

Jesus Our Lifestyle

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in Paul's letter to the Colossians in chapter 3.

Colossians chapter 3, and if we just read again at the beginning, where Paul writes, 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. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you will also appear with him in glory.

And so on. Now, it's safe to say that life is full of questions. And you know, it's good to ask questions, because, well, that's how we learn.

And you know, I see that every day with David, Finley, and Daniel, our three little boys. They're always asking questions. Why? How? What for?

[1 : 20] They're always asking questions. And sometimes I'll admit it's tiring. But you know, it's good to ask questions, because that's how we learn. And you know, over the past few weeks, while we've been studying Paul's letter to the Colossians, Paul has been asking us questions about Christianity.

Because when we considered chapter 1 a few weeks ago, Paul was asking us, how do you become a Christian? And contrary to the false teachers in Colossae that claimed that in order to become a Christian, you need Jesus plus.

You need Jesus plus your knowledge, or Jesus plus your good works, or Jesus plus your law keeping, or Jesus plus, well, as it was for the Colossians, circumcision. And you know, the result of presenting this false message to these young Gentile Christians, it left them feeling inferior, and that they were inadequate, and that they weren't good enough to earn their salvation, and that they lacked something in their Christianity.

And you know, the result was that the Colossians doubted their salvation, and they questioned whether or not they were actually saved. They lacked confidence in Christ, and they lacked assurance in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

But when Paul asked the question in chapter 1, how do you become a Christian, he emphasized that our Christianity is not about what we do. It's about confessing what Jesus Christ has done.

[2 : 49] And Paul says that in order to become a Christian, we must simply confess Jesus Christ as our Lord, and Savior. We must confess that Jesus Christ is supreme, he's sovereign, and he's sufficient in all things, including our salvation.

And so in chapter 1, Paul asked, how do you become a Christian? Then when we went on to chapter 2, Paul asked, do you live like a Christian? Do you live like a Christian?

But when Paul asked that question in chapter 2, he wasn't speaking about our Christian conduct.

He was speaking about our assurance as a Christian. He said, do you live like a Christian?

Do you live in the assurance of your Christianity? He says, you have confessed Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, but do you live like a Christian? Do you live in the assurance that you're following Jesus Christ, and that you belong to Jesus Christ, and that you're bought by Jesus Christ, and that you're united to Jesus Christ?

Do you live like a Christian? Or the alternative he presents is, do you constantly live in fear? Do you have this sick feeling in your stomach, this anxiety that you might not be a genuine Christian?

[4 : 11] Do you live, this is Paul asking, do you live thinking, I'm not good enough? Do you live like a Christian?

A Christian? It wasn't to plant a seed of doubt in our heart and in our mind. The reason he asked this question in chapter 2 is because we have no reason to lack assurance or confidence in Christ, because he says Jesus Christ is our fullness.

and that in Christ as Christians united to Jesus Christ by faith as those who who love the Lord he says we lack nothing because we are complete in Christ as those who have confessed Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior he says we have received every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ we are complete in Christ because of our union with Christ and as we said before Paul loves this concept of union with Christ he's writing about it in every every letter and he emphasizes how precious our salvation is and how full our salvation is because we are in Christ or we are with Christ there's this marriage between the Christian and Christ we are in union with Christ and from that Paul goes on to say that because of our union with Christ he says to the Colossians you don't need to be circumcised you don't need to follow all these traditions you don't need to follow all these certain customs that these people are imposing upon you in order to be a proper Christian you don't need to follow all that he says no Paul says that your union with Christ it's so close and so personal that when Christ was crucified on the cross you were crucified with him when Christ died on the cross he says as a Christian you died with him when Christ was buried in the tomb you were buried in the tomb you were buried in the tomb you were buried with him and when then he says when Christ was raised from the dead you were raised to the newness of life with him you were raised through the power of the resurrection and Paul emphasizes how close our union with Christ really is because when you come into chapter 3 he goes on to say that that union with Christ is so close that our Christianity should affect every area of our lives our Christianity should affect every area of our lives and so in chapter 1 Paul asked how do you become a Christian in chapter 2 Paul asked do you live like a Christian but now as we come to chapter 3 Paul is asking how much does your Christianity affect your life how much does your Christianity affect your life and he says in the opening words of this chapter if then you have been raised with Christ in union with Christ he says 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 with Christ and your life is hidden with Christ in God so when Christ who is your life appears then you will also appear with him in glory and what Paul is saying is that if you have confessed Jesus Christ to be your Lord and to be your Savior then you are united to him by faith and that union it's inseparable you cannot be separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus because you've been crucified with Christ you've died with Christ you've been buried with Christ and now you've been raised to the newness of life in Christ and Paul says that if you have been raised with Christ to this new life then you must seek the things that are above you must seek to live your life in a manner that is God honoring and Christ like because he says Christ is seated in glory he's at the right hand of God the Father and this is the beauty of it he says to the Christian you are in union with him you are in union with Christ who's seated at the right hand of God and so you are to set your mind upon things that are above not on things that are on earth he says look to Jesus for your direction and your guidance and listen and obey his voice you don't look to the world for your direction don't look to the earthly things that are around you for your direction and your guidance he says if you have been raised with Christ you're a new creation the oldest passed away it was crucified dead and buried the oldest passed away you're a new creature in Christ your old life has died your old self it's crucified dead and buried but now as a Christian you're alive in Christ and you're hidden with Christ in God your life is concealed he says in the fullness of Jesus Christ your life is hidden with Christ and so as someone who has been raised with Christ he says you're to seek the things that are above you're to look to Jesus and by looking to Jesus your Christianity should affect every area of your life because as those who have been raised to the newness of life in Christ Paul says you have to put off the old self you have to put on the new self and you have to put in the effort you have to put in the effort and so there are three headings this evening put off, put on and put in put off, put on and put in and I know it's a long introduction but I want us to see the thread of Paul's letter and I want us to see his overall purpose in writing to the Colossians because we can often get lost in all the details and some of the details are beautiful but we often miss the emphasis of his letter and so what Paul is saying to the Colossians is that because they are Christians who have been raised to the newness of life in Christ their Christianity is to affect every area of their lives and so the first thing Paul says to the Colossians and to us is put off your old self put off your old self look at verse 5 he says put to death therefore what is earthly in you sexual immorality impurity passion evil desire and covetousness which is idolatry on account of these things the wrath of God is coming in these

you too once walked and when you were living in them but now you must put them put them all away anger wrath malice slander and obscene talk from your mouth and he gives all this list and so following on from the opening verses these opening key words where Paul says that if we've been raised with Christ we're to seek the things above he says following on from that he says you must put off your old self and you know when Paul says if you have been raised with Christ now don't get him wrong he's not questioning the Colossians he's not questioning us as to the genuineness and the completeness of our salvation no he's actually reminding us that we have been raised with Christ as Christians we have been raised with Christ and because we've been raised with Christ we must put off the old self and what Paul is saying to the Colossians and to us is that if you're a Christian then you can't live like you used to if you're a Christian you can't do some of the things you used to do if you're a Christian you can't go to some of the places you used to go why?

[13:02] because you're in union with Christ you are united to Jesus Christ his spirit dwells within you and yes your salvation it's all a work of the spirit but Paul is emphasizing here you also have a responsibility you have a responsibility to be obedient to God's word and to seek to live a Christ-centered life you have the responsibility he says of putting off your old self and you know this teaching of Paul it wasn't just confined to the Colossians this is what Paul reminded the Corinthians he said to the Corinthians if anyone is in Christ if anyone is united to Jesus Christ they are a new creation the old has passed away behold the new has come and that's what Paul is saying here to the Colossians you are a new creation in Christ you've been raised with Christ you have new life in Christ therefore you must put off the old self but notice

Paul doesn't just say put off the old self he says put it to death put it to death put to death therefore what is earthly in you sexual immorality impurity passion evil desire and covetousness which is idolatry then he says again in verse 8 but now you must put them all away anger wrath malice slander and obscene talk from your mouth put it to death I love the way the authorised version puts it he says mortify your members mortify your members or Paul says in Romans chapter 8 if you live according to the flesh you will die but if you live according to the spirit you will mortify the deeds of the flesh and you'll live and Paul's point is that we don't just put off sin because that would make it too easy to put it back on no Paul says put it to death mortify the deeds of the flesh because if you live according to the flesh he says you will die but if you live by the spirit if you've been raised with Christ then you must endeavour to mortify the deeds of the body of the flesh we've got to mortify the deeds of the flesh and you know it was the 17th century

Puritan John Owen he once wrote a book called The Mortification of Sin and you know it's a brilliant book and you can read a more modern and more concise version of his book it's one of the Puritan paperbacks and it's a brilliant book and it's an eye-opening book about our sin and how our sin affects us and how our sin affects everyone around us but in the book The Mortification of Sin John Owen he famously writes do you mortify do you make it your daily work to mortify your sin then he says be always at it whilst you live cease not a day from this work then he gives this famous quote be killing sin or sin will be killing you be killing sin or sin will be killing you and you know that's what Paul is saying to us here he's saying you've been raised with Christ you're united to Christ therefore you must endeavour to put sin to death you must mortify sin you have to kill sin or sin will be killing you but you know you might be thinking well what's the point in trying to kill sin sin is impossible to kill it almost seems like a futile exercise trying to kill what's impossible to kill it's impossible to get rid of this sin but as Paul explains he says that as Christians he says we're not to get angry with one another or show malice or slander one another or speak ill of one another and even lie to one another and Paul says in verse 9 that we're not to do these things he says you have to put off the old self with its practices and you have to put on the new self which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator and Paul's point is that the only way to put on the new man is to put off the old one the only way to make room for the new is to get rid of the old the only way to adorn the characteristics of the new self is to put to death the characteristics of the old self and Paul is making quite clear here we can't do both we can't enjoy the benefits of the new man and live like the old man because well that's hypocrisy is it not you can't be double minded the bible doesn't teach us to be double minded the bible says to us a double minded man is unstable in all his ways and so we have to put off the old self we have to put to death the old man we have to mortify the deeds of the flesh of the body so that we can put on the new self and put on the new man and live in the newness of life in Christ and with the newness of life in Christ and as those who have been raised with

Christ Paul says there's no distinction there's no segregation there's no category there's no separation or division or type of person that Jesus saves and this is the beauty of it Paul says in verse 11 here there is not Greek and Jew circumcised and uncircumcised barbarian Scythian slave free but Christ is all and in all and the reason Paul says this is because as we mentioned before in Colossae there was all these divisions all these types of Christian all these these different segregations of Christianity but Paul says here when you are in Christ when you're raised with Christ when you put on the new man there's no group there's no person there's no category that Jesus saves when you're in Christ that's your category you're all in Christ you're all one in Christ Jesus and so we're to see that when we're in

Christ we're all one in Christ we're not a better Christian than someone else we're not a poorer Christian than someone else we're not more inferior to someone else's Christianity we're all one in Christ and so he says we must endeavour to put off the old self and put on the new and that's what Paul talks about in the next section because as Paul continues to emphasise to those who have been raised to the newness of life in Christ he says that our Christianity it's to affect every area of our lives and so Paul says put off then he says put on put on he says in verse 12 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 you also must forgive and above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful and so having told us to put off and to put to death the old man the old self

[21 : 15] Paul now tells us to put on what to put on and you know when we consider all these characteristics that we are to put on the characteristics he says of holiness compassion kindness meekness patience forgiveness and love all these characteristics are the characteristics of Jesus and so what Paul is really saying to us is put on the Lord Jesus Christ put on as God's chosen ones the characteristics that imitate and emulate our saviour Jesus Christ put on the Lord Jesus Christ and you know that was just what Paul said to the Romans when he wrote to the Romans he mentioned in chapter 13 he says let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light let us walk properly as in the daytime not in orgies and drunkenness not in sexual immorality and sensuality not in quarrelling and jealousy but put on the

Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires and what Paul was saying was don't give the flesh any room keep putting it off keep putting it to death keep mortifying the deeds of the flesh put off Adam and put on the Lord Jesus Christ adorn yourself with Jesus Christ and live a Christ like life that's God honouring but you know what's more is what Paul is saying is that we should put on all these characteristics because we are united to Jesus Christ we should be like Jesus he says because we are united to Jesus who's at the right hand of the father we should emulate and imitate and walk in the ways of Christ because we are in union with him we've been raised with him therefore like this spiritual wardrobe we're just to open the doors and put on and adorn ourselves with holiness and compassion and kindness and meekness and patience and forgiveness and love and you know how hard that is to do but you know what's interesting is that Paul makes a point of expanding upon some of the characteristics here he says if one has a complaint against another forgive each other as the

Lord has forgiven you so you also must forgive so he expands upon the characteristic of forgiveness and you know Jesus he taught about this in the Sermon on the Mount remember how Jesus taught us how to pray we all know the Lord's prayer forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors but you know in Matthew chapter 6 Jesus then added this solemn and important footnote at the end of the Lord's prayer he gave this condition and he said if you forgive others their trespasses your heavenly father will also forgive you but if you do not forgive others their trespasses neither will your father forgive your trespasses and it's a solemn warning to us that as Christians we should be characterized by forgiveness but you know the problem is how often do we see Christians falling out with one another and we see

Christians holding grudges against each other and we see Christians refusing to talk to one another but what's worse about it all is that Paul is highlighting here that both those who are indemnity with one another they're both united to Jesus Christ they're both brothers and sisters in Christ they're one in Christ and yet there's no forgiveness there's this childish and stubborn attitude that doesn't want to forgive one another doesn't want to talk to one another and when you dig deep or dig just

below the surface you see that the disagreement is so trivial in light of eternity so trivial and yet Paul reminds us here that we are to put on forgiveness we are to adorn ourselves with forgiveness and it's a challenge because to be anything else other than forgiving Paul says is to be ungodly and it's to be unchrist-like therefore our life should be characterized by forgiveness forgiveness and if we've wronged someone we should acknowledge it and seek their forgiveness because Paul is urging us here to put on

Christ follow his example because the example we have when you look at the cross the example we have as Jesus hung crucified upon a Roman cross is that he said about his enemies father forgive them for they know not what they do you know the life of Jesus Christ it was characterized by forgiveness and Paul is saying you're to put on Christ Jesus Christ is to affect every area of your life but you know the greatest characteristic of Christ that we must put on as Paul says is love he says in verse 14 above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony we are to put on love Paul mentions it as the first outworking of the spirit the first fruit of the spirit love joy peace patience we're to put on love because that's how people will know that we are disciples of [27:17] Jesus Christ Jesus said a new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you you are also to love one another and then he says by this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another and so my friend love is the defining characteristic of a Christian because love was the defining characteristic of Christ Christ himself said greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends and you know our response to all that we are in Christ and all that we have through Christ it should be thankfulness and this is what Paul is saying to us he says go to your spiritual wardrobe and put on Christ put him on every day put on

Christ adorn yourself with Christ clothe yourself in Jesus Christ and put on holiness and compassion and kindness and meekness and patience and forgiveness and love and then he says in verse 15 and 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 so as Paul continues to emphasize here that those who have been raised to the newness of life in Christ he says our Christianity it should affect every area of our life and if our Christianity is affecting every area of our life then we will seek to put off the old self we will seek to put on Jesus Christ within 30 and finally

Paul says that we will seek to put in the effort we will put in the effort of obedience so put off put on and put in put in look at verse 17 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 wives submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them children obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord fathers do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged slaves obey in everything those who are your earthly masters not by way of I've service as people pleasers but with sincerity of heart fearing the Lord whatever you do work heartily as if to the Lord and not for men knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward you are serving the

Lord Christ for the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done and there is no partiality masters treat your slaves justly and fairly knowing that you also have a master in heaven and so in this chapter in chapter three Paul has already reminded us that as those who have been crucified dead and buried with Christ and then raised to the newness of life with Christ he says that new life in Christ should cause us to put off the old self put on Christ but it should also cause us to put in the effort of obedience because you know there's no doubt that the Christian life it's a life of discipline it requires discipline but when we're raised with Christ and new in Christ things have to be different because as we said we are united to Christ the spirit dwells in us and if you said yes it's a work our salvation is a work of the spirit but we have a responsibility we have a responsibility of being obedient to

God's word and seeking to live a Christ centred life but you know the question is why why do you live in obedience why do you seek to live a Christ centred life is it because that's what you were told to do is it because it's well because you know you have to is it because that's expected of you by the elders or by other Christians is it because you think that God will love you more if you do it is it because you think that God will be pleased with you if you're obedient and you and you know I ask all these questions because if you think that your obedience to God gives you a better standing with

God or makes you a better Christian then you haven't understood the gospel you haven't understood that your salvation is nothing to do with you it's all about Christ what Christ has done on your behalf your salvation is nothing to do with you that's what

[32 : 30] Paul has emphasized all the way through this letter but now he says your obedience has everything to do with you your obedience has everything to do with you your responsibility says is to be obedient to God's word and apply it in your life but you know we have to get this clear you're not to obey God's word out of a sense of duty and slavish fear you're not to obey God's word out of a fear of punishment or a fear of what God will do to you if you don't do as he says my friend we are to be obedient to God and we're to fulfill our responsibility not out of a sense of duty but out of love we're to fulfill our responsibility of obedience out of an out working of love in our heart for God that's why we respond in obedience and you know the apostle

John he emphasized this in his letters John was dealing with just the same issues as Paul was dealing with here Christians who were lacking assurance Christians who were lacking confidence in the finished work of Christ and John dealt with this problem of thinking that Christian obedience is done out of a sense of duty and the slavish fear of God but John reminded the Christians by saying there is no fear in love for perfect love casts out fear for fear has to do with punishment and whoever fears has not been perfected in love and this is the point everybody knows this verse we love him why because he first loved us that's why we respond in obedience we love him because he first loved us and the point that both

John and Paul are making is that we're to put off the old self we're to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and we're to put in the effort to live in obedience to God's word and we're to do it out of love not because we have this slavish fear of God but because we love God we love what he's done for us in Jesus Christ we love the fact that Christ died on our behalf and that we were crucified with him and we died with him and we were buried with him and we were raised with him we love this we love the fact that we're saved in Christ and so the outworking of our salvation is not only love so my friend we're to obey because of what Christ has done for us and out of our love for him and for his church and for his cause we're to respond in obedience and you know the point that Paul is making here it should make us see that

Christianity is not a religion please do not think that Christianity is a religion don't think that it's a book you read or a creed you follow or just commandments that we adhere to this is the beauty of it Christianity is a relationship and it's a relationship based entirely upon love and when you're in Christ when Jesus is your saviour when you're in this personal relationship with Jesus Christ Christ is your life he's your everything he's your all in all and your union with Christ this marriage that you have to him where he's so precious to you as your saviour that union you have it should affect every area of your life it shouldn't just affect certain compartments and certain areas of your life when you're raised with Christ it shouldn't just affect your little religion box that you have for the Lord's day it shouldn't just your Christianity shouldn't just reschedule your timetable for coming to church twice on the Lord's day and the prayer meeting midweek no when you're raised with Christ when you're in a relationship with Jesus Christ it should affect every area of your life your Christianity should affect every area of your life because when everything is made new on the inside it should affect you personally it should affect your heart your mind your soul your feelings your conscience your will your affections everything when you're raised with Christ it should affect your home your marriage your family your community your relationships your neighbors your job your what colleagues your money your lifestyle if your life has been raised with Christ if you're in a relationship with Jesus Christ then there should be not one area in your life that doesn't change and my friend if there are certain areas in your life that have not been affected by your

[37 : 52] Christianity if they haven't been affected by your resurrection with Jesus Christ then Jesus Christ is not Lord over every area of your life and you know far too often we want to keep things to ourselves don't we we want to give Jesus this bit but not this bit but he has to be Lord over our whole life Lord of all and Paul's emphasis is that if you've confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord then he must be Lord over your whole life that's what he says down in verse 23 whatever you do work heartily as for the Lord not for men knowing that from the Lord you will receive inheritance as your reward then he reminds us you are serving the Lord Christ and that's Paul's point if you've been raised by your union with Jesus Christ then you must live in loving obedience to his word you must put off your old self you must put on the

Lord Jesus Christ and you must put in the effort of obedience out of love you must put off put on and put in and so in this wonderful letter that we've been studying Paul is asking us a lot of questions he asked in chapter 1 how do you become a Christian and if you're not a Christian tonight Paul tells you you must repent and confess Jesus Christ to be your Lord and your saviour that's how you become a Christian in chapter 2 Paul asked do you live like a Christian do you live with this confidence and assurance in the finished work of Jesus Christ on your behalf and he says you should have no reason to lack assurance or confidence because you have a full salvation in Jesus Christ and then here in chapter 3 Paul asks how much should your Christianity affect your life and he's reminded us this evening that our

Christianity should affect every area of our lives every nook and cranny of our lives should be affected by our relationship with Jesus Christ because we have to put off the old self put on the Lord Jesus Christ and put in the effort by loving obedience to his word put off put on and put in and God willing we'll look at chapter 4 on Wednesday evening and if you want to come along you're more than welcome may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray oh Lord our gracious God teach us we pray to be obedient to be obedient to thy word we know Lord that there are many voices that call for our distraction they demand our attention and they in one way or another they want our soul but Lord we pray that we might put off these things that we might mortify the deeds of the flesh and that each and every morning when we wake up that we would not only clothe ourselves physically but that we might clothe ourselves spiritually that we would put on the

Lord Jesus Christ at the beginning of every day and go out into this world with Christ in us who is the hope of glory O Lord help us we pray to be obedient help us to serve the Lord Christ humbly and to do it out of love not out of this slavish fear but to know that this Christ loved us and he gave himself for us and that we too would respond respond in loving him and following him and walking closely with him O Lord do us good and we pray bless us in the week that lies ahead a week Lord where we're always reminded that we do not know what a day or an hour may bring but we commit this week into thy hand knowing that thou art the one who is sovereign go before us then we ask and do us good for Jesus sake Amen we shall conclude our service this evening by singing to God's praise in

Psalms 119 Psalm 119 we're singing again well this time in verse 103 page 408 so we said this psalm is all about the Bible how the psalmist loves the Bible and it's his guide and rule in life and he says Psalm 119 at verse 103 he says how sweet unto my taste O Lord are all thy words of truth yea I do find them sweeter far than honey to my mouth I through thy precepts that are pure do understanding get I therefore every way that's false with all my heart to hate thy word is to my feet a lamp and to my path a light I sworn have and I will perform to keep thy judgments right we'll sing these verses of Psalm 119 to God's praise

[43 : 24] O sweet of my taste O Lord are all thy words of truth yea I do find them sweet of love than honey to my love I through thy precepts that are pure do understand sunt he get my sing as my heart is

To my feet a lamp, and to my path a light.

I swore her funds I will perform to keep thy judgments right.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.