

VILLAGE

CHURCH

Bible Study Notes

Intro Question: What's a habit or quality you've picked up from someone you deeply admire?

Pray: For God to clothe us in his character, and for his peace to rule in our hearts and in our community

Read: Colossians 3:12-17

Questions about the passage:

- How does Paul describe the Colossians in v.12?
- What are the virtues the Colossians are called to 'put on' in v.12-13 and how do they relate to each other?
- Why do you think Paul places love above the other virtues in v.14?
- What does it mean for the peace of Christ to 'rule' in our hearts and why does Paul connect this to the 'one body' v.15?
- What does v.16-17 say about the purpose of congregational singing?

Questions for us:

- Which of the five virtues in v.12-13 do you find most natural, and which do you find hardest? What do you think that reveals?
- Is there a relationship in your life where forgiveness is still outstanding?
- How does v.16-17 affect how we choose what songs we sing at Village?
- 'Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.' What would actually change in your week if you took that seriously?

Pray: that Village would continue to grow into full Christian maturity

Homework: Before one regular activity this week, pause and ask: can I do this in Jesus' name?

Remind: EOFY giving to MTS & 10% giving goal (announced on Sunday)

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Colossians Overview:

Paul's letter to the Christians of Colosse in Asia Minor is one of his shortest letters. Paul is writing to a young church that's just starting to figure out what it means to believe in Jesus and follow him. He urges them to dig into the riches of the gospel and let it shape the way they live.

This week, Paul, having called the Colossians to put off the old self, now turns to what they are to put on, grounding a rich collection of virtues in their identity as God's chosen, holy and beloved people.

Paul's aim:

Paul writes to a church he's never visited to establish his apostolic authority and relationship with them. His core aim is to ground them deeply in the gospel so they grow to maturity in Christ. Urgently underlying everything is a warning - don't drift toward the alternative teachings circulating in Colosse.

Asia Minor Map:



Asia Minor in the time of Paul

Source: N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 12, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 18.

Praying to see 10% of the northern suburbs in gospel-centred churches & 250 by 2030 at Village Church who grow, gather, give & go, in love & joy to the glory of God

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Questions about the passage:

How does Paul describe the Colossians in v.12? Is the description fitting?

Chosen, holy and beloved. Each of which once belonged to Israel but now belongs to the whole church through Jesus. It is identity that is gifted and received, not earned. Everything Paul says flows from this stated identity. They are still learning to live out what they already are.

What are the virtues the Colossians are called to 'put on' in v.12-13 and how do they relate to each other?

Five virtues: compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. They all point away from self and toward others. Compassion and kindness dictate how we feel and act toward those around us. Humility shapes how we regard ourselves, and meekness and patience are the practical out-workings of these in moments of difficulty and conflict. A community shaped by these virtues is one where no one is handled with contempt or dismissed. Together they mirror the character of Jesus.

Why does Paul place love above the other virtues in v.14?

Paul describes love as the outer garment 'above all these', the thing that holds everything together. The other virtues, pursued without love, can become distorted. Patience can turn into cold endurance, humility into self-interest. Love is not just one more virtue added to the list, it's the thing that orders and completes all the rest. This echoes the point of the letter, just as Jesus holds all things together (1:17), love holds the life of his people together.

What does it mean for the peace of Christ to 'rule' in our hearts and why does Paul connect this to the 'one body' v.15?

The word Paul uses carries the connotation of an umpire or arbitrator giving the deciding verdict. Paul's point is that whenever disagreements or suspicions come up in the church, the peace of Christ, not personal grievance, is to resolve it. This peace is not just inward or individual, the Colossians were called to it 'in one body', so it is fundamentally communal in character. To let Christ's peace rule is to refuse any conflict the final word over the unity believers share in him.

What does v.16-17 say about the purpose of congregational singing?

Singing is to bring us into the unity of peace by teaching and admonishing one another with the message of Christ.

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What does a life surrendered to God look like v.16-17?

A community where the word of Christ has taken up residence and overflows into teaching, mutual shaping and singing in gratitude. 'Dwell in you richly' suggests a saturated quality, the gospel is not a reference point consulted occasionally but a presence shaping the entire texture of shared life. 'Whatever you do', all action done in the name of Jesus and with gratitude to the Father through him. The whole of life, from gathered worship to daily work, is under Jesus' authority and for his glory.

Questions for us:

Which of the five virtues in v.12-13 do you find most natural, and which do you find hardest? What do you think that reveals?

There's no right answer here. Some find patience easy and kindness hard, others the reverse. The point is that all five are needed and none can be dropped. These virtues flow from the identity Paul names in v.12, chosen, holy and beloved, so growth in them is less about trying harder and more about living further into who we already are in Jesus.

Is there a relationship in your life where forgiveness is still outstanding? What might it look like to let Jesus' forgiveness of you become the measure of your forgiveness of them?

This can be a real and tender topic for some. Forgiveness doesn't always mean reconciliation and proximity. There are real reasons to maintain distance from someone if harm is present. However, Paul's point is that the forgiveness we've received is the only basis we need to forgive another. This doesn't mean pretending nothing happened, but it does mean the debt is not ours to hold.

How does v.16-17 affect how we choose what songs we sing at Village?

Songs should be faithful to the message of Christ and should 'teach us' and bring us into the unity of peace. Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs may not be different things, could be synonymous expressions of faithful songs. Either way, the point of the songs remains the same.

'Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.' What would actually change in your week if you took that seriously?

The point isn't to make everything feel religious, but to recognise that nothing falls outside Christ's lordship. A conversation at work, how we spend an evening, how we speak to a family member, all of it counts. Think specific, ordinary examples. What would it look like in one concrete area of your life this week?

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