

Last week we looked at how important it is for us to set our heart and mind on eternal things, heavenly things, and not focus on the earthly. It is often said that some people are so heavenly minded they are no earthly good. The problem is really that **most are so earthly minded they are of no eternal good.** We get wrapped up in the temporal, whether the food laws or religious rituals and esoteric experiences of the false teacher, or in our culture, the priority of comfort and pleasure. Paul reminded them that they had died with Christ and been raised with Him. That’s why we should fix our heart and mind on what is eternal. (Romans 8:4-6)

We noted that even though dying with Christ is a one-time act with continuing effects, we still must continue in a heart and mind cooperation with the Holy Spirit. That old nature that died with Christ would like to resurrect itself and dominate your life again. (Hebrews 10:38) It would like to remove Jesus from the throne in your heart and rule your life once more. It would like you to return to the old desires and thoughts that you once thought were the way to satisfaction. (John 8:34)

The old nature is like the mythical zombie. It’s dead, but it can crawl out of the grave and ruin your life. (Romans 5:12) So every time that zombie climbs out of the grave we need to do what our text instructs, *<sup>5</sup> Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* You died with Christ, yet, you must continue to put to death what is earthly in you. This is another of the imperative commands of this chapter. The language here means you must do it and keep doing it. That is our experience, isn’t it?

A few weeks ago, when in the second chapter, we talked about how important it is to know that the work is done by Jesus. We don’t have to do or not do something to earn God’s favor. (Galatians 3:11) We are accepted in Christ. That is absolutely true as far as salvation is concerned. Then we are to live in Christ and in His resurrection power. It’s important that we don’t think we can then just relax and go back to our old life style. That would mean we are only fooling ourselves about our salvation. To be raised with

**Commented [Paul1]: Romans 8:4-6 (ESV)**  
<sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.  
<sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.  
<sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

**Commented [Paul2]: Hebrews 10:38 (ESV)**  
<sup>38</sup> but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”

**Commented [Paul3]: John 8:34 (ESV)**  
<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.

**Commented [Paul4]: Romans 5:12 (ESV)**  
<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

**Commented [Paul5]: Galatians 3:11 (ESV)**  
<sup>11</sup> Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” \

Christ means we are a new creation. (2Corinthians 5:17) It doesn't mean the old zombie won't make a desperate attempt to retake the throne of your heart. (Psalm 85:8)

**Commented [Paul6]: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**Commented [Paul7]: Psalm 85:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.

What Paul is describing in verse 5 is not only what happens when we are saved, but what continues to happen. Christianity is the one belief system that truly matches the reality we face every day. We live in a fallen world of sinful man. We can have a heart transplant, but **we must continue to suppress the old nature and recognize it for what it is.** That is why Paul went on to describe the actions that come from the old nature, *sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

We could look into the meaning of each of those words, but all we have to do is look at our old nature and you can understand the definition of them. It's all about pleasing self with disregard for others. Paul gives a slightly longer list in Galatians 5:19-21 (ESV) <sup>19</sup> *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, <sup>21a</sup> envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.* If these describe our life, we never became a new creation, or we let the old zombie back on the throne of our heart. If you received Christ and the zombie is back on the throne, you will be miserable. How do I know? I've experienced it. Your joy will disappear. The peace of God will leave your life until you repent and go back to putting the old nature to death. (Psalm 119:165)

**Commented [Paul8]: Psalm 119:165 (ESV)**

<sup>165</sup> Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.

**Commented [Paul9]: 1 Corinthians 15:31 (ESV)**

<sup>31</sup> I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!

This is why the Apostle Paul described his life as dying every day. (1Corinthians 15:31) There are things the old nature would tempt us to do until the day we die, but like Paul, we die daily. We continue to see that old nature stays off the throne of our heart and that Christ remains there instructing us with His word and directing our thoughts to things that are above.

I once thought that if I grew enough in Christ that I would no longer be tempted and wouldn't have to fight these battles so frequently. There is some truth to that, but we will only be free of this internal strife of the old and new nature when we see our Savior

face to face. (1John 3:2) Meanwhile, kill the zombie! God empowers you to continue to do so. Recognize that lust and greed are lying about what they can deliver and that real fulfillment is knowing Jesus. (Galatians 5:16)

In this passage and in Ephesians, Paul calls covetousness idolatry. (Ephesians 5:5) He is referring to the second and tenth commandment. (Exodus 20:3-5,17) The old nature wants what someone else has been blessed with. We can even make the gifts of God things that we idolize. To covet is to complain that God should have given you the gift He gave someone else. That turns into idolatry. It's thinking that the thing or ability would satisfy your heart. **God alone satisfies the heart of the believer!**

Any time you start to think something else will satisfy, you become an idolater. Then you have to recognize it and continue to put it to death. Paul is giving them these descriptions because the heart is deceitful. (Jeremiah 17:9) We can justify in our mind that doing something is not really the old nature. So Paul spells it out clearly so that we don't delude ourselves or be deluded by some false teacher. False doctrine will always end up in either self-righteousness or sexual indulgence or both.

***6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming.*** Here is a reminder for those who would compromise. If you think those things aren't so bad, remember, this is the reason for Noah's flood. (Genesis 6:11) This is the reason behind the destruction of Sodom. (Genesis 19:5) This is the reason for the vials of wrath that will be poured out on the earth. (Revelation 9:20-21) God is just. He will execute justice! It will not be restrained by uncertainty. These things mock God's goodness and hurt others and must be judged. Justice is one of the attributes of God we should highly value. (Genesis 18:25) In this world, injustice abounds. But we can know that the day is coming when the books will balance. If we are in Christ, we have nothing to fear. If you are not in Christ you'd better run to Him, the only way to escape certain judgment. (John 5:24)

***7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.*** It's not that Christians are any better than anyone else. We did all the same things in mind if not in body as well. It was our life. We simply took the opportunity to be forgiven that was offered us

**Commented [Paul10]: 1 John 3:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

**Commented [Paul11]: Galatians 5:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

**Commented [Paul12]: Ephesians 5:5 (NIV)**

<sup>5</sup> For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

**Commented [Paul13]: Exodus 20:3-5 (NIV)**

<sup>3</sup> You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup> You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

<sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

**Commented [Paul14]: Exodus 20:17 (NIV)**

<sup>17</sup> You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

**Commented [Paul15]: Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

**Commented [Paul16]: Genesis 6:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence.

**Commented [Paul17]: Genesis 19:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."

**Commented [Paul18]: Revelation 9:20-21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk,

<sup>21</sup> nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

**Commented [Paul19]: Genesis 18:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

**Commented [Paul20]: John 5:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

in Christ. That is why we should now be different. He saved us from the wrath to come. Out of love and appreciation we should yield to Him reigning within our hearts.

But now that we are raised with Christ our lives should be dramatically different.

*<sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.* Are you hanging on to anger over something that was done to you?

That isn't consistent with new life in Jesus. (James 1:19-20) Maybe that is where your joy has gone. Sometimes we even get angry with God for things He allows in our lives. That will certainly steal your joy and peace. Do you slander others? It doesn't matter if it is true or not. If you are speaking evil of others, remember it is not consistent with the life of Christ in you. That does not mean we do not condemn what is evil, but when it becomes personal, it becomes ungodly. (1John 4:20)

Recently within the movement called the emerging church, some of its leaders began using foul language on a regular basis and justifying it. This passage says that is inconsistent with our new life. It may be popular, but it is still ungodly. Some say it makes us fit in better so we don't look too holy. The Apostle says, "Get rid of it!" (Genesis 35:2)

It's interesting to hear people's language change when they find out I'm a pastor. Sometimes they will even apologize. The world is convicted about their language while some of the church is trying to talk us out of that conviction. God help us. We are supposed to be different! Don't confuse "holier than thou" with holy.

*<sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices*

Deception must go with the old self and all its practices. The zombie lies to impress or gain an advantage. There is no need to do that in Christ! Our value is in Jesus and His love for us. Our advantage is that we are His chosen ones, God's children. Now we can finally be honest and not hide under masks of deception. (Ephesians 4:25)

Paul uses a couple of terms that were used for undressing and dressing. We take off the old self like a set of dirty work overalls. Then we put on the new man. <sup>10</sup> *and have*

**Commented [Paul21]: James 1:19-20 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;  
<sup>20</sup> for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

**Commented [Paul22]: 1 John 4:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

**Commented [Paul23]: Genesis 35:2 (NIV)**

<sup>2</sup> So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes.

**Commented [Paul24]: Ephesians 4:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

*put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

The new wardrobe is in fact Christ Jesus. (Romans 13:14) He is what people are to see in the way we go about our work, in our responses, in our concern, and in the way we live our lives each day. We are supposed live the “What Would Jesus Do” motto continually.

And we are to be renewed in knowledge. The Amplified Version puts it like this, *[ever in the process of being] renewed and remolded into [fuller and more perfect knowledge upon] knowledge...* The way we think and see the world is continually being transformed as we study God’s Word and live in Christ Jesus. (Romans 12:2) We gain true knowledge. We get God’s eternal perspective. We continue to grow and grow. If you think you’ve arrived, it just shows you’ve got a long way to go. The more we see, the more we realize how much more there is to see. (Ephesians 1:17)

*<sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.* In Christ, our background does not matter. Our status in society or our income level is not a factor. For the believer, it is all about Jesus. If He’s in you, you’re my brother or sister. We have the same great fixation, Jesus!

We read of what the old self looks like, and we know the new self looks like Jesus, but Paul gets a little more specific about what we put on when our wardrobe is Jesus. He gets into the individual articles of our dress. *<sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.* Because we are chosen ones made holy by the blood of Jesus, loved by God, here is what we should look like. Our heart should feel with others, which is what compassionate means. That is how Jesus is with us! (Hebrews 4:15) We should be kind toward all, even our enemies. We should be humble, considering others above ourselves. Our strength should be controlled, which is what it means to be meek.

**Commented [Paul25]: Romans 13:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

**Commented [Paul26]: Romans 12:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Commented [Paul27]: Ephesians 1:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,

**Commented [Paul28]: Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

We should patiently bear with one another. This is one of the church's greatest failures. We refuse to forgive like we have been forgiven. Jesus had some pretty stern words to say about that. (Matthew 18:34-35) God puts up with so much in me and you. Can't we reflect that grace to others? We will if we put Jesus on each day and continue to kill the zombie.

That old zombie is reigning in the heart of too many Christians. Jesus died to set us free from unforgiveness, anger, slander, and all sensuality. Put it off. Put Jesus on! Get dressed up, fellow believer, and don't let that zombie out of his coffin! Amen? The world needs to see Jesus in you and me. They need to be freed from their old nature. How can they desire that freedom if they don't see it lived out in us? (1Peter 2:12)

**Commented [Paul29]: Matthew 18:34-35 (ESV)**

<sup>34</sup>And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.

<sup>35</sup>So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

**Commented [Paul30]: 1 Peter 2:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup>Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

#### Questions

- 1 How is our old nature like a zombie?
- 2 In what ways does the Bible fit our true life experience?
- 3 Describe the zombie?
- 4 How often do we have to kill it?
- 5 Why is coveting idolatry?
- 6 Why is God's wrath coming?
- 7 What are the throw away clothes?
- 8 What are the new clothes?
- 9 Why are there no class distinctions in Christ?