

Text: Colossians 3:17

Title: Whatever You Do

Truth: Live in a way that honors the name of the Lord Jesus.

Date/Location: Sunday December 13, 2015 at FBC

Introduction

Read Matthew 5:48. One of my sons read this yesterday and asked me what that verse means since it is impossible to be perfect. I told him that God's standard for us is perfect behavior, and I agreed with him that it is not possible to do just the right thing every time, but that God wants us to do so. God wants us to be good in every way in our life (like Barnabas in Acts 11:24), but because we are sinners, we have fallen short of this glorious standard of righteous behavior (Romans 3:23, 3:10). God is at work in the Christian to bring about this kind of lifestyle through the course of time, ultimately perfecting each one as he or she enters into the presence of God in heaven.

Colossians 3 is at the center of that process. At conversion, God makes a person from an old man into a new man (2:20, 3:1, 3:3, 3:9-10) and expects that with such a transformation will come a change in behavior—a killing off of sins (3:5-9a) and an enlivening of righteous ways (3:12-17). We must be active—not passive—in the process, which is called in theology by the big word *sanctification*.

I. Diagram of the Verse

And whatever you do
in word
or deed,
do all
in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father
through Him [Christ].

II. Whatever We Do

- A. This is a comprehensive statement. It covers everything that we do in every part of our lives. It is another result of the richly indwelling Word of God and Holy Spirit that we learned about in the previous verse.
- B. “Word and deed” is a phrase that is a Biblical way of referring to the whole of one's life. Jesus was a “prophet mighty in deed and word” (Luke 24:19). Paul's ministry was geared toward bringing Gentiles to faith and therefore obedience to God in word and deed (Rom. 15:18). Paul was

strong in word by letter to the Corinthians, and he would be the same in deed when he came, if he had to (2 Cor. 10:11). We are taught not to love in word or tongue only, but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18).

C. There are two descriptions that should accompany every word and deed that we do:

1. They should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.
2. They should be done with thanksgiving to God the Father through Jesus.

We have a practice in our church family, inherited from Pastor Raymond Saxe, of praying “with thanksgiving in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” This text calls us to extend that tradition to everything we do, not just how we end our prayers. Hopefully that ending has not become perfunctory, and hopefully we will implement it in life, not just in prayer.

We will now look at these two descriptions in more detail.

III. In the Name of the Lord Jesus

- A. This does not mean just reciting the name of the Lord as some lucky charm over your daily activities.
- B. “In the name of” means that what you are doing and speaking is in line with Christ’s entire character. The name refers to all that He is, His perfect character.
- C. To extend that thought, note that “the name of the Lord” occurs 86 times in the Old Testament, and 21 more in the New Testament of the Bible. In the Old Testament this phrase refers to God, the LORD. We are forced by how the Bible presents Jesus here to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. He is the LORD!
- D. You cannot do sinful things in the name of the Lord.

IV. Giving Thanks to God the Father Through Christ

- A. “With thanksgiving to God” indicates an expression of thanks, not just that you got pleasure or like the thing you are doing, but that you express gratitude that God has permitted you to participate in this activity. This clearly rules out complaining and the like!
- B. You cannot do sinful things with thanksgiving to God.
- C. We can only thank God through Jesus. If you attempt to come any other way than through Christ, then you are violating God’s word in this verse,

and you are not getting through to God anyway because there is no other way than Christ.

1. Remember these key “mediator” passages: 1 Timothy 2:5; John 14:13-14, 15:16, and 16:23-26.
2. Christ is not a delivery man taking each and every prayer and “over-nighting” it to God the Father. Rather, He is the One who opened the way that permits us to speak to God the Father and is thus the channel through which we can have access to God.

V. Application

- A. These two companions (in the name of the Lord and with thanksgiving) can be used as tools to discern to see if we should start or continue to do anything. If we cannot in good conscience say, “I am doing or about to do this ‘in the name of the Lord with thanksgiving’” then there is a sin happening or about to happen!
- B. Think of some examples in your own life. Think about your private walk with the Lord, your marriage, your church participation, your watching of TV and movies, playing of video games, listening to music. Can you really say that you listen to worldly music and lyrics, watch nudity, lewdness and violence, etc. “in the name of the Lord”? Really?
- C. When Paul says everything, does he mean everything? I believe so. What about personal things, how do you do those in the name of the Lord Jesus? Even personal functions in line with the Bible and how God has created us can be done with thanks, recognizing that God made us and gave those functions or abilities. Although it might be considered a bit common or beneath a public message to speak about, think about this: a person has just had part of his or her large intestine removed because of colon cancer. After going through that, do you think they might thank God that they can use the bathroom? Absolutely!
- D. The Bible says “word” as well as deed. You cannot just get away with saying, “Well, I always *do* the right thing, even if I don’t say the right thing.” Forget the half-baked pious sounding words. Your speech can do great damage, or it can do great edification. Remember that we will be judged for our idle words (Matthew 12:36)! You are what you speak! You must also say the right thing, the right way, in the name of the Lord, with thanks.

1. How does this fly: “I’m telling you what you need to hear, and while I’m yelling at you, I’m yelling in the name of the Lord Jesus, thanking God through Him!!!!”
2. Marital and family problems almost always have an element of communication in them. The communication often shuts down or blows up, or alternates between those two states.
3. Break the broken communication cycle by words that reflect the character (name) of Jesus, words that express thanksgiving, words that build up, words that show Christian love.

Conclusion

How shall we expect or ask for the blessing of God in our life if we don’t do things fitting to be attached to Christ’s name, or we do so with grumbling and complaining instead of thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving should be in our hearts. It is part of our singing (verse 16). But it should extend to everything in our lives.

Our Christian life starts out by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10). It continues by praying through Him to the Father, working and speaking in His name with thanks to God, and ends still entrusting and calling upon His name, as Jesus did (Luke 23:46).

MAP