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What ‘Life in the Spirit’ Looks Like (Colossians 3:1-17)

Pastor Gene Giguere, September 27, 2026

Introduction

1) Last Sunday we considered the provision we have as believers in Scripture to NOT break the Holy Spirit’s heart.

✠ We said whenever we tolerate sin in our daily life, the Spirit Who indwells us, must turn from His ministry of *working in us*, to a ministry of *pleading with us* to return to fellowship with Him.

✠ The mandate is that we “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption” (**Ephesians 4:30**).

✠ Sin – any sin – immediately severs our fellowship with God and must therefore be avoided at all cost.

And the Bible tells us how we can do just that: avoid it.

There’s not a million things God asks us to do to remain in fellowship with Him; there’s only one: *walk by means of the Holy Spirit*. It begins by confessing our sins and thereby being “filled” with the Spirit. And it continues by *remaining* there. We’re told to be (1) filled with the Spirit, to (2) walk in the Spirit, to (3) be led by the Spirit, and to (4) keep in step with the Spirit. And **Galatians 5:16** promises that if we’ll do that – if we’ll only “walk [order our steps] by the Spirit,” we will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

✠ The truth resounds all throughout Scripture that we can only ever accomplish the will of God for our lives – the Divine Desideratum, or our personally mixed ‘cup’ – by *the power of the Holy Spirit*.

Last week, we looked at this same pattern in the Lord’s word to Zerubbabel through the prophet Zechariah.

The Temple would be rebuilt, “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts” (**Zechariah 4:6**). And the “great mountain” – the obstacles which stood in the way of completing God’s work – would “become a plain” when he shouted, “Grace, grace to it!” (**Zechariah 4:7**).

The same is true of believers now: obstacles are only removed, and God’s will is only accomplished, by His Holy Spirit working through us. As Jesus Himself said, “... apart from me you can do nothing” (**John 15:5b**).

✠ We saw in **Romans 8** that the key to true spirituality lies in *where we set our minds* – what we are occupied with.

Verse **5** tells us that “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.” And so, we have a choice to make – and *we must choose carefully!* Because, as Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters” (**Matthew 6:24**).

- 2) The very fact that the Spirit indwells us means that we have been given a *new life* and a new way *to experience the life we’ve been given*.

We owe the flesh no debt to serve its will or fulfil its desires (**Romans 8:12**). *We are truly free*. Jesus, through His Holy Spirit has given us *a new way to be human*. We have roads open to us that are closed to every unbeliever: *roads of the Spirit*. And if we’ll follow Jesus down these roads of the Spirit, we’ll *experience* the exuberant life that we received at the new birth.

As Paul wrote in **Romans 6:4** – something I truly love and always try to emphasize in my teaching – God’s Word promises believers the possibility of living in the “newness of life” NOW!

Paul is talking about *walking in the experience* of our post-salvation, resurrected, exuberant, new life in Jesus.

This “newness of life” – which, Paul says, we can “walk in” – means some wonderful things!

✠ It means our identification with Christ has made a brand-new way of living available to us: *life in the Spirit*. As Jesus said, “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly [*exuberantly!*]” (**John 10:10b**).

✠ The “newness of life” acknowledges that believers have *come under new management!*

We no longer have to be slaves to our old nature! Paul wrote in **Romans 6:7, 11**: “One who has died has been set free from sin ... ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin [NOW] and alive to God in Christ Jesus [NOW].”

That’s why Paul told Timothy – an *already-born* again man, to “take hold of the eternal life to which you were called ...” (**1 Timothy 6:12b**) We do this by living life in the Spirit.

✠ So, for all believers there is (1) a resurrection *coming* (**Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 6:14, 15:42, 53; 2 Corinthians 4:14**), and there is (2) a resurrection that HAS COME.

We don’t *have to* grieve the Spirit. We don’t *have to* set our mind on the things of the flesh. We don’t *have to* walk in experiential death. We *can* choose to submit to the Spirit, to walk in the ‘newness’ of the life Jesus has given us, and to do the things which please the Father – a Trinitarian blessing!

✠ So, this “newness of life” means seeing our old life – our B.C. days – as ‘slavery days,’ and our current life as being “free indeed.” For, as Jesus said, “if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!” (**John 8:36**).

Putting On and Taking Off, Part One

- 1) So, we’ve been talking a lot about ‘life in the Spirit’ and the ‘newness of life,’ but what does this life look like *practically*? There are a number of beautiful passages we could point to with respect to this, but none are more beautiful than **Colossians 3**. Let’s read through the first 17 verses of **Colossians 3** carefully, because, Church, it’s all here!

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator ...

¹² Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ 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 ...

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

So, what does life in the Spirit look like? It looks like this!

- ✠ It’s people who’ve been “raised with Christ” raising their eyes to “seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (**Colossians 3:1**).
- ✠ It’s setting our “minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth” (**Colossians 3:2**).
- ✠ It’s moving through life with a personal sense of destiny, knowing that “when Christ *who is your life* appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (**Colossians 3:4**).

✠ Life in the Spirit means actively putting to “death ... what is earthly” in us - reckoning *ourselves* dead, but a live *to Christ*.

This is precisely what Paul means when he says, “[Y]ou also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (**Romans 6:11**). Dead, but more alive than ever! For life in the Spirit is also understanding that we’ve died, but that our “life is hidden with Christ in God” (**Colossians 3:3**).

And so, life in the Spirit means actively putting “to death” anything that is “earthly” in us – that is, a part of our old nature. “Put to death” is very interesting here. It is the *aorist active imperative* of the Greek word, νεκρώω, the verb form of νεκρός, which means ‘dead.’¹ I would have expected to find the present tense here – ‘keep on putting to death,’ but we don’t. I think Paul uses the aorist here to indicate an act which must be done once and for all.

He’s saying, ‘YOU MUST (note the *imperative* mood) put to death what is earthly in you, *and make sure they stay dead!*’ What kinds of things? Well, he says, “sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness”; that’s verse **5**. And “anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth”; that’s verse **8b**.

“In these you ... once walked,” Paul says, ⁸“But now you must put them all away [*aorist middle imperative* of ἀποτίθημι, to take of like a piece of clothing]!”

Then Paul isolates one sin specifically in verse **9**: *lying*. “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ...”

¹ We would have expected to find the present tense here – ‘keep on putting to death,’ but we don’t. The aorist tense refers to an action in a moment in time, usually past. I think that Paul is using this grammatical construction to indicate a definite act, an act which is done once and for all. For this, see Alford, Henry, “The Epistle to the Colossians” in vol. 3 of *The Greek Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1874, 1958; Revised by Everett F. Harrison), *ad loc.*; Bruce, F. F., *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament series (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1984), *ad loc.*; and Lenski, R. C. H., *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), p. 155. Dr. Peter O’Brien thinks it refers to a decisive act which is followed by a permanent attitude (O’Brien, Peter T., *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary, Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1982, XLIV, 176). Others see it as an action which, though it needs to continue to be repeated, is being thought of as a unit. For this, see King, Martha, *An Exegetical Summary of Colossians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2008), *ad loc.*, and Harris, Murray J., “Colossians & Philemon” in *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), *ad loc.*

Dr. Lenski's comments are very helpful on this verse. He writes: "Lying is a different sort of harmful sin and is therefore listed separately with its own imperative [μὴ ψεύδεσθε] ... This present imperative wants to exclude all lying; we should translate [it]: 'Never lie to one another!'"²

Jesus said, "I am the Truth" in **John 14:6**. He also said that the devil is a liar and has been lying from the beginning! In **John 8:44**, He told the unbelievers who were opposing Him:

"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

Obvious, *lying has no place among followers of Jesus*.³ "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (**Ephesians 4:15**). The Holy Spirit, the anointing we have from God, always leads us in the truth – no matter what it costs. And so, Paul forcefully says, "Never lie to one another!"

Life in the Spirit means actively putting to "death therefore what is earthly" in us. We must take them off like an old, stinky garment. Why? Because it's "on account of these," Paul tells us, that "the wrath of God is coming" (**Colossians 3:6**).

God's Word is clear: if any of these things are still a part of our lives, we are *not* enjoying the fullness of the "newness of life" that is available to us as followers of Jesus.

✠ But life in the Spirit is more than just *taking something off*, it's also *putting something on*! Verse **12** tells us to "put on" some things – a different word

² Lenski, R. C. H., *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), pp. 161–62.

³ The Holy Spirit, the anointing we have from God, always leads us in the truth – no matter what it costs. 1 John 2:27: "The anointing that you received from him abides in you, and ... teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him." "It" is used here because its antecedent is the word "anointing" which translates *χρῖσμα*, a neuter word.

here, the aorist middle imperative of ἐνδύω, which simply means to *dress up*.⁴ Another *aorist*, and other *imperative*.

If we're to live 'life in the Spirit,' how are we to dress ourselves? What are they to wear? This is beautiful! Church, I believe that this is one of the clearest pictures of what life in the Spirit looks like!

It's not only what we've taken off – all of that *old junk* from our former way of life. But it's what we've put on – the *magnificent virtues* of a man or woman who's following Jesus down roads of the Spirit.

- 2) Please notice: we put these things on those who have been “chosen” personally by God!⁵ **Ephesians 1** even tells us *when* He chose us!

“He [the Father] chose us in Him [in Jesus] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him” (**Ephesians 1:4**).

The word “chosen” (ἐκλεκτός) refers to “those whom God has chosen from ... mankind and drawn to himself ... Hence of Christians in particular.”⁶ So, Paul wants us to know, first and foremost, that we've been “chosen” by God to receive this new life in Jesus.

But that's not all! Verse **12** goes on to say, we are to “put on then, as God's chosen ones, *holy and beloved* ...” So, as if it weren't enough that God has “chosen” us, He's also called us “holy and beloved.” “Holy” is ἅγιος, set apart forever by God, and “beloved,” which declares us to be the eternal objects of God's love [ἀγάπη]! How's that for two wonderful adjectives!

- 3) OK, so how are we *chosen, holy and beloved* Jesus-followers supposed to dress? How should we look? Well ...

✠ We're to put on “compassionate hearts” – or, more literally, ‘compassionate bowels’! “Hearts” translates perhaps the most melodious sounding word in the Greek language, *spilagchnon* (σπλάγχνον). The word

⁴ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 333.

⁵ Hendriksen, William, *Exposition of Colossians and Philemon*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1964), *ad loc.*

⁶ *Op. cit.*, BDAG, p.306.

refers to the “inward parts of the body” especially the “*entrails*.”⁷ But in the ancient world, the “inner body parts served as referents for psychological aspects” such as “the seat of the emotions.”⁸

Now, if I say, ‘My heart belongs only to Mary,’ you wouldn’t assume I mean the muscle that’s pumping blood in my chest! You’d know exactly what I meant – I would be speaking of an *emotion: love! L’Amour! L’Amour toujours l’amour!* That’s how a 1st century reader would have understood this word too. Not as *literal* ‘bowels of compassion,’ but as *figurative* ‘bowels of compassion.’

The key word here though is “compassion” – οἰκτιρμός, in Greek; it means *to have mercy or pity* for someone else. We’re to put on *a heart of mercy* toward one another. Jesus commanded His followers in **Luke 6:36**, “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” Friends, this is what it looks like to live ‘life in the Spirit.’

- ✠ Then, we’re to put on “kindness” (one of the fruits of the Spirit in **Galatians 5:22**) and “humility” (ταπεινοφροσύνη, *modesty*).
- ✠ We’re to put on “meekness” (πραΰτης is “the quality of not being impressed by a sense of self-importance”⁹; I think its best translated *gentleness* here).
- ✠ And we’re to put on “patience” (μακροθυμία, the ability to remain “tranquil while awaiting an outcome”¹⁰; I think the best English word to use here is *forbearance*).

And so, Paul is saying, expanding the Text a bit:

*‘As chosen ones, set-apart objects of God’s eternal love,
put on hearts of mercy toward one another,
and (the Holy Spirit’s fruit of) kindness,
and a modest, gentle spirit toward one another,*

⁷ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 938.

⁸ *Ibid*, BDAG, p.938.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, BDAG, p.861.

¹⁰ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p.612.

*and patience, quietly forbearing with one another
in every circumstance!’*

And then, Paul pulls all of these beautiful words together and expands them in a way that is very useful to us! He gives us a kind of test – a very *understandable*, and *practical*, and *challenging* self-test in verse **13**.

Aside: The Importance of Forgiveness

- 1) How can we know if we’ve put these things on and are walking with Jesus down roads of the Spirit?

He writes, we are to be “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.*”

So, how can we know that we’re pleasing the Lord?

How can we know that we’re living ‘life in the Spirit’?

How can we know if these things are truly present and growing within us – mercy and kindness, and patient forbearance, and gentleness of spirit?

By this. By the self-test of verse **13**.

Do I ‘bear with’ other Christians?

“Bear with” translates ἀνέχω, a word that means *the ability to listen patiently (Hebrews 13:22)*, and even *to accept a complaint*.¹¹

If I have “a complaint against another,” or of they have a complaint against me, am I eager to forgive it and reconcile?

Do I forgive others as the Lord has forgiven me?

¹¹ *Ibid.*, BDAG, p.78.

Or do I hold grudges, even against those who have asked for my forgiveness, who've sought reconciliation?

If so, I need to deal with that, and fast!

For holding back forgiveness is *especially* connected with *grieving* the Spirit.

Let's look at the full context of the 'grieve not the Spirit' passage, **Ephesians 4:30-32**:

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

If I am harboring any unforgiveness in my heart toward another brother or sister, *I am not filled with the Spirit until I do*. I am disobeying the Lord and walking in darkness.

The problem is we often feel justified in our unwillingness to forgive. But the Lord gives us no such option of holding back forgiveness. So, we go about carrying a grudge and we think we're right with God, but we are not. Please don't fool yourself!

1 John 1:6 says, “If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

I must let it go. Why? Because, as long as I hold on to my lack of forgiveness, I am grieving the Spirit, and possibly quenching Him. “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (**Ephesians 4:32**). “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (**4:30a**).

And remember, forgiveness depends only on *one* person, *me*; reconciliation depends on *two* people, *me and you*.

- 2) Now, Jesus told a parable that should terrify all of us! It's called, *The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant* (**Matthew 18:21-35**). You know it, I'm sure.

A servant owes a master 10,000 talents—an impossibly huge sum of money that he could never pay back in a lifetime. The king takes pity on him, cancels the entire debt, and lets him go free. But then, just after leaving the Master's presence, that same servant runs into a man who owes him a relatively small amount of money (100 denarii). But rather than forgive him after he'd been forgiven so much, he grabs the man and chokes him, and demands to be paid immediately. When the other servants saw this, they went and told the Master! The Master was angry and he revoked his forgiveness of the man's debt and handed him over to be tortured until he paid back everything he owed. And then Jesus said, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart" (**Matthew 18:35**).

Now, I think this parable is about life in the coming Messianic Kingdom and it's about discipline, not salvation. But it has a very important Church-age application. We know that Jesus will never revoke forgiveness from a born-again man or woman, *but we also know He told this parable for a reason!* He told this story to answer a question Peter asked Him: not *if*, but – *how often* we should forgive someone who sins against us.

His point is clear: God has forgiven each of His servants of an impossible-to-pay spiritual debt. Therefore, we are required to forgive any debt others may owe us – because any debt they owe us will certainly be smaller than the one that's been forgiven us.

Now we read this phrase several times in the New Testament: "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (**Ephesians 4:32**). And, whenever I enter a state of momentary insanity and decide to hold back forgiveness from someone who's offended me, do you want to know what I hear? I hear God saying, 'Gene, *who exactly do you think you are?* You proud, arrogant fool! What makes you think I'll allow you to refuse to forgive your brother when I've forgiven you so much? You'd better put on your seatbelt, Son, because I am about to take you to the woodshed for a little quality time!'

And I think that's about right. Who exactly do I think I am to have had God's mercy lavished upon me the way it's been, and then refuse to show it to others? This is a clear indication that I am *not* walking with God.

This parable shows us that God is angry when we refuse to forgive. If we refuse to show mercy to others, God will withdraw His mercy from us. If I "walk in the

light, as He [the Father] is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses [keeps on cleansing] [me] from all sin” (1 John 1:7). But I’m *not* walking in the light; I’m walking in the darkness. Mercy is held back because of our broken fellowship. He no longer forgives my sin and I remain out of fellowship with Him until I fix this.

In **Matthew 6:14-15**, Jesus said, “If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

In **Luke 17:3-4**, Jesus warned: “Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”¹² “Forgive” is in the future tense. Scholars are in agreement that the *future tense* here carries the force of an imperative.^{13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22}

In **Matthew 5:23-24**, Jesus said, “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” Mark it down: God won’t even accept your gift if you refuse to reconcile with your brother.

And **Mark 11:25**: “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

¹² “Forgive” is the future active indicative of ἀφίημι [a-fi-a-mi], a word that means to dismiss something or to let something go or to release someone from a “legal or moral obligation or consequence.” Cf., Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p.156.

¹³ Blight, Richard C., *An Exegetical Summary of Luke 12–24*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2008), p.204.

¹⁴ Arndt, William F., *Luke* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1984), *ad loc.*

¹⁵ Bock, Darrell L., *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), II:1388.

¹⁶ Fitzmyer, Joseph A., *The Gospel according to Luke X–XXIV: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, Anchor Bible (Doubleday, 1985), 28A, p.1139.

¹⁷ Lenski, R. C. H., *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1961), p.865.

¹⁸ Marshall, I. Howard, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), p.643.

¹⁹ Hendriksen, William, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), *ad loc.*

²⁰ Reiling, J., and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Luke*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), pp.578–79.

²¹ Nolland, John, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1993), 35B, p.838.

²² All major translations render it this way, except the KJV.

Nothing could be clearer: if we desire to walk in the Spirit, we must forgive others and be reconciled. Until we do, we are out of fellowship with God. Period. So, Paul says in our passage that we're to be "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*. I have literally stepped out of the place where God can bless me; all He can do now is discipline me.

- 3) Jesus' point here could not be more clear: He *expects* to find that someone who is truly saved, who truly belongs to Him, would be willing to forgive others.

The lack of willingness to forgive indicates that the person is either spiritually very immature or not saved at all. Remember, Jesus said that there are many who call Him "Lord" and who are doing things in His name, that He does not know. We don't always get it right, but, mark it down, truly saved people *desire to do the will of the Father*.

Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (**Matthew 7:21**).

We don't "do" the will of the Father to be saved; we "do" the will of the Father because we *are* saved. There are people doing "work" in Jesus' name who He will in a future judgement call "workers of lawlessness," of iniquity.

He said: "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'" (**Matthew 7:22-23**).

Now, I'm saying these things because the New Testament writers make and explicit connection between the willingness to forgive and the character which the Lord expects to find in a saved man or woman.²³

²³ To not forgive a brother or sister is an act of *hatred* toward that brother or sister. And the Apostle John wrote: "Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰ Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹ But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:9-11). I think this is about fellowship with God and not salvation – 1 John chapter 1 uses this 'light and darkness' language to talk about our fellowship with God being broken by sin. It's clear though that no Christian can walk in hatred toward his brother or sister and be in fellowship with God! John brings this home in 1 John 4:20: "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. ²¹ And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother." The same

- 4) Paul is telling us in **Colossians 3:13** that if we think we're living life in the Spirit and yet refuse to reconcile with another brother or sister in the Lord, we're dreaming! He makes the "will of the Father" as clear as crystal in this verse. We're to bear "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." God commands anyone whom He has forgiven to generously forgive.

Putting On and Taking Off, Part Two

- 1) And so, Paul continues showing us what a believer living 'life in the Spirit' looks like in verse **15**.
- We're to "let the peace of Christ rule in [our] hearts, to which indeed [we] were called in one body" (**Colossians 3:15a**). I think this means we're to wait upon the Spirit's peace in every decision we make.
 - And we're to "be thankful" (**Colossians 3:15b**) – ah, the rare virtue of gratitude!
 - And we're to "Let the word of Christ dwell [within us] richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in [our] hearts to God" (**Colossians 3:16**).

Do you see the brotherhood here?

The fellowship?

The joy of teaching and sharing and singing together as God's people?

Psalms 133:1: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!"

is true of 1 John 3:14-15: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death." ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." I think this passage is also about fellowship with God and not salvation. To "abides in death" is (similar to Paul's language in Romans 8) to live in the 'realm of death' experientially as a believer. In the phrase "no murderer has eternal life abiding in him," the key word is "abiding". This is talking about experience life in the Spirit, 'the *experience of life* abiding in him.' Why not? Because as long as he's hating his brother, he's dwelling in the realm of darkness, even as a believer.

But sin, and selfishness, and unforgiveness, and anger, and malice – all of these things – destroy the unity of the Body and help the devil in his desire to divide brothers and sisters.

So, it is the obligation of every believer within the Body to be “diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit” (**Ephesians 4:3**, NASB95).

- And finally, Paul writes, “Whatever [we] do, in word or deed, [we should] do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (**Colossians 3:17**).

To Jesus “be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen!” (**Jude 24**).

These are the things which mark those who are living ‘life in the Spirit.’

If these things are growing within us, Church, we will *not* grieve the Holy Spirit.

- 5) Church, here’s an unfathomable truth: the Lord loves us so much that He desires to walk with us!

He tells us what life in the Spirit looks like, this astonishing gift that He’s made available to us.

But He also tells us precisely what to expect if we refuse to repent and choose not to walk in fellowship with Him – if we *grieve* and even *quench* His Spirit instead.

We’ll look at that next time.

Amen.