Renewed and Remade in Christ

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 November 2026

Preacher: David Court

[0:00] This is Colossians chapter 3 verses 1 to 11. This is Colossians chapter 3 verses 1 to 11.

Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, Biberian and Scythian, slave free, but Christ is all and in all.
Amen. This is God's holy word. We'll return to that passage in Colossians chapter 3, the first 11 verses that Chris read for us.
It's called kintsugi, and it's the Japanese art of repairing or mending broken pottery.
However, it's not just about sticking the pieces back together with glue. It's a kind of art form that involves both repairing and recreating.
[1:48] The broken pieces are reconnected by a special lacquer, dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum.

It's apparently a very slow and painstaking job. It can take over a year just to remake a piece of pottery. But the result is something that is more beautiful and more attractive than it was before.
And I want to remind you this evening that the gospel of Jesus Christ is about more than just putting things back together again, like Humpty Dumpty.
The gospel is more than a repair job. It is a work of restoration and renewal and recreation.
It is God remaking and reshaping His people in the image of Jesus Christ. If you're a Christian tonight, God is at work in your life to make you beautiful.
[2:59] He is dressing us in the beauty of Christ. And I think that is part of what Paul is speaking about here in this, our next section of Colossians.

He's talking about that work of new creation that is taking place in our lives. The broken pieces of our old Adamic nature are being remade and renewed by Jesus.
Because it's in Jesus alone that the divine image, shattered by sin, is being painstakingly and wonderfully restored in a glorious new way.
The backdrop to what Paul writes in these verses has, as we've seen, been the arrival of false teachers in Colossae, promoting something else, really, as a way of spiritual growth, maturity, and fullness.
Paul's sustained argument in this letter has been that the way of maturity and growth in the Christian life is by keeping Jesus at the center.
[4:15] So, what does that involve? As men and women in Christ, how are we to live out our lives with Jesus Christ at the very center?

And this section of the letter, really from chapter 3, verse 1 to 17, is all about how we are to live as those who have been united to Christ.
Next week, we'll look at the second part of these verses, verses 12 through 17. But this week, we're looking at these opening verses of Colossians 3.
Now, I want to summarize their teaching under four headings. So, a radical departure from norm.
Four things that we are called to if we are men and women united to Jesus Christ by faith. And the first of these, in the first four verses, we will call that we are called to focus on a new reality.
[5:21] In the previous chapter, Paul has already spoken of the powerful working of God who raised Jesus from the dead and how we were made alive together with Him, Colossians 2, 12 and 13.

And here he picks up and expands on that idea of a new resurrection reality that is ours in Christ. If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. The Christian life flows out of our union with Jesus Christ.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And it's interesting, I think important just to note that Paul is speaking here of something that has already happened. Yes, there are words of exhortation and application that come and that follow. But these initial words are not an exhortation for us to do something. They're a description of what has already taken place in us through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
[6:37] Our lives have been connected or fused to Jesus. And it is as we are united to Him that we come to enjoy all the benefits of His death and resurrection.

And Paul's point here is that if we have indeed been raised with Christ, then certain things will follow from that. Here are the consequences of being united to our risen Savior.
And the first thing that Paul highlights is that we are, you'll hear it there, we are to seek the things that are above. We are to set our minds on things that are above, not on earthly things.
Now, what is Paul driving at here? What are these earthly things that we are not to focus on? Does Paul mean that we are to be, I don't know, completely otherworldly?
Are we to ignore the material, physical world altogether? Are we to be so spiritually minded as to be of no earthly use? Well, no, I don't think that is what Paul is saying here at all.
[7:47] The things of earth that he speaks of relate, I think, specifically to this false teaching that was being imposed at Colossae. These earthly things included the right of circumcision, mystical visions, a never-ending list of rules and regulations.

And Paul is saying that these earthly things tied to this world are not to be sought after. Don't seek assurance and encouragement from such man-made religious ideas.
Indeed, instead, you are to seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Look to the living Savior in all His grace and glory and exultation.
Set your affections on the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is saying that is where our focus must lie, not below, but above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
For, of course, not only did Jesus rise from the dead, He ascended into heaven. He was exalted and raised up and enthroned.
[9:01] That reference here is to sometimes what is referred to as the heavenly session of Christ. When we recite the Apostles' Creed, we say of Jesus that He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

And this idea of being raised up, of course, implies that there has been a death. When we speak about death, we express the end of something.
We talk about, maybe we talk about our hopes have died or a friendship has died. And what we mean by that, those things have come to an end. They're finished. And when someone comes into a relationship with Jesus Christ, there is a sense in which they die.
That old relationship with sin and guilt and the condemnation that it brings is finished. That old way of life is no more.
Paul says here, For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. What does Paul mean in what sense can our lives be hidden with Christ in God?
[10:17] Well, something's hidden. It is out of our view. Maybe also out of our reach. Sometimes when people go on holiday, I know this is the case in our house, they hide their valuables.

Not that we have a lot of valuables, but anyway, they're hidden in case someone comes and finds them and they're stolen away. They're hidden so that they will be safe and secure.
And Paul tells us here that the essence of our lives is hidden away in the safest place of all, in the risen and ascended Christ, in the one who has defeated death and drawn its sting, in the one who is risen and alive forevermore, in the one who reigns over all things, seated at the right hand of the Father.
Our life is there with Him. In Christ, we are perfectly safe and secure, despite the many threats and problems of this life.
It's in Jesus Christ alone that we find ultimate safety, security, and shelter. You will look in vain in this world for a safe place to live and move and have your being.
[11:40] Paul says, amid our fragile, fractious, uncertain world, our lives have been hidden with Christ and God, safe and secure in Him.

It doesn't mean that we're immune from harsh and difficult experiences. It doesn't mean that we will never be ill or encounter tragedy in our lives. It doesn't mean that we won't endure suffering.
It doesn't mean that we won't have to face death. But it does mean that none of those things can cause us ultimate harm. It does mean that such things cannot prize us from His grip or snatch us

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

from His hand.
Our lives are hidden with Him in God. Our citizenship is now in heaven. And so, whatever happens in this world, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
And so, as Christians, we are indeed a people of hope. The Christian life has a future orientation. It's always looking forward to the glory that lies ahead.
[12:52] We live today in the light of that great tomorrow. And this hope, says Paul, you'll notice, is centered on Christ, who is your life.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you will also appear with Him in glory. What does it mean when Paul says that Christ is the life of His people?
Well, actually, we find that thought, I think, back in the Old Testament, where on a number of occasions, Yahweh has described as the life of His people, the source of strength and vitality.
And that is what Jesus Christ is to His own. He is our all in all. He is our very life. And one day, this glorious but now hidden reality will be revealed.
And Christ will appear. He will be made manifest. The word for appear refers to something that's put on display in a very open, a very public fashion.
[14:00] And when He does that, His people shall share in His glory and triumph. They will appear with Him. The second coming of Christ is not just about Jesus.

It's also about His people. Such is our union with Christ that nothing can dislodge us from His loving embrace. His people are always in Him and with Him.
And so, our union with Christ cannot be dissolved, so that when He returns in power and majesty and glory, He will bring us with Him. Friends, the focus of the Christian life is not within.
We are not to become naval gazers consumed by introspection. In my previous church, we had a lady who would often share some advice given by James Philip from the pulpit of Holyrood Abbey.
And the advice was this. Don't look in. Look up. Don't look in. Look up. It's good advice. Set your minds on the things that are above.
[15:17] Our focus is not to be on ourselves, to be on Christ and the new reality that He has wrought for us, His people. Focus on a new reality.

Secondly, engage in a new activity. Verses 5 through 9. Becoming a Christian involves us living this new life.
Because of the gospel, the basis on which we live our lives has been completely altered and changed. A radical transformation has taken place.
We have become men and women in Christ, and that new reality brings with it a new activity. And the activity to which Paul refers here is to do with what the Bible calls sin.
By nature, as human beings, we are sinners. In rebellion against our Creator, sin has corrupted us. Instead of looking to God by nature and worshiping Him, we have become turned in on ourselves.
[16:27] And elsewhere in his writings, Romans 6, Paul describes sin as a reign and a power, a dominion that rules over us. But when we become Christians, we are united to Christ, and we become part of a new humanity.

We are delivered from the dominion and power of sin. Now, it's not just, or it's not that, our sinful natures somehow magically disappear.
It is rather that we are no longer under sin's control as we once were. And that raises an important question for the Christian.
For if in Christ I'm delivered from the dominion or the power of sin, why then do I keep on sinning?
And the answer is this, because although you are delivered from the power of sin, you are not yet delivered from the presence of sin.
We experience, therefore, a conflict in our lives that, I suppose, that the non-Christian never knows. And it's about this conflict that Paul is writing here in these verses.
[17:45] The new activity of which he writes is sometimes described as mortification. It speaks of how we are to deal with sin and put it to death in our lives.

Because although we have this new identity and new life, it doesn't mean that sin is no longer present. The vestiges of our old Adamic nature remain. And this new life has to be lived out in the midst of this old world.
This heavenly life has to be lived out on an all-too-earthly environment. That's a really important issue. How do we deal with the brokenness of sin in our lives?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And Paul tells us here there's action we must take. And the foundation, the basis on which we deal with sin is, of course, our union with Christ, our relationship with Him.
This new relationship demands an all-out attack on the old life. Put to death, verse 5. Therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry.
[18:55] On account of these, the wrath of God is coming. In these, you too once walked when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth.

According to Paul, our new resurrection life in Christ demands we remove the grave clothes of the old life.
Now, if we're going to do this, it's important that we see sin for what it really is. We live in a world that often denies the reality of human sin.
Often we hear that, you know, people telling us that everyone is basically good. I wish I'd a pound for every time I've heard, you know, politicians or celebrities or others say that.
I believe that everyone is basically good, and that is utterly self-deceived. I think of C.S. Lewis's description of what he found in his own heart.
[19:59] A zoo of lusts, a bedlam of ambition, a nursery of fears, a harem of fondled hatreds. Their name is Legion. Martin Luther, during the heat of the Reformation, I'm more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his cardinals.

The godly Murray, Robert Murray McShane, wrote in his diary that he discovered the seed of every known sin dwelling in his heart. And friends, it's worrying that this kind of perspective is fast disappearing, even amongst those who profess to be evangelical Christians.
And notice how Paul describes sin in verse 5 as idolatry. Sin is putting other things in the place of God. Put to death what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, covetousness, which is idolatry.
And it's interesting here in these verses, Paul makes it clear that our idolatry, this idolatry is often revealed in two particular areas. First, in our sexuality.
Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, revealed in the abuse and distortion of God's gift of sex. Wrenched from its God-given context of marriage, sex becomes a commodity to be sold, a vehicle for self-fulfillment and gratification.
[21:30] And in the ancient Greco-Roman world, sexual immorality was the norm. Sexual appetite was given free reign. It was to be indulged and gratified, not restrained.

And so, as our own culture retreats from Judeo-Christian roots, we shouldn't be surprised to see a reemergence of this kind of attitude to sex.
One where there's no boundaries to be observed, anything goes. And what a powerful idol sex is within our own culture, in which we are bombarded by sexual imagery day in and day out.
Prevalence of pornography has now reached epidemic proportions. The advent of mobile technology means that today, pornographic imagery can not only be accessed in secret, but can be accessed anywhere, anytime, anyplace.
No longer does a man have to reach for the top-shelf magazine or enter some seedy shop. He can simply switch on his phone, and it's all there.
[22:44] How many bow down at the secret altar of pornography and sexual immorality? It's very important that we are honest with ourselves and with others and with our God.

Let's not pretend that these temptations are not real. Let's not sweep them conveniently under the carpet, but develop proper accountability and a brutal honesty about such matters.
Absolutely vital that we see sin for what it really is. It is completely inconsistent with our new life in Jesus Christ. And yet one of the interesting things in this list of sins that Paul mentions is not just about sexuality, but also speech.
In these, you too once walked when you were living in them. Now you must put them all away. Look what he says. Our words are often a window into our hearts and our souls, revealing the kind of people we really are.
Think of that old rhyme, Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me. What an absolute load of rubbish that is.
[24:09] I much prefer Steve Turner's poem called Sticks and Stones. Sticks and stones only break your bones, but words can tear your heart out.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Isn't that true? Bones can and do heal. Sometimes the wounds left by words don't. Sometimes they never heal.
Fall out from words spoken to us years ago, and I've discovered this as a pastor over many years. They can remain with people all their lives.
And perhaps some of you know that only too well. Words from your childhood burned into your self-consciousness. Destructive words that have made a deep impression on who you are as an individual.
You're no good. You'll amount to nothing. I hate you. Wish you'd never been born. Or words from a destructive relationship. You're ugly.
[25:17] You're stupid. You can do nothing right. You're useless. Friends, how profoundly words can affect a person's life. And Paul mentions in this list, you'll notice, slander.

It was Blaise Pascal who once said, If all men knew what others said of them behind their backs, there wouldn't be four friends in the whole world. And which one of us hasn't done it?
Which one of us would stand up this evening and say, I've never slandered another person. This month. This week. What about today?
Friends, the indwelling Christ calls us to put away all lies and deceit and slander and to speak the truth in love. There's a lot more can be said about these verses, but time marches on.
John Owen said of mortification, You must always be at it while you live. Do not take a day off from this work. Always be killing sin.
[26:26] Or it will be killing you. We're called to focus on a new reality. We're called to engage in a new activity. Thirdly here, quickly, we're called to embrace a new identity.

Having put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Yes, mortification is vital, but it's not the whole story.
There are not just those old patterns of sin to be confronted and to be put off. More than that, there needs to be the putting on of Christ. The old has to be displaced by the new.
And the second half of this section focuses a little more on that aspect. The old Adamic nature left behind the new nature of Christ, the last Adam embraced.
Putting on the new self. Renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. And what that means is this, that we no longer identify with the old man, Adam.
[27:34] We identify with the new man, the second Adam, Jesus Christ. We are part of his new creation. We're part of this new reality.

And so, we are being renewed and reshaped into the likeness of Jesus Christ. He has given us a new identity. And in and through Jesus, we've been brought to a knowledge of God.
This is one of the great blessings of the gospel. One of his books, Jim Parker, asks the question, What is the best thing in life, bringing more joy, delight, and contentment than anything else?
He answers, Knowledge of God. Been thinking about that in our midweek gatherings. Knowing God lies at the heart of the Christian life, not the periphery.
It's very important. We cannot please God and honor God or glorify God unless we know Him. And this knowledge of God only comes to us through Jesus Christ. He is the image of the invisible God.
[28:37] He's the one in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And so, knowing and understanding who we are in Christ is fundamental to all Christian living.

Because only then can we live out the new life. The famous story told of St. Augustine, not long after his conversion, was walking down the street in Milan.
And he met a prostitute whom he had known. She called to him, but he would not answer. He kept right on walking. Augustine, she called again.
It is I. Without missing a beat and with the assurance of Christ in his heart, he replied, Yes, but it is no longer I.
The new life involves us killing who we are not and becoming who we really are. The putting to death of the practices of the flesh.
[29:40] The old man. And putting on living in and becoming more and more the new man. And so, the secret to godliness is not some method or technique or discipline.

It is to be found in Jesus Christ. Looking to him and allowing him to renew our minds and change the way we think even about ourselves.
We are called to embrace a new identity. We are called to engage in a new activity. We are called to focus on a new reality.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Finally here, and briefly, we are called to belong to a new community. Paul says here, you'll notice it there, this new humanity with its new identity creates a new community.
And this work of renewal and restoration in our lives is not simply individual. It's actually corporate. It involves others. For through Jesus Christ, a new race really has been brought into being.
[30:46] Paul says, here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave-free, but Christ is all and in all.

That's probably worth saying that Paul is not denying the reality of these various distinctions. When people become Christians, they retain their own national, cultural, social, racial, economic distinctives.
These things are not erased by the gospel. They remain. His point here is that these things make no difference within the body of Christ. The things that Paul mentions here were amongst the great religious social chasms of the ancient world, Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free, these unbridgeable gulfs, divided and separated peoples. What could a slave have in common with a free man? How could an uncouth Scythian from the north of Greece relate with a sophisticated Athenian? How could the Jew and Gentile be brought together?
These highly disparate groups of people, all their differences, are brought together only in one place, says Paul, in Jesus Christ. It's in union with Christ we become part of this new humanity and new community.
[32:08] We not only belong to God, we belong to one another. The New Testament knows nothing of a privatized, individualistic Christianity.

Christian faith is unashamedly corporate. It involves us being and living and serving and worshiping with others who may be very, very different to us.
Yes, differences remain. They're not erased. But they're no longer things of paramount importance. They're significant fades in the bright light of Christ's glory and grace.
Was it Billy Graham? Not our Billy Graham. The other Billy Graham who once said, The ground is level at the foot of the cross.
The church is a community gathered around Jesus Christ. He is at the center. He is all and in all. Bonhoeffer Dietrich writes, Christian community means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ.
[33:21] There is no Christian community that is more than this and none that is less than this. Whether it be a brief single encounter or the daily community of many years, Christian community is solely this.

We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2.10. Paul says, And that word for workmanship is a word from, you know, I think we get our word poem from it.
It conveys the idea of a work of art. God's purpose in revealing himself and his grace and uniting us to Jesus Christ is to display, if I can put it this way, his craftsmanship and artistry in our lives. Because we are the raw material where God is pleased to display his grace in Christ. We are the broken pieces of pottery. The image of our divine creator almost completely obscured.
And yet, nonetheless, in love at great personal cost, the creator has come to restore and renew what has been lost. He desires to remake us so that his image be seen again in our lives.
[34:51] And like the Kintsugi pottery, our lives are to be the evidence of the skill of the master workman.

And just as people gaze with wonder at those renewed pieces of pottery, so the world is to look upon us and ask, just how can this be?
What a transformation. What beauty. What skill. Who could have done this? You see, we are to be adverts for all that the grace and mercy of God in Christ can produce.
I wonder what kind of adverts are we? Are we focusing on that new reality wrought by God's grace? Are we engaging in that new activity and striving to put to death our sinful nature?
Are we embracing our new identity and seeking to live out our new life in Jesus? Are we belonging in that new community and putting our differences aside for the sake of the gospel?
[36:02] Let's pray together. Almighty God, we bless you and praise you.

We thank you that we are able to confess this evening that Christ is all and in all. Lord, we ask for the help of your Holy Spirit that we might focus on that new reality, that we might have in mind the things of God.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Lord, help us in that new activity that we are called to in the gospel, and putting away sin and putting on Christ.
Help us to embrace that new identity that we may live in a way that pleases you and honors you.
We thank you for that new community to which we now belong.
And we pray that as we gather and as we fellowship together, that we would put our differences aside for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of your great name.
[37:21] We pray this through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host