

Raised to New Life  
– Overcoming Evil With Good  
Colossians 3:1-17  
God & Evil 3

*Sermon*

*Hobart, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011*

**Colossians 3:1-17**

**3:**<sup>1</sup> Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits at God's right hand in the place of honor and power. <sup>2</sup>Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth. <sup>3</sup>For you died when Christ died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>And when Christ, who is your\* real life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

<sup>5</sup>So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>God's terrible anger will come upon those who do such things. <sup>7</sup>You used to do them when your life was still part of this world. <sup>8</sup>But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. <sup>9</sup>Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. <sup>10</sup>In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you. <sup>11</sup>In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile,\* circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized,\* slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

<sup>12</sup>Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. <sup>13</sup>You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. <sup>14</sup>And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

<sup>16</sup>Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.<sup>1</sup>

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\* *Colossians 3:4* Some manuscripts read *our*.

\* *Colossians 3:11a* Greek *Greek*.

\* *Colossians 3:11b* Greek *Barbarian, Scythian*.

<sup>1</sup>*Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. 1997, c1996 (electronic ed.) (Col 3:1). Wheaton: Tyndale House.

## INTRODUCTION:

### I. WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING AT THE SUBJECT OF EVIL

#### A. AND HOW GOD'S PLAN HAS BEEN FROM THE BEGINNING, TO OVERCOME EVIL, INJUSTICE AND SUFFERING, AND TO DEFEAT DEATH

1. To set the world right again
2. To bring his life to us, and us into his life, so that we can all bear his image as he intended when he created us
3. To be his agents, his representatives, living and sharing in his eternal life of love, peace, joy and prosperity here on earth

#### B. WE HAVE SEEN IN THE O.T. HOW THIS IS WHO GOD IS

1. He is the redeemer, the restorer, the gracious and loving forgiver and re-creator
2. Who continually raised up people to be his agents in saving and healing, in bringing hope to the world around them
3. We saw how this is the main and repeated theme and message behind all of the stories of the OT
  - a) Noah and the flood, Abraham, Joseph in Egypt, the Exodus, and the entire purpose and history of Israel

#### C. AT EASTER WE SAW HOW JESUS' LIFE, DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

1. Are the full solution to evil, sin and death
2. How he has won victory for each of us as individuals
3. How as one of us, God's ultimate representative; he has won victory over Satan and the evil forces of the world, as well as the political and institutional forces of evil
  - a) How Jesus has power and authority to deal with the perpetrators of injustice and suffering
  - b) How he also has the power to rescue the victims, and the whole of creation and give them new life, free of evil, corruption and destruction

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**S.P.S:**

**A. TODAY WE ARE GOING TO START LOOKING AT HOW THIS GOOD NEWS SHOULD IMPACT ON OUR PERSONAL LIVES**

1. How we are to live in the light of Jesus' victory over evil
2. We are going to particularly think about the way Jesus won victory in a revolutionary way that challenges us all to look at the way we deal with life and problems in the world today

**B. PRAYER**

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**BODY:**

**A. ONE OF THE ISSUES FOR CHRISTIANS LIVING IN OUR TROUBLED MODERN WORLD**

1. Is what approach do we take to life and the problems of the world around us

**B. THERE ARE TWO BROAD APPROACHES;**

1. They are in a sense similar to the approach many take towards the nature and role of the church itself
  - a) Where some see the church as a holy exclusive temple where only people who fit the image and rules are welcome
  - b) And the contrasting view in which the church is seen as a place of refuge, forgiveness and healing, into which all are welcomed

**C. THE TWO APPROACHES TO HOW WE LIVE IN THE WORLD TODAY ARE**

1. One in which everything in the material world is seen as bad, and that the solution is to be spiritual and rise above the material things of this world
  - a) To focus exclusively on our personal spiritual lives, on truth and holy living

b) Perhaps looking to some particular view of prophecy and the future, as the only solution to evil and unrighteousness

(1) Seeing the individual Christian's role in the world today as being supportive of the preaching of the particular view of the gospel they hold to

(2) and enduring to the end, avoiding involvement with the world lest they become contaminated by it

2. We have seen this in our own history to one degree or another

a) And it is still the predominant view of many, mostly unorthodox Christian groups

b) Though there is an interesting contrast between the approach of the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses

(1) One being engaged in society, socialising and helping in order to win people

(a) The other being disengaged, keeping separate, and convincing people to focus almost totally on the future world, rather than this one

#### **D. IN THE LIGHT OF JESUS' VICTORY OVER EVIL THROUGH HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION**

1. I'd like us to take a look at a second approach to living our lives and dealing with the suffering, evil and injustice of the world around us

2. Look first at Jesus' own example

3. Then at some clear instructions from Paul to the Colossians about how we are to live in the light of the resurrection victory of Jesus

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## **II. JESUS' EXAMPLE**

### **A. JESUS' NOT ONLY WON VICTORY AT THE CROSS, BUT HIS WHOLE LIFE CLEARLY ILLUSTRATES HOW TO LIVE THE LIFE OF VICTORY OVER SIN AND EVIL**

1. He came to be the second Adam, living as God has called us to live in the world

2. He was God, and he showed us what living as image bearers of God looks like in our world this side of the final resurrection and new world

**B. WHAT DID HE INVOLVE HIMSELF IN DOING, AND WHO DID HE SPEND TIME WITH?**

1. Did he avoid involvement with the world and material things?
2. What was his attitude to food, drink, material things?
  - a) Appreciate them, enjoy them but don't depend on them as the source of security or happiness
  - b) Don't let them be gods or idols that dominate your life
3. Who did he spend time with?
  - a) Did he restrict himself to spending time with the religious, righteous acceptable people?

**C. CLEARLY HE DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO REACHING OUT TO THE REJECTED, THE DOWNTRODDEN, THE SICK, SUFFERING AND OPPRESSED**

1. The unclean people of his day
  - a) To showing them God's love, grace and acceptance
  - b) To assuring them of their forgiveness
  - c) Calling them to a new and restored life lived in relationship with him

**D. WHO AND WHAT DID HE BOLDLY OPPOSE AND REBUKE?**

1. The corrupt and powerful authorities
  - a) Who focused on rules and standards, on purity
2. The ones who stood for exclusivism, separation from those they ruled to be unclean and unacceptable
  - a) Who put their energies into building their own power base at the expense of the poor and oppressed
  - b) Who forbade him from healing on the Sabbath, and accused him of being a glutton and wine-bibber
  - c) And condemned him for associating with those they labelled as "sinners"

**E. JESUS STOOD AGAINST THESE ATTITUDES**

1. Telling stinging parables against them, and rebuking them publicly

2. In the end his actions and their opposite attitudes caused them to ally themselves with the Romans in bringing about his crucifixion
3. This all dramatically serves to remind us which of these two approaches to living our lives in the world we should take, and which we should avoid

**F. IN HIS LIFE, JESUS DIDN'T CONQUER EVIL WITH RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES OR BETTER LAWS**

1. He didn't overcome sin by stricter judgments or enforcement of rules and standards

**G. HE DIDN'T OVERCOME EVIL AND DESTRUCTIVE FORCES WITH SUPERIOR FORCE AND VIOLENCE**

1. He overcame evil by meeting it face on and letting it do its worst,
  - a) Letting the religious authorities judge and condemn him
    - (1) And the political powers abuse and crucify him
2. And he rose triumphant, undefeated, victorious over them all, on our behalf
3. He faced and resisted the utmost temptations to use power and position to defeat the devil in the Temptation
  - a) He won by not yielding to the temptation to win that way, but chose to win by humbly trusting in God, and doing his will, which would involve victory through being the suffering servant
4. Jesus dealt with spiritual oppression by serving, and using his relationship with God to relieve suffering, to free people from spiritual oppression
  - a) He sort out and healed those who were suffering
  - b) He spent time with the sick, and the sinful
    - (1) and they were changed, freed and given an start in life
  - c) He cast out demons, releasing people from evil and oppression, spiritually and physically
5. He emphasised forgiveness and restoration of lives
  - a) And being born again to live new lives in relationship with God
6. He spoke of overcoming and defeating evil with good
  - a) through love and forgiveness

- b) turning the other cheek
  - c) being poor in spirit, meek, gentle, righteous
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### III. PAUL ON LIVING THE NEW LIFE OF JESUS' RESURRECTION VICTORY

#### A. PAUL ALSO MAKES REPEATEDLY CLEAR WHAT THE FOCUS OF OUR LIVES IS TO BE;

1. Now that Jesus has won the victory at the cross and through the resurrection

#### B. SO THE EMPHASIS IS THAT WE ACTIVELY LIVE THE NEW LIFE NOW

1. To live our new lives in the way Jesus' lived his, and commands us to
  - a) To display the way of life God intended human beings to live from the beginning
  - b) Like Jesus, being image bearers of God, being like him
2. As Jesus partners, using the gifts of the spirit to overcome evil with good,
3. Being his representatives, his agents, his ambassadors
  - a) Being his hands, his arms, his voices
  - b) Using the gifts, the blessings, the life, the time and opportunities the Spirit gives us to be God's instruments of justice, mercy, peace, grace, love and forgiveness

#### C. LET'S READ A FEW PASSAGES IN WHICH PAUL DISCUSSES HOW WE ARE TO LIVE THE NEW RISEN LIFE IN CHRIST

##### Colossians 2:6-3:17

*Freedom from Rules and New Life in Christ*

6 And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to live in obedience to him. 7 Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all he has done.



**1. This is the basis for our Christian lives, Jesus and all he has done**

- a) We need to grow in understanding and draw nourishment from him
- b) On the other hand there are attitudes and influences we are to avoid

8 Don't let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world,\* and not from Christ. 9 For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body,\* 10 and you are complete through your union with Christ. He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe.

**2. Jesus has had to come to rescue us from the evil powers.**

- a) We are complete in him. He is the one with the true power and authority.
- b) Why look elsewhere?

11 When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature. 12 For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

**3. Baptism pictures the new life we have been raised to by trusting in God's power to solve life's problems**

13 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. 14 He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. 15 In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ.

**4. The cross is the solution to evil, sin and death, nothing else!**

- a) So, Paul goes on to say, don't go back to legalism, looking to physical rituals and days etc., thinking they make us ok

16 So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new-moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. 17 For these rules were only shadows of the real thing, Christ himself. 18 Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on self-denial. And

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\* *Colossians 2:8* Or from the basic principles of this world; also in 2:20.

\* *Colossians 2:9* Greek in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

don't let anyone say you must worship angels, even though they say they have had visions about this. These people claim to be so humble, but their sinful minds have made them proud. 19 But they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For we are joined together in his body by his strong sinews, and we grow only as we get our nourishment and strength from God.

20 You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the evil powers of this world. So why do you keep on following rules of the world, such as, 21 "Don't handle, don't eat, don't touch." 22 Such rules are mere human teaching about things that are gone as soon as we use them. 23 These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, humility, and severe bodily discipline. But they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires.

## **5. Paul is urging Christians away from empty, vain legalism**

- a) **And calling on them to live lives of Godly substance**
- b) **Being nourished by Christ, and rely on him to empower us to victory over evil thoughts and desires**

### **Colossians 3:1-17**

#### *Living the New Life*

3:1 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits at God's right hand in the place of honor and power. 2 Let heaven fill your thoughts. Do not think only about things down here on earth. 3 For you died when Christ died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 And when Christ, who is your\* real life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

## **6. Thomas Torrance;**

...in the resurrection God's Yes is finalised in and through the No of his resistance to all corruption, evil and death.<sup>2</sup>

## **7. This is what Jesus did throughout his life;**

- a) **He said no to evil, and yes to the victims, the lost and oppressed**
- b) **He healed and helped the down trodden, the rejected**
- c) **He confronted evil, especially the legalistic, oppressive judgmental attitudes of the religious leaders**

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\* *Colossians 3:4* Some manuscripts read *our*.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *Atonement*, p.238

**d) But he loved his enemies, to the point of forgiving the perpetrators of his own death, and dying for them as well**

5 So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don't be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry. 6 God's terrible anger will come upon those who do such things. 7 You used to do them when your life was still part of this world. 8 But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.

**8. Paul calls on us to say no to sin and evil in our new lives**

- a) To focus on pure hearts, rather than legalistic purity
- b) And to focus on living and acting as Jesus did in our relationships with others

9 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. 10 In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.

11 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile,\* circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized,\* slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

**9. Complying with religious practices in order to be part of the “in” group, and judging and separating from others is not to be part of “this new life”**

**10. Wright talks about this dualistic attitude of “us and them”, Jew and Gentile, circumcised, uncircumcised, “good” and “bad”**

- a) And how damaging it is, and so much the opposite of what Jesus exemplified, and Paul is talking about

...there is the danger of dualism, of the us-and-them disjunction which says, “Our’ way of life is ‘good’ while ‘theirs’ is ‘bad’”.

**11. He says this is not much better than the dualistic approach that sees the world of space, time and matter as being evil, and only a world of pure spirit being the solution.**

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\* *Colossians 3:11a* Greek *Greek*.

\* *Colossians 3:11b* Greek *Barbarian, Scythian*.

- a) He then shows how the idea shared by most today (and many of those at the time of Jesus and Paul) of just working harder, is not the solution to our problems either;

Imagining a world without evil is not simply imagining what things would be like if we could only work a bit harder and arrive at the utopia that we all know is just around the corner.

**12. We see what he is saying today amongst those who work hard to be successful, and who look to technology and progress to solve the world's problems, as well as among religious legalists who see working harder at being 'righteous' as the solution, through more obedience and better rules**

- a) Paul is opposing all of this in our passage

**13. Wright says;**

But perhaps the important thing is to realize the way in which these false perceptions... have played out in terms of the way people in our world actually behave and order their lives.

If you're a dualist, then there's nothing much we can do to change the world at the moment. Things are going to continue much as they are in this wicked, dark vale of tears until the Lord returns.

So we shouldn't even try to make things better, at best, we'd only be repairing a car which is in any case soon going to lunge over a precipice.<sup>3</sup>

**14. In his book, *The Challenge of Jesus*, he adds;**

Some have so emphasized the discontinuity between the present world and our work in it on the one hand and the future world that God will make on the other that they suppose God will simply throw the present world in the trash can and leave us in a totally different sphere altogether. There is then really no point in attempting to reshape the present world by the light of Jesus Christ. Armageddon is coming, so who cares about acid rain or third-world debt? That is the way of dualism; it is radically anti-creation viewpoint and hence is challenged head on by (among many other things) John's emphasis on Easter as the first day of the new week, the start of God's new creation.

On the other hand, some have so emphasized the continuity between the present world and the coming new world that they have imagined we can actually build the kingdom of God by our own hand work.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wright, p.105-106

## 15. Back to Wright's other comments;

Dualism of this sort breeds paranoia; ...the system is rotten, and there's a great conspiracy in Congress, in the news media, in Hollywood, in secret movements such as Freemasonry and so on and so on. Conspiracy theory has even got a foothold in the church; we can fight and kick and scream if we want, but there are too many dark plots going on, and what we need is a final showdown between God and evil.

I want to suggest... that the Christian vision of world history offers a different way of addressing the problem of evil on the basis of the death and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

## 16. We do well to heed Wright's warning and urging

a) And to continually seek God's help through the Holy Spirit to transform our thinking, so we can see;

- (1) through the Scriptures, and most particularly, through the death and resurrection of Jesus,
  - (a) God's approach and solution to the world and its problems
- (2) And the way we should think and act
- (3) Seeing us all as one in Christ, all valued and loved

11 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile,\* circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized,\* slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

12 Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

## 17. The cross shows that the fruits of the spirit, not those of the flesh are the way to transform life and the world

13 You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

## 18. Forgiving, not highlighting and condemning others is God's way

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<sup>4</sup> Tom Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus*, p. 178

<sup>5</sup> Wright, p.106-107

\* *Colossians 3:11a* Greek *Greek*.

\* *Colossians 3:11b* Greek *Barbarian, Scythian*.

- a) Looking to restore relationships, to bring peace through love and forgiveness is God's way of healing the world

14 And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

## 19. Our priorities are to be those Jesus, had

- a) Being nourished by God
  - (1) Understanding, appreciating and being thankful for WHO he really is
- b) Being focused on what God has always been engaged in doing, setting mankind and the world back the way he intended
- c) Being his agents, his representatives, bringing glory to him in all we do
  - (1) Being clothed and equipped with his mind and attitudes, not our own or of the world
- d) Living his way of love, of mercy, sharing, caring, forgiving, healing, peacemaking

16 Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. 17 And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.

## D. VICTORY OVER SIN AND EVIL WAS WON, IS WON, AND WILL BE WON

1. Not by brute force and mere superior power and control
2. Not religious observances, or insisting on particular religious practices or standards
3. But by the power we see exemplified in Jesus' ultimate victory at the cross
  - a) The superior and unassailable power of sacrificial love, grace and forgiveness
4. These are the far superior means God uses to win victory over evil, sin, separation, suffering and death
5. Wright;

It is a problem if and when a “Christian” empire seeks to impose its will dualistically on the world by labelling other parts of the world “evil” while seeing itself as the avenging army of God. That is more or less exactly what Jesus found in the Israel of his day.

The cross was and remains a call to a different vocation, a new way of dealing with evil and ultimately a new vision of God.

...The cross becomes the place of pilgrimage, where we stand and gaze at what was done for each one of us.

The cross becomes the sign that pagan empire, symbolized in the might and power of sheer brutal force, has been decisively challenged by a different power, the power of love, the power that shall win the day.<sup>6</sup>

## **6. This reminds me again of that wonderful quote of Thomas Torrance about the power of God’s love demonstrated in Jesus’ sacrifice**

In the incarnate life of Jesus, and above all in his death, God does not execute his judgement on evil simply by smiting it violently away by a stroke of his hand, but by entering into it from within, into the very heart of the blackest evil, and making its sorrow and guilt and suffering his own. And it is because it is God himself who enters in, in order to let the whole of human evil go over him, that his intervention in meekness has violent and explosive force. It is the very power of God.

And so the cross with all its incredible meekness and patience and compassion is no deed of passive and beautiful heroism simply, but the most potent and aggressive deed that heaven and earth have ever known; the attack of God’s holy love upon the inhumanity of man and the tyranny of evil upon all the piled up contradiction of sin.<sup>7</sup>

## **E.IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE LET THIS PROFOUND AND FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH EFFECT AND TRANSFORM OUR OWN THINKING ABOUT THE TRUE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF OUR WORLD**

- 1. It is just too simplistic, and seriously wrong, to look at any other means as being appropriate for solving any wrongs or injustices in our lives, or the world around us**

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<sup>6</sup> Wright, p.99-100

<sup>7</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ, Robert T. Walker, editor; Paternoster/IVP Academic, Milton-Keynes, UK, 2008, p. 150

2. We need to continually be transformed in our attitudes and actions by the clear teaching and examples of Jesus
3. Colossians shows that religious rules and philosophies that are based on exclusivism, self-righteousness, legalism, the enforcing of religious and moral rules and laws are NOT Jesus' way of solving things

16 Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

17 And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.

4. The judging and condemning actions and words of too many outspoken Christian leaders is much more in line with the Pharisees than with Jesus
    - a) The world needs to hear a more gracious, loving and Christlike voice
    - b) and see more humble and serving actions from Christians
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## CONCLUSION:

5. Jesus has come and died on the cross, and been resurrected to God's right hand, bringing the full and final solution
  - (1) And we are called to learn from how he did that
  - (2) And to participate in the application of that solution in our lives and our world today

### **F. WE HAVE BEEN BAPTISED INTO JESUS' DEATH**

1. And raised to share in the new life in communion with the Father, Son and Spirit
  - a) Our hearts and minds, our lives and actions are to be being enlightened, transformed to be like those of Jesus
2. Wright;

The cross is not just an example to be followed; it is an achievement to be worked out, put into practice. But it is an example nonetheless, because it is the



exemplar--the template, the model--for what God now wants to do by his Spirit in the world, through is people. It is the start of the process of redemption, in which suffering and martyrdom are the paradoxical means by which victory is won.<sup>8</sup>

**G. NOWHERE ARE WE TOLD TO FOCUS ON HAVING GOD TO OURSELVES,**

1. Dwelling on being right, and focusing on the future,
2. Ignoring the present world around us or our fellowman

**H. CLEARLY, BY CONTRAST, WE ARE URGED TO PARTICIPATE TRIUMPHANTLY IN THE VICTORY JESUS HAS WON OVER SIN AND EVIL, RIGHT HERE AND NOW**

1. Showing forth the light of Christ and the life and the kingdom of God in this dark world
2. Not hiding it under a basket, or keeping it selfishly to ourselves
  - a) But participating in the continuing life and mission of Jesus in our time and place
3. Wright;

The call of the gospel is for the church to *implement* the victory of God in the world *through suffering love*.<sup>9</sup>

**I. WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING PARTNERS WITH GOD IN THE ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION OF CHRIST'S VICTORY AND THE NEW LIFE;**

1. We are to be his agents in saving and healing, in bringing hope and new life to the world around us
2. Participating in the resurrection victory Jesus has won, and continues to win through the power of his love, grace and forgiveness
  - a) The new life lived in communion with God
3. That communion is based on constant prayer, study, growing in the love and wisdom of God
  - a) Allowing the Holy Spirit more and more to bring the life of Jesus into our lives, to live in and through us

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<sup>8</sup> Wright, p.98-99

<sup>9</sup> Wright, p.98

4. Growing in our relationships with one another, both in and outside the body of Christ
  - a) Being sensitive and aware of the needs of others
  - b) And healing and restoring relationships through gracious and merciful actions, and being quick to forgive
5. We do this through humble loving acts, loving our neighbours with the love Jesus has shared with us
  - a) Building up the lives of others
  - b) Bringing light and hope to the discouraged
6. We do this by sharing in his ongoing work to overcome evil with good, darkness with light
  - a) Injustice with justice
  - b) Hatred with love
  - c) Misunderstandings with understanding
  - d) Lies and false teachings, with truth
  - e) Discouragement with the encouragement that we are loved and valued
  - f) Hopelessness with the hope of the new and better life in fellowship with God
7. Conclude with Paul's words in

### **Colossians 3:12-17**

<sup>12</sup> Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. <sup>14</sup> And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

<sup>16</sup> Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.

### **J. PRAYER**