**Colossians – Pre-eminence** – **wk 5 – The Closet**

**10-year-old suburb church, new Christians struggling and confused…**

**Paul's response - He has been in the root system (what we believe)**

**Paul is now about to talk about the fruit system (how we live)**

**Today - the apostle Paul starts getting into our business - our closet**

**Older TV “What not to wear” letter written in – surprise the person - They go into their closet - mock the clothes – embarrass them – then send them on a shopping spree - by the end- tears you changed my life. Majority of show is the fight to get rid of their old style, it’s painful.**

**That is what we are doing today - dig in the closet, throw stuff out (this old shirt) - no mocking you - but by the end you will look back and thank God.**

**Paul is talking about a total life makeover. The preeminence of Christ in every area of our life. Col 3 - covers areas of our personal life.**

**A major objection to Christianity is that Christians do not act like followers of Jesus. They are angry, hateful, unkind, and vindictive, and lives that look just like theirs. I get it.**

**As a person is rooted and growing Christ, what comes from your tree? Our fruit is different from the world's fruit – and - it tastes differently.**

**We are going to read through Col 3:1-17 and see what it means to be Dressed for Success**

**Paul is challenging them to take a look in the closet - Colossians 3:1 If then you have been raised with Christ, (If truly in Christ) seek the things that are above, (set your heart - passions/mind) where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (authority of Jesus) 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

***This is not* about condemning everything on earth and being spiritually airheaded.**

**1 - You think differently - we have a new view**

**We set our mind on diff things - In Christ, we have the mind of Christ. (Ro 12:2, 8:5-13, Eph 4:23-24, 2 Cor 10:4-5)**

**What are the things above? People (family, friends, the lost) and the kingdom of God. Things that point to God!**

**This is about what we think about = our affections = what we chase - the choices we make good and bad start in the mind.**

**Col 3:3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Praise God when God looks at me, he does not look at my past - he sees Christ. I am hidden in Him - I am in him he is in me. He is working in and on me - changing me daily from the inside out...) 4 When Christ who is your life appears, (Jesus is not a section, he is our life – that’s fanatical – we are all fanatics of something) then you also will appear with him in glory.**

**Jesus is coming back! We are between 2 advents; we will be changed!**

**We think diff about this life because our eyes are on the kingdom. We look to eternity – with eyes fixed on Jesus.**

**So, we pursue diff things - our heart is set on diff goals.**

**A new identity - and it is not my sexuality, skills, or successes.**

**Now it’s time to clean the closet - Col 3:5 Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, (sexual activity outside God’s design) impurity, (misuse of sex) passion, evil desire… (sexual desires outside God’s design acted out in the mind)**

**God created sex and wants people to experience it in his design and order. It was his first command (Gen 1:28)**

**Designed for covenant-committed marriage. One God, one man, one woman, one flesh, one life. There God says it is good and blessed. Everything else is disorder.**

**5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you… and covetousness, which is idolatry. (greed that results in evil actions to get it) 6 On account of these (all those mentioned) the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. (we start to see Colossae's struggles)**

**2 - You live differently – the above are actions from the heart**

**But your heart is different – the things you want are different – which means the way you live your life begins to look different.**

**Paul says – thrown that shirt out – that style was the old you.**

**John 15:1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**

**These are not rules that save us - this is healthy pruning – to help us grow and be fruitful. This is what comes off.**

**Col 3:8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another… (all deal w/ mouth)**

**3 - You talk differently –**

**These are challenges to speak patiently, speak with self-control, speak respectfully, honestly, and with kind and gracious words.**

**James 1:26, 3:1-9 – if we can control our mouth we can control our life.**

**Luke 6:45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**

**What about swearing? Not about salvation - but it’s more than words**

**1 Cor 13:5 – Love is not arrogant or rude (disgraceful unseemly words)**

**Every culture has words deemed vulgar – pridefully vulgar**

**Ephesians 5:4 - Let there be no filthiness (obscene, indecent) nor foolish talk (moro-logia- moronic buffoonery) nor crude joking, (dirty inappropriate jokes) which are out of place, (unfitting – they don’t fit you anymore – if you heard me - doesn’t’ look right on you) but instead let there be thanksgiving. (Ask, is my speech thankful and points to Jesus? Wear that!)**

**Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupting talk (wholeness rotting words - spoiled) - come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Ask, is my speech hopeful or encouraging? Wear that!)**

**You cannot control other's tongues – but you can and should control yours – you can’t always control what you hear – but you can control your mouth. Is it thankful, hopeful, encouraging – reflective of Jesus?**

**Col 3:9 …seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. (Changing shirt - changing it out!)**

**I’m good - Really? How do you talk to your wife, kids, parents, boss behind their back, person who ticks you off - this is not the Christian Gold package this is for every Christ follower - Paul says if you are His, get in the closet and toss the junk**

**These are not Man-made rules, but God planned Holy Spirit Fruit (Gal 5)**

**This is not about our salvation – but our sanctification (explain).**

**Jesus did not set us free to continue in our sin - but set us free from our sin - set us free from it's grip and control - it's hold!**

**Romans 6:18 And, having been set free from sin, we have become slaves of righteousness.**

**Col 3:10 …put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator.**

**(Being renewed) As you learn – you grow – as you grow – you think different, live different, and talk different – it is a process.**

**Here is another - Col 3:11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.**

**4 - You see people differently**

**All those barriers existed in the Roman world - still do today**

**A new creation - re-born into a new family - a new culture - a new citizenship - We are ONE in Christ! - The beauty of the kingdom**

**Racism - mental / and actual segregation – prejudices - economic superiority - looking down on others = is a sin**

**Unity in Diversity - barbarian, Scythian = extreme people groups**

**Col 3:12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

**Just as God chose you, choose how you will respond to hurt.**

**5 - You treat people differently -**

**Again, these are not rules that save us - they are the fruit that drop off a deep-rooted tree in Christ. Put on a new Spiritual Wardrobe**

**Let’s walk thru these**

**- Compassion = Getting into their shoes - changing our view**

**- Kindness = Treating people better than they deserve - kind**

**- Humility = Accepting the lesser role - letting go of what you think you**

**deserve - choosing to be last – remaining silence.**

**- Gentleness = Strength under control - Holding back a response**

**Opposite of harsh – gentle with your actions and touch**

**- Patience (longsuffering) = Putting up with more than I should**

**- Grace = Forgiving the Inexcusable.**

**Col 3:13 …bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.**

**Those other ones I’ll try - but forgive? They don’t deserve it. Choose to - it's at that moment you're putting on Christ.**

**We can do this - because - we have been greatly forgiven**

**Col 3:13 - Forgive as the Lord forgave you. How as Christ forgave us?**

**Jesus says put these on – it makes you and more importantly me look good – it may not feel easy at first… Jesus says - you look marvelous!**

**Col 3:14 And above all these put on love, (the jacket) which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Then he adds an accessory) 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.**

**6 – You love differently**

**Put on LOVE = generous affection to others**

**You love those you once hated, care for those you neglected, and notice those you once ignored – and you do something about it.**

**This is one of the most important identity markers for Christ’s body.**

**I like the accessory of peace. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.**

**2 Simple Questions to ask yourself in any issue and circumstance:**

**What is the loving thing to do? / What would produce peace?**

**In family conflict, arguments, issues at work, kids – We are called to love and bring peace not be right. What’s the loving thing to do? What would bring peace?**

**15 …And be thankful. 16 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.**

**7 - You Worship differently**

**For a person rooted in Christ - our worship changes – it shifts from always wanting to thanking. Heartfelt adulation!**

**Doesn’t matter what it sounds like - who's singing - or if it’s our fav song - it is all about the object of our worship, Jesus**

**16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, (Worship together is not about more music and singing – but a hunger and growing in the Word of God) teaching (even songs teach us - theologically sound) and admonishing one another in all wisdom, (reminding each other of the word of God) singing psalms (songs from the scriptures) and hymns (songs written by others) and spiritual songs, (songs of your heart) with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (NIV - singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.)**

**Worship is not just a part of the service, singing, or a song.**

**Worship in Spirit and truth (John 4:24) is sincere and Jesus-centered. Resulting in true gratitude and humility.**

**And in case Paul missed anything - he says - Col 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

**This is the summary of all the previous verses. Jesus is the Lord of all - and is to be Lord of all your life. He is preeminent.**

**Whatever you do, wherever you go, whatever you say… it’s all about Jesus!! Work - family - hobbies - recreation – friendships, education, school, pursuits, and free time. Whatever we do – we do it representing Jesus and for Jesus.**

**Paul did not say to do this if you want to be a better Christian – he said we do this because you are a Christian. We are already in Christ.**

**Philippians 3:15 All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.**

**Sounds good, but I don’t know where to start. So much is in the closet!**

**How do we clean the closet?**

**\* Receive the grace of Jesus - and follow Him as Lord**

**Col 2:6 6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,**

**But there is an issue (Person on chair) When you are saved you have a 180lb gorilla inside. The old life who has grown big/strong.**

**\* Recognize that your old life is in the past**

**Col 3:3 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

**7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.**

**You have been called into a new life - a new life - a new way of life**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!**

**Your past does not define you anymore - that sin - struggle - that old nature - 80lb gorilla is not the boss of you - Christ is - you have the power of God in you.**

**\* Starve the old man (Romans 6, Ephesians 4)**

**Col 3:5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you…(kill it or be killed)**

**3:8 But now you must put them all away… (get rid of them – don’t wash ‘em)**

**Things in our closet: Sexual immorality, lust, evil desires, greed, anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language.**

**Paul is not saying - stop playing with it - feeding it - giving it baths! Get rid of it, get out of it before it’s too late. Starve it! Kill it or it will cause havoc in your life - it's time to go hunting!**

**\* Feed the new man**

**If you are going to starve the gorilla, you need to feed the new man**

**Col 3:1 …you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above...**

**2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.**

**10 - …put on the new self..**

**Trust me if Sunday is all you get of God all week– your gorilla will eat you alive… we need to feed our spirit – eventually, your 250lb spirit will smash your 180lb gorilla…**

**The differences are the process: How you think affects how you live, how you talk, how you love, and how you worship.**

**What you think about feeds your affections - pursuits - choices - and outcomes - Good and bad. Our actions & temptation starts in the mind.**

**So, a real question is - What are you feeding your mind?**

**Maybe it’s time to clean the closet out?**

**Next week - Your family looks different**

**We dive into some of the most misunderstood and misused yet powerful verses for marriage and family in the Bible.**