

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 5, Take a Stand, Colossians 3

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This is Dr. Dan Darko and his lecture series on the Prison Epistles. This is session 5. Take a Stand, Colossians 3.

Welcome back to the biblical studies lectures on prison epistles. So far, we've been covering a few things about this great letter called Colossians, and now we are continuing the discussion on chapter two. In this part of the discussion, we are focusing on how the church needs to take on the foundations they have known about how to stand and be rooted in Christ and live it out.

And we see from verses 16 to 19, which will form the beginning of this session, as follows. Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are shadows of the things to come, but a substance belongs to Christ.

Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, pathed up without reason by his sensuous mind and not holding fast to the head from which the whole body nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments grows with a growth that is from God. What we find here is interesting. Paul has established the two statements, and he has reminded them about the centrality of Christ and how receiving Christ must be a life that is grounded, founded, and established in him.

So now he turns to what they should do and this is the core of the message here from verse 16 to 19. This is what not to do. Do not allow yourselves to be judged.

Verse 16. You have the ability to not allow yourself to be judged. That is to say, you don't have control over those who would judge you, but you have the ability not to accept their assessment, words, or characterization of you.

Two, do not let anyone disqualify you as if you are entering a race and or you are going into an institution of your dream to study, and you always thought you were part of it and you have someone who is trying to say no, you don't belong here. Paul says you have the ability not to let anyone disqualify you. Personal responsibility.

In these verses, just see how this pattern plays out. It is very, very interesting to see verses 16 and up to 18 how these things are actually couched and framed. First, you see a warning, and you see a parallel warning in verse 18a.

And then, you see the main issue that is addressed in 16b. You see the parallel of it, the main issue 18b. And then you see how Paul makes an assessment of what is going on in 17, and then you see the parallel assessment in 19.

So, if we are to read it in the way it goes, it will be like this. Let no one pass judgment on you—verse 16a.

18a. Let no one disqualify you. What is the main issue here? From verse 16.

The question of food, drink, and with regards to festivals and the new moon and light. Let no one judge you on this front. What is the main issue from verse 18? Those insisting on asceticism and worship of angels and going on in detail about visions who are puffed up without reason.

And by sensuous mind, do not let them disqualify you. Assessment. From verse 16.

17 gives that assessment. These are a shadow of things to come. But the substance belongs to whom? Christ.

Assessment from verse 19. Not holding fast to the head from whom the whole body is nourished and knit together through each joint and ligament grows with a growth that is from God. What is going on here is those who are likely to disqualify you don't hold fast to that which is important.

Ignore them. Paul would then go on to discuss this subject matter in detail. So, let's look further from verses 16 to 23.

How this discourse unfolds. Well, verse 16. He begins to point out in clarity the character of the false teaching of their teachers.

They actually like to talk about dietary rules and Jewish holidays. Interestingly, they emphasize ascetic disciplines. And they are very interested in food.

Who doesn't like food? But they seem to push the boundaries of food too far for us. And so, they talk about food as well. And they focus some of their discussions on angels.

They spend a lot of time talking about visions and dreams. Oh, I don't know if you've been to some of these spiritual churches. You hear some of those.

Be careful. I'm not saying they are false teachers. But be careful when you see these signs because that is exactly what Paul is saying was happening in the church at Colossae.

Arrogance comes along with this. Nowadays, even then, if you think it's a new thing, There's nothing new under the sun.

Those who were doing that will come in and assume that they are superior Christians to those who are not involved in such. So, they were puffed up in the arrogance. I like to call this ignorance in arrogance.

They have no connection to the head. Verse 19. That has to be clear.

They have no connection with Christ. The one whom we read about in high Christology. The one through whom we have been reconciled.

And the one we have received. They have no connection with him. In fact, they seem to promote worldly rules.

Paul will highlight a very strong critique of this sort of behavior from verses 20 to 23. Let's look at a test since you died with Christ to the elemental spirits.

The elemental spiritual forces of this world. Why? Why as though you still belong to the world do you submit to its rule? In other words, since you died with Christ, why do you behave as if it doesn't matter? Why are you subjecting yourself to the dictates and the influence of these deceivers and false teachers? They come in and say, do not handle. Do not taste.

Do not touch. These rules, which have to do with things that are destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Pause.

Do you remember when he says, as you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, being rooted, be founded and established him? And then he goes on to say, as you were taught. Do you remember that line? Now, he said, you have to be careful with these guys here.

They come with merely human commands and teachings. You were not taught that way. Don't yield to a different form of teaching.

Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom. They look smart from the outside. With their self-imposed worship, their false humility, and their harsh treatment of the body.

But they lack any value in restraining sexual indulgence. So, looking at the end of chapter two, I leave you with the question of thinking, why? Why, as though you still belong to the world, do you submit to the rules? Mu answers or addresses the question of why pretty well. Paul's point is that believers no longer count the world as their true home or as the place that dictates who they are or how they are to live.

By dying with Christ, we have been set free from the elements of this world. And we no longer, therefore, belong to the world over which they rule. How foolish then to continue to submit to the rules of this world.

Why do we think we will need something else other than Christ? In fact, we don't need anything else other than Christ. It is from this platform that Paul is going to go forward and say, now let's talk in plain language. I told you not to allow yourself to be judged.

And I told you not to allow yourself to be disqualified. But there are more things I want you to know. And now, we are moving from what we have been calling in scholarship, sometimes the indicative to imperative.

We are actually moving from giving you a wider theological framework to actual ethical things you need to live your life by, which requires personal responsibility on your part. It doesn't require some kind of teacher to teach you. Oh, you need to do this. Now, doing what is required of you, the tangibles.

So, let's begin to look at chapter three. And let me quickly switch to chapter three here. So, looking at chapter three, before we reach chapter three, I would like to give you the scope of how this discussion continues and the four basic outlines we will be following in trying to understand chapter three.

One is a call to develop a heavy mindset. Two is a call to kill and strip off the old. These are very provocative words.

I tried to translate Greek literally so that you would understand its force. Instead of saying the call to put to death, I want you to understand the nuance of how the imagery is conveyed in the Greek. That is something that is really, really bad that needs to be killed immediately.

It's not, you know, let's decide how do we put this thing to death? How do we get it sick for two weeks before it dies? No, it's bad, kill it. It is also a call to strip off the old, using the clothing metaphor of wearing a jacket and actually saying, strip it off because that is how people see you.

And you are wearing this old rugged stuff that doesn't look really good. Strip it off. So that will be the second part we'll be looking at from verse five to 11.

As we continue with the next lecture, we'll be looking at the call to put on the new self. Again, notice it is what we do. Not what God will do for you this time.

On the basis of what Christ has done, this is what you should do. Lastly, looking at chapter three, all the way up to verse one of chapter four, I think it is supposed to be long together. We'll look at the Lordship of Christ in the household of believers.

Before we read chapter three, let me draw your attention to some major contrasts that you should keep in mind as we read the text. You will see from the very beginning that there is a sharp contrast between the heavenly mindset and the earthly mindset. So, Paul is going to actually challenge the Christians or the believers at Colossae to develop a heavenly mindset and not live by an earthly mindset.

That which is earthly, in this sense, is that which is carnal. That which is ungodly, that which is unchristian. That which is heavenly corresponds to the Christian calling.

It is that which is of Christ. It is a life worthy and pleasing to Christ. Paul will still use a very, very typical ancient Greek rhetoric that calls for contrastive patterns to make a strong statement and use another strong contrastive pattern, and he will actually call to put to death.

And then he will contract you to make alive. Definitely, you don't want to hang around with skeletons. And things that belong to the dead column have to be in the dead column.

But to make alive. Paul will go on in chapter three of this passage to make another interesting contrast. I told you to use the clothing metaphor to strip off the old and to put on.

The new. Now, let's begin to look at the first part of the outline. I am keeping all these contrastive patterns at the background.

And let's begin to see how this discussion is developed from verse three. If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on the things that are above. Not on things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Set your minds on things above. And setting your minds on things above places you this time not with Christ, not associated with Christ, not behind Christ, but in Christ.

And Paul will begin to depict very interesting imagery. By identifying with Christ in his victory over death, one may now set their minds on things above. Because that is where the right things that are worth living for reside.

That is where the true hope. If you remember, in chapter one, I reminded you to underline or observe the word hope. And how it appears several times, perhaps three times, in chapter one alone.

The heavenly realm is where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Let's pause here. For Western students following this course, this may sound weird to you.

What does it mean to sit at the right hand? I don't know a lot about some Asian countries or Latin American countries. But definitely, for those of us who were raised in African rural settings, you know that when the chiefs of the town come together, the paramount chief sits in the middle. The next in command to the paramount chief sits in the position of authority by the right hand.

And then the others follow. You may also know, as it may be in the cultures you are familiar with, that the left hand is not a hand that is clean, a hand that is used for anything good. This is not so far removed from the concept, a Jewish concept, and a Greek concept referring to the right hand of authority, the right hand of primacy next to the person of authority.

Christ is seated in the heavenly realm, by the way, not on the left side. He's seated on the right side, on the right-hand side of God. He is in the place of authority on whose behalf? Your behalf.

So, as believers in Christ, their lives are now hidden in Christ and in God. Look at verse three again; it is a very interesting expression so that we may conceptualize it. If you like, call it the coconut dynamic.

For you have died, and your life is hidden in Christ, in God. So, the image will be like this. You have died, and this is God, and actually, your life is hidden in Christ, who is surrounded by God, and you are tucked in there.

Double security. Relax. Relax.

This is a concept illustration, and you don't want to stretch it into some kind of theological connotation. The main point is that developing a heavenly mindset places the believer in a secure place with Christ. On that note, the believer can then continue to develop this mindset that, in the end, will bring glory to God in a significant way.

Douglas Moo, in trying to explain this concept right, so Paul suggests that at the present time, our heavenly identity is real but hidden. We have certainly not been physically transported to heaven. Nor do we who have belonged to the heavenly realm look any differently from those around us who still belong to this world.

Verse four affirms that this will one day change. In the meantime, and sorry for my spelling on the screen there, our true status is veiled. And though we may not look any different than those around us, Paul's point in this context is that we certainly need to behave differently.

It is on this note that he will make a strong statement from verse five. Verse five, in Greek, actually puts in the imperative, in other words, command, put to death, that expression in a phatic position, put to death. Therefore, now that you know you are in this place with Christ and you are developing this heavenly mindset, put to death.

By the way, it is within your power, by the grace of God. Again, Paul is not saying by the grace of God, and I'm just trying to make it a little bit softer for you here. It is within the believer's power to put to death. Therefore, what is earthly in you? What do those earthly things look like? Wow, they look something like this.

Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, covetousness, which is idolatry. Wow. On account of this, the wrath of God is coming.

And in this, you once walked when you were living in them. But now, you must put them all away—anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth.

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here, there is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all. Let's begin to look at this a little bit more closely here.

Put to death what belongs to your earthly nature. And you'll notice that the list has mostly sexual sins. We'll look at that.

Now, get rid of or strip off detrimental behavior. A close look at the list will show that they are mostly speech-related, how you speak. You also see another imperative there to put off the old practices and put on the new ones.

And for the new, the new self is being renewed in another area, knowledge, which I've been talking about quite often in this lecture. The new nature is so new that it transcends the ethno-racial divide that they had known prior to becoming followers of Christ. Religious and social boundaries are broken in the new community or the new self because all are now one in the new self under Christ.

So, let's begin to look at this list one by one. First, we must consider earthly nature and what needs to be put to death. Notice I said they are mostly sexual.

It says, first, the earthly nature, the things that the flesh is struggling with, is sexual immorality. In fact, the word is an umbrella word that can carry the sense or explain so many forms of sexual immorality. The Greek word can be translated as fornication or sexual immorality.

It can be translated as promiscuity. It has all those sexual things in there. And then, we begin to see language that sounds more Jewish in connotation, which normally is also used for sexual conduct and impurity.

The word can be translated as uncleanness. The uncleanness in the sense of sexual impurity. Put to death.

You can do it. The church in Colossae is susceptible to the influence of forages if they actually make these things happen in their midst. They should be put to death dead last.

Last is sexual desires inherent in the body that drives the individual. It is interesting that you may find that Paul will go on sometimes to use the word greed instead of last to show the greed that drives one sexual passion to go after somebody's wife. Here, he says, put to death last, put to death evil desires, and then he will add now the Greek one at the end and say, put to death greed, which is idolatry.

This greed sometimes carries the sense of just covetousness as greed for money, greed for more things, greedy as we know in English as greedy. But often, when it is used on the list of sexual vices, it carries the sense of greed for someone's spouse, greed for someone's sexual partner. Paul says it is within the church's power to put to death so that the church can work together.

I mentioned to you that what to strip off is basically a list of different forms of anger. Maybe you have seen yourself behaving like this before. Can you imagine a community of believers who don't know how to address differences, how to address issues that emerge, and who allow anger to fill and consume their being? Paul says in terms of the way they look on the outside, he uses how sometimes I call it a static model in terms of what you are wearing.

So imagine Paul is saying, when I see what you are wearing with your jacket like me, actually what I am wearing is actually making me look a certain way, looking like I am angry, I am full of anger, rage, malice, slander, and as far as this filthy language in terms of anger that bursts off with all kinds of words and anger that is followed by falsehood, Paul says, you know what? Strip it off. Strip it off. It is within your power to strip it off by the grace of God so that you can be the person God wants you to be.

But before we go on, let me actually touch on this verse a little bit. The forms of anger listed here will be brought up again in Ephesians. There, I will unpack some of them one by one to you.

But you want to know that some of the languages used here in Greek convey the sense of anger that is harbored on the inside. And some of the anger, that is, anger, is expressed in a violent way. Some of the words here carry the sense of anger that has some of this malicious intent that once one becomes angry, one gets to do all kinds of things that are full of malice so that somebody will be hurt more.

Here, it is amazing that Paul is not saying God is going to do it for you as we will see in Ephesians, where what we call divine passive, place yourself in a place where God can take this from you. In Colossians, you should strip it off.

It is within your power. He then goes on in verse 11 to actually highlight what is happening in the new self. In this new community, some boundaries are breaking, and these boundaries are worth noting.

Here, it is clear there is no Greek, Gentile, or Jew. In other words, the ethno-racial divide that within the wider culture could prevail no longer should exist for those who know Christ. Let me give you a quick background about cultures and city dynamics in the ancient Mediterranean world.

The closest city to Colossi is 120 miles away, a very big city by the size of the ancient world called Ephesus. Colossi, Hierapolis, Laodicea, and the tri-cities form a good hub for all kinds of multicultural activities. You want to note that the Jews did not like the Greeks too much.

By culture, the Jews are likely to be circumcised. Most of the Gentiles will be uncircumcised. They may even make a mockery of those who are circumcised.

We have evidence to the effect that in a culture where sometimes there are public bath events when the males go and have a public bath, and they discover that some men are circumcised, they actually humiliate them because they actually form a minority. But within the Jewish religious framework, they are Gentiles. They are unclean.

They are not part of the covenant. So, there are all these divides in their camp. Religiously, the Jews worship one god, whereas others may worship multiple gods and add magic and all forms of religious activities to their way of life.

The Jews did not like the Gentiles because they are unclean. Think about Gentiles as non-Jews. But when it comes to the non-Jews, think about the Greeks.

They were the occupiers of the world. They led the world before the Romans. Think about the love-hate relationship between America and Great Britain as one who lived and has been brainwashed by the education system of Great Britain.

I can tell you the funny dynamics of the love-hate relationship between the British and Americans. Of course, the British Empire is non-existent. America is a world superpower.

And there's sneaky jealousy underneath there. So, when Americans are around, Americans, they are the most horrible people. They don't have manners, the British would say.

They talk loud in the restaurants. They don't know how to say please and all that when Americans are not around. Americans, they are great.

They are boisterous. They can express their opinion. They are wonderful.

And you begin to see this love-hate relationship. You see, the Greeks were the world superpower before the Romans. Their pride was crushed when the Romans took over.

The Greeks did not like Romans so much. The Romans did not like Greeks so much. And so, think about a church that has Jews, Greeks, Romans, and people from other parts of the world in there.

Paul says, with all these differences you have brought from the background into the church, for those of us in the church, there is no such distinction between Greek and Jew anymore. Going back to the beginning of chapter one, I reminded you that Paul refers to the church as brothers. And he reminded them that, in fact, their father is God.

So, they belong to a new family now. And there's no such distinction anymore. In verse 11, he goes on to point out that there are not even such distinctions between circumcision and circumcision.

So, Jews should not make too much, too many problems as a result of this. Scholars seem to believe that the false teachers who are trying to cause all these commotions from inside come from Jewish backgrounds. They are likely to have the number one item that distinguishes them from the Gentiles.

We are circumcised, and you are not. We are the descendants of Abraham and you are not. We are the holy people and you are not.

You worship more gods and all that. Paul says, in Christ, there is no difference between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. He goes on to make an interesting distinction that I should draw your attention to.

Before I go to the decision between Barbarians and Scythians or Barbarians or Scythians, let me remind you about the issue of slave and free. The free person is the one who is not a slave. A slave could be bought, but a slave could work their way out by paying the price that was used to buy them.

Slavery, as I will highlight later on in the ancient world, is not race-based. Most slaves are of the same race as their masters. But there is a sharp social distinction between the slave and the free.

The free had all kinds of rights and privileges that the slaves did not have. A slave's top desire is to fulfill the will and the wishes of the master. Paul says there is no difference between the slave and the free.

But hold on to this thought because when we get to the end of chapter three, we will see a dynamic I will draw your attention to. So, saying there is no such distinction does not mean you cease to be a slave, and one ceases to be free. He's trying to say this should not be a bone of contention in the church.

Barbarians is another way of saying you are not a Greek. And it's almost a diminutive expression for those who are non-Greeks as barbarous. So, you think about someone somebody else is trying to humiliate, and Paul says, you know what, there is no such humiliating game in the church.

In fact, there are no barbarians or even Scythians. Actually, you look at the president as all Scythians. Why Scythians? This is the only place we find that expression.

Paul is provoking the church. When I'm in Ghana, I like to say that Paul is saying there's no difference between the Akan and somebody from the Gomba or the Numba lands in northern Ghana because the Akans are proud and arrogant. And actually, they look down on those in the north.

And for instance, I am an Akan. And it was always my dream that never came to pass to marry a Nodna from that point, just to make a statement to my people that in Christ things are different. Well, it turned out differently.

Sense of arrogance when I'm in Romania, I would like to draw my Romanian friend's attention that it is like saying this Romanian and the gypsies that they think to cause a lot of problems; there's no such distinction between them and the gypsies. The Scythian was the lowest of the low. And Paul says even in Christ, those are not to be set aside.

They are one. To explain this, we'll try to explain the nuance of this Scythian because its origin is from a specific place where people, their geography, and their ethnicity betray them. And so there's every reason to look down there.

We will say Scythian refers to a person who lives in Scythia, a region just north of the Black Sea. The evidence we have from ancient sources suggests that the Scythian was generally thought of to be the epitome of unrefinement and savagery. In other words, they are uncultured, they are uncivilized, they are downtrodden, and everybody should look down on them.

Paul says for those who are in Christ, there is no such difference. Dan may add that the point again is clear. In Christ, there is no place for any such racial, ethnic, or cultural contempt among peoples and individuals.

And even the wild, repulsive Scythians are not ruled out of courts. In Christ, it behooves the community of faith to live and work together and to exemplify the life of those who have received Christ and are working according to what they have believed in Christ. This brings me to verses 12 to 17.

Put on, then. Put on. Now we have put off, we have killed, and now we can put on. I like that. Maybe I should put on my jacket.

So now I have put on. Put on them as God's chosen ones. This time, not that old rugged stuff, as God's chosen one, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another.

And if one has any complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all, above all this, put on love. Put on love, which binds everything together and creates perfect harmony.

Put on. You see, Paul will emphasize the need to put on. But how he's going to ask them to make this happen? It's not going to be so easy.

You see from verse 12 he makes sure that he establishes their identity. He reminds them about who they are first before he actually calls for how they should be seen in the public arena. Putting on, in this metaphor, is literally putting on a character, a behavior, an outlook, a demeanor that will be seen by the public as well.

Putting off the old rugged is changing your garment from the way people see you. Now, putting on the new is transforming your public image, as well as the public side. And that has the benefit of actually giving you honor in society as well, and honor to the community you belong.

He will challenge them and root it in their identity. He will then call for mutual responsibility so that they may have solidarity in the church. He will then teach.

He will ask for teaching and admonishing one another, mutual support if you like, and challenge them to integrity. Let's unpack these four areas quickly. A challenge that is rooted in identity.

He says this is who they are as their identity. Their identity is actually rooted in their place as the chosen of God. They are holy or set apart, and they are beloved.

Imagine working as the President of the United States and going to meet other people as the President of the United States. Would you like to meet people as the President of the United States with the clothing you would wear in the morning for your gym? Or would you like to meet them in your jammies just because you have a new jammy and you want to show off? Will that be worthy of who you are and what you represent? Paul's point is that you are not ordinary, and you should not appear in that fashion. You are not like how you used to be.

Your new identity is a people chosen of God, set apart, and you are beloved. I have often said you can't give what you don't have. You can only give part of what you have, and part of what you have is what will be a blessing to other people.

If you have not received love, you cannot give love. You cannot foster community and solid relationships if you have not experienced a loving relationship. Perhaps you may do that, but you may not do that well.

Paul's point is you are special, and you have actually been loved. You are beloved, so you can actually foster this loving relationship in the community. It is on that note that he calls for mutual responsibility.

Looking at the imperatives and instructions he gave there, let there be, this is what I want you to do, let there be compassion. What is the contrast? You remember stripping off anger, malice, rage, slander. This is what should be.

That is what should not be. Compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness. Wow, some of these words are so rich we can spend a whole day trying to unpack them.

Patience is not just waiting for your turn. Patience here carries the demeanor to be able to be relaxed in the waiting, and sometimes it is the demeanor of being able to relax while waiting for something that you wish or hope could turn out soon. The demeanor that is put into motion, that says, I will not be irritable.

I will not be actually showing my frustrations to other people, but I will keep my inner calm while waiting for that, which I'm expecting to happen. The word for endurance or forbearance, which is one of those words I like in Greek, is the ability to bounce back when it almost looks like all is gone. I have often used it in terms of soccer, and sorry if you are a baseball fan or an American football fan, I'm still trying to catch up with the rules of the game, but I'm a kind of soccer guy.

I used to play soccer. It was like playing in my team, and we were down 3-0, and we had five minutes to go. The ability to say we are down 3-0, and we are not ending the game defeated.

The inner strength and certitude or fortitude that make us say, you know what, we can gather, or we can enlist our prowess to work hard and draw the game or win the game. That ability to bounce back, move forward, and win is in Greek the word that is used for hypomoni. Endurance or forbearance, the ability to get that happen.

He says, let there be that spirit among you. Let you give up too quickly and throw in the towel, and he'll go on to talk about compassion. Just in case it's a word we take for granted, think about the gospels.

Think about how often in the gospels Jesus comes across someone or some people, and we are told he had compassion on them. Another word in this list that you may be thinking about may think it's cool when somebody actually shows it to you. You may not think it's cool when you have to act on it.

It's forgiveness. I like to see that word on a list like this because you know what it means. Even among believers in Colossae, and so among believers even in the 21st century, people hurt people, and people offend people. People make people angry, and people need to be forgiven.

In that, Paul says, let there be forgiveness. And it should not be a simple forgiveness. It should be the kind of forgiveness you were forgiven in Christ.

That is when you deserve the punishment of your wrongdoing. The kind of mercy that was shown to you is the comparable mercy and forgiveness that is required of all the people in the community of faith. Paul will go on to ask for something else, to seek.

To seek, to make sure, to work hard, to do everything, make sure there's no discord in the church, but concord. People are not actually all over the place fighting and bickering, causing all kinds of problems. Have you actually experienced arguments in a church setting? Have you seen Christians disagreeing with each other at a board meeting? Or maybe you have not seen that.

Have you seen a bunch of Christians actually sitting somewhere so irritated? Is that what you will call the new self? In fact, if you're looking at Colossians, is that what you identify with people who are set apart or holy? Who is beloved? Who is chosen by God? Think about that. Paul says it is within their power. They should pursue it.

They should seek it. And he calls them to let love bind all together. And they should let the peace of Christ rule where? In their hearts.

You know, years and years ago, it sounds like I'm 100 years old, but years ago, I learned the hymn, and I don't think I even knew English well enough when I was being taught that hymn. And the first stanza of the hymn went like this. Peace, perfect peace.

In this dark world of sin, the blood of Jesus whispers peace. Peace within. Paul's point is that peace is here, peace that should be from the heart.

Let the peace of the Prince of Peace rule in your heart. And if that so happens, be thankful. Be grateful.

Let a virtue of gratitude be evident. And let the word of Christ dwell in you. As we've been looking at chapter three so far, you are beginning to realize how Paul is narrowing down.

Now that we know the nature of false teaching, and now that we know that Christ is everything that we need and not all that the false teachers have to offer, we have this responsibility. We have a responsibility to break down ethno-racial boundaries. We have a mutual responsibility to throw away anger and rage, to let sexual immorality and all that is associated with that be rid of in our midst.

We should actually kill them. And we should put on as our new identity good qualities that are worthy of the children of God. The evidence of that is that we bear mutual responsibility in which we see compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance, and forgiveness.

Where we see unity conquered, not discord. Where we see love and where the Prince of Peace takes his place in the hearts of those who believe in Christ Jesus. And where gratitude and certitude, rooted and grounded in the word of God, is evident among us.

I hope you are enjoying this discussion on Paul's letter to Colossians. I hope you are also being challenged to think about your own life as a Christian. I have not ceased to internalize some of this material as I think and teach them.

I have realized the more I do that, the more I become a better Christian. I have not arrived yet, but I am growing. I hope in the course of this biblical studies lecture on prison epistles, you are also growing side by side with us.

Thank you very much for following this course.

This is Dr. Dan Darko and his lecture series on the Prison Epistles. This is session 5. Take a Stand, Colossians 3.