

How To Live The Overflowing Life

Colossians 3:15-17

Pastor John Miller

I want to read the text, follow with me beginning in verse 15 of Colossians 3. Paul says, "Now let the peace of God or of Christ actually rule in your hearts, to which you are also called in one body," which is a reference to the church, the body of Christ, "and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in Word or Deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

Someone said, "The surest sign that we are carrying a full bucket is wet feet." The surest sign that you are filled with the Spirit and filled with Christ is Christ will overflow from your life. You know, the moment you get saved, you're on your way to heaven. But what Christ wants to do is actually make us more like Him right here, right now, before we get to heaven. This is called sanctification.

You need to understand that we have first salvation or justification. We're declared righteous before God. That starts a process. It's called sanctification. We're the Spirit of God through the Word of God, through circumstances in our life, the sovereign hand of God. is molding us and shaping us and making us more into the image of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And then the third phase is glorification when we actually get to heaven and we see Jesus face to face and we will be like Him for we will see Him as He is.

So it begins with grace, ends in glory, but we're in that middle period right now where He's sanctifying us. So Paul wants us to overflow with Christ in our hearts and in our lives. Now from verse 8 to verse 14, in this chapter of Colossians, Paul has commanded us to put off the grave clothes of the old life and to put on the grace clothes of the new life.

Now in our text today he gives us three commands which are to control the expression of the overflow of that new life. We're going to look at them one at a time.

The first is that the peace of Christ rule, verse 15. The second is that the word of Christ dwell, verse 16. And the third is that the name of Christ be glorified, verse 17. So let's look at one at a time. Go back with me to verse 15. The first thing that we are to do, and these are all imperatives or commands, they're not options, they're commanded of us in the Scriptures.

He says in verse 15, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which you are called into one body, and be ye thankful." Now, I want you to know four qualities of this peace if you're taking notes. Number one, it is a divine peace. Notice in verse 15, it's called the peace of God in my King James translation. But if you have a different translation, most likely it's rendered that the peace of Christ, which actually is probably a better translation, the peace of Christ.

And you say, "Well, how is it that you can have the peace of Christ when it says the peace of God?" And the answer is very simple. Jesus is God. Amen? In the Bible it says there's one God and He's manifested in three persons. Not three gods, one God in essence or nature. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. But He is three persons.

This is what we know as the trinity or the triune nature of the God of the Bible. So we believe in the trinity. So this is the peace of God, whether it be from the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. They are all divine beings. But it's the peace of Christ in the Greek translation that should rule in our hearts. So it's God's peace which flows from Christ.

Now, before we were converted or saved or justified, we were actually at war with God. You know the Bible says the carnal mind is an enmity with God. He cannot be subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So when you were unsaved, unregenerated, you hadn't been born again, you were actually at war with God. This is why you are war with people. You couldn't get along with others because you're not right with God.

When we get right with God in salvation, then we're able to get along with others in sanctification. So the peace of God is a different than the peace with God. So, but it is a divine peace. So at our conversion, we have peace with God. Romans chapter five, verse one, says we have peace with God through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But now, before we get to heaven on earth, we can have the peace of God.

This is the experience of God's peace in our hearts. So we get saved, we have peace with God, and then we trust Him, put our faith in Him, and we put our confidence in Him, and then we begin to experience the peace of God in our hearts and in our lives. In Philippians chapter four, verse seven, Paul says, "The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep," it's a military word, it means a guard or to garrison your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. So you have peace with God and you then can have the peace of God.

Now, you can't have the peace of God until you have peace with God. You have to be born again. D'Amoudi said, "A little faith will take your soul to heaven." I love that. It doesn't take a lot of faith. Just the object of your faith must be in Christ. If you have a little faith but you're putting it in Christ, it'll take your soul to heaven. But a lot of faith here now will bring heaven down to your soul.

A lot of people on their way to heaven, but they're not experiencing the joys of heaven here now in this world. So God wants His peace to reign in our hearts. This is why Jesus said in John 14, verse 27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Not as the world give I unto you, let not your heart be troubled." He said, "Let not your heart be troubled nor be afraid."

Now I want you to notice the second thing about this peace. Not only is it a divine peace from God, which brings us into harmony with God and then able to get along with others, but it's a ruling peace. Look at what it says in verse 15.

"That the peace of Christ," what? "Rule in your heart." This word, rule, is an athletic term,

which means to act as umpire. It means God's peace should arbitrate all our activities and our decisions. I don't know if you've been watching the World Cup soccer or football, whatever you want to call it, and it's kind of fascinating to watch. But you notice sometimes the umpire, the referees, will actually go watch in a screen to make sure of a call they make on the field.

Once they get that information to make the call, the subject's over. This is what it means. It means to umpire, to referee. So God's peace wants to rule or guide or decide what is right and what is wrong and what God's will is for our lives. Someone said God's peace should arbitrate all our activities and our decision. Not our anger, not our passions, but God's peace.

So when you want to know the will of God, you look for the peace of God, you look for the word of God, and you look to the hand of God, which is the providential care of God. Now you gotta be careful when you're talking about knowing God's will, and you sometimes kinda have a false peace. You want something so bad that you go, "I have a peace about it."

The will of God will never lead you in a way contrary to the word of God. And you'll never have peace from God if it's contrary to the word of God. If you come to me and say I want to get a divorce, there's no biblical basis for you to divorce. I'm just not happy with my marriage, I want a divorce. You know what the Bible says, the I know it, the Bible says, but I have a piece about it.

No, you do not. You don't have a piece about it. That's like saying I have a piece about robbing the bank right now, I prayed about it. (congregation laughing) And I just have a piece that God will watch over us and we'll make a great kill. And I'm gonna give him 10% so no problem. You don't do that, it's contrary to the word God, I've had people say that to me. Well, I have a peace about leaving my wife.

I have a peace about leaving my husband. No, you don't have a peace. That's a pseudo-peace. That's your flesh. So God's peace will never leave you contrary to God's word. So we always want to consult the word of God. And we're going to see that in just a moment. So God's will, God's peace, God's word. How important.

Notice thirdly that it's a piece of unity. I love it in verse 15. He says, "To the which also you are called." And he mentions one body, that's the church, the body of Christ. So peace with others in the church. So peace with God, salvation. Peace of God, sanctification. Brings peace among the saints in the church of God, the body of Christ. with others in my marriage, in my family, and in my home and on my job. A position of peace before God brings a practice of peace within the church.

So very, very, very important. So we have to have God's peace. Now let me mention a fourth thing about this peace. It's a peace that brings thanksgiving. A peace that brings thanksgiving. and be ye thankful. Notice that verse 15. It makes us thankful, a thankful heart. Now in the Greek it would literally read, and thankful continually become.

So we need to learn, it's an imperative, a command, make a decision to be thankful. Now I

have to solemnly confess that this is a challenge for me. God's blessed me in so many ways, but I have a natural tendency, which is not good. I have to walk in the Spirit to overcome this, to look on the negative side of things. The glass is only half full, that's not right, that's not right. If you wanna know if something's wrong, just ask me, I'll let you know. (audience laughing) My wife calls me Mr. Negative. Pray for me.

So I have to really think and work difficult to be thankful. But when we think about God's blessings and grace, then we can respond with thanksgiving. God's grace and salvation brings me peace with God and peace with God, which is in turn bringing me a thankful heart. And a thankful heart brings me into harmony with other people. Other people and circumstances. When I put this in the practice, I let God's peace, Christ's peace rule in my heart.

It brings me into a thankful, joyful relationship with other people and with my circumstances. I realize God is in control. God is sovereign. Be thankful for that. Right down in 1 Thessalonians 5/18 where Paul says, "In everything," yes it says everything, "Give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus." Jesus. Now, he didn't say "for" everything, but he said "in everything." See, that's what peace ruling in my heart brings me.

No matter what my circumstances, God's in control, and I can have a thankful heart. A thankful person acknowledges the working of the sovereign will of God in their life and in their circumstances. So in everything, we can give thanks. Ask yourself, "Am I overflowing with God's peace "and a thankfulness in my heart?" Here's the second command for the abundant life, verse 16.

Let the word of Christ dwell, look at it with me. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly and in wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another. In Psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Now, what does Paul mean by the word of Christ? I'm glad you asked. Let me answer that. The word of Christ speaks of the recorded scriptures in the gospels where Christ speaks.

Let Christ's words in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John fill your heart. Let the words of the gospel about Christ fill your heart. But I also believe that the word of Christ here There is a reference to, it's synonymous with, the Scriptures or the Bible. It's considered the Word of God. So this phrase, the Word of Christ, is the Word of God because the Bible points to Jesus Christ. It's all about Him. So it's the Word of the Lord, we say.

God's Word is to do what? Notice it, verse 16, "Dwell in us." Well, the word dwell means "settle down and be at home." It's more than just reading the Word, it's letting the Word have its access to every part of your life. It's letting your heart become Christ's home. You know, we many times have a guest room in our homes and a guest will come for a few days, Lord willing, not more than that, (congregation laughing) and stay in your home, right?

Or maybe a family member comes to stay at your house, but you don't want this to become their home. But isn't it funny that we use this expression when we have company, we'll say,

"Make yourself at home." We don't mean that. You really want me to make myself at home? I just take my shoes off and throw my socks wherever they land, they're going to land. You know what I mean to go to the refrigerator and open up, drink milk out of the carton?

Go into the bathroom, brush my teeth, spit on the mirror. I'm making myself at home. No, what we really mean by that is just sit there and don't move. Don't go anywhere. But I love this idea that we're to open our hearts to God's Word and let it be at home in our hearts. In every facet and aspect of our lives, what we think, what we say, what we do should be controlled by the Word of God.

Read Psalm 1, blessed or happy is the man and the woman who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, doesn't stand in the way of sinners, doesn't sit in the seat of the scornful, but their delight is in what? The law of the Lord. That's another figure of speech or reference to the Scriptures. And in his law, word does he what? day and night. And he should be like a tree planted by the rivers of water who's leashed on it wither and everything he does shall prosper because the word of God is made itself at home in your heart.

Letting your heart become Christ's home. Not just reading the Bible but letting God's word control your thoughts, your attitudes, and your actions. Notice it says there in verse 16 that it should richly dwell in us, in wisdom, richly and all wisdom. It means that we must highly prize richly our value or appreciate God's word by reading it, believing it and obeying it for our lives, for our home and for our church.

I love the way Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount with the wise and the foolish builder. The wise builder was a man who heard the sayings of Christ and obeyed them. And when the wind came and the storms beat upon his house, it stood strong.

It didn't fall under the test of life. But the foolish man heard the Word but didn't obey it. So you can hear the Word, but you don't let it take control of your heart. You don't let it have every room of your life. You need to open every area of your life to the influence of the Word of God so that Christ can be at home in your hearts.

Now when the Word of Christ dwells in us, verse 16, it happens that we richly receive it, how by teaching and admonishing, and by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Now the teaching mentioned in verse 16 is the positive instruction of the truth of God's Word. We must not only receive God's Word, we must receive the teachings and the instructions of the Word of God. And then secondly, admonishing through the Word, which is a warning or correcting.

God's Word corrects us or warns us or admonishes us. In 2 Timothy 3, verse 16, it says this, "All Scripture is given by what? Inspiration," which literally means in the Greek, it's God breathe. means God breathed, and not only breathed, but breathed out. God breathed out the very word of God, which is good for doctrine, reprove, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

Doctrine is what is right. We read the word to know what's right. Reprove is what is wrong. It

tells us what is wrong. Reproves us. Correction, it tells us how to get right. So what is wrong, what is right, how to get right. Instruction in righteousness, 2 Timothy 3, 16, is how to stay right. So this speaks of the sufficiency of Scripture, that it has every facet of my life under its control.

It teaches me what is right, what is wrong, how to get right, how to stay right, and how to live right to the glory of God. Now notice verse 16, the phrase "one another." So in the church, the body of Christ, where to teach and to admonish one another. How in Psalms? In Psalms is the Old Testament, God's playlist of songs by which we can worship the Lord. Hymns. These are songs of praise to the glory of God.

You know, even in the scriptures, there were songs that they sang that were put in scripture, 1 Timothy 1. 15.

Paul says, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all the acceptations, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. I love what A. W. Tozier said. He said, "Every Christian should have a Bible and a hymnal, two most important books for the Christian, the Bible and the hymnal. And we should read the Word of God, and we should sing the hymns of God, worshiping and praising the Lord." And then he mentioned spiritual songs. So hymns, psalms, spiritual songs.

Spiritual songs are all other songs that are spiritual and that edify the believer and glorify God and build you up. Charles Erdman said, "Songs use widely of many forms of poetry, not only of sacred but secular as well." Therefore, the word spiritual is added to denote the religious character of these songs. Now, if you want to listen to secular music, have a good time, that's fine. There's nothing necessarily intrinsically wrong with that unless the lyrics are blatantly dishonoring to God.

But why not take from the sacred songs, spiritual songs, that will edify and glorify and build you up in letting just these songs fill your heart? You know, when the script of God fills your heart, you begin to sing. Saint Augustine said, "Insisted that there are three characteristics of a hymn. It should be praise to God. It must be addressed to God, praise of God, excuse me, addressed to God. And thirdly, it must be sung.

Do you ever notice that when you get saved you want to sing? I didn't say sing good. You want to sing good, but you might not have a good voice. That's why the Bible says, "Make a joyful what?" Noise. You know that verse quite well. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. For some it's a joyful grunt. Or groan. Or bark. But it's coming from your heart. You're singing.

Verse 16, look at it with me. "With grace in your heart to the Lord." Isn't that beautiful? Christian singing. Christian is a singing religion. We sing because we've been set free. We sing because of the joy of finding God's salvation through grace and faith in Jesus Christ.

So Jesus puts a song in our hearts, and as Christians we should be singing and worshiping the Lord in the history of the Christian Church of revivals. Every time there was a revival in church

history, there was a revival of singing and worshiping God. Now, there are two things about singing in this text. I want you to note verse 16. We're to do it with grace in our hearts. That literally in the Greek would read with graciousness or because of God's grace.

So we sing because of God's grace out of gratitude. So when you think of God's grace and goodness to you, You respond by worshiping and singing to the Lord. You can always tell when you're walking in the Spirit, there's a song in your heart. When you're in the flesh, your songs disappear. Grumbling and complaining comes. So Lord, fill us with your Spirit. Give us joy and help us to be singing and worshiping you and worshiping you in spirit and in truth.

Now, I want you to hold your place here in Colossians. We'll be right back in just a minute. and turn with me to Ephesians chapter 5, and we're going to look at verse 18 to 21 because there's a wonderful parallel between being filled with the Word of Christ and being filled with the Spirit of Christ, or the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5, 18. The same result of in Colossians we find that the Word fills our hearts, speaking to one another, Psalms, him, spiritual song, is the result of being filled with the Spirit as it tells us in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 18.

Now again, another imperative. Negative. Don't be drunk with wine, wearing his excess. The Bible clearly forbids drunkenness or debauchery. But it commands us, verse 18 of Ephesians 5, "Be filled with the Spirit." This is a command. That means it's not an option, it's an imperative. In the Greek it's all inclusive. All Christians are equally to be filled with the Spirit. In the Greek it's in the present tense. It's actually continually being filled with the Spirit. And it's also in the Greek it's in what's called the passive voice. Let the Spirit fill you. And when that happens, you'll be joyful.

Verse 19, same as we saw in Colossians, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing, making melody in your hearts to the Lord. You'll be thankful, giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And you'll be submissive. Submitting verse 21 of Ephesians 5. ourselves one to another in the reverential fear of God. So don't miss this. The same results of when the Word of Christ fills our hearts are found when the Spirit of God fills us and controls us.

You cannot be a Spirit-filled Christian without the Bible. And if you want to be filled with the Spirit, Let the word of Christ dwell in you rich so you'll be joyful, you'll be thankful, and you'll be submissive. And I would point out that in Colossians, as well as in Ephesians chapter 5 right after this, he says, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands." Now some of the ladies are going, "This has been a great sermon till that verse was quoted. Now I'm not happy.

But then it says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." So in a marriage relationship we need the Word of God and we need the Spirit of God to be joyful, thankful and submissive. Now go back with me to Colossians chapter 3, so very important. "Is your bucket overflowing with joy and thankfulness in the name of Christ?" Now here's the third and last commandment in this text, it's in verse 17, and that is, "Let the name of Christ be glorified."

These are three imperatives that can control the abundant Christian life. Look at verse 17. "And whatsoever you do in word or deed, all that you do and all that you think and all that you speak, do all," here it is, "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God again, and the Father by Him. So, let Christ's peace rule. Let the Word of Christ dwell. And let the name of Christ be glorified.

Now what does Paul mean when he says the name of the Lord Jesus? He means his person and his character. He means the nature, person and character of Jesus Christ should be glorified. in and through our lives. There are three features involved in this command.

Look at verse 17. The scope of the command is whatever you do in word or deed. So everything we say and we do, the words we speak and the things that we do, all of life should be giving glory to God. Secondly, all of life should be lived under the authority and for His glory. So we should all be living for all the glory of God. Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Nothing should be permitted into our lives that cannot be associated with Jesus Christ. If you have to leave Jesus Christ out of some activity, you shouldn't be doing that. Interesting in verse 4. By the way, go back to, if I haven't mentioned it, go back to Colossians chapter 3. And back in Colossians chapter 3, verse 17. In verse 4 of Colossians 3, Paul says, "Christ who is our life." I love that phrase. Christ who is our life.

So all of life should be lived for his glory. "Giving thanks to God and who father by him." This is literally in the Greek, "Become thankful." Why? Because God is your Father. He's promised to take care of you. Isn't it great that Jesus said when you are worrying that you don't need to because you have a Father in heaven that knows what you need before you even ask Him. And He delights in taking care of His children.

So we're glorifying God who is our Father in heaven. But the thought that's important is, is He your Father? Because remember, when you're not born again, you haven't been saved, you're at war with God. God is not your Father. You're living in rebellion to Him. So you must submit to Him. You must receive Him. Realize that I'm a sinner. Realize Jesus died for my sins. And receive Jesus Christ and be born of the Spirit. and become a child of God and have peace with God so that I can then experience the peace of God in my heart and in my life.

So, three things. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. And then third, let the name of Christ be glorified. All of life is to be lived to the glory of God. Let's pray.