly into the clergy and the pulpits many churches and many Christians remained bible based and evangelical because of the good hymns they were singing about the blood of Christ and the atonement here Paul lists it seems three sorts of songs psalms hymns spiritual songs

I don't think actually that's what he is doing I think basically Paul is just saying all sorts every type psalms yes certainly we can speak about those wonderful psalms those 150 hymns of praise and we do sing them and we should sing them and it's good to sing them but we're not restricted to them and hymns well we would say well those are those sort of Charles Wesley and we sang some Dodderidge and we sang who else did we sing Isaac Watts those are the hymns we should only sing those and then spiritual songs well those oh what are spiritual songs eh surely dear friends the only controlling factor in what we sing is this controlling factor one does it flow from the heart spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts is it heartfelt and surely again it must be is it spiritually beneficial to one another now we all have our own tastes we all have our own styles we all have our own traditions but I think dear friends we've got to be very careful that we aren't too dismissive of somebody else's taste or style until we are actually able to say well this is not helpful spiritually or this is not heartfelt because otherwise dear friends we can find ourselves falling into a legalism of rules and regulations is it spiritual is it something which uplifts the heart to worship and to praise

God does it edify and build up believers then really I think it's good and one of the things I'm encouraged by in our fellowship is that we do sing I believe psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and may the Lord help us to continue to do so with understanding so those are the marks of a healthy church there is peace there is preaching there is praising and a little bit like verse 14 where at the end of the list of characteristics that we are to pursue in our lives Paul says there's one more thing that binds them all together so it seems to me verse 17 is a similar sort of conclusion what binds all the things that we do together as a church what is it that really encompasses them all and he sets out there a ruling principle just as the ruling principle about how we live as individuals is that we are loving so the ruling principle about all that we do as a church is this that we do it in the name of the Lord

[35 : 19] Jesus giving thanks to God that isn't just when we're in a service that isn't just when there's preaching and singing but surely in every part and aspect and life of the church this ruling principle is to be sought after and held up briefly as we conclude what does it mean if we are to do everything whether in word or deed in the name of the Lord Jesus then we are to do it all with a realization that we are representing Christ in other words we are to act in such a way that honors him and doesn't dishonor him now again that may have some bearing about how we worship how we sing but realistically we need to recognize and we know it to be true but we need to take hold of what is a very very serious responsibility that as the church of Jesus Christ what we do reflects upon

Jesus and if the world looks upon the activities of this local church and it reflects badly upon the Lord Jesus then we are doing something seriously wrong that is one of the great sadnesses I believe about what we see going on in the church worldwide and nationally is the reflection it has upon Christ and I don't know how seriously how those people can speak of themselves or act in a way as Christians when they know very well the reflection it has to the world of Christ is extremely poor that's a heavy responsibility isn't it we bear it as individuals of course but we also bear it as a church are our activities are our lives are our actions ones that represent Christ well and then we realize as well of course that whatever you do whether or do it all in the name of the

Lord Jesus means ultimately that we are to do all things without one desire to do his will notice it's in the name of the Lord Jesus he is the Lord of this church we are his servants his people whatever we do we are to do in such a way that we are doing unto him and that means that whatever task we are engaged in whether it be in praying whether it be in preaching whether it be in making the tea whether it be doing mums and toddlers whether it be doing the food bank whatever we are doing is not irrelevant is not inconsequential is not beneath us because we are doing it for Christ what did Jesus say whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of these that's why dear friends as a church every single part of the body is important and matters because every single part of the body is serving the

Lord Jesus Christ and everything that we do we are doing in his name for his sake and then finally of course we have there everything we do we have to do with thanksgiving have you noticed that in every one of the sentences thanksgiving is included why does Paul have to say that because we don't give thanks enough we don't give thanks enough to the Lord for what he's done for us true worship true service true church living can only flow from a heart which is filled with gratitude for what God has done for them we can only worship him when we realize oh what he has done on our behalf when we delight in his grace and mercy to us when we rejoice in the gift of his son when we are so appreciative of the blessings of our salvation that's when we do everything with thanksgiving to him and I think verse 17 can easily be turned into a prayer and I would encourage you dear friends to think about this in the coming week make verse 17 a daily prayer each morning something along these lines whatever I do whether in word or deed may I do it all in the name of the Lord

Jesus giving thanks to you God my father through him can we pray that at the beginning of every day in whatever we do whatever I do Lord let me do it in your name here's some of the steps to a peaceful church let's pursue them with prayer let's pursue them with a deep longing that indeed Christ might be in all well let's sing as we close our time this evening it's not a hymn that I know myself very well I just picked it because of the words but some of you will know it because you're far more educated in hymnology than me 384 Lord from whom all blessings flow perfecting the church below steadfast may we cleave to thee love the mystic union be join our faithful spirits join each to each and all to thine lead us through the paths of peace onto perfect holiness now we may know of course that Charles

[41 : 06] Wesley along with his brother John thought that that perfect holiness was attainable in this world we're not singing it with that thought we're singing it with the thought and the knowledge that we shall have perfect holiness in heaven but we're working towards it we're a work in progress and God in his grace is taking us on so let's stand and sing three eight four let each one use whatever gift he's received to serve others faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms if anyone speaks he should do it as one speaking the very words of God if anyone serves he should do so with the strength God provides so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ to him be the glory and the power forever and ever amen blood he has on the further act he is delicious

God has another... oh summer let's go to last Tab one six ■amy■ Johnny■ ■■ not even men toáb aliRockirus Vamos agenda