

## Colossian 3 Series #11

### *“The Indwelling Word”*

The Bible can be boiled down to four basic purposes for living. We have adopted these for purposes for the church. We try to make everything we do somehow connect to one or more of these purposes. Chico exists to encourage and inspire one another to...

**Continually cultivate deeper relationship with God.**

**Passionately pursue meaningful connection with people.**

**Resolutely resist evil and restore right living.**

**Reach and teach people for Christ.**

In chapter three and four of Colossians we find 10 instructions for how we should live as those who have been transformed at the core of our being through the sufficiency of Christ.

Each of these instructions could fit into these purposes.

#### **Pursue (seek) and Ponder (Set your mind) things above i.e. things of eternal nature.**

*Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. Col 3:1-2*

He emphasized past, present and future reasons why those raised with Christ Jesus should continually pursue and ponder things above.

*For you have died (past) and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Present). When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory (future). Colossians 3:3-4*

#### **Purge (Put off) the behaviors of the old self 3:5-11**

#### **Put on (adopt) the new behavior of the new self 3:12-14**

#### **Permit the peace of Christ to rule your heart with gratitude. Col 3:15**

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful.*

The Bible thoroughly addresses two of humanity's greatest needs. Paul continued to pray for these two things to be showered on his readers.

*To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 1:7*

Everyone longs for grace, favor, blessing on related to merit.

Everyone longs for peace, tranquility, a sense of well-being, internal and external calmness.

God promises such calmness in spite of living in a world of chaos and conflict.

He promises peace between him and us through the sacrifice of his son Jesus.

He promises peace within our own selves through trusting him.

He promises peace with each other through the power the Holy Spirit and a transformed core.

He promises peace in the midst of circumstantial chaos through a focus on him.

Last week, we concluded that peace, contentment, calmness or a sense of well-being ultimately depends on a genuine trust in a sovereign God.

#### **Definition of Peace**

Peace is the calm inner confidence resulting from a resounding realization that God is powerfully at work in me and through me and promises to work EVERYTHING together for His glory and my good.

Jesus left us an example of how to respond to suffering and conflict.

*Jesus committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:22-24*

The key here, is to continually entrust yourselves to God no matter what. Whatever happens in our life has a divine purpose. Jesus was able to face these things because he entrusted himself to his loving father. If we truly believe that God actually does work all things (good or bad) together for his glory and our good, then we need to view every aspect of life as an opportunity to grow and glorify God. We need to entrust ourselves to a faithful Creator and respond accordingly.

*Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. 1 Peter 4:19*

The unbearable loss or illness of a child

The elongated illness

The unexpected loss of job or a prized possession

The disappointing unanswered prayer

The unthinkable violence in our world

Only a sovereign all-powerful God can weave these devastating dark threads of life into a glorious masterpiece. Our trust in him enables us to discover the calm in the face of chaos and conflict. Trust in him overshadows any trust in ourselves or other people to make life work. The self-centered desire is embedded in our members that expects other people to make life work for us fosters conflict. Such unrealistic expectations extinguish peace. People cannot produce what only God can provide. When they realize our sense of well-being will never come from people, we turn to ourselves. It is not long until we realize that we can't fulfill those unrealistic expectations either. At that point, we lose the peace within ourselves. The only hope of lasting peace is genuine trust in God. It is the calm inner confidence resulting from a resounding realization that God is powerfully at work in me and through me and promises to work EVERYTHING together for His glory and my good. Such a realization acts as an arbitrator between the self focused passions embedded in our members by the old self and the Christ focused passions flowing out of our Holy Spirit regenerated core.

So Paul commands us to allow the peace of Christ to umpire the chaos in our heart. How we do that, is to get our heads straight. We continually renew our thinking. We embrace the truth of God.

*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock. Isaiah 26:3-4*

Peter is a perfect example of what happens when our mind strays from its focus on Christ.

*But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." Matthew 14:27-33*

As long as our mind stays on Christ we have peace. When our mind strays from Christ we have fear, conflict and chaos. Each of the lifetime practices that Paul prescribes plays a significant role in our growth. If we don't know what God is promised we have nothing to trust and everything to fear.

*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. Romans 10:17*

We will never experience the peace that comes from genuine trust without the hearing of the word of Christ. So, Paul prescribes the next continuous practice.

### **Permit the word of Christ richly dwell within you. Col 3:16**

*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16*

#### **Observation one**

Just as we were told to allow the peace of Christ to rule our hearts, we are also to permit the word of Christ to inhabit our hearts. There are two ways to interpret "word of Christ". It either refers to the word that Christ proclaimed or it refers to the word concerning Christ. Given the context, I think Paul meant the word declared by Christ. He instructs every follower of Jesus to permit what Christ taught to permeate our soul.

Allow the word of Christ to completely saturate and flood our souls. Water is a great purifier. Paul shared one aspect of Jesus' ministry to the church His bride.

*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Ephesians 5:25-27*

This cleansing by the word can only take place if we allow it. Paul instructs us here to allow the word of Christ to saturate our soul to completely cleanse it of all the old leftover self-centered programming. Paul earlier prayed that the Colossians would be filled (saturated) with the knowledge of God's will (revealed in the Word of Christ).

We not only need an umpire in our troubled hearts but we need an instructor. Most trouble in life comes when we fail to think correctly. Faulty thinking leads to flawed living. And we can't think correctly when we are not continually exposed to the truth.

*"Be TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your minds." Rom 12:1-2*

We are easily driven by the old passions and longings embedded in the members of our body. Patterns of thought and feelings were ingrained in our brains and emotions from the time we were born. We often let those passions imbedded in our members dictate our actions rather than the godly desires out of our newly established core.

*Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." John 8:31-32*

*Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. Psalm 51:6*

Our only sure source of the truth is the word of Christ embedded by the spirit of Christ.

*Putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save (transform) your souls. James 1:21*

The only way to rise above the passions and lies embedded in our members is to reprogram them with CONTINUAL exposure to the truth of God. Permit; allow the word of Christ to indwell your heart.

### **Observation Two**

Paul instructs us to allow the word of Christ to dwell in us. “dwell” means to inhabit, live in, be at home, take up residence. He uses the plural “you” or “ya all”. Two ways to look at this. The church much allow the word of Christ to be at home in your fellowship. Or, Ya all individually must all the word of Christ to richly dwell. The result is the same. If each individual opens their heart to the truth it will powerfully affect the body as a whole. Perhaps this is in contrast to resisting the word by not allowing it to come in at all. Some only allow the word for a brief visit rather than take up permanent residence. Allow the word of Christ to take up full and permanent residence.

### **Observation Three**

Not only are we to allow the word of God to continually dwell or live, but to **richly** live. The term “richly” means abundantly, copiously, plentifully. It’s one thing to confine a guest to a small room in the basement, and quite another to give them full access to and authority over the entire house. Paul instructs us to open our hearts and give full and continual access of the word of Christ to EVERY area of our life; not just on Sunday morning. He instructs us to allow the word of Christ to not just be a guest but to actually run the house. Only the heart that is open to such a takeover will enjoy the true transforming power of the word of God in their life.

The inclusion of the qualifier “richly” elevates the life transforming nature of this indwelling. It points to effectiveness. Allow the word of Christ to effectively take up residence. This indwelling goes beyond mere intake of truth by reading or memorizing. It indicates a life changing presence that includes both hearing and doing the word of Christ. Allow the word of Christ to effectively take up full residence the heart of each member.

### **Observation Four**

Since we are called to allow the word of Christ to dwell in us, it indicates the possibility that we could certain choose not to allow or to resist such a rich embedding of truth.

This could happen by neglecting regular interaction with the word.

This could happen by rejecting those truths that feel uncomfortable.

This could happen by choosing to believe our old programming over the word of God. God rebuked the Israelites...

*You hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you. Psalm 50:17*

*Their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 5:24*

*This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me... Matthew 15:8*

People in the last days will stop opening their heart to truth.

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. 2 Timothy 4:3-4*

Jesus rebuked the Laodicean church because they had closed their hearts to His truth.

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:20*

Jesus told the parable of the sower to illustrate why the word of God does not bear fruit in a life. The seed is the same in each scenario. The only difference between no fruit and abundant fruit is the heart in which it is sown. Here is the parable that Jesus told.

*"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Mark 4:3-9*

Here is the interpretation of the parable that Jesus gave.

*The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." Mark 4:13-20*

How serious are we about the rich indwelling of the word of Christ in our hearts? What tangible evidence can you point to that demonstrates your level of seriousness?

Do we long for fruit and meaningful life?

*Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4*

Your quality of life greatly depends on allowing the word of Christ to saturate your heart.

Evidence of the power of the word of Christ appears all through the Bible. The digging deeper guide will focus on a number of those benefits.

Yes there are personal benefits of this indwelling word, but Paul here focuses on the powerful benefits of permitting the word of Christ to permeate your soul for the entire body of Christ.

### **Observation five**

Such a saturating and vibrant indwelling of the word of Christ in the heart ministers to the body.

*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. Colossians 3:16*

Paul uses three participles (“ing” word) to elaborate how one saturated with the word of God ministers to the body.

### **Teaching one another with all wisdom**

This is the common word referring to the act of giving instruction. Actually it literally means “to cause to learn.” Neither the Hebrews nor the Greek really had separate terms for teaching and learning. Someone postulated that the teacher hasn’t taught until the student has learned. Simply disseminating information is not necessarily teaching. When the word of Christ saturates one’s life, it naturally follows that they would pass it on.

### **Admonishing one another with all wisdom**

Unfortunately this term has been limited and narrowed to a single concept. What usually comes to mind with this word is telling someone were they have messed up. It does include that aspect but actually encompasses much more. The original Greek concept came from the marriage to two terms. “Put” “mind” or “to put into the mind”. As the truth fills our heart and mind we have the responsibility to help get that truth embedded into the heart and mind of others.

Paul included three of these terms earlier.

*We proclaim Him, **admonishing** every man and **teaching** every man with all **wisdom**, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. Colossians 1:28*

### **Singing with thankfulness to God**

Paul references three types of music here. We really don’t know a great about the kind of music used in the early church. Many recognize the following distinctions.

**Psalms** = the singing of the Hebrew Psalms.

**Hymns** = the singing of songs of praise that focus on exalting the character and work of God.

The Song of Moses in Exodus 15 is a possible example.

Many of the Psalm could actually be categorized as a hymn.

Mary’s song in Luke is an example

Revelation 4 contains the words to a heavenly hymn

There are numerous phrases in the New Testament most likely take from hymns.

**Spiritual songs** = a song or testimony, experience or a particular spiritual truth.

Some of the Psalms could actually be included in this category. Many of the songs in our Hymnbook are technically spiritual songs.

I think the point here is that these powerful truths of Christ Paul tells us to invite and enthusiastically welcome in our heart should flow between all the followers of Jesus Christ through wise teaching, wise admonishing and melodious singing with gratitude to God.

The issue to address today is the prominence of the word of Christ in your life.

Are you neglecting it? Are you resisting it? Are you purposely ignoring it? OR, are you continually permitting or allowing it to richly and effectively transform your soul?

*Putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save (transform) your souls. James 1:21*

Man only truly lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God permitted to richly dwell in the heart.

*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. Colossians 3:16*