

Mortifying Sin Colossians 3:5-9a

INTRO: Chapter three marks a change of direction in this letter. In chapters one and two, we have the theology of the letter; and in chapter three and four, we have the ethical demand that comes after the theology.

Chapter three begins in heavenly places (vss 1-4). This is the believer's positional reality; and it then moves on to an exhortation to practical Christian living (vss 5-9). Verses 1-4 are positive; verses 5-9 are negative. Verses 1-4 are popular; verses 5-9 are neglected. The cry today is for a steady diet of positive themes, but we must remember that positive truths produce negative commands.

I. VS 5a, PUT TO DEATH THE OLD VICES

- A. "Therefore"- the force of this word is most important. Because the believers at Colossae shared in the death and resurrection of Christ, because their lives were "hid with Christ in God," because one day they will be revealed in glory with Him, they must put sin to death. They must kill sin. This is true of all believers. We must put sin to death.
- B. "Mortify...your members." The Greek word for "mortify" is *nekroo*; and it means "to put to death, to deprive of power, to destroy the strength of."
 1. Believers are to be firm; they are to be decisive; they are not to waiver; they must put sin to death.
 2. Believers must eliminate everything from their lives that is opposed to godliness (Rm 6:6-11).
 3. Only when we put to death the deeds of the body can we have spiritual fullness that God intends for us. There must be death to sin before there is abundant life (Jn 10:10). "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
 4. Here in verse five, Paul says: "Mortify [put to death]....your members." Why does he say this when in verse three he said: "ye are dead.....?" How can both be true?
 - a. Positionally and judicially, we are dead to sin.
 - 1- Positionally, we are in a state of perfection, without sin, wholly justified. We are justified for eternity. Romans 8:33: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect." We are made the

righteousness of God by faith in Christ (II Cor 5:21).

- 2- It is true that the believer has died to sin judicially (vs 3); now he must die to sin practically.
- b. The practical battle with sin must be waged throughout our lives on earth. Paul fought the battle of sin, and so must we (Rm 7:18-25).
 - 1- The inward man is alive (II Cor 4:16). He is a new creature (II Cor 5:17). It is the old man, the old nature, that we must deal with daily.
 - 2- Daily we must pull down the strongholds of sin and go forward in faith (II cor 10:4-5).
- C. "Members....upon the earth." We are to reckon ourselves as dead indeed unto sin (Rm 6:11).
 1. Fleshly desires want to dominate us, but we have spiritual power to slay those fleshly desires.
 2. We are not to yield our members, body parts, to sin. We must kill the sin associated with those members (Rm 6:13-14).
 3. Believers are to regard as dead all of their own fleshly desires and ambitions (Rm 12:1-2). We are to die to self.
 - a. Many of the battles that we have with sin occur because of our pride or self-centeredness.
 - b. To live the risen life, there must be radical transformation of the will. We must be willing to pray: "Not my will, but thine be done."
- D. In verses 5b-9a, Paul names sin. Some folks don't like that; they want the positive, not the negative. "No amount of positive talk about health will cure a ruptured appendix. The doctor will have to 'get negative' and take out the appendix. No amount of lecturing on beauty will produce a garden. The gardener has to pull weeds! The positive and negative go together, and one without the other leads to imbalance" (Wiersbe 103). Remember, truth out of balance leads to heresy. The sins listed in verses 5b-9a belong to the old life. They have no place in the new. These sins must be cut out. There must be a radical operation.

II. VS 5b, SINS OF UNBRIDLED PASSION

- A. "Fornication"- Greek *porneia*- can be defined as, "illicit sex,

adultery, fornication, etc.” We must mortify our members: morally because our limbs can be either used for evil or good, for the world or for Christ.

1. Chastity was a new virtue which Christianity brought into the world. In the ancient world, sex before marriage and outside marriage was the norm. In heathenism, it was accepted. A return to immorality is a return to heathenism.
 2. I Cor. 6:18 says: “Flee fornication....” Stay pure! The Christian ethic insists on chastity.
- B. “Uncleanness”- Greek *akartharsia*- means filthiness.
1. This speaks of impure living, loose living.
 2. Evil behavior begins with evil thoughts. Because of this, the battle with sin, especially sexual sin, begins in the mind (Mt 5:28).
 - a. Evil thoughts produce sinful behavior.
 - b. Pure thoughts produce righteous behavior (Phil 4:8).
- C. “Inordinate affection”- Greek *pathos*- meaning “depraved passion,” and referring to sexual passion set loose in the body. This Greek word is used in two other instances in the New Testament: I Thes 4:5 and Rm 1:26-28. Where it refers to the sin of homosexuality.
- D. “Evil concupiscence”- Greek *epithumia*- meaning evil desire, craving, desire for what is forbidden. This is the driving force behind a perverted life style. The definition of concupiscence is given in Webster’s 1828 Dictionary as: “to covet or lust after....carnal things....Unlawful.” This definition is found in Romans 7:7-8, 14.
- E. “Covetousness”- Greek *pleonexia*- meaning “greed, always, wanting more, whether it be more things or more pleasures.” Desiring what a man has no right to have.
1. Covetousness is idolatry because it puts things in the place of God.
 2. Ex 20;17: “Thou shalt not covet.”

III. VSS 6-7, THE CONDEMNATION

- A. “God’s judgment inevitably falls on those who practice these things in which the Colossian Christians had formally lived and it is certain to come not only now, but hereafter” (Thomas 109).
- B. Christians are delivered from their past ways; they are dead to sin positionally and are to put sin to death practically. Sin has no

place in the believer's life.

IV. VSS 8-9, SINS TO BE PUT OFF

A. Vs 8, There are certain things that Christians are to strip themselves of:

1. "Anger"- Greek *orge* is anger turned inward. It is long lasting, slow burning anger which refuses to be pacified and nurses its wrath to keep it warm.
2. "Wrath"- Greek *thumos*- is a blaze of sudden anger quickly kindled, quickly dying out, like a straw fire. Both "anger" and "wrath" are forbidden to the Christian.
3. "Malice"- Greek *kakia*- a vicious mind, an attitude of ill toward others, wickedness that is not ashamed to break laws, a desire to bring harm to others.
4. "Blasphemy"- Greek *blasphemia*- speech that tears down others, slander, gossip, injurious to ones good name.
5. "Filthy communication"- foul language, coarse talk, cursing, obscene language.

B. Vs 9a, "Lie not one to another"- Lying is a sin. A lie is any misrepresentation of the truth.

CONCLUSION: If you are a Christian, you are delivered from a life of sin and dissatisfaction.

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