

NOVEMBER 2, 2020

A Life Transformed

Colossians 3:5-17

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In this part of Colossians 3, Paul is reminding the church that Jesus has delivered them from the powers of this age. As a result, they have already put on the “new man” and they are dead to things that hold them back. What he wants these believers to understand is that as they know Jesus better and grow in their understanding of the cross, they will continue to grow and display the sort of behaviors that God desires – they will become more Christ-like.

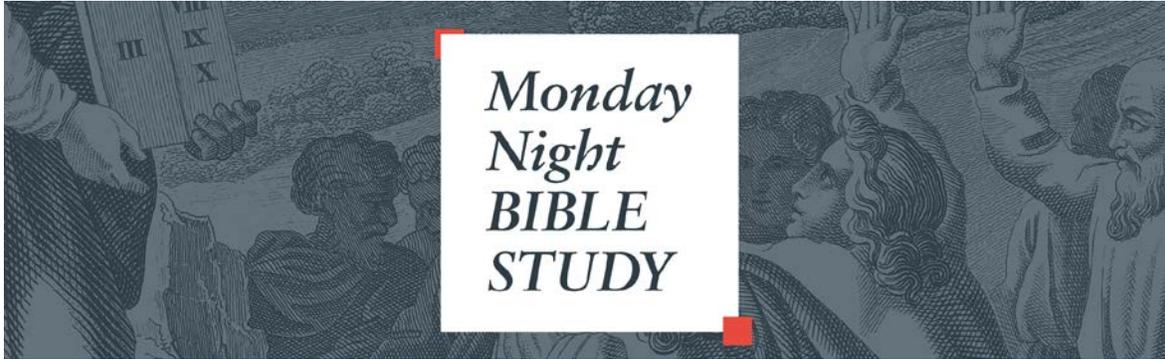
God is not problem focused, He’s solution focused. He doesn’t beat us up when we make a mistake, He goes to work to reveal more of who Jesus is. The Bible tells us that as we grow in our understanding of Jesus, our minds are renewed. We begin to think differently, see things differently. Those two things – our speech and our behavior - is exactly what this section of scripture is about.

Verse 5 - God has already caused you to die (separated you) from sin. That means the moment you first believed in Him, the second you got saved, God delivered you from the powers of sin – you died to it. You’re no longer in the place where sin has a hold on you. You belong underneath a new power, a new domain. (I Corinthians 1:13)

Verse 7 - You used to be enslaved to the power of sin and were a victim to it. Now, God made you free. The trick is to see it, consider it, meditate on how God has freed you through the cross. You’ve been moved from death to life, from one power to another. God freed you from your past, cleaned you up, and gave you a new set of clothes.

Verse 9 - Notice this is in the past tense - you have already taken off the old self. God has given you a fresh set of clothes. Your new clothes become more apparent over time as you grow in your understanding of Jesus and the cross. You model the behaviors that are in line with God as you “consider” in your mind that the cross has freed you.

Verse 10 - As we grow in our understanding of what has already happened in the cross, that knowledge renews us to the image of Jesus. True knowledge is the ability to see what happened in the cross – how God defeated the corrupting power of sin and delivered you from it. Because of



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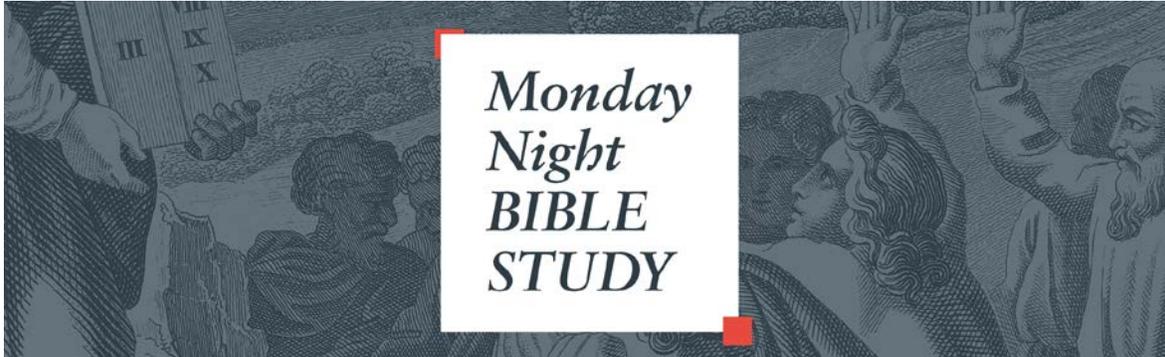
the cross, the power of sin has been broken. For those who believe in Jesus, they are being transformed in such a way where that victory is seen.

Paul, in this letter and other letters, is teaching believers to pray for a better understanding and a deeper knowledge of Jesus so that they can grow up. This is the process of growth that causes us to be renewed in the image of Christ so that we turn away from things that hold us back, and walk in love, humility, compassion, and kindness. It's a gradual process of renewal as we know Jesus and the cross better.

Much of Christian growth comes by what you see. Christian growth happens as you see things more clearly.

Verse 6 - The idea that earthly things (anger, slander, murder, lust) will all be removed (pass away) is why he tells us not to set our minds on earthly things. Anger, slander, greed, lust, evil desires will all pass away one day. That's what Paul means by "God's wrath is coming." God is coming to remove those things and flood the whole world with love, justice, mercy, and kindness. Paul's point here is to say you've already been set free from the powers of this age that cause sin. You've already put on the new man. If you've been given that in advance, before Jesus comes and removes it through the world, then we should model that future life in the present.

Paul taught that although the present evil age still exists, the resurrection of Jesus was the launching of the age to come. What will come in fullness later (perfection, peace, and justice) has already begun to invade the earth through Jesus's resurrection. Jesus's death was in fact the death blow, the beginning of the end, to the current age. In other words, in the darkness of the world we live in with all its evil, worldly wisdom and corruption, the dawn, the first rays of a new day have arrived. Through the cross, the lens by which we look at life and the world, we see what is coming to nothing and what is coming into being. The world's way of thinking (wisdom) and the world's way of power (ruling) is on its way out. But also, a new wisdom has come and with it, a new way of living. It's just the beginning of a new day, but soon the full day will come. But for those of us with wisdom, eyes to see, we perceive that the first rays of God's new world have already arrived.



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Verses 12-14 - In light of what the cross has done – defeated evil – we should live a life that reflects that victory and reflects the world that is yet to come. And what does that look like? Paul describes it here – compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. When we “clothe ourselves” with these, we are announcing to the world a new way of living, a way of living that will win out in the end. In these behaviors, we are announcing God’s victory in the cross and modeling the world to come.

Verse 16 - In the New Testament we see that much of our personal growth takes place within a community of believers. Paul is talking about when believer’s gather, they should talk about and think about what happened with Jesus and the cross. It should also infuse their worship. Their singing should be about Him and the cross. That’s why Paul says, “through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” we should sing to God with gratitude for what He has done through Jesus.

Verse 17 - Paul here is simply saying God is calling you to live in such a way that Jesus is reflected in every word you say and every action you take. Before you say anything and before you do anything, make sure it’s in line with who Jesus is. That way you can be sure you’re reflecting Him into the world.