**LET THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE IN YOUR HEARTS AND BE THANKFUL**

Colossians 3:1-17 (Key verse 15)

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

This passage builds on the themes of joy and thanksgiving that we have studied over the past two weeks and today we turn to Colossians 3:1-17, with our key verse on verse 15, which says: “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.”

In this study, we will learn about the peace of Christ and how it is deeply tied to our union with Him. This union—our death, resurrection, and new life in Christ—is the foundation for the peace to which we are called. It is my prayer that through this passage, we may grow in our understanding of this peace, experience it ruling in our hearts, and live lives marked by gratitude and unity as His people.

To begin today’s passage Apostle Paul starts by revealing to us something very fundamental for our Christian faith in **verse 1-4** saying: “*Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”* What does Paul show us here? He shows us that we have died, that we have been raised with Christ, that our lives are hidden with Christ in God, and that we will appear with Him in glory. Furthermore he gives us commands, and these are not just mere commands or moral improvements that we muster in ourselves; these are divine commands which we ought to obey as those who belong to Jesus. They form the bedrock of who we are. The command that Paul issues in these verses are to seek the things that are above, to set our minds where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Apostle Paul is saying that because we have died and risen with Jesus, because our lives are secured forever in Him, we must now align our hearts and minds with His heavenly rule. The seeking and the setting of our minds on things above are not ways of earning union with Christ; They are the essential, genuine responses of those who have already been brought to life with Him. The instructions come after the facts. We do not seek heavenly realities in order to become raised with Christ. Rather, we seek because we have been raised. We do not set our minds on things above in order to secure our hidden life in God. Rather, we set our minds on things above because that hidden life in God is already guaranteed. God has accomplished the foundation—our union with Christ in His death and resurrection—and now we live this out. Yet we must not make the error of assuming that we can ignore these commands and still rest assured that we will appear with Christ in glory. True faith that has joined us to Christ will manifest itself in obeying these commands.

The Christian life is not a stagnant thing. It has movement. It has shape. We confirm the authenticity of our calling and election through our perseverance in seeking the things that are above. If there is no desire to set our minds on Christ, no inclination to seek what is above, then we must ask whether we have indeed tasted union with Him. Peter warns us, similarly, saying that we must make every effort to confirm our calling and election, and that as we do so, we will be richly provided an entrance into Christ’s eternal kingdom (**2 Peter 1:10-11**). Thus, these commands to seek and to set our minds on heavenly realities are not adding conditions to the finished work of Christ; they are unveiling the true character of those who trust in that finished work. This truth of our death and resurrection with Christ is more than a theological idea; it is the heartbeat of the Christian life. Through faith we are united with Jesus. His death to sin becomes our death to sin, and His resurrection life becomes our new power to walk away from the flesh.

Furthermore Paul says “*For you died*”, meaning our old self died, that rebellious, God-ignoring dimension of our being which refused to bow the knee to Christ died. In union with Jesus, we have died to the law as a means of salvation, we have died to the dominion of sin, we have died to the old patterns that held us captive. Sin still exists around us, Temptations still linger, but their old controlling authority has been shattered. We are no longer bound to that old way of life.

But now as new beings, alive in Christ Jesus how can we set our hearts and minds on things above? What does it mean to set our hearts and minds on thing about. Let us look at **verse 5**: *“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.”* To set our minds and hearts on things above means to put to death your earthly nature. Meaning to strive to align our entire way of life, our patterns of thought, our emotional reflexes, with what is true of Christ in heaven. To conform our desires and reasonings to the Christ who is our life. To turn away from the old earthly ways : Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, covetousness—these are the old patterns that once held sway over us. If we have died with Christ, we have the authority to say no to these things by the Spirit, in which there is a sword which is the Word of God, we put these deeds to death. This does not earn us salvation; it proves and displays the power of our salvation. We have been transferred from death to life, and the Spirit empowers us now to resist sin and walk in holiness. We have put off the old self, and we put on the new self, which is being renewed in the image of our Creator.

Furthermore, to set our minds and hearts on things above, means to clothe ourselves with the nature of Jesus. Let us look at **verse 12-14**: *“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”* We are a new people. Our identity has shifted. Paul describes us now as chosen, holy, and beloved by God. This is who we are in Christ, and from this identity flows the call to show compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. We bear with one another, we forgive one another, because that is what Christ has done for us. Consider how completely Christ has forgiven us—sins we do not even remember, sins repeated countless times, sins that wounded Him at the deepest level—and yet the blood of the cross covers them all. The magnitude of such forgiveness turns our hearts outward to others.

We can't focus on the cross for long and still be unwilling to forgive. Over all these virtues, we put on love, the glue of every relational grace. Love does not stand alone, but it binds these virtues together and perfects them. Love is patient, kind, not arrogant, not boastful, not resentful, and it never ends. This love, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, is the mark of the mature believer who has learned to rest in Christ’s love and then extend it to others.

Furthermore, as Christian believers, who died and rose with Christ, who have their minds and hearts set on things above we should let the peace of Christ dwell in our hearts. Let us look at the **key verse 15** once again: “*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*” This peace is not a human invention, it not like the peace we get in this world which temporary and not true peace; it is the peace Christ Himself accomplished by His blood, breaking down the wall of hostility that existed between us and God, and consequently between us and each other, filling our hearts with joy for the privilege to come to God any time as his Sons and daughters. At the cross, Jesus overcame sin and wrath, so that we might be reconciled to God and brought together into one body. Paul wants this peace to rule, to exercise authority in the core of our being.

Let the peace of Christ govern your heart. What does that look like? It means that we allow the reconciling work of Christ to become the referee in our conflicts, the compass in our choices, the standard that defines our relationships. When anger, resentment, or bitterness seeks to creep in, we hold up the cross and remember that the same blood that bought my forgiveness also bought the forgiveness of my brothers and sisters. How can I cherish animosity against one for whom Christ died? How can I give anger the throne in my heart when Christ died to establish peace? The peace of Christ calls us to sacrifice our pride for the sake of unity. It does not mean we ignore wrongs, or pretend sin does not matter. Rather, it means we engage conflicts, disappointments, and misunderstandings under the banner of Christ’s reconciling work. We deal with sin seriously, we seek repentance and forgiveness honestly, and we find ways to build each other up in love.

And we do this with thankfulness. Paul, in this passage, keeps returning to thankfulness. A thankful heart is one that stands amazed at what God has done for us in Christ. Thankfulness flows naturally from the heart that recognizes we would have been lost forever were it not for Christ’s atoning sacrifice. Without Him, we would remain slaves to the old self, enslaved under wrath. But with Him, everything has changed. In **verse 16** it says: “*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.”* When the word of Christ dwells richly in us, this thankfulness overflows. The word of Christ is the message of the gospel: the good news that the glory of Christ—His perfect life, His saving death, His mighty resurrection, His sovereign lordship—is our anchor and our treasure. When this word saturates us, when it is not a stranger but a treasured friend in our hearts, we find that faith is strengthened, joy is awakened, peace is nourished, and thankfulness abounds. This living word takes shape in our church as we teach and admonish one another, sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. We remind each other daily of who Christ is and what He has done. We remind each other that we are chosen, holy and beloved. We call each other out of fear and resentment and into the sweet peace of Christ Jesus.

In my own experience, I have sometimes tried to avoid conflict and considered that to be peace. I often withdrawn from people, thinking that staying away from people would protect me from conflicts, accusations, or misunderstandings, but this did not bring me any peace, if anything it left me isolated, lonely and without friendly relations with believers, this is not the type of peace that Paul envisions. Paul is describing a body of Christ actively engaged with one another, bearing each other’s burdens, forgiving and loving as Christ has done for us. Peace is not the absence of people; it is the presence of Christ ruling among people. When we are close enough to each other to hurt and be hurt, close enough to risk offense or disappointment, that is precisely the context where the peace of Christ can truly prove its strength. Only the cross-bought peace of Jesus can hold a church together through the trials of living shoulder to shoulder with real sinners saved by grace. The power to do this is not in ourselves. We do not muster this peace and forgiveness from the resources of our old nature. Rather, as we stand amazed at what God has done for us in Christ, as we remember that we died with Him, that we are raised with Him, that our lives are hidden with Him, and that we will appear with Him in glory, then we find new strength rising up within us.

**Conclusion**

Because we have union with Him, we can obey. Because our lives are hidden in Him, we can persevere with hope. Because we have tasted this grace, we can let His peace rule and be thankful. So, may we open our hearts afresh to the Word this day. May we believe anew in the supreme value of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. May we know ourselves to be raised and hidden in Him, and so have the courage to kill sin and embrace holiness. May we clothe ourselves with mercy and love. May we let the peace of Christ rule, not as a casual suggestion but as a divine command honored from the depths of our beings. And may we be thankful—truly thankful—for all that Christ has done to bring us from death to life, from hostility to peace, from alienation to adoption in the family of God. By His grace and for His glory, let this Word shape our hearts, our minds, and our communal life together, until that day we appear with Him in glory.

As we enter the festive season and approach the year’s end, let us be intentional about letting the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. It’s easy to be swayed by the distractions of the holidays—seeking temporary peace in material things, overindulgence, or fleeting comforts. But the peace of Christ offers something far greater: a deep, unshakable calm rooted in our union with Him. This season, may we turn to Him, allowing His peace to guide our hearts and minds, so that our celebrations are marked by gratitude, love, and the true joy of His presence.