

*Colossians: Christ In Us, The Hope Of Glory*

In a marriage engagement, there's this weird tension where you're married but not quite married. You've announced that you're going to get married, but yet you haven't gotten married. There's a tension that you live in where there is something that is true about you, but it isn't fully realized. This idea of living in this tension between what is and what isn't, or what hasn't yet happened, is exactly what Paul is talking about in this text in Colossians 3.

Now, he's not speaking of engagement; he's not speaking of relationships; he's speaking to that tension of what it means to live in the now and the not yet. Where we find ourselves in the text this morning is Paul dividing history, and this is a really important concept to understand. To unpack a lot of what Paul thinks in all of his writings is that history is divided into two distinct ages. For Paul, there is the present age that is passing away and the age to come, which began in the work of Jesus. We live then in this overlap between the present age that's passing away and the age to come that began with Jesus. We're in this tension, both ages coexisting right on top of the other.

Look at Ephesians 1. Here, Paul is unpacking this very similar idea. He says, *"and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,"* (vv. 19-20). So he's saying that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available in us.

**far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. vv. 21-23**

If you've been tracking with us through Colossians, some of those words should sound relatively familiar: the supremacy of Christ, that he's before all things, everything has been placed under him. But all I want you to note is in verse 21 when he says that there is a present age and one to come, and Jesus' power is available to us.

The hope of the first-century Jew was that there was coming an age, a time. This was all the way through the prophets. They would speak about this coming age and call it a new creation. There was something out on the horizon that was going to come, and in that age to come, we would see the elimination of sin and death and brokenness. Because, for Paul, the present age is ruled

by sin, death, and brokenness. It is governed by all of those things in which he talks about it passing away. But the age to come is ruled by, just like we sang, Our God Reigns.

We believe God reigns supreme and king over this created order and is bringing about the age to come, so we live in this tension. It's why we are here right in the middle. We live in the overlap where God has announced and inaugurated the kingdom of God. He has, in fact, been resurrected. The kingdom of God is here, according to Jesus. That's what he proclaimed at the beginning of each of his biographies: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

So, in this overlap, we have the opportunity to live into that reality here and now, which should begin to reorient all of our ways of living because there are dynamics that the present age operates by that no longer bring about reality. They're fading away, but yet the age to come has a different ordering set of dynamics that govern that age. We, as Christians, are learning how we transition from the present age to the age to come.

This is discipleship in the way of Jesus. Jesus embodied this reality. He embodied it, and it was his teaching, his work. This is his ministry, fully saturated in the age to come. It has come, present, and is here, available now. This is what Paul has been teaching through the first two chapters of Colossians. He's been in this high theology and philosophy realm. But in chapter three, he brings it down to a very practical level in which he's looking at this church in Colossae, and he's saying, "Here is how you now live out of your identity that isn't found in the present age, but it's found in the age to come."

Turn with me to Colossians 3, and we're going to begin to look at the way Paul is describing this tension. He's placing these two ages side by side, and he's saying that we are living this way, but our identity is here.

So what do we do to help bridge that gap, which we don't do alone? Again, that was the Ephesians text. The very power that rose Jesus from the dead is in us, and we have the availability to live in that reality. Let's pick up in verse one. *"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things"* (vv. 1-2).

Paul had just come out of chapter 2, talking about the implications of the very death of Jesus for our lives. You no longer have these external markers that identify who you are. So now, in chapter 3, he's helping us understand the implications of Jesus' resurrection. He begins by saying, "since then, you have been

raised with Christ." He says this is now your fundamental identity, your life. If you are in Christ, if you follow Jesus and have been united with his death, this is baptism and raising back to new life. You no longer identify with that old life but with that new one that came about through the resurrection.

He says three things here that are worth unpacking. "Set your heart on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. So, the first thing I want to start with in this set is this idea of the things above. We tend to think of this in a little more spatial understanding, thinking of literally looking up at things above. But that's not necessarily what Paul is talking about here. He's not saying quite literally fix your eyes up to the clouds. Michelangelo has messed with our imagination. Heaven is not some reality above the clouds. It's a dimension. He's here with us, available, overlapping with the age to come. It's a way in which we live and operate in this world here and now. And he says, set your eyes on things above.

Now, recall back to chapter 1 when Paul was talking about the idea that God is before all things. He's above all things. This is language, particularly when he says that Christ is at the right hand of God that is hierarchically as a better way to understand it. He is the one who is reigning, so set your hearts and your minds on things above.

Let's unpack those two things that he talks about. The first one, he says, is to set your heart on things above. In the modern world, we tend to think of hearts as emotions. Emotions are a good, healthy thing that God gave us, and so they are a good thing about who we are, but that's not what the biblical writers mean by hearts. The heart is the center of the person. It's what we would probably call the brain in the modern world because our science and understanding of humans have progressed, at least our anatomy in some sense. So when it says your heart, think of your will, your intention. It's more of what Dallas Willard would call "the executive center of your person." It's the thing that makes decisions. It's the thing in which you live from. And Paul says, set your heart, your intention, your will on those things above.

Then he goes on and says not just your heart, but your mind. Go back to the *Renewing the Mind* series, not too many months ago, where the mind is not just the place that stores facts, but for the biblical imagination, it's something akin to our consciousness. Place your attentiveness is a language I really like. Place the thing that consumes you in Christ. Place it on the things above. We've talked about this before, but there's a direct connection between what you give your utmost attention to and who you become. There's a relationship between your mind and your consciousness, and how that filters through your whole being into your heart and then expresses the way you understand reality.

Just watch any kid who's obsessed with any movie. They fill their mind with it, and then they begin to act it out into the world. They're projecting that into the world. That's a simplistic way of understanding the relationship of what we fill our consciousness with becomes who we are. So Paul says to set your intention, your will, on Christ, but even more so, set your mind on Christ as well. Those things will orient your heart. It's like saying, allow the vision of your life, your worldview, and your basic life orientation to be directed by Christ's heavenly rule because it's here and now.

He says, "*For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God*" (v. 3). He's repeating what he began in verses 1 and 2 because he's trying to get us to see the emphasis of it. "*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory*" (v. 4). What Paul is saying to this church is that the reality of that age to come is here; it's available, and you are now hidden in Christ. What a beautiful phrase to say your life is caught up in union with Jesus, and when it is in union with Jesus, that means Christ is your very life. This is the truest thing about you. If you are a follower of Jesus, the truest thing about you is that you are hidden in Christ. It's a beautiful reality.

He says this place then is where you live from. It's how you reorient the whole of your life towards that age to come. It is hidden in Christ. N.T. Wright, in his commentary on Colossians, says,

**The new age has dawned, and Christians already belong to it. The old age, however, is not yet wound up, and until they die (or the Lord "appears" again in His second coming), their new life will be a secret truth, "hidden" from view (from others, much of the time: often enough, from themselves too.) N.T. Wright, Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary, Logos**

He says our life is caught up in this age to come, and until we die or the Lord comes again, that old creation wound up and done away with, the truest thing about you is almost hidden. It almost doesn't make sense. It contradicts with the world around it because it is ordered by a different reality. He says that Christ, who is your life, this is the place from which you live.

Look down at verse 5. Paul's going to get ruthless here and start talking about the dynamics that organize the present age and the dynamics that organize the age to come. He's going to compare and contrast and tell us how we make that transition. "*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming*" (vv. 5-6).

He begins this list with a pretty emphatic statement, "Put to death." What he's talking about is that there's this tension between these realities. So if you are living according to this reality, the present age, Paul's instructions are to put to death that which orders your life into that reality. And what he's alluding to, which

is where we'll get when he talks about the wrath of God, is that the age to come is, at some point, taking over, consuming, and ridding the present evil age from existence.

Paul's instructions to put to death that which belongs to the present age is, in some ways, saying, put it to death before it kills you. Because that reality is passing away, it will no longer be in existence. When all of creation is reconciled back to Jesus, Paul is saying that all that pertains to that way of life will soon be gone, and I hope that we are not bound up within it.

But how do we put to death that which orders our life? He goes on to this long list, and he prefaces it with this idea of that which belongs to our earthly nature. Now, we have to be careful here. We can think of earthly nature as being all material, but that's not what Paul's talking about. He's talking about this idea of the present age. There's the earth and the heavens; those things are in contrast, but it's not the material reality because what we understand of the hope that we have is that God is restoring the material world. Jesus, when he was resurrected, had a material body. We will have a material body in the age to come for eternity. It will be restored and renewed. All of that will be true, but we have a material reality. This earthly nature connects with the way in which the present age is ordered.

I want to flip the list because it's helpful for us to see, starting with idolatry, how it all weaves. At the end of the list, he says to not be caught up in idolatry. Idolatry is simply the worship of that which isn't God or that which belongs to the old age. Then, he moves into this idea of greed, and greed is upstream from idolatry. Greed is more than just an economic term. It has to do with that, but it's the unchecked hunger for physical pleasure. It becomes a breeding ground for what precedes it in Paul's list, which is evil desires.

The modifier evil is really important here, too, because I don't want you to think that desire is bad. Desire is actually a gift from God. It's what gets you up out of bed in the morning. It's what drives you to understand your way in the world, your vocation, your calling, the love of your family or friends or roommates, or whatever that is. Desire is actually a good and healthy thing. But Paul is careful to say the same thing that drives you into all of life can actually be distorted in such a way that it drives you away from the things of God. So he says, be careful; those evil desires can exist.

Hebrews 4 has to do a little bit with this idea of temptation. Temptation itself is neutral. Hebrews 4 would say Jesus was tempted in all the same ways we were. It's not that the temptation is that which causes sin, but rather what you do with that desire that's been placed within you. How do we respond to that? And, of course, he now begins to link it with this concept of lust. Lust could be understood as an over-mastering passion. It's generally used in the context of sexual urges, but it can mean much more than that. It can also mean being mastered by a

certain passion, being overcome by a desire that's twisted and gone in a different direction. When he goes to the term impurity, it highlights the contamination of character that results in immoral behavior.

Then, we finally arrive at the one in which Paul started, and he says sexual immorality. This word sexual immorality is the Greek word *porneia*, which you can hear is the derivative of our word pornography. It's this idea that you can be so consumed with another that you aren't viewing them as an image bearer but rather as a commodity to be consumed. Ultimately, it's what pornography is. It's someone that you distort beyond their humanity, and you consume them. You consume them for your own pleasure. You consume them for your own purposes. And he says this is really what that sexual immorality is. It's the consumption of another. It's placing you above whatever else it is. It's the sacred self.

We've talked a lot about that, where the sacred self becomes the center point of how you view the world. The present age is orchestrated, particularly in our day and age, around the sacred self. That's why we have sexual immorality that seems really rampant. It seems to be just continuing to take off. Paul says to be careful not to allow that to consume you.

But I want to be clear here, too. Another commentator I read this week pointed this out, which is important. Sexual sin is not sin because it's sexual but because it is invariably covetous, meaning sexual sin at its core covets something that isn't theirs. That's why it's a sin. It's not a sin because it's sexual. Your sexual nature is a gift from God. That was something ingrained in you as a gift. That itself is not dirty; it is not sinful. It is not something to be done away with. It's something to be brought under the lordship of Jesus. Then, we live into that reality but know that it is not sinful in itself. That's a gift that has been given to us. It's a love to be ordered properly.

I'm guessing, if you're like me, you don't like to talk about the topics of sexual immorality and pornography here. But the reality is, I know from my own personal experience. Pornography is a part of my history. It's part of my own wrestling with God. It's part of my own history that has been done away with, that has been ordered by that present age. And how do we wrestle with that in such a way as to do away with that? Because it has a unique mastery. And what I find is we often hone in on this as the act itself, but we forget to pause and zoom out and see the reality. The problem is that it's placing the self at the center. It's more than just the act itself. It's an orientation towards the world that views the self as ultimate, that God doesn't know what's right. So therefore, all of these other humans are meant for my own consumption.

As we put it into those sorts of terms in those languages, we begin to see the way it distorts reality. None of us would want to dehumanize another, but yet often, that's the path that it leads

to. And Paul says to be careful. The self is not the center of the universe, particularly in light of what Paul is doing. The gospel orchestrates a new humanity, a new community. And covetousness, this idea of I am supreme above others, at its core, erodes community. You cannot live in that new humanity, that new community if the self is centered above others. As Paul says, be careful because all of that is wrapped up in this idea of the wrath of God coming.

Now, let's talk about the wrath of God. This also is one we have to unpack. This wrath of God is less about God's vindictiveness. This isn't God is angry, and therefore, he's vindictive toward creation, and he can't wait to get his payback! That's a distorted vision of God; that is a wrong view of God. To place that on God is missing the point of what this is. The present age is passing away. The age to come is coming. So how, then, would you describe this reality of the age to come extinguishing death and all of its friends from the present age? That is a type of wrath in which God is dealing with the injustice of the world. We cringe at this term mainly because we worship at the altar of the sacred self. So anything exterior can't possibly tell me what's right and wrong. I'm the arbiter of that. That's one of the reasons we cringe at this.

But the reality is you and I actually love this concept of wrath. We're just selective in where we want to apply it because we think of all the injustices that we witness. We want those to be made right. That's the wrath of God. That's the goodness of the resurrected life entering into this world and extinguishing death and brokenness. We desire wrath because that's in us. We want the justice of God to make things right. We want Christ to be all in all. We see the brokenness of violence, rage, sexual immorality, and all these things, and we think we want things to be made right. We long for that.

Don't think this is some mean, cosmic, angry God. That's not at all what this is about. It's about the reality of God's kingdom permeating this world. And therefore, in the same way that light extinguishes dark, God coming more and more into this world extinguishes that which is evil. Scott McKnight, a New Testament scholar I deeply respect, says.

**God will undo evil at the final judgment by destroying it and will reward goodness by establishing it. Thus, Paul appeals here to God's own character and system of judgment: what the Colossians did in their former life will someday be destroyed in judgment by God. Wrath, then, must be given a teleological context: it is not reducible to God's personal vindictiveness but instead is God's way of eliminating all that opposes his will for his creation. We need to keep the context in mind: God's wrath is coming upon the sins of desire and disunity, so therefore, the Colossians need to put them to death and lay them aside. McKnight**

This reality is coming. Have we ordered our life in its proper order and through the work of the Holy Spirit so that we live into that reality that's here? That's this interchange of the wrath of God. *"You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips"* (vv. 7-8). Notice all of the past tense. See the threat of dehumanization through all of it.

It's the acts that he listed in the first list, and these here are really about how we dehumanize others by placing the self above everyone else. He says, do not. He says, rid yourself of anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language. Anger could be understood as the continuous state of smoldering or seething hatred. Rage: think of when that state of anger breaks out into action. Malice: the Greek word here, simply means evil or evil intended to harm. Think of slanderous speech that puts malice into practical effect that degrades another human being.

One list is not more important than the other, by the way. Paul says all of this is about how you order your living. Do you order it towards the present age or do you order it towards the age to come? Because, again, the present age is ruled by sin and death and brokenness, and so anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language find a nice, comfortable home there.

It makes sense. In fact, within the logic of the present age that's passing away, it's how you get ahead, isn't it? Paul says that's not how we, as believers, order our lives. It's a different way. Your identity is not there. Your identity is in what's coming. So he says to be careful to do that. Put those away, rid them, put them to death.

**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. vv. 9-11**

He says that where all of this is going is the formation of a new community and where the present age used to be divided by Jew and Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, Slave or free; he says those were a part of an ordering of society. That was what's passing away. It is no longer the way in which we view the relationship with one another, but rather, we see one another as Christ is there in them. The hope of glory, all in all.

Paul's saying that as we do away with that present age, what emerges is the formation of a new humanity that sees one another for who they are in Christ. Not their worst sin, not their worst whatever, but rather sees them by what Jesus has done in their life. This then brings about the emergence of a new humanity that we model for the world around us that lives into the reality that's coming. We become an outpost. We become a



lighthouse in the midst of all that fog of the modern world and point to the gospel that's coming. There is a new reality. We live into that here and now.

Now, here's where conflict often comes. The age to come inherently conflicts with the present age, and we often are inefficient and ineffective when we live in the age to come. Something like loving your enemies doesn't get you very far in the present age, but it is faithful to Jesus. The call in this time—for the church, for us—is not to be successful; it's to be faithful, and we bear witness to that age to come. It isn't about if it works or not. That idea of loving your enemy, if you're operating from the logic of the present age that's passing away, it doesn't work. The strong survive. The powerful win. The rich always get the last say. The present age that's passing away is not the reality that we live in. So whether or not it works in the present age isn't the point. It's about how we live faithfully to what Jesus has taught us about the age to come.

Where I worry, particularly in an election year, is that we will often get caught up in our allegiances that will inherently conflict with all that's going on, and it is very easy for us to succumb to anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language. Church, may we never be the community that dehumanizes another because of something as small as a difference in political opinion. It's not who we are. It's not how we order our life. It may be inefficient. It may not be that it gets the person you want elected, but that's secondary. That's all secondary because the reality is our hope is fixed towards the age to come. The kingdom of God is coming, the work of Jesus of the reconciliation of all things.

Yes, there's importance to those things. I'm not diminishing those. I don't want to demean that. But I all too often find myself, my own heart, a little more enraged than it should. We begin to speak of others as if we forgot that they, too, were created in the image of God. That is our call. Faithfulness over effectiveness. Look down at verse 12. Paul moves from what we negate from the old world to what we put on in the new.

**Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. vv. 12-14**

Paul's call is as you divest yourself from the present age that's passing away, you invest yourself in the age to come. This looks not like anger, rage, malice, sexual immorality, or all those sorts of things but like compassion, which is a sensitivity to the sorrow and the pains of others. You're willing to suffer with others. Kindness, which essentially is grace, needs little explanation. It's a virtue that's often disregarded, but the reality is it is central to

the way of Jesus. We are called to be kind people. We are called to kindness.

Humility: it's the Christ-like attitude that we show towards ourselves. If kindness is Christ-likeness towards others, humility is Christ-likeness to ourselves, in which we recognize and view ourselves as God views us. Not as we think we are but as God views us. Humility is that proper view of ourselves. And these final two, gentleness and patience, seem to culminate in kindness and humility. Gentleness: it's the effect of meek humility on one's approach to other people. It rids us of rudeness and arrogance. Patience is the effect of humble kindness to one's reaction to others. It rids us of resentment and anger.

Does the world need a church that's marked by compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience? Whether or not it's effective is not the question. It lives into the reality of the age to come. And Paul says, put these on like clothing. Let them be that which you wear. It becomes the way others see you, and of course, it all culminates in this virtue of love. He says, over all these virtues put on love, which binds them together in perfect unity.

What's the greatest commandment? Love God with your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. If God is love and we are called to become like Christ, taking on the transformation of the Holy Spirit towards this, then we are to be people of love. That's what we are increasingly supposed to become.

As we follow Jesus, if we become more angry and filled with malice and slander, I would question if we are following the right Jesus. It doesn't mean it's perfect, believe me. It's a lifelong journey of increasing love at the core of your being because that's who God is. As we follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit slowly begins to purge us or put to death that which belongs to the present age and swells up in us a love at the core of who we are. We have to do all sorts of work.

It isn't love as this present age defines it. It's love as defined by Jesus on the cross, which is self-sacrificial, laying down your life for the other. That's a radically different view of love than that which feels right. We're called to be people of love. That is where we find our central way of living. It binds everything together. Love is patient. It is kind. It's humble. It doesn't keep a record of right and wrongs. That's Paul in Corinthians 13, isn't it? Love is the center of who we are becoming.

How do we get there? Paul says in 15, "*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts*" (v. 15a). Remember, the heart is the executive center of your being. It's where you make decisions. And Paul says to let the peace, the shalom, the wholeness of Christ dwell in your heart. Let it be the operative thing that makes decisions in your life. It says the peace of Christ dwells or rules in your heart. Meaning, as Brandon said in our worship set, if Jesus reigns, we

don't reign. So, if the peace of Christ is ruling in our hearts, it means our own selfish ambition does not reign in our hearts. How do we let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts?

**since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. vv. 15b-16**

What we do in worship is not just warming up for something. It is embodying this way of Jesus. We are singing truth over one another, whether or not you can bring yourself to sing or not. I know many come in here and are like, "Man, I don't want to sing another song." That's okay. Allow the other voices to sing and allow the peace of Christ to dwell in you, maybe not through your voice, but through others. When we sing, we are submitting to the Lordship of Jesus. We're letting it preach to our hearts. It's not lost on me that you remember songs better than sermons! It's an important part of what we do. We sing truth. It sticks. It resonates in our heads.

It culminates in verse 17. *"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."* He says that as we have embodied this identity, we've lived into that reality. What overflows is everything we do is now ordered not by the present age but by the age to come, which means, in all of those mundane ways of life. Much of life is maintenance. It's laundry and lunches and dishes and all those things. But Paul says there's a way in which when ordered properly by the peace of Christ dwelling within you, the message of Christ dwelling in your hearts, you begin to understand all of those tasks as a way of worship towards the Lord because it's forming in you a different way of being.

It sees it as a service to others. It sees your work as a way of loving the world. Whatever it is, it's taking all of those tasks and saying there's a way in which you do this in the name of the Lord Jesus. It means more than just in the name of Jesus I'm scrubbing these dishes. It means more of there's an orientation in which I'm living in a different reality right here and now in this very world. He says in whatever you do, it'll swell up in that.

To close, I want to mention maybe three or four things that help us to understand how we do this. There are some practical steps here, but what does it look like to put these things to death? Or how do we exist in this overlap and tension? The first is that we have to embrace discomfort. You have to recognize that in this overlap if what Paul is saying is true, that this present age is passing away and this new age is coming, we will

be uncomfortable in this world. It will not fit nicely. Like an ill-fitting jacket, it will be uncomfortable because this world is ordered by a different reality, and so it will not seem to fit nicely.

Even more so, we have to learn to be discontented with this world. Not in some otherworldly, I can't wait to escape reality, but we recognize that what this world has to offer will not satisfy the deepest ache of our soul. Eternity has been placed within the heart of man, and so that will only be filled by an equal being, which is God, the eternal God. So we just grow discontent. Over time, we learn these things aren't satisfying in the way they used to be because we are built for something different. We are built for an indwelling relationship with the triune God. That is something our hearts long for.

It's what one commentator called an ethic of secession. We need to secede from this world and divest from it because we recognize more and more the teachings of Jesus that better to give than to receive is actually the way the world works, and we find more contentment there than we do here. We need to immerse ourselves in Christ, saturating ourselves in the personal teachings of Jesus. It's how we begin to reorient. We take on his mental maps. We've talked about that. The way Jesus views reality slowly becomes the way you and I view reality. We immerse ourselves in Christ. I encourage you to constantly read the gospels over and over, little pieces here and there, to understand the story of Christ.

And lastly, we put on love. We learn more and more what it means to have love reside in the center of our being, where we encounter Christ in such a way that he is all in all. He is becoming who we are. It's the disposition in which we view the world through love. In prayer, we open up our minds to the ways in which we are not love. We ask God to help us become people of love. That he would enter into our lives, give us more of that reality, and put to death that which belongs to the old order.

Church, this is hard work. Putting those things to death is not a simple task. Ridding ourselves of those things is not simple because the way of the present age has been ingrained in us year after year after year. It will take time. Be gracious with yourself. But take a step towards the age to come. What does it look like to sit in prayer and hold your life before God, saying, "God, I desire for you to become the center of my being."

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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