



STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, February 14, 2010

She Said

“He Said. She Said.” (Week 2 of 3)

Colossians 3:12-17 — *The Word from the Bible (TNIV)*

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.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your 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. 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.

Colossians 3:12-17

In verse 10, Paul spoke of the **“new nature”** that Christ offers to all who believe in the power of Christ in this world and have committed themselves to following Christ’s call. In verse 12, Paul now instructs God’s people to **“put on”** or **“clothe”** themselves with the actions of this new nature. The list of five characteristics is meant to contrast with the two lists of vices presented in verses 5 and 8. They are proposed as typical of the characteristics and attitudes of the Christian character.

The distinctively Christian element in this passage is not the content of the list, but its context. As followers of Christ, we are a new creation. Our spiritual nature becomes the focus of our existence. In other words, we are spiritual beings existing in a physical world. The question implied in these instructions is whether or not we will “clothe” ourselves with the clothing of the spirit or the clothing of the world as described in verses 5 and 8.

Paul is addressing Christians who should know the difference between caring for one another and the self interest of the secular (in that day, the actions of pagan worshipers). The Colossian Christians are **“God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved.”** This distinction now is passed on to future Christians who strive to follow the teachings and example of Christ. The inference is that we are set aside for obedience to God’s will and the praise of God’s name. We are a new creation. We have a new existence. Our identity has been established.

All the qualities named in verse 12 have a bearing on one’s relationships with others. In verse 13, Paul further stresses the full dimension of the Christian life as grounded in forgiveness and new beginnings. The basis of this forgiveness and new action is based on the realization that God has first forgiven us through the action of Jesus as the Christ.

In verses 14 and 15, love is defined as the mark of the new life in Christ. It is the bond wherein life has meaning, vitality and integrity (Colossians 2:2, 19). **“Perfect unity”** translates a Greek word that connotes wholeness, completeness and authenticity. Love establishes wholeness not only within the Christian community, but within each participating believer and all God’s creation.

To **“put on”** love (verse 14) means to surrender oneself to Christ’s rule (Colossians 1:15-20). The **“peace of Christ”** must not be interpreted as an attitude of inner tranquility; it is the condition that exists between God’s people. In this

sense, peace is the definition of Christian community.

In summary, as one is called into the body of believers, one participates in the wonderful reconciliation of all things and all peoples. Therefore **“in your hearts”** describes the commitment to this new life and not the limits of God’s peace as defined by love and forgiveness. The community and all the relationships that community represents (including marriage, family, neighborhood, world and school) is the place where Christ’s peace rules – for that is in the community, where the Christian’s obedience to God is evident.

Verse 15 ends with the words, **“and be thankful.”** In verse 17, this need for thanksgiving is expanded to include one’s whole life. We are reminded of Paul’s exhortation to do everything to the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31). One must live in accord with the new life to which we have been raised in Christ, thereby **“giving thanks”** to God in the only way fully appropriate to the magnificence of the gift which has been bestowed – in everything.

What does this have to do with Relationships?

What do these words from Colossians have to do with relationships? Everything! Not one of us is perfect. We are all broken, and we rely on the forgiveness and love of our spouse or future spouse to get us through the tough times. It’s often a matter of give and take, compromise and cooperation.

Most engagement periods are spent falling in love and thinking through the heart and head issues of whether or not this person is the “right one.” Marriage, on the other hand, involves the hard work of learning how to relate to each other and live with our differences and similarities. In order for a marriage to last a lifetime it takes **“compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and love.”**

***Making Love Last a Lifetime*, by Adam Hamilton**

If you have unclear expectations of marriage and how it is to be lived, it is important that you read these words: Marital love begins and ends with friendship and a commitment to do love even when you do not feel it. You may be married, and your love has grown cold. Perhaps you have children and you have “lost that loving feeling.” This is a normal part of any marriage relationship. Your situation is not hopeless. It is possible to fall in love again.

It is often said that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, used to tell his ministers to “preach faith until you have it.” I encourage you to practice love until you feel it. There is hope for every marriage. What you may feel now will pass, but only if you are committed to that profound calling you accepted in your marriage vows: “for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death.”

As Paul says in Colossians, **“Clothe yourselves with love.”** It is what you need to be wearing after the honeymoon is over to make love last a lifetime. (Page 64)

Prayer Focus

Trietsch is a praying church. This morning, as you worship, one of our prayer volunteers is praying for everyone in each section of our worship center. We believe that prayer changes lives and hearts for good and for God.

We invite you to join these volunteers by praying for those persons around you. We believe these prayers will have an immediate impact on those for whom you are praying.

Remember... someone is praying for you. As we focus on relationships here are a few prayers to use with your family or mate.

A Prayer for Your Wife

(You are encouraged to insert your loved one's name into this prayer. Make this prayer your own as you add other qualities, blessings or need for forgiveness)

Heavenly Father, help me to love (name) sacrificially, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her:

- ☞ May I always love (name) and treat her with honor and respect.
- ☞ May I always remember that we are partners – side by side.
- ☞ Help me to understand and fulfill (name) needs.
- ☞ Teach me to love (name) and show appreciation.
- ☞ Inspire me to draw on (name) wisdom and strength.
- ☞ Lead me to treat (name) with tenderness and humility.
- ☞ Help me to be unselfish at all times in all places.
- ☞ Forgive me when I have failed as a husband.
- ☞ When I have been harsh and unfair.
- ☞ When I have been lazy and self-centered.
- ☞ When I have put my needs above her.
- ☞ When I have failed to listen and be attentive.

God, strengthen (name) and bless her daily:

- ☞ Keep (name) safe.
- ☞ Keep (name) strong.
- ☞ Give (name) wisdom.

Lord, I thank You so much for all that (name) does for me, and our family. Thank You for blessing me with such a wonderful companion, helpmate, and best friend.

In the name of Your Son, and our Savior, Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Have a great week!

Next week we continue the series on relationships – “He Said. She Said.”

***Invite someone to worship this week. You will be glad you did.
God is doing great things through the ministry of Trietsch.***

Daily Readings

This sermon is the second in our series on “He Said. She Said.” During this series, we will be focusing on the scriptural teachings that will help us strengthen our relationships. The entire Bible is focused on relationships – our relationship with God and our relationships with each other. Too often we assume that because the Bible is centuries old that it will not have relevance for our modern challenges. Let’s remember in reading these passages that times may change, but the way we relate to each other is the same today as it was in the beginning. Hopefully these readings and reflective questions will prepare you for the sermons. The study guide readings allow us to dig deeper.

The first two days are repeats from last week. This is intentional since love is the basis of every meaningful relationship. Repeat the reading, the questions and the exercises.

Monday, February 15 – Read I Corinthians 13:1-7 — This passage should be read in conjunction with chapter 12. Paul is dealing with conflict between members of the faith community based on egos. Chapter 13 is Paul’s answer, saying love is the most excellent way to relate in every circumstance. Without love, we are nothing. Read this passage, inserting your name beginning in verse 4 for the word love — claim each aspect of love for your life and relationships. Which of these qualities do you need in relating to others?

Tuesday, February 16 – Read I Corinthians 13:8-13 — Paul continues his writing on love. Apart from everything else in this world, love is eternal. Even though we might not understand everything about this world, we can respond to each other in love, knowing that one day, all things will be revealed to us. Do you know someone who has been confused by recent events? Can you show love to them this week by offering an act of kindness?

Wednesday, February 17 – Read Matthew 5:1-16 — This passage begins the Sermon on the Mount as preached by Jesus and recorded by Matthew. It begins with the Beatitudes or “blessing” that result as a consequence of our actions as followers of Christ. Included in this reading is also Jesus’ comments on our role as examples as Christ in this world. How would you measure your “Christ-likeness” in your marriage, with your family, with friends, with co-workers or school mates? What can you do to this week to be the presence of Christ for someone?

Thursday, February 18 – Read Mark 10:35-45 — Jesus has been telling his disciples that true greatness comes from service and sacrifice. But they don’t get it. Here James and John create a conflict among the disciples when they ask for special favors and a position of authority from Jesus. Jesus response is clear, **“whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.”** This is a tough lesson for Christians and often misunderstood by those outside the church. Does this mean that Christians must be “pushovers” or “doormats” to the world? No, instead this passage has everything to do with our relationships. How are you a servant to those you love? How do you put yourself last among the least? What are you doing at home and church this week to lead your family to serve each other?

Friday, February 19 – Read Isaiah 43:1-7 — The Christian life is often a challenge. We are called to a life of service and sacrifice, and yet we suffer the same consequences of tragedy as the rest of the world. Where is the justice? Why do bad things happen to good people, and good things seem to happen to the evil? Why do we experience pain at the hands of those we love the most? Isaiah answers this question by speaking of God’s eternal and everlasting love. There is a love for us that we will never understand. The love of God will never leave us or forsake us. **“As far as the east is from the west,”** says Isaiah. Therefore, on this Friday, claim the love of God as your love. Make the living of God’s love your number one priority. God promises that in this love, even the most devastating situation can be redeemed. In God’s love, our joy is multiplied in the presence of the one that will never give up on us. Spend time today thanking God for that love and sharing that love with those closest to you. Tell them, “There is nothing in all creation that will keep me from loving you.”