

January 18, 2026,

Rooted in New Life

Colossians 3:1-17; Matthew 16:24-27

“Since then, you have been raised with Christ; set your hearts on things above...”

“And whatever you do... do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus” Colossians 3:1,17

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves...and follow me.” Matthew 16:24

Have you ever heard the cliché “Out with the old, in with the new?” This phrase is often used to describe everything from fashion trends and home decor to political shifts and sports trades. Regardless of the context, it conveys the idea of replacing something old or worn out with something new and fresh. This saying is similar to what Paul has been communicating to the church in Colossae. He has been emphasizing that following Jesus is not about improving the past; it's about embracing a new identity.

Today, as we continue our "Rooted" series, we explore how to live a life that is rooted in Christ. A relationship with Christ leads to a transformative way of living—this means letting go of the old life and embracing the new. The Colossians were spiritually dead because of their sins, but Jesus brought them new spiritual life through His death and resurrection. **Their new identity in Christ demanded a change in how they lived, affecting their character and way of thinking.** Verses 1-4 present the motivation for this new life, while verses 5-17 highlight the contrast between the old life and the new.

How was this new way of living supposed to happen? Paul commands them to set their “hearts” and “minds” on things above. In contrast to the false teachers who were demoting Jesus, Paul reminds them that Jesus is seated in a position of honor, majesty, and authority. Since Jesus is above, their minds should be focused on things above.

The “things above” are contrasted with “earthly things” or things below. What Paul means is that **Christians should focus on spiritual rather than physical matters and on eternal rather than temporary things.** This does not imply that believers should live in a mystical state or ignore worldly concerns. He is not suggesting that we should be so heavenly-minded that we become ineffective on Earth! Instead, he emphasizes that believers should uphold heavenly values reflected in their daily lives.

After Paul lays the foundation for a new life and encourages the Colossians to focus their hearts and minds on things above, he contrasts the old life with the new. He describes the old life in verses 5-11. In verse 5, he uses an imperative command: when he says to “put to death whatever belongs to the earthly nature,” he is not suggesting that we carefully manage behavior; he is calling for complete elimination because it does not belong to the new life in Christ.

The old nature includes a wide variety of sins that can be divided into three groups: perverted passions, hot tempers, and sharp tongues (verses 5-11). These behaviors have no place in the new life with Christ. God wants us to completely eliminate these practices and do everything possible to put them to death. Which of these do you struggle with? What steps are you taking to eliminate them?

After urging the Colossians to leave behind their former practices, Paul directs them in verses 12-17 to actively pursue a virtuous life worthy of Jesus Christ. In verse 12, he says, “As God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves...” Having shed the sin-tainted garments of their old life, they are to put on the pure and virtuous clothing of the new life.

In the Christian faith, you actually win by losing, as Jesus tells us in Matthew 16:24, "If you want to save your life, you must lose your life." This means surrendering your own version of life in exchange for God’s version. Paul transitions from discussing what to take off to what to put on. He emphasizes that they have been made new and should wear the wardrobe that reflects their identity in Christ. Now, as part of God's family, they are no longer on the losing team; they are on God's winning team, and with that change, they need to change their jerseys.

So, what exactly is included in Jesus’ wardrobe? The list in verses 12-17 features qualities such as compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love, unity, peace, thankfulness, and gratitude. These traits should fill the minds and guide the hearts of Christians.

Living out these traits is a daily decision, not based on feelings or emotions! You wake up and decide to put on Christ. You choose grace instead of grudges. You choose love instead of bitterness. You choose forgiveness instead of revenge. **Think about firefighters. Before they go into a burning building, they don't ask, "Do I feel like wearing my gear today?"** No, they always suit up. Why? Because their lives depend on them. In the same way, when you wake up and put on Christ... you are stepping into your mission with purpose and protection.

Paul concludes this section with a universal command for the new Christian life: “Let the words of Christ dwell in you...And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ...” This command underscores that the process of life transformation encompasses every aspect of our activities to honor the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Starting a new life means fully immersing yourself in Christ. This involves allowing every aspect of your existence—your home, conversations, attitude, generosity, service, work, and worship—to reflect His resurrection. Being rooted in Christ enables you to live a fulfilled, abundant life while anticipating eternal life with Him.

Therefore, let your life be deeply rooted in Jesus. Allow your roots to grow deep—not into your past, but into His promises. Focus not on what has been, but on what is and what is yet to come. **Allow His peace to reign in your heart instead of anxiety or fear.** As Corrie ten Boom said, "If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest." **Let your life boldly declare: I have been raised with Christ. I am alive in Him and grounded in new life.**