

Series: Advent 2021- On earth as it is in heaven
Week 5: Farewell 2021- Living as people made alive!

- **Merry Christmas!**
- **This is a year when Christmas Eve is really close to the following Sunday... so I'm being really basic...**
- **Most of message is going to be scripture itself- going to comment a bit, but mostly I want to point you toward a few big concepts in scripture itself, invite you to consider this, to wrestle with it, yourself...**
- **Start with concept I learned way back in seminary... Greek word, the concept of OIKOS.**
- **LAST SUNDAY of 2021.. PE, TO....**
- ✠ **What is your oikos?**
- **Eastern concept- household- basic unit of society... but not just immediate family...**
- **Middle eastern culture- especially in time of early church, was much more communal.**
- **A HOUSEHOLD, or OIKOS, would also include extended family, servants, their families...**
- **CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE.**
- **In our day of easy communication, email, social media, need to broaden out this just a bit... what is your circle of influence?**
- **Your family. Co-workers. People you interact with on a level where what you say, what you do, your words, choices... your countenance... has an INFLUENCE on their lives.**
- **As a church, when we combine together all our different circles of influence, we really are talking about our COMMUNITY.... SO QUESTION...**

As we move into a new year, what does our community most need from us as the Body of Christ?

- ✠ **Our community needs us to give what we've received**
- **Theme of Advent this year. In Christ, there are gifts we have received from God... they are part of God's nature, growing within us... and we will come to experience them as we GIVE THEM TO OTHERS...**
- In Christ we have received Hope, so we are *bringers of Hope*
- In Christ we have received Peace, so we are *bringers of Peace*
- In Christ we have received Joy, so we are *bringers of Joy*
- In Christ we have received Love, so we are *bringers of Love*
- **This principle is illustrated in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, where Paul describes the gift of Christ's COMFORT...**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

- **Our community NEEDS to be givers of the goodness we have received in Christ.**

✠ **Our community needs us to live by the Spirit**

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

- **FRUIT... inevitable result of an abiding relationship with Jesus... but what does FRUIT DO? In nourishes us. NOT JUST US...when we are BEARERS OF FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, we NOURISH our community. We make our community a better place.**
- **OUR COMMUNITY needs us to be people who bring this fruit.**

† **BIG POINT...Our community needs us to live as people made ALIVE in Christ**

- **Great theme of NT- talk about it all the time- is that IN CHRIST we are not just forgiven, we have been given a NEW LIFE. We are people who have been brought from DEATH TO LIFE- and this isn't just some theoretical spiritual concept- it is one of the most practical – essential- realities of being a Christian. SO, lets read this, then we'll talk through it...**
Colossians 3:1-17 (read from bible)

† **Living as those made alive in Christ**

SO MUCH IN THIS SCRIPTURE... Again, I'm just going to give you some big concepts.

- **OVERARCHING... THERE are things that are TRUE OF US IN CHRIST, that we won't experience- and that those around us will not be influenced by- unless we BELIEVE that they are true, and CHOOSE to live in the good of that truth.**
- **SO, these attributes of LIVING as a person who has been made ALIVE... these are CHOICES.**

- **The choice of where we set our minds (heart)**

Colossians 3:1-4 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

- **In our day to day lives- life as it really is- where do we set our mind? WHAT DO WE LOOK TO for our identity, our wholeness, our contentment, what we believe to be TRUE, and good? What is our source?**
- **WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE FOR YOU to make the choice to SET YOUR MIND/HEART on the presence, the truth, of Christ?**

- **The choice to deny our flesh any power**

- **So important! Remember, our flesh is the old mode of living before we received the SPIRIT- the presence of Christ as our source of life. At it's core, the flesh LOOKS TO SELF as it's source.**
- **We've talked about how IN CHRIST we are no longer SINNERS (as an identity), but we can choose to be SELFERS.**
- **Language Paul uses here is strong. It is putting something to death- complete getting rid of, like clothing that is contaminated that we take off and throw away.**

Colossians 3:5-9 *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices*

- **HOW DO WE DO THIS? CRUCIAL concept! As disciples, we don't overcome destructive patterns and habits by just determining to do so... but by CHOOSING WHERE WE LOOK as our source- to our FLESH- our own wisdom and strength/ weakness, where these patterns of brokenness are rooted, OR, TO THE SPIRIT, to our dependence upon Christ.**

Galatians 5:16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

- **CHURCH! Our OIKOS, our circle of influence, needs us to not be controlled by the old patterns of our Flesh. They need us to be people of NEW LIFE whose default is being transformed to REACTING TO LIFE out of our flesh, our own strength... to RESPONDING to life out of the SPIRIT of Christ, his nature within us.**
- **THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT.**
- **NOW, Paul turns from the negative- the old corrupt clothes that used to define us, to the POSITIVE...**
 - **The choice to put on the disciples new clothes**

Colossians 3:10-14 (take off the old self)... and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, (**Galatians 3, 'male and female'**) but Christ is all, and is in all. ¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

- **Old word to describe that kind of life... it is WINSOME. It is attractive, healing, encouraging.**
- **OUR COMMUNITY, the people with whom we have INFLUENCE... they NEED US- in our interactions with them- to we wearing these clothes. It is POWERFUL.**
 - **The choice to be people of gratitude**

Colossians 3:15-17 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- **SO much there... but we can't miss... there is an inseparable connection between the experiencing the PEACE of Christ, sharing the message of Christ, being people who worship the Lord Jesus Christ... and being people of GRATITUDE.**
- **Church- our community- like all communities (INCLUDING Christian community) is struggling with fear, resentment, and even entitlement... OUR COMMUNITY needs us to be people of GRATITUDE.**
- **Gratitude's traveling companion is HUMILITY... and when gratitude and humility are working together, they are a powerful force to tear down the barriers that block us from experiencing God's gifts of peace, hope, joy, and love.**
- **Last thought...**
- † **We may live as those who have been made alive in Christ because we are those who have died with Christ**

Romans 6:1-11 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?.....

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

- ***IN CHRIST- we are NEW CREATIONS... the old has gone, and the new has COME.***
- ***As we bid farewell to 2021... And WHATEVER 2022 may hold... MAY WE BELIEVE the truth that IN CHRIST, we are those whom have been given NEW LIFE, and a new SOURCE of life. And in our OIKOS... our circle of influence, may we CHOOSE TO LIVE as people who have been made alive.***