

A Life Ruled by Christ: Colossians 3:15–17

Day 1 — Let the Peace of Christ Rule

Read: Colossians 3:15, Colossians 1:19–22, Romans 5:1, Ephesians 2:13–18, John 14:27

Paul does not tell us to create peace. He tells us to let the peace of Christ rule. That matters. Christian peace does not begin with our ability to stay calm, keep everyone happy, or avoid uncomfortable conversations. Christian peace begins with the cross.

Colossians 1 says Christ made peace “by the blood of his cross.” We were not naturally at peace with God. We were alienated, hostile in mind, and guilty before Him. But Christ came, obeyed, suffered, died, and rose again. Through Him, sinners are reconciled to God. That means peace is first a gift before it is ever a command.

But Paul does not stop with peace between God and us. He says we were called to this peace “in one body.” The peace Christ purchased vertically must rule us horizontally. If Christ has reconciled us to God, we cannot treat reconciliation with one another as optional church décor. It belongs to the furniture.

This does not mean peace at the expense of truth. It does not mean ignoring sin, dodging hard conversations, or pretending everything is fine while bitterness quietly builds a guest house in the heart. Biblical peace is not fake politeness. It is the reconciling power of Christ governing real sinners in real relationships.

So the question is not merely, “Am I a peaceful person?” The question is, “What rules my heart when I am offended, overlooked, corrected, disappointed, or wounded?” Is it the peace of Christ? Or is it pride, self-protection, resentment, or the need to win?

Christ made peace by His blood. Now He calls His people to live under that peace. Not to earn His love, but because we already belong to Him.

Reflection Questions

1. What tends to rule your heart when you feel offended or overlooked?
2. Where do you need to let Christ’s peace govern your response instead of pride or resentment?
3. How does remembering your peace with God help you pursue peace with others?

Practical Application

Before responding to someone who frustrates or disappoints you this week, pause and ask: “What would it look like for the peace of Christ to rule my heart right now?”

Prayer

Father, thank You for making peace with me through the blood of Your Son. I confess that my heart is often ruled by pride, resentment, fear, and the desire to be right. Teach me to live under the peace Christ has purchased. Help me pursue peace without compromising truth and speak truth without abandoning love. Let the peace of Christ govern my heart, my words, my relationships, and my place in the church. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 2 — A Thankful Heart Is Harder to Divide

Read: Colossians 3:15–17, Colossians 2:6–7, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18, Psalm 103:1–5, Philippians 4:4–7

Three times in three verses Paul brings up thankfulness. That is not an accident. “Be thankful.” “With thankfulness in your hearts to God.” “Giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Thanksgiving is not a decorative Christian phrase we stitch onto the end of religious thoughts. It is part of the spiritual climate where peace, worship, and obedience grow.

A grumbling heart and a peaceful heart do not live well together. One of them eventually changes the locks.

Discontent feeds conflict. When I believe I am owed more than I have received, I become easily offended. When I forget grace, I become entitled. When I stop giving thanks to God, I start keeping score with people. Suddenly, every slight feels larger, every disappointment feels personal, and every unmet preference feels like injustice.

But gratitude softens the heart. Thanksgiving remembers what grace has given. I have been forgiven. I have been loved. I have been reconciled to God. I have received mercy I did not deserve. I have Christ, His Word, His church, His promises, and His presence. That does not make suffering painless, but it keeps suffering from becoming the only story I tell myself.

Thankfulness also protects the church. A thankful church is harder to divide. Not impossible, of course—we are still sinners, and sinners can turn almost anything into a competition. But gratitude reminds us that the church is not built around personal preference. It is built around Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Paul’s call to thanksgiving is not shallow positivity. It is gospel realism. Life is hard. People disappoint us. The church requires patience. But grace is greater than our grievances. Christ has given us more than sin, suffering, or disappointment can take away.

Reflection Questions

1. Where has discontent been feeding conflict in your heart?
2. What specific evidences of God’s grace have you been overlooking?
3. How might thanksgiving change the way you view your church, family, or difficult relationships?

Practical Application

Write down five specific reasons to thank God today. Make at least two of them related to people you are tempted to complain about.

Prayer

Father, forgive me for the ways I grumble more quickly than I give thanks. I confess that I often keep score with others because I forget how much grace I have received from You. Open my eyes to Your mercy. Teach me to remember Your forgiveness, Your provision, Your patience, and Your love in Christ. Make me a thankful person, not in a shallow way, but in a gospel-rooted way that brings peace to my heart and blessing to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3 — Let the Word of Christ Dwell Richly

Read: Colossians 3:16, Psalm 119:9–16, 2 Timothy 3:14–17, John 17:17, Luke 24:25–27

Paul says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Not visit. Not pass through. Not sit politely on a shelf until Sunday. Dwell.

The Word of Christ is the gospel message concerning Christ, given through the apostles, grounded in Scripture, and centered on Him. The Bible is not a scattered pile of religious advice. It is one unfolding story of redemption that finds its center and fulfillment in Jesus Christ. He is the One promised, pictured, preached, crucified, risen, reigning, and coming again.

So when Paul says the Word must dwell richly, he is calling for more than Bible familiarity. Many Christians have access to Scripture everywhere. We have printed Bibles, study Bibles, Bible apps, reading plans, podcasts, and coffee mugs with verses on them. And yet a person can have constant access to Scripture and still be spiritually malnourished. The issue is not access. The issue is indwelling.

Does the Word of Christ shape our thinking? Does it correct our assumptions? Does it confront our sin? Does it comfort our suffering? Does it govern our worship, speech, homes, habits, fears, ambitions, and relationships?

When the Word dwells richly in the church, the church becomes healthier. Paul says believers teach and admonish one another in all wisdom. The Word does not only come from the pulpit, though preaching matters deeply. The Word also fills conversations, discipleship, encouragement, correction, prayer, songs, homes, and friendships.

A Word-filled church is not an audience watching religious professionals do ministry. It is a body where members help one another hold fast to Christ.

The church does not grow beyond Christ by looking for something newer, deeper, or trendier. The church grows deeper into Christ as His Word richly inhabits His people.

Reflection Questions

1. Does the Word of Christ merely visit your life, or does it dwell there?
2. What area of your life most needs to be shaped by Scripture right now?
3. How can you help someone else hold fast to Christ through His Word this week?

Practical Application

Choose one verse from today’s reading to carry with you throughout the day. Read it slowly, pray it back to God, and look for one conversation where you can encourage someone with biblical truth.

Prayer

Father, thank You for giving me Your Word. Forgive me for treating Scripture casually while expecting spiritual strength. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in me and in my church. Use Your Word to correct what is false, heal what is wounded, expose what is sinful, and strengthen what is weak. Teach me to love Christ more deeply through the Scriptures and to speak Your truth with wisdom and love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 4 — Singing the Word with Thankful Hearts

Read: Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:18–20, Psalm 95:1–7, Psalm 100:1–5, Hebrews 13:15

Paul connects the rich dwelling of the Word with the singing of the church. That means congregational singing is not filler. It is not background music. It is not the warm-up act before the sermon. Singing is one of the ways the Word of Christ takes root among God’s people.

When we sing, we sing to God. But we also sing to one another. We teach when we sing. We admonish when we sing. We confess truth together. We remind the weary saint that Christ is faithful. We remind the doubting saint that grace is sufficient. We remind the tempted saint that sin lies and Jesus is better. We remind ourselves that God is worthy, even when our emotions are limping behind.

This is why songs matter. Music puts doctrine into our mouths and often into our memory. Many believers remember songs long after they forget sermon points. Slightly painful for preachers, perhaps, but we’ll survive.

Not every emotional song is spiritually healthy. Not every popular Christian song is fit for gathered worship. The question is not merely, “Do I like this song?” The better question is, “Does this song help the Word of Christ dwell richly among us?” Is it true? Is it clear? Is it centered on God’s glory and Christ’s work? Does it help the congregation sing with understanding and gratitude?

Paul also says we sing “with thankfulness” in our hearts to God. That does not mean every person will express worship the same way. Some people are naturally expressive. Others look like they are waiting at the DMV, even when deeply moved. Personality is not the point. The heart is.

Sometimes the most faithful singing comes through tears. Christian singing does not deny sorrow. It confesses that Christ is worthy in the middle of it.

Reflection Questions

1. How have the songs of the church shaped your understanding of God and the gospel?
2. Do you sing as a spectator or as a worshiper who is also encouraging the body?
3. What truth about Christ do you most need to sing into your own heart right now?

Practical Application

This Sunday, sing with intentional faith. Pay attention to the words. Sing to God, and remember that you are also helping your brothers and sisters confess the truth.

Prayer

Father, thank You for giving Your church songs that carry truth into our hearts. Forgive me for treating worship as background music or judging it mainly by preference. Help me sing with faith, understanding, and thankfulness. Use the songs of the church to make the Word of Christ dwell richly among us. Let my worship honor You, encourage others, and deepen my love for Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 5 — Everything in the Name of Jesus

Read: Colossians 3:17, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 12:1–2, Philippians 2:9–11, Titus 2:11–14

Paul closes this section with one of the most comprehensive commands in Scripture: “Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.” That does not leave much wiggle room. And by “not much,” we mean none.

“Word or deed” covers speech and action, conversation and conduct, public and private, Sunday and Monday, church and home, work and rest. Christ does not claim a religious corner of life while leaving the rest to us. He claims everything.

To do something in the name of Jesus does not mean we slap His name onto decisions we have already made. His name is not a religious stamp for self-rule. To act in His name means we live under His authority, according to His character, for His honor, as people who belong to Him.

This is not anxious legalism. Paul is not trying to make Christians neurotic, wondering whether they chose the right cereal in the name of Jesus. That is not holiness. That is a nervous breakdown with a study Bible.

But this command does give holy clarity. Can I say this in the name of Jesus? Send this text? Watch this? Post this? Treat this person this way? Nurse this resentment? Spend this money? Neglect this duty? Pursue this ambition?

Those questions are not meant to crush us. They are meant to bring our whole life under the good rule of Christ.

And again, Paul adds thanksgiving. We do not obey to make God gracious. We obey because God has been gracious. We do not obey to purchase peace. Christ made peace. We do not obey to become accepted. We obey because we are accepted in Him.

The One who commands your whole life also died for your sin, rose for your justification, intercedes for you, and bears your name before the Father. So do everything in His name—not to earn His love, but because you belong to Him.

Reflection Questions

1. What area of your life are you tempted to keep outside the Lordship of Christ?
2. Which question from today’s devotional most searches your conscience?
3. How does knowing you are accepted in Christ change the way you pursue obedience?

Practical Application

Before making one ordinary decision today—what you say, watch, buy, post, or pursue—ask: “Can I do this in the name of the Lord Jesus with thanksgiving to the Father?”

Prayer

Father, thank You that Jesus is Lord over all things, including my ordinary life. Forgive me for the ways I divide my life into religious and private categories. Bring my words, actions, habits, thoughts, relationships, and desires under the gracious rule of Christ. Help me obey with thankfulness, not fear. Remind me that I belong to the One who died for me, rose again, and intercedes for me now. In Jesus' name, Amen.