

Reference

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Prog #: 3

Text : Colossians 3:9

Theme : "New Life in Christ"

Time : 18:25Min.

Note: Has RIR tape

Festo - "New Life in Christ" Prog #3

Let me read you a passage which is very practical from the pen of St. Paul, and if there is anyone who experienced the meaning of newness of life in the old nature, it was this man. Colossians chapter 3, we read from verse 9. "But now," as J.B. Phillips puts it, "But now, put all these things behind you, no more evil temper or furious rage, no more evil thoughts or words about others, no more evil thoughts or words about God. No more filthy conversation. Don't tell each other lies anymore, for you have finished with the old man and all he did, and have begun life as a new man who is out to learn what he ought to be according to the plan of God. In this new man of God, of God's design, there is no distinction between Greek and Hebrew, Jew or Gentile, foreigner or savage, slave or free man, Christ is all that matters for Christ lives in them all, as therefore, God's picked representatives of the new humanity, purified and beloved of God Himself. Be merciful in action, kindly in heart, humble in mind, accept life and be most patient and tolerant with one another. Always ready to forgive if you have a difference with anyone, forgive as freely as the Lord has forgiven you. And above everything else, be truly loving, for love is the golden chain of all the virtues."

New man simply means fresh man, a man whose life has become fresh, no longer stereotyped and outmoded. Actions - fresh. Thoughts - fresh, as fresh as God Himself from whom life has come. Really this is ^{the} freshness of life in Jesus Christ. And

I'm sure you heard, as Paul puts it, the first part, the negative part, which really gives you the impression of a life stifled. If you heard those things, that was not fresh air. "put off these," he said, "evil thoughts, evil words, cutting remarks, harsh criticism, hidden jealousies, impure thoughts." This does not give you the impression life is fresh. These things are old, stuffy, and rather poisonous. As long as I'm breathing in this atmosphere, I can never fail, my heart is walking in newness of life. It is walking in the oldness of life. But he said, "But," you know, one of those lovely "but's" of the New Testament. "But," now that Christ has done something, for when a man is in Christ Jesus he becomes completely fresh, or new." His way of looking at things is different. His way of looking at life is completely different. Life has got a new meaning now. Work has got a new meaning. It's no longer spinning round in endless, meaningless circles, there is a direction and it's a fresh direction everyday.

"So," Paul says, "put off as an old garment." Very, very clear expressions, "Put off." And that is an action upon you and me. God is not going to force you to put them off, but as you catch the new vision you resent the old things. And putting off simply means repentance. If I may use an expression common in my country, repentance. Many, many christians have completely forgotten what that means. You see, we have forgotten that it simply means practical living, that if you offended your brother in the morning, or your wife in the morning, in other words, a very difficult atmosphere between you and she, or between you and that brother, and that fellow worker, what do you do?

Take a big bible, impress the crowd? Use lovely petic phrases, and lovely evangelical cliches? And you looked tremendously pious, you know, with a big bible all marked. What is that bible telling you about that stuffy atmosphere you caused in the kitchen in your house? Does the bible say anything about it? Is the living word alive? Here is your brother.

An old man in my own church, he is about seventy, converted, and they were living on a mission station. And mission stations are wonderful places where you learn deep lessons of relationships. You see, you are so close that you can't hide. Just as in the atmosphere between a husband and wife, it's a waste of time to try and hide. I've tried it, that's why I'm saying it. However, this dear gentleman had another man, they were working on the station, and they simply never could get on together. And they were both christians, old, reliable, mission station type, very, very nice, you know, and a bible in hand, tremendously men of church, but they really never could get on together. And one day we were talking, and we were talking about forgiveness, and some people were rejoicing and they were even giving their testimony in a personl way about things which were sorted out. This man came and took me by the hand and he said, "You know, you were talking about going to pray, and as you kneel somebody sticks out as you pray, and you can't get away from this person, and in the end you stop praying and you go." He said, "How did you get to know me?" I said, "I don't know anything about you. In that relationship I knew as a person, and as a very good christian too." "Listen, I've got a man. My prayer life has become miserable because every-

time I kneel to pray, here comes this man." He said, "I just can't love that man." "You mean you can't, or you won't? First of all, let us sort out the two. You mean you can't, or you mean you simply don't like to love him?" And he said, "But how do you begin?" And I said, "You go, when you kneel down and he sticks out, you speak to Jesus and say, 'Lord Jesus, here he comes again.' (laughter) Just be simple in that, say, 'Lord Jesus, here he comes again,' call him by the name, and then say to the Lord Jesus, 'I simply don't find love for him. Will you do something for me? Just help me to love, because by not loving him my prayer doesn't seem to go through. Everytime I kneel he comes, everytime I kneel he comes. Lord Jesus can't you take him away?'" And make him love him.

He said, "I'll try that." He was serious enough and he went and he tried. He knelt down and the man stuck out again as usual. And he said, "Lord Jesus, here he comes again. (noise) He gives me a lot of trouble, my prayer is interrupted, I can't get away from him, I keep meeting him. Lord help me. What shall I do with him? Give me love for him." And this man came a few days later, and he said, "It worked. Last night, he came again, I told the Lord about him, I prayed for him, I wanted to love him. This morning ^{when} I knelt he was not there, and I'm beginning to love him. I don't know where that love came from." Now, I'm giving you, that is repentance. Practical like that. One day, I'm going to be very practical this morning, not very theological. One day there was something between me and my wife, as usual, a number of things stuck out, stick out from time to time. And we

I was going to preach. I had prepared my talk, and I was very proud of my preparation, and my notes, and very evangelical, you know, and very biblical. And I was going to go, and before I went, the Holy Spirit, you know, He is a wonderful, faithful minister, and He said, "Now, before you take that big bible, your wife is standing in the kitchen utterly lonely because of what you said this morning. You can go and take your big bible and impress the crowd, but you know, I am going to remain in the kitchen with your wife, and you are going to go out with your sermon without me." So, I scratched my head, and it's terribly difficult. It's much easier to go and preach. Very difficult to go back to the kitchen and face it.

So, with a sort of trembling and, you know, hesitation, I don't know whether you are like me, maybe some of you are too saintly you just go quickly to put things right. I don't. I'm very reluctant to face even the one I love so much like my wife, however, grace encouraged me, and tugged on me, and there was that gentle pressure of the Holy Spirit, I went to the kitchen. With trembling lips I said, "I'm sorry about it. I made the atmosphere difficult, and I hurt you. I'm sorry about it. Those words were unnecessarily tough, and they came from criticism, and I'm not well(?), please forgive." There was a hush. Somehow she was given grace to forgive, I don't know she managed to do it, because I thought I really, I shouldn't have been forgiven so quickly. But anyway, she forgave me, and the atmosphere changed immediately, and we were in each others arms in that kitchen. And you know, may I give you a tip if you are married?

I call those 're-weddings.' Try them. To be wedded again when things are breaking. It's humbling, but it's relief, it's tremendous relief, and it's a deep beginning again. And God is a tremendous God, He gives us these beginnings again. We don't have them, we could just go to pieces. But, somehow because He is gracious, He gives us another chance, and another chance, and every chance means deeper freshness and more relief.

So, I left the kitchen with my bible, and I preached, I think, with a more relaxed attitude that day. Well, then before I finish, this new man who repents, and because he repents, and you know, the last bit, the positive is all about human relationships. You read about it, the kindness, the readiness to forgive, the gentleness and humility, all these have to do with you and your fellow worker, you and your wife, you and your brother, you and the man next day. They are very practical. Why? Because, you see, at Calvary, there were no theories at Calvary. It was ?, practical experience, the deepest of its kind. It was not theorizing, and speculating, and talking and preaching. No, the Son was in blood and sweat. It was deeply practical, shattering, shatteringly real. (Noise in background over voice) Because, you see, He was dealing with the kind of thing that you and I are going through day by day. He was not there just to impress, He was there to pick you, and pick me, shattered, broken up. (noise is too much, all the way to the end)