

ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

Colossians 3: 14-17

Have you ever grappled with the great question as to the purpose of your existence? More high school football and basketball players than you think will tell you, my purpose is to play pro football or basketball. Talk to a lot of college students and they'll tell you straight up, I want to make a lot of money. And a smaller number of young ladies will tell you, I just want to raise a family. And there are a few children and teenagers, if they had the courage, would give you a Charley Brown type answer – "I don't want to grow up".

But all these answers are just surface stuff. Pie crust, whipped cream on your sundae, suds on your root beer. Time spenders that will be spent in a few short years and then buried and forgotten forever. But I dare say that the majority of people have never given it more than a passing thought if there could be some higher purpose for their life than to just make the best of it until they turn their toes up and die. But as believers in Jesus Christ it should be a matter that we've thought about and settled early in our Christian life. Way back in 1647 a group of English and Scottish ministers thought it was important enough to make it the answer to the very first question of the famous Westminster Catechism. Perhaps you've heard it before. Here's the question: "What is the chief end of man?" And the answer in the catechism: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever".

And beloved, those stiff and formal old Englishmen and Scotsmen definitely got it right. Isaiah 43: 6b-7 says, "Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth – everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for my glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him." God says here that He created Israel for His

glory, but this can be said of every child of God, Jew or Gentile. verse 17 of our text says that whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do it for the sake of Christ. And 1 Cor. 10:31 says, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God". We are all creations of Almighty God, and children of God if we have been saved by trusting Jesus, and we are alive today to bring glory to the One Who has created us and redeemed us.

So just how do you go about doing this every day the sun arises? Well, let's look back at v. 14 and begin to see. First of all for our lives to bring glory to God, Paul says that we are to **put on love**, which is the bond of perfection, or the bond of maturity. Last week we looked at the articles of clothing that we are to wear as believers. And we saw that we are to put on sympathy, which is tender mercy and kindness, and that we are to put on humility, which includes gentleness and patiently enduring persecution, and forgiving one another, just as Christ has forgiven us. But Paul says that above all things we are to put on love. Why above all?

You see, beloved, it is only the unconditional love of God, love without strings, love with no thought of anything in return, that will give substance to any of the things we've just mentioned. Listen to how one person describes our efforts to practice the Christian graces without being empowered by God's supernatural love: "Mercy would degenerate into weak sentimentality; kindness into foolish extravagance; humility into a mock self-depreciation - which is but another form of the proudest egotism; and longsuffering into a dull, dogged stupidity. Love is the grand element in which all other graces move and from which they derive their vitality and value". And is that not what Paul said in 1st Corinthians 13. That you can speak like an angel, prophesy like Daniel, move mountains with your faith as Elisha, and give your life as a martyr like Stephen, but if you don't have

the love of God as your energizer of these great things it profits you nothing. So Paul says, "Put on love".

Now, last week we saw the only way we're able to do that. Paul writes in Rom. 13:14, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ..." Every day by faith we are to clothe ourselves with the same Christ that we put on the day that we were saved. Look back at Col. 3: 9-10. The day you asked Jesus into your life He came in with all of His perfect character qualities that He longs to manifest through you. Because you can't love someone with Jesus' love. But He can, for it's His love to start with. And every day we need to cry out to Him to clothe us with Himself, to live His supernatural life of love through us.

And let me remind you, it is love that is the truest sign of genuine faith. Paul said that it was the bond of perfection. And the Greek word for "perfection" in this case means maturity. Beloved, mature Christians are going to love. Mature Christians love God (You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart....(Matt. 22: 37). And the proof that they love God is that they keep His commandments (1 John 2:5). Mature Christians love the lost. Mark 10:21 said that Jesus loved the rich young ruler. Mature Christians love their neighbor ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself"). Mature Christians love their enemies (Matt. 5:44). Mature Christians love those of other races (Deut. 10:19 – "Love the stranger"). Mature Christians love one another and forgive one another (John 13:35).

Now, let me ask you something. Do you at times feel that you love for God has grown cold? That you do not love Him like you once did? I doubt there is a Christian alive that cannot bow his head and say, "Yes, I've been there". And it is a shameful, miserable place to be, isn't it? So what do you do when your love has grown cold towards God? Well, let's turn to Revelation 2 and find out. Look at Rev. 2:4-5. If your

love for Jesus is not what it used to be, then Jesus says to do three things – remember, repent, and return. First of all, think back to the times when you were walking close to Christ. Remember the joy that flooded your soul as you sang praises to Him, sought Him in the Word, and served Him. And then repent of your cold heart and your sinful desires that have replaced your love for Him. And finally, return. Jesus said do the first works. Now, what could that be?

Well, what was your posture toward God when you first were saved? If you were truly saved, you were delivered out of darkness into light. You were rescued from the path of destruction and put on the path of eternal life. And you were overjoyed at what Jesus Christ had done for you. And you loved Him with all of your heart, and as a new Christian you just wanted to get as close to Jesus as you could. You were into His Word, you prayed, you were faithful to be with His people in church. You pursued Jesus with all of your heart! Beloved, that's what Jesus is calling you to do now! Repent of your coldness and selfishness. Cry out to Him and ask Him to pour out His love in you afresh and anew. And return to spending time with Him in His Word and in prayer and with His people. And He will restore to you your first love and you will put it back on and wear it wherever you go.

All of us have heard of strange things that supposedly appeared on old tombstones. One source said that Alexander the Great's tombstone reads, "This mound now is large enough for him for whom all earth was not". And it is said that when Alexander had conquered all of the known world he sat down and cried because there were no more worlds to conquer. But true or not, that epitaph is a sober reminder that one day, no matter how many worlds you may conquer, your earthly home will be reduced to a box that is 7' long by 28" wide by 23" deep. But friends, the greatest epitaph that could ever

be written on a believer's tombstone are two simple words, "He loved", or "she loved". If you died today, what would they be most likely to write on your tombstone?

There is a second way in which our lives are to glorify God in our text. Not only are we to **put on God's love**, but also **submit to God's peace**. Peace is one of the great themes of the Bible. The word is used 429 times from Genesis to Revelation. And God tells us to let His peace rule in our hearts. And the meaning is that we are to let the peace of God act as an umpire, to tell us when we are straying from the center of His will. And God's peace comes from the Holy Spirit, for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace.

Beloved, there is something that we must never forget pertaining to listening to the Holy Spirit's voice as He speaks to us. And that is, God has a plan! God loves us so much that He not only sent His Son to save us from eternal wrath in Hell and unto eternal life in Heaven, but He has also created a perfect plan for our good while on the journey toward Heaven. Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, say the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope". God's perfect plan begins with our obedience to His perfect Word in all things. And then His plan diverges into a specific path for each and every one of us, a path of peace and hope for a glorious future. But so many believers think that they have a better plan than God has for their lives.

But I want us to think for just a moment about what happens when you and I leave the path that God has called us to walk. Adam and Eve left the path, ate the forbidden fruit, and it led to the downfall of the entire human race. Abraham left the path, fathered an illegitimate child, and it led to untold turmoil in his family. Moses left the path, struck the rock, and forfeited his entrance into the Promised Land. David left the path, committed adultery, and that led to murder, the death of his son, and much, much

heartache. Solomon left the path, married a zillion wives, and the monarchy was destroyed. But think about this. Every one of these thought that they were bettering themselves by doing what they did. They thought that going their way instead of God's would make them happy. But the end was pain, heartache and sorrow.

And beloved, you can be sure that what the Devil designed for all of these old patriarchs he has certainly designed for you and me! He throws something in our faces that looks so wonderful, and we grab it, just like Eve, and we suffer the awful, hurtful consequences. Much too often we read or hear of a prominent Christian who has left God's path and brought a torrent of trouble upon themselves. And how many times can we look back at our own lives and see times of heartache and sorrow because we fell away from the will of God? But God has promised us that when we begin to go astray from following Him He will throw up a huge red flag to warn us. He will remove His peace from our hearts, and when He does that is the Holy Spirit speaking to us, saying to us "Stop, turn around and get back on the path of righteousness before you destroy your life".

Now, beloved, letting the peace of God rule in your heart is not just for keeping you from the sins that will land you in jail or cause you to get a divorce. It is also for the mundane things that you deal with day by day. When someone asks for your help, either physically or financially, you need to let the peace of God rule. When you are choosing a movie to go to or purchase, you need to let the peace of God rule. When you fill out your check for your offering on Sunday, you need to let the peace of God rule. When a conflict arises with a commitment you've already made to help someone, you need to let the peace of God rule. Friends, if God is interested in the number of hairs on your head then you can be sure that morally speaking He is also interested in every detail of your

life. And that's a good thing! Because God doesn't want you to be deprived of the least of His blessings because you've missed walking in His perfect will.

Now, beloved, I cannot think of anything in this world that is more of a no-brainer than letting the peace of God rule in your heart. Who in this world does not want peace in the depths of his heart? Isaiah 26:3 says, "You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because He trusts in You". So trust the Holy Spirit when He speaks to you. Obey His voice when He takes His peace away. He is trying to protect you! And let me tell you something. When you let the peace of God rule in your life, then you can be sure that God is glorified in your life! For when you have God's peace you have God's joy. Is. 55:12 says, "For you shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace..." And people will see your peace and joy and say what a great and mighty God you serve.

There is third way that we glorify God that we see in our text. And that is, we **abide in God's Word** (verse 16).