**Sermon Notes:** Sunday, 11/14/21: Rebuilding Community

**Scripture:** Colossians 3: 1 - 17 ESV

**3**If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **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. **4**When Christ who is your[a] life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**5**Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:[b] sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **6**On account of these the wrath of God is coming.[c] **7**In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. **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, seeing that you have put off the old self[d] with its practices **10**and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. **11**Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave,[e] free; but Christ is all, and in all.

**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. **14**And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15**And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. 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. **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.

**Summary:**

Pastor Justin continued his two-week sermon on rebuilding healthy community first noting that unhealthy community leaves us empty, burdened, and drained. He noted there are three commitments one needs to make in order to build life-giving community. First, as individuals we must be committed to total transformation through Christ. Transformation involves sight—that is seeking things that are above; sinfulness—putting to death that which causes death (chiefly impurity); selfishness—anger, wrath, malice, slander, selfish language; Justin explained the language Paul is using alludes to CHANGING CLOTHES. So, personal transformation is about taking OFF the old, sinful self that would destroy community, and putting on the new, compassionate, transformed self that will foster healthy community. A spiritually healthy person starts with the transformed self.

Second, to build healthy community we must demonstrate the PEACE OF CHRIST. This word “peace” is connected to the word reconciliation—which means to restore the relationship between beings. This peace does NOT come by sweeping problems under the rug, but rather by bringing the attributes of Jesus into every situation—so that the peace of Christ will rule in our hearts—and thus over the situation as we work through it. Thus, anger, malice, wrath, slander, etc., CANNOT be allowed to rule over the situation.

Finally, to create a healthy community, the Word of Christ must dwell in us richly. That is, we must allow the transformative power of the Word into every situation.

All this builds into today’s big idea: Healthy community happens when we demonstrate the peace of Christ and dwell in the Word of Christ.

**Questions:**

1. Read through verses 5 - 9 again in our passage. Have you ever observed these things creating an unhealthy community? Can you give an example? Why do these things destroy community?
2. When Paul admonishes us to put to death and put off the things listed above, how does one put to death these things?
3. Read verses 12 - 14. On the other hand, Paul calls us to put on very different attributes. As Justin explained, the image is of taking off old clothes and putting on new clothes. What does it feel like when you put on new clothes? How does it affect you when you put on something new and clean? How then will it affect you personally and the community overall if you put ON the things listed in 12 - 14?
4. Letting the PEACE OF CHRIST rule in our hearts personally and corporately, as Justin pointed out, DOES NOT mean ignoring genuine problems. Instead, it invites Christ’s attributes into every situation. What happens to difficult situations and conflicts when we invite Christ’s attributes into them? Can you think of an example when you have seen difficulties and conflicts dealt with in a healthy manner because Christ’s attributes ruled over it?
5. Finally, what role does the Word of God play in helping us put off the old self and put on the new self? What role does allowing the Word of God dwell in us richly have in creating a healthy community?
6. What attributes do you feel challenged to—through the Spirit’s power—put off? What attributes do you want to ask the Holy Spirit to help you put on?