Shedding Bad Behavior

Colossians 3:8-11

July 19,2026

I want to ask you to turn your Bibles to Colossians Chapter 3. We are looking at another vice list this morning, and we're taking another important step in sanctification. Colossians Chapter 3, the section we're in is Colossians 3:5 through 11, and last week we saw in Colossians 3:5 what sins we need to put to death, what sins we need to mortify and then verses 6 and 7 gave several reasons why we're eager to target those sins for termination.

This week there's another vice list, another set of sins to strip away from our lives and put off. So having put off the old man and having put on the new man we're to be formed into Christ's image, we're to be clothed in him, we're to wear what he wears, walk as he walks, talk as he talks and this is a section that is about stripping off and shedding the old rags of the old man in order that the new man in Christ shapes us, shines forth from us, comes to characterize our lives; such that his personality, his virtue dominates our lives, our being.

And then through us, Christ glorifies God the father through his people. We are his temple, and he shines in and through us because he's the foundation. We are the stones within his temple, all being built up to glorify and praise and honor God. That's the plan. We're caught up in this tremendous, encouraging plan set before the foundation of the world, as we were confessing this morning. And the decree of God is that we would be stones in this temple, that we would be those in whom Christ forms himself and his character and shapes our lives and brings glory and praise to God the father.

Well, we want to return to the text and start by reading it. So let's go again back to verse 1 and read from verse 1 through verse 11, "Therefore, if you've been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God." And, "when Christ, who is our life, is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

"Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. On account of these things, the wrath

of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, lay them all aside; wrath, anger, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you put off the old man with its *evil* practices, and have put on the new man who is being renewed to a full knowledge according to the image of the One who created Him- a *renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, *and* freeman, but Christ is all and in all."

If we are to keep seeking the things above and keep our minds set on things above and not on the things that are on the earth, we have to put to death sin. We have to deal severely, directly, diligently with sin. We need to put off all sinful behavior and Paul is here outlining, what it is to kill sin and what it is to shed sin, what sins there are to kill, what sins there are to shed. And he gives us two lists of vices, one in verse 5 and another in verse 8 and as we said last week, these lists are related.

The first vice list in verse 5, "sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed." Covetousness is another word for that, "and that is idolatry." That has to do

with the desires, the ambitions, the drives of an idolatrous heart. And as we said, when the idolater is frustrated in trying to fulfill his idolatrous cravings, when his covetousness and his greed does not find its satisfaction, that sinner sins all the more. And those sins that come out of the life are outlined in the vices of verse 8.

So that's that second vice list, verse 8, "wrath, anger, malice, slander, bad speech." We're going to examine those in more detail today. Those sins, when they show up in a life, they never look good, do they? When they show up in public, when there's an article written about them, when there's a video that captures it, when a politician does it, in particular, or a celebrity, we look at those things that get passed around the Internet and we say, aha, everybody knows what those sins are.

Now, if someone were to come in to your home with a camera and take a video of you reacting badly, poorly, doing some of these things and post it on the Internet, you wouldn't want to go in public for a while. You may even want to, depending on the incident, you may even want to move, change zip codes. Even unbelievers recognize that that list of sins in verse 8, they can hide the stuff for a while in verse 5, but the stuff in

verse 8, even unbelievers recognize that's bad form. That's unacceptable behavior, losing one's temper, using foul language.

But for unbelievers in particular, rather than doing what's right, as God prescribes, I mean, what ought we to do when we sin in this way? We ought to humble ourselves, confess our sins, ask for forgiveness. But what do unbelievers do? Many of them, all of them, really, they try to sew fig leaves together, cover over their shame. In other words, the biblical word for that is they lie, they deceive, they try to cover up themselves.

This beloved ought never to be for the Christian. Never. Paul tells us and especially as we get to the end of this section, Paul tells us we're no longer separate tribes. We're not belonging to separate peoples. We're not just a bunch of individuals. We're not a bunch of separate families all coming together and it's the family that has dominance over the people of God. No, we're members, one in Christ, members of one another, joined to him. And so we desire to see and know and love the Christ who abides in each and every one of us. That's why we come together. We want to see him more fully manifest among us, in our midst, in one another. That's why we talk to each other the way we talk. That's why we confront sin. That's

why we exhort toward holiness. We want to see Christ fully formed in each and every one of us, because he is the best thing about every single one of us.

Sadly, this is not the way many today think, even among professing Christians. It's just not the way they think. There are so many who enter into churches today and they're, they're sitting as individuals, isolated and cut off from everybody else around them. They keep their own counsel. They hold their cards close to their vest. They don't let anybody in. They're guarded, not open. They're nice, but they're disingenuous. They're not sincere. They're not transparent.

There are many like that, religious, but they keep others at a distance because frankly, let's call it what it is, they know that if they let other people near, if other people get close enough to see the shameful sins that they have not overcome in their life, that they are defined more by anger than they'd like to admit, that they harbor self-centeredness and are driven by covetousness, even if it's a socially acceptable kind. They don't want people to know that.

They don't want to let go of former identities and loyalties: Greek, Jew, wealthy, educated, connected, social elite. They're pleasant enough people, religious people, they

give to charity, they do community service, but don't get to know them. Don't look too closely, stay on the surface. Just, just believe the image and all will be well.

The problem is with people that put on a religious mask, the corruptions of their hearts are not mortified. They're not only doing the people around them a disservice, they are killing themselves. The sinful attitudes that simmer beneath the surface, just waiting for the right provocation to break forth. When once that happens, instead of confessing and forsaking their sins, they deceive and avoid scrutiny and wade back into shallower waters that are more comfortable for themselves.

This is why mega churches thrive. People like that live in anonymity without anybody asking questions. They avoid scrutiny, accountability. This is why churches today are so much more like community centers and social clubs. This is the way of so much religion in America. This is what evangelicalism has become in the majority and make no mistake, beloved, this is not true biblical Christianity. It is not. It is a lie and a fraud. And we not only us have to be discerning about that, but we have to help other people be discerning about that too. We have to tell them the truth, even though we may lose friends.

So listen, beloved, the only way forward for true Christians is to shed all of that. To shed all the old ways of the old man so that the new man can emerge. We have to be cognizant of what we bring into the church from the world, and we need to shed that, if I could call it this way, shed that dead skin and then put on and wear the new robes that Christ has given to us. That's what this text is all about.

So, first let me give you two points, number one: Shed the dead skin. I know it's a gross picture, but write it down anyway. I want it to be burned into your brain, even if it makes you uncomfortable. Shed the dead skin. Look back at verse 8, "But now you also," or you yourselves, "lay them all aside, anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth." And then we'll add this in verse 9, "and do not lie to one another."

Now before we dig into the details, the key concept in this section comes in the second part of verse 9, beginning of verse 10. And it shows us not only that we must shed the old deeds of the old man, but I want to make it clear, Paul wants to make it clear, we are able to do so. We're not victims. We're not weak in this process. We have a new nature. We have the Holy

Spirit living in us. We have the Word of God to teach us, instruct us.

We have the example of the Lord Jesus to look at, and we have a heavenly father who is doing the work within us. We have the power of the Almighty Trinity to shed the old ways and the old life and the old skin and the old clothes and to put on the new man. End of verse 9, beginning of verse 10, he says, and this is like a statement of fact, it's not a command here, it's a statement of fact. "You put off the old man with its evil practices and you have put on the new man." It's a done deal. It's what God did for us.

This draws back from what Paul taught in Colossians 2:11. It's the outworking of this Colossians 2:11, new birth. This is the practical application of spiritual circumcision. He says there, "in him you were circumcised." Remember that means to cut around, cast off. "You were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in the removal of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ." And once that thing, what Paul calls the body of the flesh, once that dead skin is, once that's cut off, that thing is dead.

It's dead skin, right? No blood flow, no vitality and the only thing to do with that dead thing is dropping in the bin

that's marked biohazard, medical waste, and then destroy that thing. Who keeps it? Who wears it? So in Colossians 3:5, when Paul tells us to mortify our earthly members, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed, he's speaking about that remaining sin as if it were a body part; different body parts that need to be cut off, circumcised, castaway, rendered lifeless, powerless, killed, dead, mortified.

And now as we come to verse 8, we've got a bunch of behavior that shows up on the outside. And we got to realize in verse 8 that all these behaviors, they really do come forth from the heart. They start in the heart. There's an internal component to them, but they do become manifest at the surface in behavior that other people can see, in words that other people can hear. We can take a picture of it, take a video of it. We can record it on our devices. You can listen to it. That's what we're seeing in verse 8.

So 5 vices and they do kind of move from the depths of the inside and come out to the outside. Kind of think about this as a word picture of like a lava flow, you know, down in the crust of the earth, there's boiling, burning lava and then it kind of, in some senses, it can seep up out of the earth or in other senses, like with anger, the word anger here, it explodes in

some kind of a volcanic eruption or comes spewing out of the mouth like so much malice and slander and vile speech from our mouths. You got to get rid of all that. Get rid of it.

The command here, aorist imperative, it means there's an urgency to this; take immediate action. Do it and do it now. For the Colossians, for us Americans, too, these are dominant behaviors of our age, aren't they? Really dominant behaviors of any ungodly age common to the unbelieving. We see manifest evidence all over the Internet, all of our news feeds. We see this kind of behavior all the time.

But when we see these sins for what they are and when we see these sins showing up in our lives, when we find ourselves sounding a lot more like that crass politician or that that movie star or whatever it is, man, you want to rid yourself of them, like quick. You want to get rid of the dirty, filthy clothing; take that off, shed it. You want to strip it off like foul smelling rags that are headed for nowhere, but the trash.

So you must shed them, as I'm saying here, as dead, rotting skin that needs to be cast off far away from you, if you like. I don't like picturing myself as a snake. I don't like snakes. But snakes, you know, sometimes shed their skin and they leave it there and little kids come and pick it up and I say put that

nasty thing down. I don't like the skin. I don't like the body it came from. I want the whole thing gone. I'm prejudice from Genesis chapter 3, you understand, got a theological reason for it.

But you got to get rid of that stuff, cast it off and get it far away from you. So look at the first two verse 8, wrath and anger, wrath and anger. Some translations flip those around, anger and wrath, and that's because these two terms, *orge* and *thumos*, they're often used synonymously. They're used interchangeably, but when they appear side by side like this, we distinguish them from one another.

In fact, I was noticing that in the NAS, the new American Standard translation of the Bible, it used to be anger and wrath. Now in the LSB, they've kind of flipped that around, wrath and anger. I think they're recognizing what I believe to be the accurate way of looking at these is that they are distinguished from one another.

The first word, *orge*, translated in the LSB as wrath. I understand your translation may say something different, but here probably, wrath is a good translation. We're talking about a very strong human emotion, reaction of displeasure. It's like that burning inside of you. It's a burning inside of you,

whether it's over someone or something. It could be person related, it could be circumstance related, but it is like here, this word, *orge* is like a seething boiling kind of emotion, a burning indignation. That is the idea here.

The next word, second, *thumos*, it can be translated as either anger or rage. Rage is a really good word, because it kind of gives you the picture, but it can refer to the negative passion or emotion, that then, not only is down in the surface, but it kind of swells up, boils up, and then it kind of explodes outward in like a flash of temper, a sharp word, a violent outburst, and even sometimes can get physical.

Kinetic violent, the first form of unrighteous anger, that might never break out, it shows itself openly. It's more like a cold war than a hot war. Always there, always simmering, always seething. But rather than engaging in open conflict, *orge*, on human beings in an unrighteous way, it's a devious thing. It prefers a more subtle form of striking out, like the malice and the slander that come next in the list.

But if we treat these two together, both of these are really manifestations of unrighteous anger. Now, *orge* can be applied to God in the wrath of God. Never unrighteous, right? It's an indignation that's always there. This is talking about

human anger, human wrath. Okay, so we're talking about, in the human realm, in unrighteous ways, unrighteous anger.

The reasons for unrighteous anger in us are really legion. There's so many reasons. Anger over things not going your way. Anger over people who don't do what you want them to do. Anger over people who do what you don't want them to do. We're kind of fickle that way, aren't we? Maybe it's anger over losing some sense of control, that we feel, because we're fearful and we're anxious; we can't keep everything perfect and under control.

Maybe it's that we have selfish ambition, arrogance, conceit. We kind of move through the world as if everybody should simply bow before us. The world should do our bidding, and when it doesn't, watch out. Sometimes anger is more like a response to hurt, pain, personal offense, some unjust thing perceived that's done to you or when your pride is offended, there's anger. Sometimes it's because we take up the offenses of others, which can be an injustice, because we really don't know all the facts and so unrighteous anger is the result and instead of, "vengeance is mine saith the Lord," it's vengeance is mine saith me, myself, and I.

It's fascinating proverb, came across years ago that brings these two words together and then kind of identifies the root of

both of them. It's Proverbs 27 verse 4. Proverbs 27 verse 4 says, "Wrath is cruel, anger is a flood. But who can stand before envy?" Interesting, isn't it? That jealousy would be a superlative over cruel wrath and flooding anger; jealousy, envy- worse. This proverb describes the destructiveness of this negative emotion, that wrath is cruel, angry outbursts flail around without any restraint, not considering the consequences done to other people. It inflicts indiscriminate pain on other people. It's cruel, it thinks nothing about the consequences of the herd, of the infliction of pain.

Anger is a flood, it's destructive. When anger spills its banks, it causes great damage. And think about a flood trail of wreckage for miles and miles. The cleanup takes years and decades, and it's so, so costly. Think about that before you lose your temper. Worse, though, than angry outbursts, worse than the overflowing destructive floodwaters are envy and jealousy. These are subtle and yet very clear expressions of greed, and no one can stand before the ruinous power of envy because it is driven by greed and covetousness, which verse 5 says, "is akin to idolatry."

It is an expression of idolatry. We can illustrate by going back to that helpful imagery in James chapter 4, verse 1,

where he asked the question, "what is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?" In fact, we could say what are quarrels and conflicts, but manifestations of these sins in verse 8, "anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech," that are exchanged between two or more people.

It's exactly what James is talking about and James says these external manifestations of quarrels and conflicts come forth from an internal source. He says, "is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members." He answers his own rhetorical questions, saying this, you lust, there's an internal vice and you do not have, and that leads to the internal vice of anger, and then so you murder, that's the external manifestation, the angry act.

He says you are envious, again, an internal vice, that's greed driven, covetousness driven, idolatry driven. You're envious and you can't obtain, there it is, the frustration that leads to that internal vice of anger again. And so here's the external angry act: So you fight and you quarrel. James is wise, isn't he? Outlining this for us, so helpful. Again, the internal vices in the first list, verse 5, they all culminate in the greatest of all vices, which is covetousness. And covetousness,

as we know, is a violation of the tenth commandment, "Thou should not covet" anything.

So significant, that covetousness, which Paul identifies as idolatry, Colossians 3:5 bookends the first part of the ten commandments, points back to the idolatry at the beginning of those ten commandments, "You shall put no other gods before me," at the one end, at the other end is covetousness, which is idolatry. It's all a piece, isn't it?

So that's the first two, wrath and anger. Third word in Colossians 3:8, is malice. Malice, just, man sounds evil, scary, doesn't it? Malice. This is another attitude that flows forth from an angry and a resentful heart, because from wrath and from anger comes malice, which is a vindictive and a vicious kind of a sin. It's the word *kakia*, evil, wickedness.

As one author says, "this is a sin that is bent on doing harm to others. Seething in the veins of the man or the woman who is filled with malice is bitterness, a list of offenses or even one single major offense that they just can't get over. It's rehearsed, it's nursed, it's never forgiven, never forgotten. And it festers. And that wound oozes forth, this foul, toxic, poisonous venom into the veins of the one who has malice."

The only escape for this person. The only anecdote to this poison is forgiveness. Forgiveness sets the person free, and it's only a true Christian that can grant this forgiveness, because Christians have been forgiven of everything. Read the back half of Matthew 18 and you'll see, that is the Christian who can forgive, and it's the one who feigns forgiveness, but then does not forgive, that's the false Christian. That's the false professor.

For non-Christians and false Christians for social, cultural kinds of Christians, they find forgiveness really impossible to grant and to maintain, because they've never truly been forgiven themselves. Some of them, they've never really seen the need for forgiveness, because they judge themselves to be quite good, really moral, nice people. Others, they consider their own offenses minor. You just need to overlook it. I had a bad day. Come on, don't, don't make such a big deal of it. Don't be such a Pharisee and judge.

Oh, but if the same things done to them, all of a sudden they pour fuel on that thing and burn it into a great great fire, bonfire flame of offence, against themselves. Listen, those who do not forgive, those who nurse grudges, those who maintain a record of wrongs, no matter how mild mannered and

soft that they seem to be, listen, they are coddling a heart of anger. The heart of anger and wrath comes out in a seething form of this viciousness and it is a maliciousness and a pure evil.

Listen, you may try to let him off the hook, because you want to be gracious. Look at what Paul is saying here. Do you want to agree with Paul or do you want to be seen as kind and forbearing and just overlooking everything? You want to be more gracious than Paul is. Can you be? Paul is saying you have got to put this thing to the sword, cut it off yourself and cast it away. And you have to help others around you do the same thing. This is not good.

There's a fourth vice in this list. In Colossians 3:8, it's the word slander, translated slander. In Greek, it's the word blasphemy, blasphemy. The English translators don't put it as blasphemy because in English we reserve blasphemy as a word for slanders against God. We call them blasphemous, but it's the same word, *blasphemia*. When it's aimed at people, we call that slander. So I grant the distinction. I think it's a good distinction to make.

But when wrath and anger corrupt the emotions, the heart becomes poisoned. It turns malicious. We have malice in our hearts. We want to hurt other people, even if it's just ever so

slightly, even if it's just to knock him down a peg or two. Let him get a little bit of what's coming to them. And when that maliciousness pours forth from the lips or the pen or the keyboard or the text message or the post, in the form of slander, it's corrupt cousin gossip, that is the social vehicle for slander. It's how slander is passed back and forth.

But slander itself is an intentional smear campaign. It's a defamation of a reputation, what we might call a character assassination and the sin is to take a false, defamatory statement and then spread it around as fact, whether the speaker or the text messenger or whoever it is knows that the statement is false or not. Perhaps they're just negligent and not verifying the statement. Listen, that's slander. It's a sin before God.

Other synonyms for slander in the Bible: reviling, evil speaking, maligning, bad mouthing, all these are evidence of malice that is at work in the heart, flowing out of a bitter, poisoned heart, drawn forth from a well that dips into the furnaces of hell. And it brings forth anger and wrath to the surface and it burns people down. It destroys reputations, it burns relationships to ash and leaves a lot of pain.

Listen, as true Christians, we'd have nothing to do with that slander, nothing to do with it, nothing to do with slanderers either. We're not to call slanderers friends; Gossipers, buddies. We're to confront them because God hates slander. You want to know another Greek word for slander other than *blasphemia*? It's the word *diabolos*. We translate that word in Greek New Testament into English; we translate it the devil.

The devil is a slanderer from the beginning. You want to be a friend with the devil or do you want to confront and expose his slanders and his gossip? Because man, that is an insidious sin. I'd take an outburst of anger right in front of me any day over the destruction that is caused by slander and gossip, because you don't see that showing up for months or years. It is absolutely destructive. So, beloved, have nothing to do with those who commit the sin of *blasphemia*, those who practice *diabolos*, speaking like the devil speaks, whether in text messaging, social media, word of mouth, text message, gossip, whatever.

It is wicked and God hates it and Christians must have nothing to do with it. And by the way, don't let it come out of your own mouth either. And if you have, verse John 1:9 applies, right? "If you confess your sins, He's faithful, He's righteous,

He'll forgive you of your sins and cleanse you of all unrighteousness." What man or woman among us has not committed these sins, right? Need to understand that we're all guilty, "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." We all need his Grace.

The fifth vice, translated in verse 8, as abusive speech. It's a good translation, but we then want to ask, what is the difference between that and slander? I mean slander seems pretty abusive in speech doesn't it? Well, the word translated abusive speech is a compound word in the Greek and it takes the word that means ugly or shameful or disgraceful. So when I say ugly, shameful, disgraceful, think of low brow, low class kind of gutter talk. Something you might hear on a job site, something you might hear in a locker room, or these days, something you might hear in a political speech.

Take that word and then join it to the word for speech. So what we're talking about is dirty talk, filthy language, unfit for public hearing, public consumption, inappropriate among polite, genteel company. So my apologies to you truckers, but this is like cussing like a trucker, right? My apology to sailors, this is swearing like a sailor. Those sayings didn't come from nowhere. Okay.

I realize today when I say this, I'm really swimming upstream in this, because there are those people who are called cussing pastors, and they have brought this kind of talk into the church, into pulpits, and they justify it. And they count themselves to be very wise in their use of words and so if they use a dirty word, well, you just need to trust that they're using it in a wise way, very directed and targeted. And so you just need to trust they've got it under control and if you kind of mature to their level, you can cuss too.

Some pastors like to use provocative titles for their books, like *no such thing as bad words;* seen that title lately. It's all to sell more books. Do not listen to these blind guides. They want to draw you into their defilement and sadly, there are many who follow after that and they will share in their judgment. People like that, especially when they are in leadership, they lack the love to care or the wisdom to see that the discipline of the young and the immature tongue starts with taming the tongue.

We all know James 3 says, "if you tame the tongue, you've got the whole body in check as well." Start with the tongue. Start with how you talk, how you speak. This means shedding this uncouth, low class, low brow language. Folks don't do it and we

put this in the context following malice and slander. It's really to be seen here as kind of demeaning others with foul mouthed language, calling that boss of yours, who really gets on your nerves, or that co-worker or that person, that relative or whoever it is calling them that word, watching what you say, not only how you say it, but the specific words you use.

When you exercise that discipline, it grows you in carefulness and in discernment and that, beloved, is driven by love and that's good. You want to be concerned that our words are like apples of gold in settings of silver, that we want to make sure our language, it persuades people, that it's useful, that it's given a hearing. The tongue of the wise studies how to answer, the proverb says.

The Christian's mouth, like all parts of his or her body, is to be used as an instrument of righteousness. It's not to be a drain and a downspout for the sewer and sewage flowing out of us. We're to use our mouths for dignified words that are edifying and encouraging. Our mouths are not designed by God to spew forth anger, wrath, malice, and slander. They're certainly not to spew forth filthy language. Repent of that, beloved. Repent of it.

Heed Paul's command in Ephesians 4:29 where he says, "let no unwholesome word," he expands the thought beyond filthy language or abusive speech to unwholesome. The word is *sapros,* it means rotten, acidic, corrosive. So think about your mouth spewing forth acidic words that cut through steel. They're corrosive. They can land on something and maybe not make a mark right away, but given time starts to erode and cut through and corrode through the metal itself.

Think about your speech, think about your speech. Paul says, "Let not that talk proceed from your mouth, but only such as is good for building up what is needed." Think about what's necessary for the moment and use your mouth that way. The tongue of the wise brings healing, so it will give grace to those who hear. This all calls for us to be thoughtful people, considering each word, not just letting it fly, shooting from the hip. Venting is the worst thing in the world.

Now, all these sins, when they are discovered, when they're exposed, when they're pointed out, can be quite embarrassing, can't they? I mean, even, even the ungodly, they want to deny being found guilty of any of this, don't they? Defend themselves, excuse themselves. So what do people do when they're exposed? They lie. They lie and deceive, and lying here refers

not only to saying what's not true, it can refer to someone who is creating a false impression. It can refer to somebody who deceives others, misleads others by how they talk.

Look, people may dress up well, especially when they come to church, religious settings. They look good in church and carry themselves in polite ways and learn how to speak in smooth, gentle tones and give soft handshakes and little warm embraces and pats on the back, but try crossing them when they're unable to get what they want. See what happens next. When something happens that they don't want to happen, when emotions are unrestrained and feelings are prominent, look out. You will find an ugly, vindictive anger that simmers beneath the surface of their paper-thin skin.

And it is worse, beloved. It is worse in religious contexts because self-righteous pride hardens the heart and hides the sins behind a mask of hypocrisy. And when people who act like that and then try to cover it over when they're caught in sin and when the sin's been exposed or even, they fear that their sin might be exposed, that's when the lying starts. Pretended friendship, showing kindness covers over a bitter, unforgiving spirit. Words of flattery that hide critical spirits and create a net for the feet, a trap.

Blame shifting, counter accusation, suspecting you of false motives and hidden agendas, because that's what they are practicing themselves and they suspect that it's in you too. Gossip shifts into high gear, framing a false narrative, garnering support, sympathy, casting aspersions as they leave you behind. That's what lying looks like in the world and among false believers. That is old man behavior, beloved, old man behavior, have nothing to do with that.

Christ was not like this at all, so have nothing to do with it. This has nothing to do with the new life in Christ. Obviously, this is how the world is. This is how sinners in the world are. But tragically, we far too commonly find this behavior among professing Christians. And beloved, it is tolerated among us, tolerated among evangelicals, tolerated among God's people, because they don't want to be seen as not nice. You know what's not nice: Gossip, slander, malicious talk. You know it's not nice: Abusive speech, filthy talk, dirty jokes, that's not nice. And you pointing it out? Loving. You've got to be loving.

All these vices, verse 8, "wrath, anger, malice, slander, filthy and abusive language, lying," all these things, they characterize the world that we're living in and typify what we

know and experience of the things that are on the earth, not the things that are above. None of this is in heaven where Christ is at God's right hand. Since that's the case, have nothing to do with them, have nothing to do with them.

As I said earlier, all these things you must lay aside like dirty, filthy clothing. You have to strip it off like foul smelling rags. You have to shed it and cast it away like rotting dead skin. So having shed the dead skin of the old man on the other side of this, we must let the nature of the new man emerge. Or we can put it this way in a second point number two: Wear the new robe. Wear the new robe.

Wear the new robe. You've got to shed the dead skin of the old man, so you do. You can wear the new robe of the new man, so that that robe becomes what characterizes you. That robe is what everybody sees, and it's not marred by any stain, any old rag sitting on top of your shoulders. The new man is a shared character. It's resident in the virtues of Jesus Christ. It takes the same shape. It bears his resemblance.

As I said earlier, we're no longer to be separate tribes, separate families with separate interests. We are one in Christ. We're united in him. We're members of each other and this is why, by the way, we're not to lie to one another. The command,

do not lie to one another. Actually, it's different than the previous two commands, verse 5, verse 8, those two commands, this command, do not lie to one another, is in the present tense. And this is in a form of a present tense prohibition, which makes it a general precept.

I mean, Paul in the same expression, in language and the syntax here, he could be saying, stop the practice of lying that you're doing all the time. But remember, he'd not been to Colossae and Epaphras had come and reported about this church to him and it is a good church and we see the evidence of that all through the first chapter as he gives thanks for them. He's not talking about the Colossians have some particular problem with lying all the time.

So this is not, stop the habit and the practice of what you're doing right now, which it could be translated that way, but that's not what's happening here. This is in the form of the other way this can be taken depending on context, and the context here warrants it. This is a general precept, just period. Christians ought not to lie to one another. Do we agree? Right. Amen. Unlike the previous commands that are in the aorist tense, which assume that the Colossians do have sins on those lists that they need to kill and put off.

The prohibition against lying does not assume this, it makes no comment as to whether they are lying to each other or not. Rather, it's just an expression. It's a strong, forceful, negative expression here, where Paul is commanding Christians just to live by a principle; if you could say in a positive way, live by a principle of honesty. Be honest with each other, be transparent. Let people in. Be open. Don't guard, don't stiff arm, don't keep people at a distance. That's old life behavior. That's old man behavior.

You want to draw people in. Let people in your home. Let people see your life. Why is that? Because the internal attitudes of the Christian life are so excellent, aren't they? The external behavior of Christians is beautiful. There's no need to hide what is plainly glorious. Who buys $1000 dress or $1000 suit and then hides it in the closet and keeps it wrapped up and never wears it out in public ever, ever, ever, ever. Don't let anybody see it. I'm going to put on my old ragged Def Leppard T-shirt, wear that out in public, get a really nice suit back there. Who does that? Nobody does, obviously.

We wear what's glorious and beautiful, and that's why we need to be open with each other. If you let your eyes scan ahead in the text, starting at verse 12, look at the beautiful

clothing that is to be worn by the Christian. Look at the robe, the glorious robe of new life in Christ. And maybe, maybe just this once you can, you can allow yourself to do a little window shopping in verses 12 to 15.

But the truth is this isn't window shopping, because these are your new clothes. Look at them. They're bought and paid for. They're given to you by the king himself, out of his own wardrobe and at no cost to you. What we put on in verses 12 to 15 is decorated in the finest of virtues, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, love and love is the perfect thread that weaves together the tightest bond of unity in that robe.

Show that to others, because it's not glorifying yourself. It's glorifying the dressmaker. It's glorifying the one who tailored the suit. We start then back in verse 10 and in verse 10 we see the skill of the divine tailor and we also see the pattern that he uses for our clothes. And then in verse 11, we see the versatility of this clothing line, fitting all shapes and sizes, but outfitting every single one perfectly, beautifully, accenting the form perfectly in a lovely way.

God is the one who weaves and sews together with the strands of golden threads to create this beautiful, glorious new

robe. It's finely woven, very, very expensive. In fact, it's invaluable. Our new clothes are made from the finest silk threads of the Spirit, and they're woven by the experienced hand of the great weaver himself, and they're sewn by the most skillful tailor.

So let's talk about the pattern and the product. The pattern in verse 10, the product in verse 11, the pattern of what we all wear in verse 10, and then the product in verse 11 worn by all. First, in verse 10, God follows his pattern to perfection. He gives us a set of clothes to wear which are worn and have been fully tested by his own son, Jesus Christ. Starting in verse 9, he says, "You've put off the old man with its practices." Verse 9; Then this in verse 10, "You've put on the new man who is being renewed to a full knowledge according to the image of the one who created him."

So what is this stuff here? Old man, new man; new man, a new man who's being renewed. What is this all about? The old man refers to you before you were born again. So that old dead man before you were born again, that man identified in Adam of this father Adam, dominated by the sin nature, under divine condemnation, heading for eternal hell. That's the old man, the old you. But that old man was crucified with Christ, Galatians

2:20. He no longer lives. The old man was buried with Jesus, united with him in baptism, Colossians 2:12, and he is no more.

The new man is identified with Christ, having been united to him by the Spirit in baptism. Not the physical ritual, but the spiritual reality here. Immersed in Christ, which is to say, joined to Christ in such a way that he is in you and you in him. God has imputed your sins to him, and he's imputed his righteousness to you. So the new man is so wholly united to Christ, identified with Christ, that when he was raised, we were raised Colossians 2:12; when he arose, ascended, and took his seat at God's right hand, Colossians 3:1.

Colossians 3:3, our life is now hidden in his. He is our very life. That's the new man. New life, new life, principle, new shape, new form, new expressions, new character, new nature. Now, however, though we have died, been buried, been raised up with him, the old man's gone and the new man is. Though we have ascended with him, spiritually speaking, fundamentally, positionally speaking, we remain in this world, in the unredeemed flesh, as Romans 8 talks about.

We're tested, we're tried, we're proven in our faith. We're put through suffering and affliction and turmoil and travail, all to strengthen our believing, all to purify the faith that's

in us. Burn, turn up the fires hot so that it clears away all the dross out of our lives, and so that face shines like gold from the inside out. What God has chosen for us by his good and his wise plan is to teach us to keep on shedding the old man deeds, the old man practices, to keep putting on the new man behaviors to be renewed. And all those behaviors, all that character, all that virtue is epitomized in Christ and it's shared with all of us. Again, this is why lying is so counterproductive.

Lying to one another is an empty cul-de-sac and a total dead end, because the new man is being renewed, present tense, ongoing, continuous, passive voice, something done to us, this renewal. It's talked about here, it comes about by the truth, not by lies, not by deception, not by falsehood, not by pretending. Truth, truth, truth, we need a truth with one another. The true knowledge of Christ, the full knowledge of Christ, the image of God is what shapes us and forms us and renews us; transforms us from the inside out.

This is why Paul said in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 13, this is why Christ gave pastors and teachers to his churches. It's all for the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith. Also this, until we all attain

to the full knowledge of the Son of God, that is to a mature man and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That's what we're growing into. That's what we're being renewed to. That's the form, the pattern.

The image is the image of, Colossians 3:10, is the image of Christ. He is himself, as Paul taught in Colossians 1:15. "He's the image of the invisible God." The one who created him in Colossians 3:10. That's not Christ; Christ is uncreated. The, him, at the end of Colossians 3:10 reverts to the new man. God is the one who created this new man, and that new man is patterned after Christ himself.

We see this in 1 Corinthians 15:49, "Just as we have borne the image of the earthly," that's the old man, "we will bear the image of the heavenly," that's the new man; the one who is patterned after Christ, the one whom God formed and created. He is himself the perfect image of God, and we are being formed by God in his image. We are those whom God foreknew, Romans 8:29 says, "And He predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son so that we would be the first born among many brothers."

When we look around and we consider ourselves, we realize, and we really only need to look in the mirror, don't we, to realize that a lot of renewing work still needs to be done,

right? We're not going to get there in this life. We will be transported, translated, perfectly renewed, instantly renewed, and transformed in glory, either at death or when Christ returns. But just because you're not fully formed now, just because you're not fully glorified now, just because this is a fight and a struggle, don't be discouraged. Don't let it get you down. Not one bit.

God is settling for nothing less in you, that perfect conformity to the perfect pattern of his son. He is going to form you to utter perfection and listen, the more you shed that old life, the happier you are and the more you put on the Lord Jesus Christ, the happier you are. So engage in the struggle, pursue the fight, fight the good fight. The pattern, the product is worth it.

So what is the product? Verse 11 talks about the product, what the divine tailor and weaver makes. This is what he brings forth in verse 11. This is what's created by God after the pattern of Christ. This is the product, the new clothing and it's so glorious, so beautiful, made of indestructible quality beyond all earthly value. And it's of such a case that all old man distinctions, meaningless. They don't matter anymore.

Looking at verse 11, remove the word in your reading, as you read it through, if it's, in this way, in your translation, remove the words in *italics*. In my Bible it's the word *renewal* or *distinction between* and let's read it simply for what it says. "There is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free, but Christ is all and in all." So it's just, "there is no" and then it goes through the pairs.

There are 4 pairs of terms. Commentators aren't in perfect alignment as to what exactly each pair of terms are supposed to convey, but the broad idea of unity in Christ, the unity of the new man in Christ, the clothing that all of us wear is exactly the same, and it identifies us as belonging to Christ and on this point, all the commentators agree. The first two pairs portray a comprehensiveness and you could say, the last pairs portray an inclusiveness. So comprehensiveness and inclusiveness.

The first two pairs, the comprehensiveness are using well recognized, widely accepted ways in the ancient world of dividing the world into two: first from a socio-cultural point of view and then from a socio-religious point of view. So for the new man in Christ there is no longer Greek and Jew. This

would have been a big surprise to both cultures, because each one of them took pride in their antiquity and they considered themselves to be the most ancient of civilizations and had pride of place over all the rest of the world.

So for the Greeks, they took pride in their philosophy and in their mathematics and in their political philosophy, their social organization. Athens, you remember, is the birth place of democracy. The Spartans, legendary, famous for war fighting. They had a history, the Greeks did, all the Greeks have of, campaigning successes and failures on the battlefield, on land and on sea. Lessons learned passed down from generation to generation. Lots of money, lots of taxation. They Hellenized the world. That word means they made it Greek. Greek in language, koine Greek was the language of Paul's day.

For the Jews, their pride went even deeper. Pride in the revealed Word of God through Moses, pride in theological purity, monotheistic excellence, the revelation of the true and living God to Moses and then to them and all through the Prophets and the Law. To the Jews belonged, as Romans 9:4 says, the adoption of sons, the glory of the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple service, and all the promises. The Jews saw themselves, Romans 2:19, as guides to the blind, as lights to those in

darkness, as correctors of the foolish, as teachers of the immature.

They had in the law of Moses the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth. We realize that the Jews were not altogether wrong about that. For from them is Christ according to the flesh, Romans 9:5, who's God over all, blessed forever, Amen. Their fault is in taking pride in that. Their fault is in not being humble, grateful.

Paul says the clothing we wear, it's not Greek clothing and it's not Jewish clothing either. We're not all to become Messianic Jews, completed Jews. We're not to look at that as the pinnacle of all existence. We're not to look like that, act like that. No, it's the new clothing worn by Christ, shared by all who are in Christ and with all who are in Christ. It's a brand-new identity, comprehensive Greek and Jew, the whole world.

Another description of comprehensiveness. Circumcised and uncircumcised also divided the world into two, but religiously, in a socio-religious way. But Paul says in Ephesians 2:14, in Christ that division is gone. That dividing wall of hostility had created a religious barrier between the clean and the unclean, between the pure and the impure, the qualified, the

unqualified. That barrier has been obliterated in Christ, destroyed, broken down.

Paul goes further in the next two pairs of terms to talk about the inclusiveness, not just the comprehensiveness of this clothing that we wear, but the inclusiveness that all can wear it, even the worst of the worst and regardless of rich or poor. He goes even further to include the barbarian, the Scythian, and this would have shocked the senses for those reading Colossians for the first time. It's kind of like, if Paul, writing to us would have included the Taliban and ISIS; kind of shocking our senses.

These non-Greek uncircumcised people, the Barbarians and the Scythians were viewed by Greek and Jew alike as utterly uncultured uncouth tribes of babbling savages is what they were. The word Barbarian, *Barbaros*, refers to the tribes who live in what we now call Europe. And the name was given to make fun of the way they talked. Bar, bar, bar, bar, bar, bar, bar, so it's like to say, it sounded to the Greek and to the Jew.

The spoken languages sounded to the Greeks as a stammering and a stuttering and like unintelligible baby noises. So the Greeks, they've been conquering these people and dominating these people across Europe for centuries. They had no regard for

them. They turned them into slaves. The Scythian tribes were even worse than the Barbarians, a kind of barbarian, but they were worse. They were notorious. They lived north of the Black Sea in what's now Ukraine and southern Russia. And the Scythians were fearsome warriors. They fought on horseback with Chariots. They were expert bowman, dreaded warriors, fierce, frightening.

When they won their battles and they won some famous ones too, against hordes of Persians who vastly outnumbered the Scythians. And yet, due to their skill on horse and chariot, and due to sniper like accuracy with their bow, they defeated far larger armies than themselves, because they were fast and they were accurate. So when they defeated their enemies in battle, Scythians used to take the scalps of the dead and then attach those scalps to the scales of their armor and walk around like that, displaying the hair of those that they had killed. Pretty gruesome image.

They lined the skulls of defeated kings with gold and used them as goblets for drinking their wine. No one liked these guys, no one like the Barbarians or Scythians. And when they were taken prisoner, the Scythians and turned into slaves, they were made a mockery of in the plays of the Greeks. They hated them so much. In Christ all these old distinctions are erased.

All the history is gone and forgotten. The new man no longer dresses as a stupid barbarian. He no longer wears the scalps of defeated enemies on his clothes like the savage Scythians. He dresses now in the garments of Christ, in beauty and in glory.

Socio economic distinctions of slave and free, that neither prevents nor aids someone in wearing the garments of Christ. Those distinctions also are gone, all inclusive, no matter your class, no matter your bank account, no matter what you have or don't have. What good news, it's no longer a slave class in Christ. Those who are the property of other men, who are treated as subhuman, who are valuable for work and for profit alone. Remember Aristotle's famous saying, "a slave is a living tool and a tool is an inanimate slave."

That's how they thought, no longer a slave class, no longer a free class either, those who are self-ruling, autonomous, wealthy. "For he who was called in the Lord while a slave," 1 Corinthians 7:22 says, "is the Lord's free man." And "likewise he who was called while free is Christ's slave." This is not a levelling of all class, but in elevating of all of us to the very glory of Christ, who is the King of all kings and the Lord of all Lords. We could wear his clothing.

In Christ there's no class system; there's no have and have not. There's no proletariat class to rise up and revolt against the Bourgeois. No more struggle, no more rich and poor, no more marked by different clothing and distinguished by finer things in life, separated from the low brow people who live on the cheap. No longer those distinctions, they do not matter.

There's no one group looking down on the other, one considering itself higher and better, and the other envious as it looks up and resentful. None of that, for in Christ were to put on, and wear with joy and with gratitude, the splendid garments, the clothing of the King. Mary J. Harris says, "Paul's point is that in the new humanity, just as old practices were abandoned, so too traditional distinctions are obliterated, whether they be racial, ceremonial, cultural, or social." The reason, end of verse 11, is because "Christ is all and in all."

Now some, that may strike you as the sound of pantheism that God is all or panentheism that God is in all, but that is not what Paul is saying. The context here makes the point very clear. Paul is talking about putting on distinctive characteristics of Christ, about losing all former distinguishing marks which have ceased to have relevance and are totally unimportant.

Christ is God's anointed, his chosen one, and God has made this Christ, who is the God man, only one like him, divine nature that took on human nature; he is all, as if to say he's really all that matters. He's really all our focus, all our hope, all of our fixation, all of our joy. And he is not only that, but he is, in all. He's not only just the external object of our affection, he's the indwelling internal drive of all of our ambition, giving us joy and hope and satisfaction.

He indwells all of his people and no matter who they are, no matter where they've come from, no matter what they used to boast in or what they used to be ashamed of, Christ is indwelling each and everyone. So beloved we're to abandon the past, having put off the old man, separate from our former life, from our former people, and take on all the marks of our new identity in Christ.

We're to embrace the king, put on the new man, wear Christ's garments, live out his character, learn his language, learn his culture, receive a new culture and abandoned our own. It's what Ruth said to Naomi, I'm not going back to my people, I'm not. Where you go, I'll go. Your God will be my God. I'm not taking on my old people, my old family, my old gods. I'm

abandoning all that, leaving it behind. I am adhering with you to the true God, the true and living God who is Yahweh.

Want to close this morning by reading from what I think is a fitting, Psalm. But it's Psalm 45 and it's a tribute to really the king. It's one of the songs *Of the sons of Korah*, a Maskil, and it says in the title, it's A Song of Love. Listen to this.

"My heart overflows with a good theme; I address my verses to the King; My tongue is the pen of a skillful scribe. You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon your lips; Therefore God has blessed you forever.

"Gird your sword on Your thigh, O Mighty One, in Your splendor and Your majesty! And in Your majesty, ride on victoriously, For the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; Let your right hand teach You awesome things. Your arrows are sharp; The peoples fall under You; Your arrows are in the heart of the King's enemies.

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You've loved righteousness and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your companions." and "All your garments are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia;

Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made You glad. Kings' daughters are among Your noble ladies; At your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

"Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear; Forget your people and your father's house;" and "Then the King will desire your beauty. Because He is your Lord, bow down to Him. The daughter of Tyre will come with a present; The rich among the people will seek your favor.

"The King's daughter is all glorious within her chamber; Her clothing is interwoven with gold. She will be led to the King in embroidered work; The virgins, her companions who follow her. Will be brought to you. They will be led forth with gladness and rejoicing; They will enter into the King's palace.

"In place of your fathers will be your sons; you shall set them up as princes and all the earth. I will cause Your name to be remembered from generation to every generation; Therefore the peoples will give you thanks forever and ever."

Our Father, we thank you for such a beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is glorious. Majesty, power, might, beauty, and those who are united to Christ are also arrayed in glory and majesty and beauty. Embroidered work, stitched with

the telling and the pictures of the deeds that you have done in our lives. We thank you so much for giving us such a glorious gospel, that is comprehensive to reach everyone and inclusive to include us all, no matter what our background is.

We want to shed the old behaviors, all those old sins and practices. We want to live as honest, transparent people before you, before one another. We want to bring each other close. We want to see each other's lives, know each other well so that we can love more deeply, more fully, show brotherly affection, and serve one another in the joy of Christ. So we pray, father, that you would impress this same heart and spirit out of the text on each every one of us, and let us strive to give ourselves holy and fully to you. We love you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we want to live our lives to the praise and the glory of your grace in Him. We pray this. Amen.