

Colossians 3:8-11

“Put Away Social Sins”

Sermon

Tim Black

1.

Introduction

1.

Illustration:

1.

Polish jokes.

1.

Example: Did you hear about the Polish man who came to his pastor saying “Please allow me to divorce my wife, because I know she wants to kill me?” His pastor replied, “What makes you think she wants to kill you?” The man said “It’s because she is refinishing my favorite wood chair.” The pastor told him his wife was refinishing the chair because she *loved* her husband, not because she wanted to kill him. The Polish man went home but came back the next week saying “Now I’m *sure* she wants to kill me, and I have proof! I looked in the closet where she keeps the chemicals she is using on my favorite chair, and the bottle she’s using says ‘Polish Remover!’” :)

2.

Why do we make fun of Polish people? At some point in history, our society came to think Polish people were unintelligent and so worthy of ridicule. We so easily take outward differences of intelligence, class, gender, or national identity as reasons to ridicule and ostracize one another. But at the end of our

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passage today, Paul tells us we must not allow these superficial distinctions we make to divide us as fellow members of Christ's church.

3.

Review. In this passage Paul continues to teach us to put off the old man of non-Christian character and put on the new man of Christian character. What characterizes the old man is a love of self on the inside, and a hatred of others on the outside. And what characterizes the new man is selfless love on the inside, and thankful blessing on the outside. In our passage today Paul teaches you to put away your hatred toward others on the outside. And centrally, he exhorts you to **put away social sins**.

4.

Sermon Outline. In this passage Paul exhorts us to put away social sins in 3 aspects:

1.

Their Core: Hatred v. 8

2.

Their Expression: Lies vv. 9-10

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3.

Their Effects: Superficial Distinctions v. 11

1.

Body – Put away social sins in...

1.

Their Core: Hatred v. 8

1.

First Paul says we must put away social sins in their core, which we may summarize as hatred toward others in its various forms. He says in v. 8,

1.

Colossians 3:8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

2.

“Now”

1.

Paul connects this verse with what he said in v. 7 by the words “But

now.

” Once you walked in paths of unrighteousness, and lived your life in the evil desires of your old nature. “

But now

” you are on a different path, and have a different life within you. You are on the path that leads to life, and you are enlivened by the Holy Spirit who lives within you.

2.

The command: You must put these things away!

1.

And so “now” you must put the sins of your old life away. This command means to put something at a distance from you, and it is a strong term. It means to throw off, to be done with, to lock up in prison and throw away the key. The sense is slightly different from the command Paul gave in the preceding passage to “put to death” evil desires. Evil desires are a power within us that influence our character on the inside, and so they must be put to death. But the sins Paul speaks of now are those that characterize our character on the outside, and so they should be put away from us, thrown off, as if they were a filthy garment that we should take off and throw away.

2.

These sins are social in nature

1.

These sins are social in nature. They are distinct from the sins in v. 5, which were sins centered in evil desires. As such they were essentially selfish

desires. But these sins in v. 8 are sins that are all involved in how we relate to other people. They all express hostility toward others. You get angry at someone

. You are filled with wrath toward someone

. You have malice toward someone

. While the sins in v. 5 were sins we commit as individuals

, the sins in v. 8 are sins we commit toward others

. And in fact these forms of hatred are the outflow

of the selfishness involved in the evil desires listed in

v. 5. How often have you heard someone say, “You’re only concerned about yourself?” What that means is that you are not properly concerned about other people. If you are only seeking your own good, you will not seek the good of those around you. What is in your heart will overflow in your life. Jesus said,

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Luke 6:45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

-

In detail

1.

“Anger, wrath”

-

Anger and wrath are very similar. Anger is “a vigorous upsurge of one’s nature against someone or something.”

1

But it has a more settled and ongoing quality than does wrath. Wrath is a sudden, passionate, emotional outburst of anger that boils hot and can subside as quickly as it began.

-

There is a righteous anger. It is right to oppose sin and uphold righteousness. David said

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Psalm 139:21 Do I not hate those who
hate you, O LORD?

-

And in Ephesians 4 Paul says,

-

Ephesians 4:26-27 Be angry and
do not sin; do not let the sun go
down on your anger, 27 and give no
opportunity to the devil.

-

But our propensity is to be angry
and to sin, to let the sun go down
on our anger, to store up a grudge
and to let anger fester within us.
And so James is right to warn us,

-

James 1:19-20 19 Know this, my
beloved brothers: let every person
be quick to hear, slow to speak,
slow to **anger;** 2
0 for the
anger
of man does not produce the

righteousness that God requires.

-

But what anger does produce is
strife. **Prov**
erbs 15:18
says

-

Proverbs 15:18 A
hot-tempered man stirs up
strife, but he who is slow to anger

quiets contention.

-

“**Malice**”

-

Malice is the state or attitude of the heart when you are

angry. It is the desire or intent to harm someone else; it is a vicious disposition; an evil bent. The Greek word indicates a person who is filled with evil inside, and who is intent on bringing evil upon others.

-

A heart in this state can be the source of anger and wrath, but it can also be the

disposition that will result when you allow yourself to be continually and repeatedly angry. You can move from being a person who gets angry, to being an angry person.

-

“Slander/Blasphemy”

-

Slander is speech that aims at ruining a person's reputation. The Greek word here is "blasfhmi,a" (blasphemia), from which we get our word "blasphemy," but the word does not refer to defaming God here, but defaming our neighbor. The word implies evil speaking, railing, slandering, trying to harm a person's

reputation, mudslinging. It even brings into view the sins we can commit by complaining and unjust criticism.

-

“**Filthy language**”

—

Lastly, Paul tells us to put away “filthy language.”

This word actually has two aspects to it—both an

aspect of dirtiness

, and an aspect of abuse

. It is “foul-mouthed abuse.” It is not merely speaking in crude terms,

but doing so in order to
ridicule, defame, anger,
threaten, and otherwise
abuse a person.

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Summary

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We can summarize what Paul commands here in this—because you have become a Christian, you must get rid of the core aspects of hatred within you—from the emotions of anger and wrath to the evil intent of malice to the evil words of slander and filthy language. If the

love of Christ constrains
you then the hatred of
man must leave.

-

Their Expression: Lies vv. 9-10

1.

Paul next tells us to put off social sins in their outward expressions of hatred toward one another.

1.

Colossians 3:9-10

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

2.

**Exhortation: “Do not
lie to one another
”**

1.

Paul exhorts us not to
lie to one another. Did
you know that lies are in

fact an expression of
malice? Paul says in 1
Cor. 5:8,

-

1 Corinthians 5:8

Let us therefore
celebrate the festival,
not with the old leaven,
the leaven of malice

and evil, but with the
unleavened bread of
sincerity and truth.

-

A lie always hides
the truth and leads your

neighbor into error. It does not reveal the true contents of your heart, and mind, and life to the other person. It cuts them off from fellowship with you and would rather see the other person harmed than for the truth to be told. A lie

is an expression of
hatred in the area of
communication.

-

But the truth is
precisely the opposite.
It unites two people in
their communication

so they can trust one another and cooperate. Ralph Waldo Emerson said that “The highest compact two people can make is that there shall be Truth between them for evermore.”

-

Reason: You have

1.

“Put off”

—

“the old man”

—

Paul tells you the
reason why you must
“not lie to one
another.” The

reason is that you
have put off the
old man, and have
put on the new man.

-

The verb “put off”
refers to taking off

clothing from your body. It is as if the old man was an article of clothing that covered your whole body, that characterized your appearance and defined the way you interacted with

other people.

—

“with its practices”

—

You have put
off your old nature.
And in principle you
have put off the
sinful practices in
which you were

bound by that old
nature. Those
practices colored
the whole of who
you were, just like
your clothing can
show people who
you are and what
you do. It is in

this sense that God
said in Malachi that

-

Malachi 2:16

“

t

he man who hates

and
divorces...covers
his garment with
violence.

”

—

But through
the regeneration
God worked in you
by giving you a
new heart, by
giving you faith in
Christ and

repentance from
your sin at
your conversion,
you have put that
old life of sin
behind you.

-

Romans 6:6

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be

enslaved to
sin.

—

“Put on”

—

“the new man”

—

And now that
you have turned
away from your
old self and its
practices, you

have also put on
the new self,
which is made
not to lie, but to
know and tell
the truth. God
has a purpose
for you now that

He has made
you a new
creature in
Christ, and that
purpose is for
you to rejoice in
the truth, to tell
the truth to

others, to
lead them to the
truth of God and
salvation through
Christ, to
reveal the glory
of God in the
way you think

and the words
you say.

—

“which is
being renewed in
knowledge after
the image of its
creator.”

—

You are “being renewed in knowledge after the image of [your] Creator.” In the Reformed tradition we

distinguish
between the
immutable and
the mutable
aspects of
the image of
God. The
immutable

aspects of the
image of God
are that man is
a personal,
spiritual being
endowed with a
mind, will,
and emotions

and stands as
God's
representative
on the earth
exercising
dominion over
the creatures.
Due to these

aspects the
image of God
was not lost in
the fall, and so
God affirmed
to Noah in Gen.
9:6 that man
was still made in

God's
image, and
James 3:9 says
we must not
curse another
man, who is
made in the
likeness of God.

The mutable
aspects of
the image of
God are chiefly
knowledge,
righteousness,
and
holiness, and

these were lost
in the fall.

Knowledge is
mentioned in
this verse, and
righteousness
and holiness are
mentioned in

Eph. 4:24. Paul focuses on knowledge in this verse in order to teach that the new man is being renewed in

order to regain
true knowledge,
which by
implication he
lost in the
fall.

—

What this
means is that
lying is in direct
opposition to
God's

redemptive
purpose, and is
following the
purpose of
Satan, the
father of lies, in
tempting Adam

and Eve to sin
against God by
believing
Satan's lie.

—

But God's
purpose in
creating man,
and in renewing
man's soul in
salvation, is for
man to know

God that he
may glorify and
enjoy God
forever. To live
in fellowship
with God and
one another.

Not to hide in
shame over our
sins.

—

As a

Christian you
have the great
privilege of
learning the
truth. So
speak it!

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Their Effects: Superficial Distinctions v. 11

1.

If you live as
one redeemed
from sin by
Jesus Christ,
you will
recognize your
fellow

Christians for
who they
are—brothers
and sisters in
Christ. And you
will love them
for that reason.

You share a
common Savior,
and in Him you
share a
common
life

■

2.

But if you let
the social sins
of anger, wrath,
malice, slander,
and filthy

language be the
rule in your life,
and you allow
your
communication
to separate you
from your fellow

believers, that
separation will
become
crystallized and
reinforced in the
sinful use of
distinctions of

religious and
social privilege.
But Paul calls
you to put off
these effects of
social sin,
saying

1.

Colossians

3:9-11 Here

there is not

Greek and Jew,
circumcised and

uncircumcised,
barbarian,
Scythian, slave,
free; but Christ
is all, and in all.

2.

These effects
of social sin are
mere superficial
distinctions that

pale in
significance
before the deep
and vital unity
experienced
between
brothers and

sisters in Christ.

3.

There are all

sorts of
distinctions we
can make
between
ourselves to
use as
excuses not to

love one
another as we
ought. In Gal.
3:28 Paul
gives a similar
list that is more
general in

nature:

1.

Gal. 3:28 **Th**
ere is neither

Jew nor Greek,
there is
neither slave
nor free, there
is neither male
nor female, for
you are all

one in Christ Jesus.

2.

There he

specifies
differences of r
eligious
prerogative,
social caste,
and physical
gender.

3.

But here
Paul speaks in
a way that
applies this

truth more
specifically to
the issues in
Colosse.

—

He opposes
the false
teachers' Judai
sm ,
especially
their
requirement

that Christians
be
circumcised.
No
Christian is
more pleasing
to God, or

more privileged
over
another
Christian, for
having been
circumcised or
not having

been
circumcised.
Rather,

—

What
matters is
whether you
have a new
heart :

—

Galatians

6:15

For

neither

circumcision

counts

for

anything, nor
uncircumcision
, but a
new creation

■

—

What
matters is
whether you
have faith in

Christ:

-

Galatians

5:6

For in

Christ Jesus
neither circ
umcision
nor
uncircumcision
counts for
anything, but

only
faith
working
through love.

—

What
matters is
whether you
have obedienc

e to
Christ:

-

1

Corinthians

7:19 19 For

neither

circumcision

counts for

anything nor

uncircumcisio

n

, but

keeping the

commandmen

ts

of God.

—

Are you
willing to

condemn, to
fear, to slight
someone in a
different
denomination
? Do you

look down on
the Baptist,
the Methodist,
the
Lutheran, the
Pentecostal?

You should
ask yourself
this
question—But
is the person
a Christian?

If so then
they are a
brother!
Christ is in
them, and
they are in

Christ.

—

Paul also
opposes the
false
teachers' Gre
ek
approval of

the
superiority of
intelligence,

understanding
, and

knowledge.
Literally the
word
“barbarian”
referred to
someone who

did not speak
Greek, and so
their speech
sounded like
“bar bar bar”
to a Greek

speaker. For
that
reason
barbarians
were not
considered

intelligent,
and Scythians
were the
lowest of the
barbarians;
they were

slaves from
the savage
people found
in Southern
Russia North
of the Black

Sea.

Believe me,

Scythians

were truly

savage—they

were nomads,

never
washed with
water, lived
by the sword
and died by
the sword,

and drank
their enemies'
blood from
the broken
halves of
human skulls.

Barbarians
were people
without
refined
civilization
and culture,

and were
considered to
be much like
we may
consider
minorities in

the U.S. or
citizens of the
third world.

There are no
second-class
citizens, or

cultures, in
the church.

We are the
community of
those
redeemed

from the
barbarism of
sin
, and are
not to despise
our brother for

whom Christ
died.

-

Paul also

opposes the
view that
those who are
slaves
should have a
low standing

in the church.

Col. 4:9 says

that

Onesimus the

slave—the

slave owned

by Philemon,
about whom
the book of
Philemon was
written—Ones
imus was one

of the
Colossians.
In the church
employers
and
employees

are equals.
Even
masters and
slaves are
equals in the
life of the

church.

—

Implications:

-

Christianity
is for the

miserable,
poor, blind,
and stupid.
Christianity is
for the
homeless. It

is for the
outcasts. Are
you for them?
Or are
you against
them?

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Do you
exalt yourself
in your own
heart above

your brother
in Christ?

Are you too
good for
someone in
this church?

Too good
to spare them
your anger, or
protect their
reputation
with your

words? Too
good to listen
to what
they have to
say?
Too good to

have them
over for
lunch? If you
are, then you
aren't good at
all.

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These
distinctions
that we so
sinfully abuse

do not
prevent
someone
that we would
ostracize from
putting on the

new man.

They do
not prevent
the gospel
from taking
root in a

person's life. [2](#)

These
distinctions do
not matter,
but Christ is
all that

matters! Is
Christ in this
person?
Then you
need to call
them your

brother. Do
you really
want to put off
all the evil of
your old
life? Then all

the motive
you need to
truly love that
most
despicable
person next to

you, to tell
them the
whole truth
with all
sincerity, to
put off

responding to
them in
anger,
wrath, malice,
slander, and
filthy

language, and
to speak what
gives
grace to the
hearer, all the
motive you

need is that
Christ is their
Savior, and
Christ lives in
their heart.

—

You are a
Gentile, and
now Christ is

in you.

Rejoice in “th
e riches of
the glory of
this mystery,
which is

Christ in you,
the hope
of glory.

”

1 Friberg Lexicon.

2Eadie,
237-238 is
excellent
here.