

## ***The Imitation of Christ -- Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3***

**Intro:** the classic joke where a witness is on the stand and is asked for his impression of the defendant. “I’m sorry, your honor, I don’t do impressions.”

Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 are about more than practicing the presence of God. They are calls to imitate God (the word literally means to mimic). More than imagining Christ in the room, we are called to be God’s actors – not in the hypocritical sense, but in the sense of giving over every aspect of our lives and hearts to Him to use in each situation in which we find ourselves.

Thomas a Kempis wrote “The Imitation of Christ” over 500 years ago. In it he declares that there is nothing better than to put off ourselves and put on the character of Christ. He also acknowledges that this is a daily struggle; a difficult one, at best.

### **I. Imitating Christ -- Ephesians 5:1,2**

- A.** Ephesians 5:21 – mutual submission out of reverence for Christ.
- B.** Ephesians 5:22 – wives submit to their husband as they submit to the Lord.
- C.** Ephesians 5:25-33 – Husbands love your wives “just as” Christ loved the church *and gave himself up for her*. (take a look at other “just like Christ” statements in this passage)
- D.** We are members of his body – verse 30. God has never treated us as marionettes, but that is a fair picture to put in our mind when we pray: Lord we give you control over the strings. We will move when you want us to move, speak when you tell us to speak. Direct our paths.
- E.** Colossians 3:1-4. It is a matter of putting on the right clothes.
  - 1. We DO take thought about what we are going to wear. We try not to, but we think about it. (and that isn’t against God’s law. He was speaking of priorities)
  - 2. (v.12,13) Before you leave home, before you speak with your children, wife, husband, or dog – here is what you are to put on: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience.
  - 3. Make some decisions now about your behavior the rest of the day: bear with each other, forgive anyone anything (mimic the Lord in your forgiveness, v.13)
  - 4. Wrap everything up in love. If it cannot be wrapped up in love, you need to get more love or less something else. (wrapping presents and wrapping paper)

## **II. The Kingdom Comes**

- A.** We never said the Lord's Prayer with editing it! I understand why. It was done that way to honor God's work among us in Christ. Since Christ had come, so had the kingdom.
- B.** But there are other ways in which the kingdom has yet to come. While we have eternal life now, we are not resident in heaven. We are resident aliens on earth.
- C.** What Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 tell us is that we can pray that the kingdom come in our lives – that Christ and the love of Christ will truly reign in our lives today, right now, in this place.
- D.** So now, I say the Lord's Prayer – unedited. I want His kingdom to reign in me.

## **III. The Negative**

- A.** There is a motif of putting off and putting on. While we speak of putting on Christ in all things, we must also deal with the negative: what must be taken off and put away never to be used again. (unlike the éclairs in the refrigerator)
- B.** In these two chapters there are two classifications of sins that are singled out for special treatment: they must be put off.
  - 1. sexual immorality (a broad term), impurity, lust obscenity, coarse joking.
  - 2. anger, rage, malice, slander.
  - 3. and a third one mentioned, not at the same length, but in both chapters: greed
- C.** Covering all sins not mentioned is the exclusionary clause in Colossians 3:16,17. If it cannot be done in the Name of God (and that means by His authority) it is not to be done.
- D.** Read Colossians 3:24.

This is taking the practice of the presence of God one step further and allowing Him – begging Him – to take control, to pick up the strings and direct our lives. “To live is Christ.”

**ADMONITION:** read the Lord's Prayer together. **Chris, if you could get the King James Version of that (it helps in familiarity and in solemnity) and have it ready to be shown and read I would appreciate it.**