Thankful People
Colossians 3:15-17
November 22nd, 2026

1. Be ruled by the _____ of Christ in your relationships. (3:15)

2. Be filled by the _____ of Christ in teaching and worship (3:16)

3. Do all in the _____ of Christ (3:17)

4. Applying the Word
    a. _____ for the peace of Christ at Thanksgiving.
    b. _____ your thinking by the Word of Christ at Thanksgiving.
    c. Let the name of Christ _____ all that you do on Thanksgiving.

Questions for Application/Discussion from Colossians 3:15-17

1. Do you ever find yourself falling into one of the misunderstandings about thankfulness from the introduction? (feeling based, circumstance dependent, personality trait, optional, etc.) If so, in what way?

2. Read Colossians 3:1-14 for the broader context.
    a. How does it describe what is *true* about us because of Christ? In other words, what are the "facts"?
    b. What is commanded of us because we follow Christ?
    c. How do the facts and commands (the indicatives and the imperatives) fit together in this passage?

3. What does it mean for the peace to be "of Christ" in v. 15? (see also John 14:27; 16:33; Rom. 5:1)

4. How can intentional gratitude for other people promote peace in your relationships with them? Even if you struggle in your relationship with someone, what are some types of things you can still give thanks for?

5. What are some practical ways for the Word of Christ to dwell in us individually and corporately?

6. How can intentional gratitude push back against pride?

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Big idea: Christ's redeemed community should be a thankful people characterized by the peace, word, and name of Jesus.

Intro

Thankfulness is not –

A feeling that is outside of our control

"I'm just not feeling very thankful this year."

Well, thankfully your feelings don't drive the bus. You can choose to act contrary to your feelings and you may be surprised how your feelings come along for the ride.

Dependent on positive circumstances

"There are a lot of hard things going on right now. What do I have to be thankful about?"

That may be true. We have many families here with hard circumstances right now. But we can still hunt for reasons for gratitude even when they aren't right on the surface.

A personality trait

"That's just not me. My family says I'm a pessimist but I'm actually just a realist. I'm always on the lookout for what is going wrong or what could go wrong."

Optional

The Bible commands thankfulness and no one is exempt from the command.

We're going to look at a passage in Colossians 3 this morning that is in the context of how Christians should live and relate to each other.

Colossians 3 describe virtues that should characterize believers like clothing that fits their new identity in Jesus.

It alternates between describing what is true of us:

1 – you have been raised with Christ

3 – you have died and your life is hidden with Christ

9-10 – You have laid aside the old self and put on the new self

12 – you have been chosen of God and are holy and beloved

13 – You have been forgiven

And what is therefore commanded of us:

We are to be compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and patient. We are to bear with and forgive one another – some things are quirks, annoyances, differences, weaknesses – that we just need to bear with or tolerate, knowing that there is a whole list of things people must tolerate about us! Others are sin issues that we need to learn to resolve and land on forgiveness and reconciliation. These things are essential for unity in a local church.

That's what leads to these three verses

Two observations about all three verses:

Each has a key command

Each is focused on Christ

Peace of Christ

Word of Christ

Do all in the name of Christ

Each includes a reference to thankfulness

Be thankful

Sing with thankfulness

Give thanks through Him

1. Be ruled by the ***peace*** of Christ in your relationships. (3:15)
    a. We often read this verse to mean that we should have an inner, subjective, personal peace in the Christian life. If we are making a decision and we don't feel "at peace," some take this to say it must not be the right decision.
        i. I don't actually think that's what it's saying.
        ii. That's not entirely wrong, in that we should consider why our conscience is tugging at us and we don't feel settled with a decision.
        iii. However, the context has been church body life – relationships – not inner experience or personal decision making. The end of the verse pulls us back again to the "one body" in which we are called.
        iv. So, what does it mean to be ruled by the peace of Christ?
    b. Jesus brings true peace to His people. It's the "peace of Christ" because it's the peace He brings.
        i. **John 14:27** "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.
        ii. **John 16:33** These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
        iii. **Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
            1. Jesus brings us peace in troubled times. Jesus brings us peace with God.
            2. Therefore, His community should be ruled by peace.
            3. Gospel-centered – the gospel not only saves us but it shapes us.
    c. The word used for "rule" was used of a referee or an umpire.
        i. "Peace" should be the arbiter or umpire, the factor that should be given preference over competing concerns and interests. It is in our relationships with each other that the "peace of Christ" should play this role.
        ii. We should ask, "Is this promoting peace? Is this furthering peace and unity in the body? Or are my actions here creating disunity and unnecessary conflict?"

1. Of course, there are principled reasons at times that we need to raise and objections or concern. But those are the exceptions. The rule, or the norm, should be pursuing peace.

iii. The question is how will we resolve conflict? Can we bear with and forgive? Can we diligently pursue peace?

1. **Ephesians 4:3** being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
2. It takes diligence – effort – to preserve unity in the bond of peace

iv. Conflict comes up with people for many reasons

1. Neutral – basic misunderstanding
2. Negative – selfishness or hidden agenda
3. Positive – both wanting the best for a situation but having different routes to achieve it

d. That desire for peace is to rule in our hearts as individuals so that it rules in our church body together.

i. Since the heart is the source of our desires as the control center of our being, Jesus must rule there, in our hearts.

e. And then it wraps up with a command to be thankful

i. Not an afterthought but gratitude is intimately associated with peace. We are to be grateful for the peace Christ bestows on us. Thankfulness for this peace becomes an incentive for preserving it.

ii. If we focused on what we were thankful for in other people we would have more peace and less conflict.

iii. Before you criticize someone, stop and think of three things you are thankful about for this person.

2. Be filled by the ***Word*** of Christ in teaching and worship (3:16)

a. The Word of Christ is the Word about Christ and the word from Christ – it is God's Word.

i. Jesus is the central message in scripture so it's appropriate to call it the Word of Christ.

b. His Word is to "richly dwell within you"

i. The emphasis is corporate.

1. The Word is to dwell within you – plural.
2. Our church must be built on, built around, guided by, founded on the Word. We make that a focus as we plan services by reading the Word, praying the Word, and preaching the Word.
3. We are "Bible-focused" as one of our core values.

ii. The word is to richly dwell in our community. However, if it is to be in our community of believers, it must be dwelling in every believer.

iii. The parallel passage in Ephesians links this filling of the Spirit to the indwelling of the Word.

1. **Ephesians 5:18-21** be filled with the Spirit, [19] speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

[20] always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; [21] and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

2. MacArthur, "The Word in the heart and mind is the handle by which the Spirit turns the will."
3. Suggestions for simple personal devotions
    a. Start reading a chapter each day –
    b. Not sure where to start?
        i. John, Psalms, Proverbs are always good recommendations
        ii. Genesis sets the foundation
    c. When you finish reading, write down one verse that stood out to you and think about how it applies. Shape it into a prayer to God.
    d. Meditation as the thumb that holds against the other fingers (read, study, memorize, hear)
4. Suggestions for simple family devotions
    a. Word and prayer
        i. Keep it simple – read briefly from the word, discuss it a little, and pray together – Proverbs is great and practical
        ii. Good to add in a little singing, considering where the verse goes next.
5. We can teach and admonish one another through songs
    a. Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs – probably not sharp distinctions between the three, although perhaps referring to the original psalms as well as modern music.
    b. There is a ministry of music to one another.
        i. How often do you leave our gathering on Sunday with the words of the sermon stuck in your head? Probably not often! But how often do you have a song stuck in your head?
6. Kent Hughes - The record of Christian awakenings during the last 2,000 years shows that whenever the Word of God is recovered, it is received with great joy that is inevitably expressed in song.
    a. Present day – a rich increase in song writing and a recovery of the joy of classic hymns – Sovereign Grace, Keith and Kristine Getty

c. As we sing, it is with thankfulness in our hearts to the Lord as well, just as our peace is to be from the heart.
    i. Our hearts must agree with our mouths. If they don't, the solution isn't to stop singing but to instruct our hearts as we sing because there is a teaching element to our singing. Rather than feel guilty because your "heart isn't in it," let the corporate singing be instructive to your heart, let God use it to soften your heart.

3. Do all in the ***name*** of Christ (3:17)
    a. Wraps up with a huge, all-encompassing statement.
    b. Whatever we do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

i. Mark Meynell - The word “whatever” is something of a teenage mantra. It can be used to artfully respond to any direction or pointed statement by a parent. It “brilliantly conveys an air of effortless aloofness and casual rebellion.”

ii. We need to redeem this word.

c. This phrase is a common way of referring to the totality of everything we do.

i. Everything we say, everything we do, should be done in the name of Jesus.

ii. To do something in the name of someone else means we represent them in some way.

1. Everything we do or say should point people more to Jesus, it should be consistent with our identity as those who are joined to Him.

2. If I meet one of your coworkers and in the course of the conversation, I learn that they know you, and I mention that I know you from church, would they be shocked? Would that reflect well upon Christ?

iii. Think about this weekend. What did you do that falls into the category of either “word” or “deed”?

1. Who did you talk to?

2. What tasks around the house or at work or at the gym did you do?

iv. “Word or deed” takes in everything in life. “Deeds” can be preaching, teaching, eating, exercising, driving, cleaning house, shopping, visiting, working, playing (basketball, soccer, tennis, fishing, even watching)—everything! Our words are everything that passes our lips, even in unguarded moments. Everything we say or do is to be done “in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Kent Hughes

d. What we’ve learned in Daniel 4-5 the past couple weeks, is that God is the one who grants us what we have in life – even our successes, strengths, wealth, health, possessions.

i. The error of Nebuchadnezzar was to look at the great city he had built and say, “Look what I’ve done.” The correction was to look at the same city and say, “Look what you’ve done.”

ii. For the Christian, we say the same thing as we look at the good things around us, “Lord, look what you’ve done.”

1. That doesn’t only move us to humility but to thankfulness.

2. If we’re taking credit for everything, who do we thank?

iii. This passage adds the idea that even as we do things – we create, build, work, study, be a good friend, resolve conflict, love our children, love our enemies, etc. – we do these things “in the name of Jesus.”

1. “Lord, I don’t feel like doing this right now, but I’m doing it for you because it honors you.”

2. “I’m doing this because I want to please Christ not to get glory for myself.”

4. Applying the Word

a. ***Aim*** for the peace of Christ at Thanksgiving.

b. ***Shape*** your thinking by the Word of Christ at Thanksgiving.

i. It won’t tell you how to cook the Turkey, but it will tell you how you should treat each other, what should be on your mind, what you should dwell on.

c. Let the name of Christ ***motivate*** all that you do on Thanksgiving.

    i. Getting up early to start on the rolls, adding an extra chair to invite someone who might be by themselves, digging a little deeper to cover the costs – all of these can be acts of worship that you do in the name of Christ with gratitude.



- **v. 1** You have been raised with Christ
- **v. 3** You have died and your life is hidden with Christ
- **vv. 9-10** You have laid aside the old self and put on the new self
- **v. 12** You are chosen, holy, and beloved
- **v. 13** You have been forgiven

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