

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

Colossians 5: Old Clothes, New Clothes

Colossians 3:5-17

Rev Adrian Ng

SERMON SYNOPSIS

- **Cultural Counter-Perspective (Greco-Roman Context):** The Colossian church existed within an ancient Roman Hellenistic culture that promoted unlimited sexual license and public prostitution. Paul's letter reminded the church of God's original design of "Godly Chastity", where physical desires are governed by honour and self-control rather than personal gratification. Specifically, Paul reminded the church to put off destructive behaviour in the areas of sex and speech because these are two specific areas of human conduct with immense power to either build or destroy spiritual communities, e.g., families and churches.
- **Put off Sexual Impurity:** Sexual misconduct (intercourse outside of marriage) and uncontrolled internal sexual desires are contrary to God's original design for sex. Sexual impurity turns self-gratification into a form of idolatry that prioritises the self over others. Because the abuse of sex destroys lives, marriages, and spiritual communities, Christians are urged to discard these practices as "old clothes" and embrace the new clothes of "Godly Chastity", i.e., staying chaste before marriage and faithful within it, thereby stewarding their bodies in a way that honours God and others.
- **Put off Destructive Speech:** Christians have to completely put off all abusive, hurtful speech, such as anger, rage, malice, slander, lies, gossip, and filthy or obscene talk. Because the gospel is rooted in truth, any deceitful and malicious language will dismantle trust and destroy relationships. Being renewed in the image of God, Christians have to ensure our words are always kind, pure, truthful, and honest to honour God and nourish others.
- **Love as the Heartbeat of Honour:** To truly transform our lives, love has to be the foundational starting point. Only with love can there be genuine behavioural transformation. Rigid rule-following rarely transforms us. Love provides the underlying purpose for personal change, humility, and sacrifice, motivating Christians to act out of a desire to bring honour to those around them, rather than pursuing self-interest. Ultimately, it is this experience of being transformed by love (specifically love for Jesus) that empowers Christians to live as citizens of God's kingdom whose conduct and speech reflect Christ to the surrounding world.
- **Intentionally Choosing to Reflect Christ:** Christians are called to reject secular temptations and intentionally choose to live our lives in godly conduct, especially in sex and speech. We have to let the message of Christ dwell in us richly through teaching, worship, and gratitude, honouring God in every word and action as transformed citizens of heaven.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RELATE

1. Have you ever been in a setting where it was "everyone for himself" (as opposed to a setting where everyone was genuinely concerned for each other)? How did you feel in that setting?

REFLECT

2. "If I am truly a new creation in Christ, how should that be seen in the way I speak and the way I use my body?" Discuss.

[Verses to help us go deeper: 2 Corinthians 5:17; James 3:8-12; Luke 6:43-45; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20]

RESPOND

3. Think about one way you either use your words or your body in a way that goes against what God wants. In the next two weeks, make a conscious effort to change this, remembering to pray about it regularly and specifically. If you are comfortable doing so, share with the group what happened.

PRAYER POINTERS

- Praise God for the grace He has so freely shown to us, despite our sinfulness.
- Thank God for His goodness and love which have touched us and transformed us deeply from within, causing us to willingly surrender ourselves to His Lordship.
- Ask that we will continue to uphold godly standards in a world that puts self-interest and hedonism first.
- Ask that we will be able to shine the light of Christ to the world around us, and that He will let His river of grace flow through us into the world. Pray that the church of God will be a force multiplier in propagating godly values in Singapore's society.

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" [Colossians 3:17]