

## The Peace of Christ, Part Three (Colossians 3:14, 15)

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### Introduction

1. In this message we want to knit together the strands that we examined in the first two parts.
2. Paul is addressing the church against the background of God's purpose to reconcile all things to Himself (Col. 1:20).
  - a. In the beginning, the Garden of Eden served as the "sacred space" (God's temple) in which He would dwell among His people as their God (2 Cor. 6:16-18). The church is the final stage in that restoration development.
  - b. Thus, the church's mission is to serve this purpose of God in a fallen world (2 Cor. 5:17-21; John 17:22, 23).

### I. The Need: *Reconciliation*

1. Fallen humans are alienated from God and hostile to His will and purpose, working evil (Gen. 3:8-13; Col. 1:21).
2. God reconciles His people through the grace of the cross (Gen. 3:15; Col. 1:20).
  - a. Reconciliation requires a new existence, a new creation, and a new kingdom in the midst of the old – not a mere reformation of morals and behavior through self-effort and religious observance.
  - b. The condition of alienation and hostility toward God necessitates something radical: transference from the domain of death and darkness into the kingdom of light and new life (Col. 1:12-14).
3. This process of reconciling has been an on-going work, is still in progress, and will be until the end of the age (Rev. 21:5; Col. 1:24-29).
  - a. God's new-creation/new-kingdom people need to be filled with the knowledge of His will for obedience (Col. 1:9). Obedience is not rule-keeping. It is relational maintenance based on knowing God and His will and purpose. One cannot obey One whom he does not know.
  - b. This work of kingdom-building is centered in the church, which is Christ's body (Col.1:24). The church, in order to function in this process, must understand her part (Col. 3:1, 2).

### II. The Motive: *Love*

1. The driving force of God's image sons in the context of body life is active, directed, and purposeful in the exertion of renewed self – *love*.
  - a. All love derives from God, for "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:16). Only those who have renewed divine life can truly love (1 Jn. 4:7). The world has but a shadow and perverse facsimile of that love because God is not in it.

- b. Love is the over-arching command that ties together everything included in verses 12 and 13.
- 2. The church needs to love in order to express the union and unity of believers in Christ's body.
  - a. *Union* involves *symbiosis* or interdependence of the parts of the one body.
  - b. *Unity* is the *synergism* or the working together of the different individual parts as they benefit the whole body or union.
- 3. Love produces unity in the union.
  - a. People tend to live in isolation and independence. The gospel destroys this isolation by restoring relationship to God and to all in union with Christ.
  - b. Love produces true intimacy through knowledge.
    - 1) Love gives us the freedom to know and be known.
    - 2) *Knowledge*, as used in Scripture, is a relational, not simply informational, term. You can't love someone that you don't know.
- 4. Love benefits the loving individual because it returns to him through maturing and perfecting as he grows in grace.

## II. The Goal: *Peace (Shalom)*

- 1. The goal of putting on love is the binding of everything into τελειότης (*teleiotes*) – what is “complete” or “perfect.”
  - a. This term reflects the OT concept of being *tamim*: perfect (complete, honest, having integrity or inner soundness, without blemish, and blameless; Psa. 19:13; 101:2; Judges 9:16; Gen. 17:1).
  - b. Perfection, in turn, produces *shalom* – the state of harmony and communion between covenant partners.
- 2. Thus, believers in the union of Christ must promote unity under the rule of Christ's peace – the state of *shalom*.
  - a. In this respect, peace is equivalent to salvation because one must be “called” into this peace (Rom. 1:6).
  - b. Those “called” must then be governed by the peace of Christ in their relationships within the body. Christ is our peace (Eph. 2:14). He must arbitrate every aspect of our relationships.
  - c. Christ rules His own, through His Spirit by “guiding their feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79).

The questions that each of us needs to answer in light of this passage:

What am I contributing to Christ's body? How am I benefiting its unity? Am I truly loving others in the strength of the Spirit (Eph. 3:14-21)?