

## **"THERE'S HOPE!"**

### **Colossians ch. 3**

*"Life is endless frustrations and challenges, but eventually you find a hair stylist you like."* That gem is traced to "Anonymous" who wanted to be unknown if quoted at a Bible study.

Born as "Saul of Tarsus," Paul's nasty *street cred* preceded him for three decades while planting churches along the Mediterranean. While terrorizing Jesus Christ's early converts, this well-intentioned religious hitman is supernaturally transformed. God taps the most unlikely, sincerely wrong zealot to tell the Gentile world "Messiah has come!"

But the temple bigs ignore 300 or so prophecies about Jesus, and kill the Messenger who was bringing heaven to earth. They crucify the One for whom they'd **hoped** for centuries, but **real HOPE** - "**living HOPE**" - is confident conviction based on faith and trust in God who keeps all His promises. **Let's read 1 Peter 1:3-9, p. 1107, Good News Bible.**

**<sup>3</sup> Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy he gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope, <sup>4</sup> and so we look forward to possessing the rich blessings that God keeps for his people. He keeps them for you in heaven, where they cannot decay or spoil or fade away. <sup>5</sup> They are for you, who through faith are kept safe by God's power for the salvation which is ready to be revealed at the end of time.**

**<sup>6</sup> Be glad about this, even though it may now be necessary for you to be sad for a while because of the many kinds of trials you suffer. <sup>7</sup> Their purpose is to prove that your faith is genuine. Even gold, which can be destroyed, is tested by fire; and so your faith, which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested, so that it may endure. Then you will receive praise and glory and honor on the Day when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> You love him, although you have not seen him, and you believe in him, although you do not now see him. So you rejoice with a great and glorious joy which words**

cannot express, <sup>9</sup> because you are receiving the salvation of your souls, which is the purpose of your faith in him.

Paul's **living HOPE**, not wishful thinking, fuels this intrepid courier to endure hell-on-earth to reveal "the mystery" and "the secret" which he unpacks in this letter (Ephesians 3:1-12). He asserts that God's Son (1) rules the universe, (2) is 100% God and (3) died in our place to fully pay for your sins and mine (Ephesians 2:12). Now he urges us to live like the person God says we are. **Let's read Colossians 3:1-25, p. 1072.**

**You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. <sup>2</sup> Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory!**

**<sup>5</sup> You must put to death, then, the earthly desires at work in you, such as sexual immorality, indecency, lust, evil passions, and greed (for greed is a form of idolatry). <sup>6</sup> Because of such things God's anger will come upon those who do not obey him.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>7</sup> At one time you yourselves used to live according to such desires, when your life was dominated by them.**

**<sup>8</sup> But now you must get rid of all these things: anger, passion, and hateful feelings. No insults or obscene talk must ever come from your lips. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, for you have put off the old self with its habits <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self. This is the new being which God, its Creator, is constantly renewing in his own image, in order to bring you to a full knowledge of himself. <sup>11</sup> As a result, there is no longer any distinction between Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves, and free, but Christ is all, Christ is in all.**

**<sup>12</sup> You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with**

compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> Be tolerant with one another and forgive one another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you. <sup>14</sup> And to all these qualities add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. <sup>15</sup> The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Christ's message in all its richness must live in your hearts. Teach and instruct one another with all wisdom. Sing psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing to God with thanksgiving in your hearts. <sup>17</sup> Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father.

<sup>18</sup> Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, for that is what you should do as Christians.

<sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

<sup>20</sup> Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents always, for that is what pleases God.

<sup>21</sup> Parents, do not irritate your children, or they will become discouraged.

<sup>22</sup> Slaves (employees) obey your human masters in all things, not only when they are watching you because you want to gain their approval; but do it with a sincere heart because of your reverence for the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. <sup>24</sup> Remember that the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve. <sup>25</sup> And all wrongdoers will be repaid for the wrong things they do, because God judges everyone by the same standard.

## ***"Mr. Big Stuff, Who Do You Think You Are?" Colossians 3:1-4***

After a humbling career reversal in my 30's, I contemplated taking an Acapulco cliff dive off the Aurora bridge. My late mentor, Gib Martin, challenged me to say "Jesus Christ is my life" to see if I meant it. I bristled, "Gib, I said I'm a Christian!" He shot back, "Yes, but your life is your self-image." If he's right, what do I do? He tells me to thank God for my meltdown (1 Thessalonians 5:18). No way was I thankful, but in the ensuing weeks as I grudgingly repeated, "Thanks a lot for this @\$%^," God reminded me of all He's done for me, birthing new **hope** that He'd come through again. And He did! **Let's read Philippians 1:20-24, p. 1067.**

**<sup>20</sup> My deep desire and hope is that I shall never fail in my duty, but that at all times, and especially right now, I shall be full of courage, so that with my whole being I shall bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die. <sup>21</sup> For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more. <sup>22</sup> But if by continuing to live I can do more worthwhile work, then I am not sure which I should choose. <sup>23</sup> I am pulled in two directions. I want very much to leave this life and be with Christ, which is a far better thing; <sup>24</sup> but for your sake it is much more important that I remain alive.**

**DISCUSS: How would you respond if asked, "Is Jesus Christ your life?"  
UNMUTE YOURSELF BEFORE YOU SPEAK. THEN RE-MUTE.**

When Christ is your life, Graham Cooke writes, you "live in a state of untroubled calm and rest .... The enemy cannot penetrate the armor of a person at rest in God. Spiritual warriors know that their inheritance is complete confidence in Him. Trusting His nature puts their spirit at rest. God's promises inspire us in our dependence on Him. ... All we can do is joyfully and humbly live in that no matter what comes against us."

Cooke defines **living HOPE**. "Confidence is concerned with certainty! It's about something definite, a firm assurance, a total reliance, an absolutely unbreakable conviction that provides us with a positive security."

Real life is Jesus living His life in you, as you, producing His "fruit" in you -- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, meekness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-25). Fruit is not for the tree; it's for others. We're dispensers of **living HOPE**. Cooke says God "can see the difficult terrain we will have to cross ... God who knows our journey better than we do and has strategically placed a provision next to every problem ....

“What you think about God is the most important thought you’re ever going to have.” Like David, “a man after God’s own heart,” “... we have a confident expectation of God’s nature toward us when circumstances are against us. ... He is our rock, our fortress and our hiding place.”

**DISCUSS:** Describe ways in which you are a HOPE dispenser.

### *Cross Dressing* *Colossians 3:5-11*

Our old nature died with Christ on the cross. Our new nature began when Christ rose to life. **Let’s read Romans 6:3-14, p. 1020; Galatians 2:19-21, p. 1057.** Jesus lives in us, filling us with God-thoughts. With His Holy Spirit guiding us, Jesus becomes the center of our life, illuminating, dispelling doubts and fears. **Let’s read Romans 7:14-8:2, 38-39, p. 1021**

**<sup>14</sup> We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am a mortal, sold as a slave to sin. <sup>15</sup> I do not understand what I do; for I don't do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate. <sup>16</sup> Since what I do is what I don't want to do, this shows that I agree that the Law is right. <sup>17</sup> So I am not really the one who does this thing; rather it is the sin that lives in me. <sup>18</sup> I know that good does not live in me—that is, in my human nature. For even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. <sup>19</sup> I don't do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do. <sup>20</sup> If I do what I don't want to do, this means that I am no longer the one who does it; instead, it is the sin that lives in me. <sup>21</sup> So I find that this law is at work: when I want to do what is good, what is evil is the only choice I have. <sup>22</sup> My inner being delights in the law of God. <sup>23</sup> But I see a different law at work in my body—a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body. <sup>24</sup> What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who does this through our Lord Jesus Christ! This, then, is my condition: on my own I can serve God's law only with my mind, while my human nature serves the law of sin.**

**8 There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit, which brings us life in union with Christ Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin and death.**

**<sup>38</sup> For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, <sup>39</sup> neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Our new, resurrection life is a wardrobe change. Formerly we wore our old, self-serving habits. Putting on our “new self,” we say “no” to sin by concentrating on the Lord and what pleases Him (Romans 12:1-2).

**DISCUSS:** How can we break the bad habits which remind us of our “old nature?”

### ***Fresh Start Colossians 3:12-17***

When you wake up, do you say “Good morning, God!” or “Good God, it’s morning.” Start by putting on your new man’s duds. Wrap yourself in Jesus’ qualities: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, tolerance, self-restraint, never complaining. Forgive others as God has completely forgiven you. He won’t deal with your sins again, ever! Nor should we.

God doesn’t see what’s wrong with us because He nailed all that garbage to the cross. God holds nothing against us. His desire is to see us become more and more like His Son (**Romans 8:1-5, 29, p. 1021**).

**8 There is no condemnation now for those who live in union with Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit, which brings us life in union with Christ Jesus, has set me<sup>[a]</sup> free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> What the Law could not do, because human nature was weak, God did. He condemned sin in human nature by sending his own Son, who came with a nature like our sinful nature, to do away with sin. <sup>4</sup> God did this so that the righteous demands of the Law might be fully satisfied in us who live according to the Spirit, and not**

according to human nature. <sup>5</sup> Those who live as their human nature tells them to, have their minds controlled by what human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants.

<sup>29</sup> Those whom God had already chosen he also set apart to become like his Son, so that the Son would be the first among many believers.

The peace God gives is to be our guide. Wherever, with whomever, whatever you think, say or do, can you say, "Jesus put me up to this?"

**DISCUSS:** Describe how God communicates His will in your decision-making process.

### *Undercover Boss* *Colossians 3:18-25*

"Submit" does NOT mean "Be a slave." God designed the husband to be the quarterback, but the Holy Spirit calls the plays. We're to love our wife as Jesus loves us, whether she submits to our leadership or not.

Children are to respect their parents. Dad should not rag on the kids, lest they lose heart and turn bitter. Employees who love Christ are actually working for God. Life works when we put God first. **Let's read Ephesians 4:17-24, 5:1-2, 5:21-6:9, p. 1063.**

<sup>17</sup> In the Lord's name, then, I warn you: do not continue to live like the heathen, whose thoughts are worthless <sup>18</sup> and whose minds are in the dark. They have no part in the life that God gives, for they are completely ignorant and stubborn. <sup>19</sup> They have lost all feeling of shame; they give themselves over to vice and do all sorts of indecent things without restraint.

<sup>20</sup> That was not what you learned about Christ! <sup>21</sup> You certainly heard about him, and as his followers you were taught the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup> So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to—the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. <sup>23</sup> Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, <sup>24</sup> and you must put on

**the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.**

**5 Since you are God's dear children, you must try to be like him. <sup>2</sup> Your life must be controlled by love, just as Christ loved us and gave his life for us as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice that pleases God.**

**<sup>21</sup> Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ.**

**<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself the Savior of the church, his body. <sup>24</sup> And so wives must submit themselves completely to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ.**

**<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. <sup>26</sup> He did this to dedicate the church to God by his word, after making it clean by washing it in water, <sup>27</sup> in order to present the church to himself in all its beauty—pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any other imperfection. <sup>28</sup> Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies. A man who loves his wife loves himself. (<sup>29</sup> None of us ever hate our own bodies. Instead, we feed them, and take care of them, just as Christ does the church; <sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body.) <sup>31</sup> As the scripture says, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.” <sup>32</sup> There is a deep secret truth revealed in this scripture, which I understand as applying to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> But it also applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband.**

**6 Children, it is your Christian duty to<sup>[a]</sup> obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do. <sup>2</sup> “Respect your father and**



mother” is the first commandment that has a promise added: <sup>3</sup> “so that all may go well with you, and you may live a long time in the land.”

<sup>4</sup> Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, raise them with Christian discipline and instruction.

<sup>5</sup> Slaves (workers), obey your human masters with fear and trembling; and do it with a sincere heart, as though you were serving Christ. <sup>6</sup> Do this not only when they are watching you, because you want to gain their approval; but with all your heart do what God wants, as slaves of Christ. <sup>7</sup> Do your work as slaves cheerfully, as though you served the Lord, and not merely human beings. <sup>8</sup> Remember that the Lord will reward each of us, whether slave or free, for the good work we do.

<sup>9</sup> Masters, behave in the same way toward your slaves and stop using threats. Remember that you and your slaves belong to the same Master in heaven, who judges everyone by the same standard.

**DISCUSS:** Why is submitting so hard, and what would make it easier?

God desperately wants to spend eternity with you. If you feel the same about Him, why not just tell Him now, “Dear God, I humbly accept Your forgiveness. Thank You for saving me. My **HOPE** is in You. Amen.”

### ***In Christ Alone***

In Christ alone my **HOPE** is found,  
He is my light, my strength, my song,  
This Cornerstone, this solid ground,  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace,  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease,  
My Comforter, my All in All,

**Here in the love of Christ I stand.**

In Christ alone who took on flesh,  
Fullness of God in helpless Babe,

This gift of love and righteousness,  
Scorned by the ones He came to save.  
*'Til on that cross as Jesus died,  
The wrath of God was satisfied.  
For every sin on Him was laid;  
**Here in the death of Christ I live.***

There in the ground His body lay,  
Light of the world by darkness slain.  
Then bursting forth in glorious day,  
Up from the grave He rose again!  
And as He stands in victory,  
**Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,  
For I am His and He is mine,  
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

**In Christ alone I place my trust  
And find my glory in the power of the cross.  
In every victory let it be said of me  
My source of strength, my source of HOPE  
Is Christ alone I place my trust  
And find my glory in the power of the cross.  
In every victory let it be said of me  
My source of strength, my source of HOPE  
Is Christ alone.**

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Moz0v73WME8>  
Sung by the Booth Brothers :22/4:33/:15

His Deal  
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