

Colossian 3:17-4:6
(John 13:34-35)
“In the Name of Jesus” II

Introduction

“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (3:17). But what does that look like? What words and what deeds are faithful to Christ and to this new life that he offers us? In the verses that follow, Paul continues to flesh out his picture of new life in Christ, a life marked increasingly by reconciled relationships, whole, healthy and growing in grace. Even those who do not seem to want to live this way themselves expect others to behave this way, and are angry when they encounter people as thoughtless and self-centered as themselves. It is a classic sign of immaturity, and it too often marks our self-indulgent culture, even within the church.

When we first read these verses, especially the ones about wives submitting and slaves obeying, they may sound terribly unjust to our ears, because we hear these words within the context of our culture, a culture that values and promises freedom, dignity and equality to all. Women have no desire to go back to the days when they had no vote, no say, no power within the culture, except whatever power they could get through marriage and manipulation. And we certainly do not want to go back to the days of slavery. But such was the culture in which the gospel first burst forth into the world as good news of freedom and liberty. Paul was writing to real live people: to women, children and slaves who had no rights within a Roman household. Only the father of the Roman family had rights, and he held the power of life and death over his wife, children and slaves.

So Paul gave wise counsel to those whose new freedom in Christ could have been a death sentence if they did not exercise that freedom wisely. And he also reminded them (and us) that true freedom is found, not in asserting and demanding our rights, but in offering ourselves in service, as Christ offered himself for us, having come “not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Here true freedom is found.

Look with me at how the apostle develops these themes of speaking and doing “everything in the name of Jesus.”

Body

- 1. The gospel should transform the way we act at home (3:18-21).**
- 2. The gospel should transform the way we act at work (3:22-4:1).**
- 3. The gospel should transform the way we speak to God (4:2-4).**
- 4. The gospel should transform the way we speak to people (4:5,6)**

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