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SPEAKER

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8

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The Power Behind Christian Maturity

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:15-17



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It's a joy to see you. If you're new with us, we're glad that you're here. I pray this time will be really encouraging to you. We're going to open up God's word this morning, but before we do, what I want to ask us to do is to pray. And I want to ask you, as I'm praying for you and for us, I want to ask you to pray, "God, would you open up my eyes and help me to receive one thing that would change the rest of my life?" I actually believe that's possible this morning. And so in faith, let's come to him and let's pray together. Okay?

Father, I ask that you would do great things in our life. Your word tells us that it's like a hammer that can break down our pride, it's like a lamp that provides light for our feet. Your word tells us that it's like honey to our lips, that when we find, within your word, instructions on how to come to you and to be with you, it is sweeter than anything else on the earth. And we're so thankful that we have a copy of the Bible in our language that we get to read it openly and freely this morning. I pray that you would give us eyes to see amazing things within the word.

I pray that you would give us hope to know that it's available for us even today, and that there really is peace that's available. I pray, Father, for those who may be far from you, who perhaps know it, or don't know it, maybe there's some in the room or online who are simply studying and looking into who you are and what your word says and what you accomplished. I pray that you would open up our eyes and help us to see remarkable things in the person of Christ. And I do pray, God, that you would speak truth into each of our lives in such a way that it would transform the rest of our days. And we pray this in Jesus's name, Amen. Amen.

In your Bible, if you would turn with me to the third chapter of the letter of Colossians. We're in a series, it's called Rooted, of, how do we grow mature, rooted in Christ that would transform the way that we live our life? It's a verse by verse study through the book. And so if you're in the room or at home, we're glad that you are here with us. If this is your first Sunday, we, just over the last two months, we've been through this. And so we're up to chapter three. And in a moment, we're going to read verses 15 through verse 17.

One of the things that he has in mind is a burden on my heart and it's on many of our hearts, and it's simply this, is that for many people in the world today, Jesus seems like this tiny star in the vast distant sky, rather irrelevant to life today, what's happening today, sort of a point in history. When in fact, we're told in the Bible, and it's true in reality, is that Jesus Christ carries the entire universe in his pocket like a pebble, including your life and mine. He's the authoritative ruler of heaven and earth. He's the creator of all things.

And so what we find though is this, is that when we want to see these stars that are so distant, we can't see them with our eyes in terms of all the glory that's bound up in them, and so we create a telescope, sometimes big, big telescopes in order to magnify those stars which appears so small in order that we might be able to see; such as this one, its glory, its color, its splendor, its power. But what's interesting is, we're told that then the Bible is that God has done the same thing with his son, and that is that he has created the church by the blood of his own son in order to help people who look at Christ and see that he feels to them irrelevant, distant, unneeded, unnecessary to everyday life, and he's seeking to show his relevance and his glory through

our lives.

If you think about that long and hard, it really is an amazing thing that God in his grace would actually crush his son in order to spill blood in order to create a people of faith that would display his wisdom to people who don't think that he matters, that he matters indeed. This is his plan. And ultimately, this is Paul's passion. This is why he's writing this letter to a church, a church like Providence. He starts his letter, and I just want to do a brief recap so that we're all up to speed, he starts his letter in chapter one and he gives what is one of the most complete, amazing descriptions of the majesty and the splendor and the power and compassion of Jesus Christ.

And then he unpacks what Jesus accomplished in order to meet our greatest need. He then goes on and he says, "And this Jesus Christ in all of his mercy, in all of his power, in all of his wisdom, it's not just that he's out there, he's in your heart. When you trust Christ, he actually comes and lives in you. Well, this is an amazing thing that Paul then says, "Well, what does that matter? How do we then live as though that matters?" And so this is where he begins in chapter two, verses six and seven. Paul writes these words. He says, "Therefore, as you receive Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith."

In other words, there, what God wants to do in our life now, his church, is to root us, built up and establish us, and how he's going to do that is that we're going to do things that were very similar to how we receive Christ Jesus. We're going to repent of self-reliance and we're going to look to him in faith, and we're going to trust him at his word. Well, something was happening in this town that's happening in our town, and that is that the church was looking and they said, "Look, we're a Jesus people, we believe in Jesus Christ. And yet, we look at other people in our city," that it'd become a pot of other people who had been moving in from other places who had different ideas, different philosophies, different faith, different theology, different belief system.

And they say, "You know what? We look at some of these people, and their life, it's not crumbling, not everything looks like this terrible disaster. And so what we want to do is create the super soil where we'll have our Jesus, and we'll add him to the soil, and then we're going to add the best elements that we can find from these other faith systems and create something so that we can really grow." And so what Paul says is, "This is not needed, and this is why." In chapter two, verses nine and 10, he said this, "For in him, that is Christ, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him."

Now, this word fullness and this word fill it's the same root, and this is what he's saying. He's saying that the fullness of God, the fullness of our creator and sustainer of all things lives in the person of Jesus Christ. And this Jesus, with all of his fullness, lives in us. In other words, Providence family and for those of you who are guests, we don't need more power, we don't need more, we need to appropriate more frequently what we have. And that's what chapter three is all about. How do you appropriate? How'd you take Christ who lives in us with all of the splendor, majesty and wisdom and love, and not only put that on display, but actually draw

from that so that we can live a new kind of life.

And so he starts in chapter three, verse one and two, and he says this. He goes, “Look, if then you’ve been raised with Christ,” now, in chapter two, this was a metaphor of someone who has believed in Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection. So he’s saying, “For those of you who are Christians, seek the things that are above.” The word seek is the Bible’s equivalent to prioritize. It’s a word that addresses the heart, what do you want first in life? What’s the most important thing to you this week? What’s the thing that dominates your heart?

And then he says, not only your heart, but he says this, “Set your minds on things that are above as well, because that’s where Christ is seated.” And so the way to appropriate what God has made available to us, it begins in our heart and in our mind. This is where it begins. We have to love Christ, we have to love being near him, we have to prioritize him in our life, and then we have to think about him. We need to think about his words. We need to think about who he is, what he’s accomplished.

And what happens when we think about him is it begins this process that he lays out for us, starting in verse five all the way to verse 14 where we’ve been looking the last two weeks. It’s summarized in these verses, verses nine and 10. He says, “You have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge after the image of its creator. This is what he means. He means for those of us who have Christ, every once in a while, we look down at our life and we find all those old behaviors and patterns and habits and motives that used to be our life before we knew Christ.

And he says that when you see those things, because your heart and your mind are on Christ in heaven, what’s going to happen is, that’s going to serve like a mirror, and you’re going to see yourself in that mirror and you’re going to go, “Uh-oh, I don’t look like that.” And so, what he’s saying here is, “What we’re going to do is we’re going to repent.” When we see things that don’t look like Christ, he says, “In the power of the Holy spirit, we’re going to make a turn and say, ‘You know what? I don’t need to behave that way. I don’t need to think that way. I don’t need to respond that way today.’”

And not only that though, he says, “But we have something to put on, and what we’re putting on... “ Paul uses a lot of words to say, “Well, I’m going to say this way.” We’re going to put on the characteristics of Christ. We’re going to behave like Christ. And we looked at last week in verse 12 when he says, “So look, put on compassionate hearts, kindness, patience, and meekness, and humility, and forbearance, and forgiveness.” Now, Paul knows something really important. We’re up to our texts today.

Paul knows something really important, and it’s this, that our ability to magnify Christ in the world will be proportionate to our maturity in Christ. In other words, if we’re doing this putting off and we’re doing this putting on one time a year, we’re not going to be mature in Christ, and therefore, a lot of our life will be characterized by the old self with its practices, and therefore, Christ is not going to be magnified in our life. But if

this is the rhythm of our day, if this is the rhythm of our week, if this is the rhythm of our relationships with people and our life, then what's going to happen is we're going to grow mature in Christ and he will grow magnified in the world.

And what we're going to look at next week, the next three weeks, we're going to take these principles that I just mapped out and say, "Now, how does this apply itself; next week in marriage? The week after that in parenting and family? And then the week after that in your workplace? he's going to make it really practical for us. But before we get there, he says, "Now, these are some principles that are going to really help you become mature in this pattern of repenting and obeying, putting off and putting on."

So let's read it together, and starting at verse 15. He says, "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you recalled in one body. And be thankful. And let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs with thanksgiving in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, The Father through him." The first thing we see here is that God calls us to be ruled by the peace of Christ.

You see this in verse 15, to be ruled by the peace of Christ. Now, when you and I, we hear the word peace, most of us, we don't even know how to define it. If I had to say, "What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of peace? You might say something like cease fire, or the absence of strife, or you might come up with serenity or something like that. But really, if we had to actually see peace, what does peace look like? What causes peace. Sometimes we have a hard time. We just use the term, and we're like, "Yeah, it's something like this. It makes us feel good."

But the Bible, when it talks about peace, it goes deeper and wider than anything that we're really taught growing up. I'm going to give you, it's not going to be on the screen, I'm sorry about that. I've learned this all morning long, this should have been on the screen, and it's not okay. I'm going to give you what the Bible says about peace. And because it's something that probably is a sentence you've never put together before, you've never heard before, you're probably going to go, "That doesn't sound like peace." But then as we work through it, you'll be like, "Okay, maybe that's what peace actually is."

Peace is the result, is the result of our parts being interwoven as one. It's the result of our parts being interwoven as one. Now, if you go out today to lunch and say, "It was a sermon about peace." "Oh, what's peace?" "Oh, well, it's when our parts are interwoven as one." You're probably going to get a look like, "I don't think you're at the right church." So let me help you see it with your eyes and let's see it in our experience.

If I were to take 1,000 threads and throw them on a table, they wouldn't become a fabric, would they? They would just be threads. What makes it a fabric is when these threads are woven together as one. And what you need to know from scripture is that God created the world to be as a fabric, where all the threads were woven

together, each thread woven together as one. And not only that, but God created you and me. He created you to feel peace. That's why I say it's the result of this happening to feel peace when the threads remain woven together as one. And when they aren't, we don't feel peace.

Let me give you some life, just like, "Okay, I get it now, physically." Physically, you're made with parts, aren't you? Your body has parts, it has skin, bone, ligament, muscle, internal organs, you have lots of parts, and they're woven together. And when you're young and if you're healthy and young, you can run a long time and not get too sore. And you're not experiencing any physical frays, if I can say it that way. And as a result of that, you feel peace. But what happens when you age or when you've experienced injury, or when you experience a disease? Well, what happens is it leads our body to fray.

All those threads were woven together. Now, all of a sudden, there's threads that are fraying from the others. And as a result of that, peace goes bye-bye. You can have a really healthy body and you get a diagnosis of cancer. Your ankle may be really healthy, and yet you don't feel peace. It's because all the parts are not now woven as one. Psychologically, God created us with parts. We have a reason, we have conscience, we have emotion and feeling, they're supposed to work together. But what happens when our feelings crave something that troubles our conscience, when we want something that causes us to feel guilt when we do it? What happens is the fabric of our psyche, it frays our mind, that frays and peace goes missing.

Socially, our culture is made up of people of different ages, genders, races, and ethnicities, and backgrounds and levels of education and finance, there's all kinds of differences. And when they're woven together as one, there's peace. But what happens if any one of those people groups is mistreated, maligned, insulted, marginalized, or what happens to culture is the threads fray and peace goes missing. Your family, you have mom, dad, kids. Maybe you go further, you got parents and uncles and aunts, you got a family together. Lots of different parts coming together.

But then what happens if any one of those people on Thanksgiving day is mistreated? Suddenly, the fabric of family, it frays and peace goes missing. We're a church, look at all these people all from different places. We look differently, we think differently. We all come together, all those races, ethnicities, genders, ages. Well, if any people group within the church, just like outside of the church, even though we're marked by Jesus Christ, what happens? Well, when people are marginalized, the fabric frays and peace goes missing.

This is why heaven is going to be so full of peace, is because in having the fabric never frays, the body will never break down. Our motives, our heart, our conscience or our emotions will never want, for eternity, something that's going to grieve and because guilt to flow over our conscience. Culture, we will always care about every different people group in heaven, every single language, and tribe, and race, and people. Nobody will be mistreated, nobody will be marginalized. You go, "That'd be great when we get there."

Well, Paul wants the church to display a slice of this peace on the earth, because if the people within the world who think that Jesus is inconsequential and irrelevant, if they could see people within the world, some people group on the earth where the fabric is not frayed and where people are actually coming together and when there's tremendous felt peace in their lives, then what happens? Then they ask, "How did that happen?" And Jesus Christ is magnified. This is the desire of his life when he writes this, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." It's all about the peace of Christ.

And so let's think about this peace for a second. First thing we know about it is, it's Christ's peace. He says it's the peace of Christ. It's possessed by Christ. Peace has an owner, and therefore, peace can only be enjoyed in a relationship with him. Spiritually, God made us with parts. We have a heart and soul that are woven together, intertwined with God himself. And when we sin against God, we break fellowship with God, we separate from God. And therefore, our heart and soul, that fabric of that relationship is frayed. And therefore, peace, it goes missing.

But in love, Jesus came. Jesus, the son of God, he took on flesh and he came to this earth. And you know what he did? He identified so intimately with the fabric that is frayed in our life, that the Prince of Peace, which is one of his titles, actually at moments during his time on the earth, tells us within his word, that he experienced a lack of peace. There's a day that he went to Jerusalem and he looked from a mountain and he saw the whole city. And he looks out and he sees all the people scurrying about being religious, and yet ignoring him. People who were utterly lost and mistreating one another.

And it says that he was troubled in his soul. Not long after that, he had a friend named Lazarus who's died. Lazarus had two sisters, Mary and Martha, and he went to visit them. And it says that when they went to the tomb, it says that Jesus, looking at grief and bereavement and pain and the reality of death, the Bible says that he wept. The night before his cross, do you remember what he did? He went to a garden and there, he was praying. And there in the garden, he became so anxious and so troubled that he began sweating as he prayed for us.

And there was such strain that was placed upon the Prince of Peace that we believe that his capillaries must've busted because the Bible says that he began to sweat drops of blood. That's not peace, that's fabric fraying. A day later, he's hanging on a cross where he's paying for our sin. The Bible says that he's never been separated in relationship with God. And yet, in that moment, he was carrying all of our sin and therefore all of our shame and guilt. And he cries out to the Father, "Why have you forsaken me?" He's so identified with our frayed fabric that he experienced a lack of peace in order to bring us peace. He died on that cross in order to pay for our sin.

And then he was buried in a grave, and then he rose from the dead. His resurrection was a declaration from God, the Father, that says that, "His blood, my son's blood is sufficient to pay for your sin." And once Jesus was resurrected, he went and he saw people. And Luke tells us, in that moment, that when people saw the

resurrected Christ, it actually says that Jesus Christ declared terms of peace. You see, the Bible says in Romans, it says that we apart from Christ are at enmity with God, we are at odds with God. He looks at us...

And if you don't remember a fight with God, he does. He looks at us and he says, "That person is at odds with me." And yet Jesus, when he rose from the dead, he says, "These are the terms of peace. The first thing you must do in order to experience my peace is you must admit that you are a sinner and that you need a savior. Second, you must believe. You must believe in who I am, you must believe in what I have accomplished. You must believe that my death was sufficient to pay for your sins. You must believe in me."

And because you have an enemy, you have a fear in front of you, and that is, that one day you're going to die and people are going to put your body in a fire or a casket. Nobody wants to think about that. That faces all of us, we have a common enemy, a common fear. And he says this. He goes, "The third thing for a term of peace is this, you need to recognize that when somebody rises from the dead and power and conquers your greatest fear, you know what you call that person? You call him Lord." So he says, "You must confess me with your mouth as Lord."

When we admit our need, believe in Christ and confess him as Lord, Jesus gives us peace. The same author, the Apostle Paul, this is how he said it in Romans chapter five. He says, "Since we have been justified by faith," what does that mean? Faith is what we put in him, justification's what he puts in us. Faith is what we put in him, we trust in Christ. To be justified, it means that he takes our sin and he gives us his righteousness. So the person who places their faith in Christ and then Christ gives us his righteousness so much so that he justifies us by saying, that's an innocent person, this is the result, we have peace with God.

Now, my question is this, do you have peace with God? Do you know that peace that surpasses all understanding? The peace that lets you go to sleep at night, the night before the election, does it make you freak out for 10 months before the election? Do you have a peace with God? It is needed, it is necessary. But not only that, once we have a relationship with Christ, I want you to notice, what's also true about this peace, is it's a ruling kind of peace. The word ruling there, when he says, "Rule in your heart," the rule is actually an athletic term, it means the referee or umpire.

In other words, peace is supposed to decide every debate. Most of us have seen a football game and you go to see the football game, and so if something happens and there's a call on the field, and sometimes we've gotten to the place where we love football so much that we want those calls to be right. And so we've set up a system where a referee can actually stop the games, "Hold on one second. Someone bring me a little TV." And so they bring a little TV, they get to watch the play again, and then everybody waits to see what the referee is going to call.

Now, here's the deal, they come out of there and they go, "Okay, this is the deal." Whatever he says at that moment, it stands. One team is going to be really happy, one team's going to be really mad, but here's the deal, they got 30 seconds to get things right in their own heart, because once he winds his hand, the play clock starts and they have to get people on the field in order to do something together. In other words, it's time to move on. You can whine about it for 30 seconds, but that's it, now it's time to move. And what he's saying is this is that the peace of Christ is supposed to be that arbitrary in our relationships and within our heart that when we say, "I don't like that."

He goes, "But this is the call." Does the peace of Christ rule in your heart? I want to encourage you that stand guard, and this is why. Sometimes our sin nature wants something so badly that it initially feels like peace to comply to its desire. And when our desires are given the referee's whistle, we sin a whole lot and then we spent a lot of time trying to convince ourselves that we're at peace. One of the things you can know absolutely for certain is this, is the peace of Christ never contradicts the word of Christ.

Another thing you can know for sure is this, is that when you experience the peace of God in your life, you do not need another person to authorize you feeling at peace. Several years ago, it was several years ago, two people came to my office and they said, "Look, this is what we want to do. This is the behavior, but we want to come and at least ask your opinion." I said, "Well, my opinion doesn't matter, let's just read the Bible." And so I read several passages from the Bible and I said, "So what would you call what you're about to do?"

And they said, "Well, the Bible says that's sin, but we're at peace." I said, "Well, that's typically how everybody sins. We're at peace for like a nanosecond before we do it and then we don't feel any peace." I said, "Well, let me ask you something." I said, "Did you know this was already there?" "Well, yeah." I said, "Well, let me ask you, why did you come? I didn't call this meeting, you asked to meet with me. So why do you want to meet?" "Well, we were hoping that you were going to tell us that what we're about to do is okay."

I want to tell you something, when you know the peace of Christ in your heart, you do not need another human being to authorize your behavior. You know, you know because you know because God in you is saying, "This is true, now, walk in it." It's a ruling peace. But not only that, it's a unifying peace. Notice this, it says, "This peace that rules to which indeed you were called into one body." It unifies the body. You see, the peace with God enables peace with one another. In other words, all these characteristics are things that restore peace, that take the frayed edges and sew them back together.

The compassion, the humility and the meekness and forgiveness and forbearance, that's taking all these frayed edges and saying, "Let's bring those back together." And as a result, this kind of peace produces thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, we've talked about Thanksgiving times here, gratitude in our hearts. Let me tell you something, this is why it's so important. I know I've used the same illustration like a billion times here, you're like, "I know you're going to talk about the car with his little thing." But you got a car, you got an engine and there's problems with that engine. You don't know because you don't know what's in that engine, you can't see it.

So the manufacturer, they put these little gauges so that you can look at things that tell you something that's true about what's happening in the engine. You need to pay attention to those gauges. And when it comes to your soul and your heart, your relationship with Christ, thanksgiving coming out of your mouth is one of those gauges. Just talk to the people who are near you, your family, don't ask if you don't want to know, but if you want to know, just say, "Hey, am I a thankful person?" You see, when you're at peace, what happens is you say to the Lord, "Thank you a bunch." And you say to people, "Thank you." Because you recognize what has been given to you.

Let me encourage you to trust in Christ and then go on trust in Christ. For those of you who have never trusted Jesus Christ, right now is an opportunity for you to do so. And I want you to know that it's not the strength of your faith that saves you, it's the object of your faith. You may say, "You know what? I just have this much faith though. I know Jesus is probably really strong, but my faith right now, it just feels so weak, it's so thin and so frail." Listen, this is how Dwight Moody said it, "A little faith will bring your soul to heaven."

It's a faith a little because you're talking about a big savior, a strong savior, a little faith will save your soul. But then most of us, once we have trusted Jesus Christ by admitting our sin, believing in him and confessing him as Lord, we want to experience more peace. And so what's the path? Well, this is how Moody said it. He says, "A little faith will bring your soul to heaven, but growing faith will bring heaven to your soul." You got to keep trusting him. You have to keep looking to him. And as you keep looking to him, what's going to happen is you're going to feel more and more and more peace within your heart. So trust him.

The second thing God calls us to do is to be filled with the word of Christ, to be filled with the word of Christ. There is no road given to the Christian that you can take to magnify Christ that detours the daily intake of his word. Let me say that again because that was really important and most of you, you thought, "Ah, that it's probably not that important." It's this important, there is not a single pathway given by God to a Christian to magnify the worth of Jesus Christ that detours your need to read the Bible every day. That's what he says. Look what he says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

Now, this word, dwell, we should work on this word dwell just for a little bit. Dwell means to be at home somewhere, to live there. So when we get invited over to a friend's house, when we get there because it's not our house, one of the first things we do is knock. You don't knock on your door unless you're locked out of your house. But if it's your house, you just walk in, but when you're going over to someone else's house, we knock. And then when we go in, we don't start opening up doors and drawers and closets uninvited because it's not our house.

Now, in the South, you bring somebody over to your house and you say, "Make yourself at home, make yourself at home." Isn't that a beautiful saying that we don't mean? We don't mean it exactly. What we mean is this, in this space that I have cleaned before you have come, in the doors that are open, where I've invited you, I want you to be absolutely at peace in this place, make yourself at home. But God's word he says is this,

God's word is not supposed to be a house guest. He comes in and he says, "Is it okay if I inform that room in your life or that closet or that drawer or that relationship?"

Now, we say to the word of God, "Come and live here, be anywhere, fix anything, inform everything." And what we find next is that this ruling of the word of God in our hearts, it's not just an individual thing that we are reading the Bible on our own, it's also a community project. And so he tells us to teach and admonish one another in all wisdom and by singing. So let's look at that. Teaching is instruction, admonishment is correction, and we're supposed to do this to one another. What do we do it with? With all wisdom. Wisdom is words, but not only words spoken, also words that are sung.

Now, this is so important. God is so good to us. You see, God gave us theology and words, and the reason is because he made us to be rational people. But God also gave us music because he made us to be emotional people. And sometimes those words in theology, when they're properly understood, they create such a sense of wonder and such a sense of enthusiasm and such thanksgiving in our heart that you just can't say them, you have to sing them. You have to ask somebody to play some music so that you can sing them because we need an emotional response and not just a heady response.

And so he says, you need to sing. In Ephesians, you notice he says the same thing almost. He says, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit, addressing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in your heart." Now, you notice that in Ephesians, it's be filled with the Holy Spirit, and then we're going to address one another with singing. In Colossians is, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as we admonish and teach. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly and be filled with the Holy Spirit," are two sides of the same coin. You can't have one without the other.

What he's saying is this is, when our mind is moved by the word of God and our heart is moved by the spirit of God, thanksgiving comes out of our mouth. He goes back to being thankful, again. In other words, when we come, you say, "Well, how come we sing? We just sang three songs, we're about to sing another song. We're about to sing another song. What should we do with that?" Well, this is what we should be thinking and this is how we should behave when we come and we sing together, are you ready?

We come and we say, "God, I want you to know something first and foremost, and it's this, I'm going to sing and I'm going to sing to you." It's to God, it's to God." But there's other people in the room and we're a community of faith, we're supposed to be helping one another. Therefore, what we're also saying when we're singing is we're speaking to the church and we're saying, "Church, I want you to know something. You're about to see somebody who loves God and who sings. And if you came in and you don't believe what we're about to sing, you can watch me and you can see somebody who believes. And you'll see somebody who believes enough to sing about it."

And if you come in and you know Christ, but you're beat down, you're discouraged, sometimes that happens. You come in, you just have nothing in the tank, and this is another reason. And sometimes it's not always you, sometimes it's somebody else. Sometimes you're high, sometimes you're low. You come in here, and so when we're singing, what we're doing is this, if you happen to be discouraged and for whatever reason you just don't have the emotional fortitude to sing today, then just let my singing wash over you. That my expression of hope, just help you to feel hope today.

And so let me encourage us church to prioritize time and God's word for ourselves and for one another. I urge you, if you need help to know how to read your Bible or where to start, I want to talk to you. I want to help you to be able to begin to enjoy that regular intake of God's word in your life. The last thing that he tells us to do is God calls us to magnify the name of Christ. There is no greater honor in all the world of being associated with Jesus, and in particular, with the name of Jesus. I know that sometimes it doesn't feel that way. In America, probably the same thing as this church in Colossae, maybe where Jesus is belittled, where he's misunderstood, where he's seen as irrelevant.

Maybe in the earth sometimes, in the weakness of our flesh, we don't look at being associated with the name of Jesus as being ultimately what it is. But I want you to know, there's no greater honor than being associated with the name of Jesus Christ. And one day when the world lays their eyes on Christ, we, on that day, will feel the honor that we have carried all these days. And not only that, but we will consider very light every sacrifice we made in order to esteem and magnify the name that is above every name.

We teach our kids to honor the family name because a family name can be a dignified name that can be soiled in about five minutes. You remember in the Old Testament, there's a name, a Hebrew name as Judah. It means praise. It was a name of strength. If you read the Old Testament, if all you had, you would conclude that Judah is like an honorable name. In the Hebrew language Judah, when it transferred over to Greek in the New Testament, well, the name is transferred also, but the name change just a little bit. The Greek equivalent to Judah is Judas, and a ton of people were named Judas because of Judah.

And it only took one of them, about a day to take what is so noble to cause literally centuries of people to say, "Maybe we shouldn't call our kid Judas." Christian, we bear the name of Christ everywhere we go, what we do. And so Paul says, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. His name is the authority by which we pray and live and share and love, and therefore, our words and deeds are to be adjusted in order to magnify that name."

So, let me encourage you finally to savor and show Christ to the world. There's two verbs there, savor and show and they're both needed, and this is why; if you try to show Jesus without savoring Jesus, meaning enjoying him, it'll feel hollow to you and it will be hypocritical to them. But if we try to savor Jesus without showing Jesus, our joy will be stymied for joy and anything is maximized when we share it with others. So if you want to savor Jesus the most, you have to share him. And if you want to share him the most, you have

to savor him.

And one of the ways that he tells us to do it, he says that once again, it's verse 17 and he says this, "We're going to be giving thanks to God, the Father through him." So let me encourage you as an expression of our desire to magnify Christ, let me encourage you to give thanks, to pray, thanks, to sing, thanks. And maybe in a world today that is so populated with social messaging, that's full of angst and anger and fear, maybe we this week could all post one thing and just say, "You know what? I am thankful for this." As a testimony of our desire to magnify Christ.

Let me pray for us and then we'll sing. Father, we love you, and we long to see your son and his name hallowed to the ends of the earth. And so would you address our hearts, would you rule over us with your peace, would you dwell in every part of our life. We give you total access to our life, every relationship, every thought, everything, inform it all. We want your name, Christ, to be magnified above all. And so I pray that you would move in our hearts.

For those that are still considering Christ, I pray right now, that you would open up their eyes and help them to see Christ and trust him by admitting and believing and confessing. So help us to sing to you now with a full heart. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.



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