

The Hope of Glory:

An Exposition of Colossians

September 27, 2020

*Sermon 12: Obedience and the hope of glory, sermon 2
Colossians 3:5-11*

Opening Point: Imagine you spend all day cleaning your house. You sweep the floors, clean the bathroom. Maybe you even dust (around things...you don't move them or anything). Imagine you have the house completely clean, and then you see a rat scurry across the floor. What do you do? How do you feel about that rat? Do you ask the rat, "Pardon me, Mr. rat, are you enjoying my fresh clean floors?" No. You do whatever you can to get the rat out of your house, even if it means killing it. Why? Because no matter how clean you think your house is, the very presence of the rat ruins it. They are disgusting, nasty animals, and if left unchecked will take over the place.

Now, what about your life and the remaining sin in it? No matter how hard you work to clean up your life, sometimes a mouse runs across your floor, sometimes a roach, a spider...whatever...pops up in your life. What should you do when that happens? Simple. Kill it.

Do you mortify? Do you make it your daily work? Be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you.—John Owen

I am concerned that a sermon like the one I am about to preach may fall on deaf ears for 2 types of the wrong kind of person: the self-righteous person and the licentious person. That is to say the person who thinks that they have already conquered sin (if not perfectly, then at least better than most) and the person who thinks such conquering is unnecessary. The former loses the battle by underestimating the power and nature of sin. The latter loses the battle by underestimating the danger of sin.

I also fear that a sermon like the one I am about to preach may fly like a cannonball into the hearts of the right kind of people. In other words, that a sermon on the call to battle our sins, if approached wrongly, will simply sound like an unsympathetic critique...bringing a voice in your heart that you are nothing...worthless. I never want to lead sincere people who are battling sin every day to feel like losers because they often fail.

Quote: Unbelief, and a thousand evils, are still in our hearts; though their reign and dominion is at an end, they are not slain nor eradicated; We cannot absolutely conquer these evils, but it becomes us to be humbled for them; and we are to fight, and strive, and pray against them. John Newton, Works 1:506

Our theme for Colossians 3: *The focus of our lives reveals the nature of our hope of glory.*

I. Introduction/Review

A. Review

1. Your mind matters!
 - a. Last week we talked about the fact that the battle for obedience starts in our mind.
 - i. **Romans 12:2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
 - b. Last week we talked about the importance of focusing on Jesus, both theologically and geographically.
 - i. **Colossians 3:1-4**
2. Set a tone!
 - a. Last week we talked about how important it is to set a tone
 - i. For your day
 - ii. For a conversation
 - iii. For anything, really

B. What will be our focus for today?

1. How to become more consistent, obedient people [That's putting it in positive terms]
 - a. Why not just say, "Be good!"?
 - i. Because if it were that easy, we wouldn't need to talk about obedience.
 - ii. Because if it were that easy, you would be perfect by now. How's that going?
2. The mortification of sin. [That's putting it in negative terms]
 - a. What do we mean when we use the term "mortification" of sin?
 - i. We mean putting sinful patterns and habits to death. (hence the term)
 - ii. We mean fighting every sinful impulse and every sinful habit.

II. The Fight for Obedience—Colossians 3:5-11

A. What are we called to fight?

Point: It would be very profitable to take each one of these words and do an extensive study on them. In the interests of time, however, I think it best to let this list simply be a list. After all, there must be a reason why Paul didn't go into detail with each individual sin. Perhaps this is intended to be used in a rapid-fire effect of the things to reject.

1. *Sinful attitudes*—sinful ways of thinking.
 - a. Immorality
 - b. Impurity
 - c. Anger
 - d. Wrath
 - e. Malice
2. *Sinful affections*—sinful delights or feelings.
 - a. Passion
 - b. Evil desire
 - c. Greed
3. *Sinful actions*—sinful deeds and practices.
 - a. Slander
 - b. Abusive speech
 - c. Lying

B. Why are we called to fight?

1. Because disobedience is an act of worship to a false god. (v. 5)
 - a. **Ephesians 5:5** For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
 - b. Now, I know that this verse only says that greed (or covetousness) is idolatry. However, I would suggest to you that every sin involves covetousness.
 - c. That is to say that everything we do is done out of a desire for something that we do not have.
 - d. Every sin is the result of craving something that isn't God.
 - i. **Jeremiah 2:5** Thus says the LORD, "What injustice did your fathers find in Me, That they went far from Me And walked after emptiness and became empty?"
 - e. Every sin is a celebration of the supposed greatness of the thing desired at the expense of God.
 - i. John Owen: "Every act of sin is a fruit of being weary of God. The great means to prevent the fruits and effects of this enmity is to constantly keep the soul in an universally holy frame." Owen, 6,176-188
2. Because disobedience is the reason for God's wrath! (v. 6)

- a. How can we possibly love the things that provoke such a strong reaction from God?
 - b. People go to Hell for this!
 - i. We lie—people go to Hell for lying!
 - ii. We cheat—people go to Hell for cheating!
 - iii. We steal—people go to Hell for stealing!
 - iv. Etc.
 - c. The point is simply this:
 - i. When we engage in sinful attitudes, affections or actions, we are dabbling in the very things that provoke God’s wrath.
 - ii. When we engage in sinful attitudes, affections or actions, we are dabbling in the very things that necessitated the death of Christ!
 - d. If the very thought of this does not stir within a holy hatred of sin, then stop right now and take a good long look at your heart.
3. Because disobedience is inconsistent with our redeemed identity. (v. 7)
- a. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** (especially v. 11)
 - b. **Ephesians 5:8** for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.
 - c. We are called saints in Christ. We should think, feel and act like saints.

C. How are we called to fight?

- 1. We fight by mortifying the specific manifestations of remaining sin in our lives.
 - a. **Romans 8:13** for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
 - b. **Romans 6:9-14**
- 2. We fight by cultivating that which is virtuous, good and obedient in our lives.
 - a. **1 Timothy 6:11-12**

D. How long must we fight?

- 1. We must fight until the fight is finished.
 - a. There are only two possible ends to this fight:
 - i. Perfection—good luck with that.
 - a) Is such a thing possible?
 - b) **1 John 1:8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.
 - c) **1 Kings 8:46** "When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near;"

Quote: “In Christ, you are free! You are free to follow Jesus imperfectly. You are free to fight the fight of faith defectively, because that’s the only way you will ever fight for faith in this age.” Jon Bloom

- ii. Death—and death only because in death we will become perfected.
 - a) **Philippians 3:12-14** Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- 2. We must fight despite our countless failures.

a. You will fail...there is no doubt about that.

ILL: In boxing, you don't lose by falling down. You lose when you can't (or don't) get back up. Christianity is a call to fight regardless of how much you fail. Victory in the war is certain even though the battles are perilous. Christianity is not a one-punch knockout. It is a 15-round slugfest, a relentless battle that, win or lose, will take its toll on you.

Quote: Now and then you will (as is usual in the course of war) lose a battle; but be not discouraged, but rally your forces, and return to the fight. John Newton, Works 1:554

b. The victory is sure...there is no doubt about that.

i. **Romans 16:20** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

My beloved brothers in sisters in Christ, battle your sins with all diligence. Refuse to let your setbacks cause you to despair. Don't let your weakness deter you from the fight. Live, fail, repent, and rejoice

To the Praise of His Glory,

Amen.