



- Word association: What comes to mind when I say “church”?
- There is a lot of confusion about the church, and almost everyone’s view of it is far too small.
- The more we understand God’s purposes for the church and who He is making us, the better we will be able to live together for His glory and our good.

- Read Colossians 3:1-17
- Pray

- **The church is a community converted in Christ (v. 9-10a).**
 - v. 9 – At conversion in Christ, we have *“taken off the old self with its practices.”*
 - Paul is describing what happened to us at conversion.
 - Our old unbelieving selves, along with its practices, died upon salvation in Christ.
 - Illustration – A butterfly putting off its wormlike cocoon
 - v. 10
 - Here we see the glorious completion of putting off of the old self—putting on the new.
 - True believers *“have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”*
 - Illustration – When the butterfly puts off its wormlike cocoon, it doesn’t just stop there, but God gives it an gloriously new existence. It can never be a caterpillar again.

- **The church is a community growing in Christ (v. 10b).**
 - Sanctification is the progressive process of our new community in Christ.

- v. 10b – “...which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”
- In conversion Christ has put off our old selves for us and is now calling us (increasingly) to put on a glorious new self being daily recreated in His image.
- Ephesians 4:22-24 – “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”
- God gives us this power to change. (v. 12)
 - Paul refers to believers as “God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved.”
 - “Holy” – God alone is the power behind this astonishing transformation.
 - We are justified and made members of this new community in Christ entirely because God loves us and has freely chosen to set us apart as holy through Jesus Christ.
- **The church is a community that is centered in Christ (v. 11).**
 - v. 11 – “Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”
 - In a truly Christ-centered community, division disappears.
 - By regenerating and renewing us in Christ, God means to obliterate human distinctions in which we used to boast.
 - He obliterates are distinctions that make us suspicious, distrustful, jealous, puffed up, or afraid.
 - Please hear this: God’s aim in creating this new community (called the church) is that we would stop boasting in distinctives that separate us and start boasting in Christ alone (who unites us.)
 - There are no divisive distinctions when “Christ is all in all” for all.
 - Within this new community, as God has established it, “there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, **but Christ is all, and is in all.**”
 - In other words, one vital mark of this new community is that the people in it stop cherishing the things that separate us.
 - Examples
 1. Cultural differences – “Greeks or Jews”
 - ex. – U.S. melting pot, differences in language and race

- 2. Ceremonial distinctions – “*circumcised or uncircumcised*”
 - ex. – traditional vs. contemporary
- 3. Cultural Stereotypes – “*barbarian, Scythians*”
 - (Scythians were barbaric nomads who had disgusting habits. They never washed in water; they drank the blood of the first enemy killed in battle; and they made napkins of scalps and drinking bowls of the skulls of the slain.)
 - ex. – tattoos, gangs
- 4. Social Status – “*slave or free*”
 - ex. – rich vs. poor, educated vs. uneducated
 - The new people in this new community do not boast in any of these. They have passed away, and when compared to Christ, they possess no power and bring no glory.
 - **The most important mark of newness in the new people of this new community is that Jesus Christ is all and in all.**
 - What is new about the new self of verse 10? Christ is all in all!
 - What is new about the new community of verse 11? Christ is all in all!
 - This new community is called the church.
 - *For* this new community and *in* this new community Jesus Christ is everything.

Once we crowed about our culture and our ethnic pedigree, but now Jesus Christ is our all... Once we exulted in our education, our inventions, and our intelligence, but now Jesus Christ is everything... Once we hailed our heritage and touted our traditions, but now our all in all is Christ alone.

About this new community, pastor John Piper says: “Once we struggled to find our significance and our happiness and our security in what we were in relation to other people—‘We’re Jews, we’re Greeks, we’re circumcised, we’re free, we’re American, we’re rich, we’re smart, we’re strong, we’re pretty, we’re witty, we’re cool. But then we sloughed off that old self. We put on the new self. And the core essence of the new self is that CHRIST IS ALL.”

- Galatians 2:20 – “*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*”

-- A New Sermon Series

- The Series – Membership Matters: One Body in Christ
- The Key Questions:
 - What does it mean for us to be the body of Christ at First Baptist Carmi?
 - How do we live together and work together for the greatest glory of God?
- The Main Theme: We are one body in Christ because for our new community, Jesus Christ is and always must remain our all in all.

No matter our issue, **Jesus is all...** No matter our activity, Jesus is everything... No matter the agenda, no matter the principle, no matter the precept, perspective, priority, or program: All we are and all we do must be centered in Jesus Christ and rooted in the Gospel. If it's not, then we are not functioning as God desires. This church exists for Christ, or it exists for nothing. We will either stand upon the rock of Christ Jesus, or we will fall for something else. We will walk most completely in our mission when Jesus Christ increasingly becomes everything for every member.

Therefore, when Children's Church is meeting, Jesus is our mission... When Sunday School gathers, the Gospel is our goal... When the youth room is buzzing, Christ is our banner... And when LIFE Groups gather, *Jesus* is our life... He is the why of our worship... the source of our songs... the point of our preaching... the priority of our proclamation... the pathway of our prayers... and the purpose of our praises. Therefore, whenever and wherever we assemble, Jesus Christ is and must be our aim and ambition. He is over us all and in us all, and He has called us together so that He will be glorified through us all! He is ultimately everything that matters about everything we are and everything we do.

-- For us to thrive as the new community of Christ, we must stress, as urgently as possible, that Jesus Christ is our all in all.

- We stress it because the world doesn't get it.
- We stress it because it is so easy for churches to lose their way.
- We stress it because it is the heart of Scripture.
- We stress it because it is the heart of the new Christian self.
- We stress it because it is the heart of our new community in Christ.

-- In order for unity to thrive among us, our fellowship must be swallowed up in Him who is our all in all.

-- Notice the progression of v. 9-11

-- v. 9 – We put off the old self by conversion in Christ.

-- v. 10 – We put on the new self by renewal in the knowledge of God.

-- v. 11 – We stop looking for significance by comparing ourselves with others.

-- Why? Because the Lord who saves us and makes us new becomes the heart of everything that matters to us.

In other words, the glorious new reality that God means to establish among us is this: In all our relationships, Jesus Christ, *and not self*, is all. By the grace of God, we actually deny ourselves and devote ourselves to the glory of Christ. He becomes our significance, our security, and our success. He alone defines our purpose, our priority, and our preferences. He *becomes* our everything because we grow in the reality that He *is* our everything. All of our hope is in Him. All our peace is in Him. All our joy is in Him alone. He is our life. He is our salvation. He is and must be our all.

-- Unity in the Body of Christ begins with a common understanding that Christ is our all. The more Christ becomes our all, not only in thought but in action, the more united we will be.

-- As verse 10 declares, we are being renewed in Christ, and the extent to which Christ is our all will define the extent to which we have been transformed.

-- In other words, putting on the new self is the process of making Christ our all more and more day by day.

-- A chief purpose of the church, then, is to demonstrate to one another and to a watching world that a community swallowed up in Jesus Christ is a community beyond compare.

-- v. 12-17 – Portrait of a Community Where Christ Is All

-- v. 12 – As God’s chosen people, we are supposed to live in a new and counter-cultural way.

-- We confirm that Christ is our all by the way that we treat each another.

-- John 13:35 – “*By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*”

-- (Read and exposit v. 12-17.)