

What Change does Jesus Make?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 January 2019

Preacher: Alistair Chalmers

[0 : 00] Well, good morning everybody. Oh, let me just get rid of all this stuff. My name is Alistair. I have the privilege of being on staff here at the church and the privilege of opening God's Word to us this morning.

So if you have a Bible in front of you, it would be great if you turn to Colossians chapter 3 and that we're going to be reading the first 11 verses and that is on page 1184 of the church Bibles.

But before we actually get to reading God's Word, I want to ask you a question. How many of you have seen a make-up show? Like a make-over show? You know those shows where someone comes in and then they get make-up on, new clothes?

How many of you have seen those? Can I get a show of hands? Okay, and now let me ask another question. Keep your hands in the air. How many of you love those shows? Absolutely love them. I'm going to put my hand up. I love them. I'm not ashamed. And the reason I love them is because when the show starts, you see this before picture. So you usually see someone with bad teeth, someone with unkept hair or hair that's all over the place, someone with a kind of really bad fashion sense.

[1 : 08] And so I can't help it because I see the before picture and I'm dying to know what the after picture is like. I just can't help myself. But am I the only one? I know you're all the same.

I know you're all the same. And throughout the whole show, which could actually be about two minutes, but it lasts about half an hour, you feel this tension building as you see smaller changes here and there to the person's appearance.

And then finally, the person is revealed. There's so much excitement. And as that person stands before the mirror, they usually say something like, I'm a completely different person.

There's so much excitement. But is that all it takes to be a new person? A few external changes, a bit of makeup and a pair of new clothes.

Is that really all it takes? Well, no, because all of those changes only happen on the outside. But the passage that we're going to look at this morning speaks of a significant change that happens from the inside out.

[2 : 13] So whether you're a Christian or not this morning, as we look at the Bible together, I want you to have this question in the back of your minds. What change does Jesus make? So we're going to be in Colossians chapter 3, focusing on verses 5 to 11, but I'll read from verse 1 just to give us a bit of the context.

So Colossians 3 verse 1 says this. Since then you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things, for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived, but now you must also rid yourself of all such things as these, anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips.

[3 : 30] Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.

Here, there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and is in all.

So coming back to that question again, what change does Jesus make? Well, verses 1 to 4 that we looked at last week tell us the fundamental change, which is that Jesus changes our whole identity. And Paul is telling the Colossians that they have died with Christ, meaning that they've died to their old self and they have been raised with him. So the fundamental change that Jesus makes is that he changes our identity.

And then in verses 5 to 11, we see how this change of identity should impact our day-to-day lives. And the first thing that we see is that the old has gone.

[4 : 43] So Paul bases this whole discussion on the Christian's new identity that you see in verses 1 to 4. Because if we change our actions because we want to reach a new moral standard, then we're teaching moralism.

If we change our actions because we want to stick to religious rules that will hopefully get us into heaven, then we're teaching moralism and we're wrong. But if we change our actions because of our new identity in Jesus, and we want to serve him and worship him and make him the focus of our lives, then we've got it right.

So as a people who have been changed by Jesus, what are we to do? Hannah, as a person who has been changed by Jesus, how do you live out your faith?

Well, Paul says the old has gone. For the Christian, our old identity died with Jesus on the cross. Therefore, verse 5, he says, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature.

Now, what is this earthly nature? Well, elements of it are seen there in verse 5. Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed.

[5 : 57] But notice the word that Paul uses to describe all of these things. They are, at their very foundation, idolatry. A well-known theologian called John Calvin from many, many years ago described the human heart as an idol-making factory.

Now, that isn't the usual story that we read on billboards or read in magazines, is it? I don't think Sabina, my wife, would be too impressed if I said, I love you with all of my idol-factory-making heart. It doesn't quite sound the same, does it? But friends, that is exactly what our hearts are like. Not just mine, not just yours, but every single heart in this world.

Every heart is corrupt and seeks to serve only itself. But did you notice how all of these things in verse 5 are geared towards and are for the pleasure of the individual?

They are all selfish acts. And in our polite British fashion, we might not think that we're guilty of any of these sins. Because these are outrageous, aren't they?

[7 : 06] They're just wrong and only bad people, we say, do these things. Well, sadly, that's just not true. Sexual immorality is anything that goes outside of God's wonderful design for sex and marriage.

Sex is a gift from God to the world to be enjoyed between one man and one woman in the covenant relationship of marriage. And I know this goes completely against what society tells us.

But who better to look to, to know how to use this wonderful gift than the giver of the gift himself? I wouldn't go and buy a brand new fitness watch, pull it out the box, then run to McDonald's and ask the guy who's frying the chips how to use it, would I?

No. I'd open the box, I'd pick up the instruction manual and I'd start reading. I'd read the terms and conditions, I'd listen to the do's and don'ts. I wouldn't ignore them because I don't like them.

But I would listen to them because the manufacturer wrote them. They know how best to use the watch. They know what it was made for. And when it comes to sex, we have the privilege of being able to go to the giver of that great gift and see his intention and desire for how it should be used in the Bible.

[8 : 28] Or what about impurity and lust? Remember that time you walked past someone on the street and you undressed them with your eyes? Or that time you clicked on that website you know you shouldn't have?

Evil desires and greed. You know that feeling when you can have as much money in your bank account as you can have and it really doesn't matter because it's never enough.

Or that time you wished that someone at work would mess up their interview so that you could get the job instead. All of these things that Paul is speaking about at their very foundation are idolatry. Because with each of these things we are removing God from the focus of our heart and saying, No God, I don't want you. I don't want what you think is best. I want what I want.

I want the desires of my heart. Now this list might be scary. But my response should be that I want to worship Jesus with everything including my whole body.

[9 : 30] And all the sins that distract me from him I need to put to death. We are to set our minds and hearts on the things that are above.

Meaning that we set our minds on Jesus. So Paul says in verse 5, Christians put these things to death. Now he doesn't say this is easy.

But he also doesn't say casually flirt with them. He doesn't say walk away from or he doesn't even say flee from them. But he says put them to death. This is not an easy task that we can do from one day to the next.

But this putting to death is a process that Christians should constantly be doing. And constantly growing in. And it should be the result of our new identity in Jesus Christ.

And Hannah's baptism is a perfect example of this. When Hannah became a Christian she repented of her sins, of her wrongdoings against God. And today has made a public declaration that she has died to her old self and be raised to life in Jesus.

[10 : 43] This change has happened from the inside out. And so if you know Hannah you will have seen a change in her. The way she views and thinks about big issues.

Her whole world view has changed because her fundamental identity has changed. She has died to herself and been raised to life in Jesus.

And she is putting to death the things of her earthly nature. But why is Paul so strong? Why is the writer of this letter so strong? Well because of the consequences of sin.

Look at verse 6. It says, Because of these the wrath of God is coming. Now all of these sins mentioned in verse 5 are acts done against God.

Against his will for humanity. And so they are deserving of his righteous anger. And each of us is guilty of the idolatry which is the root.

[11 : 48] So when we say no to God's rule. And we make little gods of ourselves and our own desires. But Paul is saying that Christians.

A Christian's new identity in Jesus should change them. But if you are here this morning and you are not a Christian. This has significant implications for your life. The just wrath of God will come. And all who are not Christians. All who have not been changed by him. Will be under his wrath and punishment forever. But I want you to see that this is not my idea.

This is not just what I think. But this is what the Bible teaches. The Bible says that every single person in this world has rebelled against God.

And are under his wrath. But the Son of God. Came to earth. Lived the perfect life that we could never even dream of. Died the death that every single one of us deserves.

[12 : 49] And was raised to life. Proving that he is the Son of God. Jesus is not just some fairy tale. But he is God in the flesh.

And he came to make it possible for us to be made right with God. For us to be freed. And forgiven. Is this true for you this morning?

If not then please I would love to chat to you and pray with you afterwards. Grab anyone you've seen up front and we'd love to speak to you. Don't let another day go by. Without you being sure that you've been made right with God.

And in verse 7 Paul continues and says that as Christians the Colossians used to walk in these ways. But now they are to put these things to death and rid themselves of the list in verse 8.

Anger. Latter. Rage. Malice. Slander. Filthy language. And lying. Why? Well verse 9. Because all of these things pertain to the old self that we as Christians have to take off.

[14 : 01] Now one of the things that I'm constantly getting told off for by my wife is getting my clothes dirty. So I just seem to attract dirt. So I can have the assistant pastor's typical uniform on of beige chinos and a checkered shirt.

But the minute I put them on I get them dirty. But of course I don't run around in dirty clothes. I don't stand up to preach in dirty clothes. I take off the dirty clothes and I put on clean clothes.

And that is the language that Paul is using here. Christians are to take off their dirty clothes meaning they are to take off the things that pertain to their old life before they became Christians.

Before they met Jesus. And they are to put on their new life. Their new self meaning that we live out our new identity in Jesus.

This is the inside out transformation that the good news of Jesus Christ brings. So what change does Jesus make? Well he completely changes our identity.

[15:06] He takes us from someone who was previously under the wrath of God because of our sinfulness. Both the obvious sins in verse 5 and the most subtle respectable sins that we call in verse 8.

And he transforms us into a people who have been washed clean. A people who have been transformed and made right with God. And because of this wonderful identity Paul tells us to put to death the things of the flesh.

Jesus doesn't just come and cover our faults and failings with moralistic makeup. Jesus transforms our status before a holy God and calls us free and forgiven.

That is the message of Christianity. That is the message that Hannah has declared this morning. And that is the message I would beg you all to think about.

Have you been transformed by Jesus from the inside out or are you still against him? Jesus changes our identity and we are to live it out by putting to death the old self.

[16:16] The old has gone. And if the old has gone then Paul continues and says the new is here. In verses 10 to 11 the new is here.

Just like this morning I put on these clean clothes. So Christians are to put on their new identity in Jesus. Meaning they are to live it out. Give it legs. This taking off and on isn't a one off event. But there is a continuous element of it which is why in verse 10 Paul says that our new self is being renewed. In the knowledge in the creator. In the image of its creator.

It's continuous. Now what does this mean? Well this renewal is the ongoing process whereby we are being made more into the image of Jesus.

This renewal starts when a person becomes a Christian. And it continues until the day they die. This passage is calling us as Christians to persevere.

[17:19] Keep going. Keep being renewed Paul says. And so Christian as you look back at how you used to live you will see a difference. You will not be the same as you once were.

Not because you've covered yourself in moralism. Not because you're trying your best. But because you are growing in the knowledge of who your saviour is and what your new identity is as a son and daughter of the living God.

And this change isn't the result of a spectacular event. This renewal into the image of Jesus comes from us being changed from the inside out.

And as we live out our normal Christian everyday life we're being changed. We're being renewed. As we read our Bibles we grow in our love for God.

In our love for his word. And we're being changed. Now I've had the privilege over the last few months of seeing this in Hannah's life. I've seen her ask some very difficult questions that have made me scratch my head.

[18:27] And think through some big topics in life. Why? Well because she wants to become more like Jesus. So Hannah, keep going.

So whether you've been a Christian for months or years. God is working in your life to transform you. You might not see it happening in your life.

But as I have the privilege of spending time outside of Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings with you all. I see it. I see you living out your new identity. And I see you putting sin to death.

And I encourage you to keep going. Put on the new self, Paul says. And for Christians this means that the old distinctions have gone.

So the list of different people in verse 11 are all distinctions that formerly separated people and created hostility. But now Paul says that the new man with their new identity is part of a new family.

[19:33] This new Christian community favors no race, no nationality, no class or no culture. But the new Christian community is united as one person who have all been changed by Jesus.

Jesus is the priority of this new countercultural community. Because Jesus is all. And he is in all.

Now we'll see more about this countercultural community in the coming weeks. But for the time being we need to see that the change that Jesus brings about doesn't only affect the individual.

But it affects the whole church. That's why today we celebrate Hannah's baptism as a church family. We bring her into this church community and we have a responsibility as a whole church to help her grow and mature in her faith.

And we do that by constantly pointing her to Jesus, the perfecter of our faith. So what change does Jesus make?

[20 : 40] Well this passage says that Jesus has given Christians a new identity. He calls people to himself and he gives them the opportunity to be made right with God.

To be forgiven of all of their rebellion and sins. Absolutely everything we've done wrong. And to be free from the punishment that every single one of us deserves.

But not by letting us off the hook. Instead God himself stepped down and took the punishment on the cross that we deserve. Jesus went to the cross where he bore the wrath of God.

Meaning that all those who call on him are free and forgiven. Jesus takes our sinful, corrupt, dirty rags.

And he gifts us his clean, spotless righteousness. This change is a big deal because it determines how you will stand before God when he returns.

[21 : 44] For those who are found in Jesus. Those who are putting to death the old self. And putting on the new self. They will stand before God and be welcomed into his presence for an eternity.

But for those who are not found in Jesus on that last day they will not be met with acceptance. But they will be met with the wrath of God as verse 6 says. How will you stand on that final day before God?

If you're here this morning and you are a Christian, let me ask you bluntly. Are you killing sin? As John Owen, a pastor from many, many years ago said.

Be killing sin or it will be killing you. Sin is not something to be toyed with. Paul uses such strong language in this passage because how we live out our new identity in Jesus really matters.

As we live out our Christian lives, are we focusing on the most important thing in the world? Are we focusing on Jesus Christ? Or are we being distracted by our sinful hearts?

[23 : 00] We should fix our eyes on Jesus, the one in whom and through whom our identity is changed. The one in whom and through whom we find the strength to take off the old and put on the new.

So think back to those terrible makeover shows that I know we all secretly love to watch. If we treat Jesus and Christianity just as a nice little addition to our lives.

If we are just transformed from the outside. And we treat Jesus as something to cover up our faults and failings. Then we're in the wrong.

Because Jesus is so much more than that. Because we're just adding moralism and legalism to the mix. But the change that Jesus makes is not skin deep.

Jesus changes us from the inside out. He changes our identity. And makes us right with God. Gives us the strength to daily battle with our sin. And to constantly take off the old and put on the new.

[24 : 07] That is the change that Jesus makes. And I want to leave you with the question of has he made that change in your life this morning? Let's pray together.

In the silence of a few minutes. I'd like us to contemplate where we stand before the great God of heaven and earth. Loving God and heavenly father we confess.

That we are undeserving of. Your son Jesus Christ. That we are corrupt. Broken people. Who have rejected and walked away from you.

And yet we know that in your great mercy. You sent your son Jesus Christ. To pay the punishment that we deserve. So that we can be made right with you.

Father we ask that you would change us. That you would cleanse us. And that you would make us more and more into the image of your son Jesus Christ.

[25 : 21] Every single day. And it is in his holy, precious, glorious name that we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.