

99-01-22b Colossians

As we resume now in Colossians chapter 3, what we have seen thus far tonight is the transition that Paul is making from his theological arguments, his statements of positional truth, the truth that pertains in the heavens. He has talked about the Lord Jesus Christ, he's talked about our standing in Him, and now he says, with this in mind, how can we turn this to practical benefit? This ought to be a source of motivation to us. We find as we look at other passages that address these subjects, that these two things are constantly linked, the way we ought to live and the return of Jesus Christ.

We tend to think, at least I do, I always have thought of the return of Jesus Christ as deliverance, as the end of the feebleness and the weakness and the failure and the sinfulness to which we are all subject, the beginning of a wonderful new kingdom. And it is all of those things, but we don't just kind of pine for better days to come. We have a responsibility, in the light of that truth, to persevere in pushing toward the upward call in Christ Jesus.

It ought to not only give us encouragement that the future is bright, but it ought to give us motivation to make the present fruitful. And this is what Paul is hammering home here. We've already seen this when we looked at 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 58, after an entire 57 verses talking about resurrection, Paul says, therefore, this is the kind of life we ought to live in that light.

We've seen it in Philippians chapter 3, verses 20 and 21, where Paul says that these who have their minds set on earthly things are destined for destruction. This doesn't mean they're going to the lake of fire. This means that their life and the fruit of their life is going to be a big source of smoke.

It's going to be the wood, hay and stubble fire. This is operational death, operational destruction. Our citizenship is in heaven.

That's where we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our vile body, the King James says, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. Turn with me now to 1 Timothy chapter 6. Paul, in the letters to Timothy and to Titus, gives us a fascinating perspective because he's talking to men who are in a position to teach, who have a responsibility for spiritual leadership and are to take the things that Paul gives them and pass on to their congregations. So, Paul says in 1 Timothy chapter 6, he encourages them to get away from people who don't teach solid truth.

Look at verse 3. If anyone teaches otherwise than the good truth that Paul has passed on, does not consent to wholesome words, even to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, if someone doesn't consent to these, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth who

suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such, withdraw yourself. Get yourself away from that environment.

Get yourself away from those people. What are they arguing about? What are they wrangling about? Truth, biblical statements, Christianity, Christian lifestyle, Christian topics, but it's useless wrangling. They're destitute of the truth.

They're hung up on details and they've missed the point. He says, from such, withdraw yourself. Get away.

Cut yourself off. Put that stuff to death. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

He doesn't say evangelism with great suffering. He doesn't say ministry with great sacrifice. He says godliness with contentment is great gain.

That's where the gain is. Not that there's anything wrong with ministry, not that there's anything wrong with evangelism, but it should spring from a person who has already achieved this plateau. Internal godliness.

Self-control. You can't go out and seek to influence others if you can't control yourself. You can't go out and preach the gospel to others, whether it's the gospel of deliverance from the lake of fire or the gospel of the Christian life, when you yourself have not learned how to win the battle.

That's why there is a qualification list for spiritual leadership. That's why a man who has problems with substance abuse, a man who can't control his family, a man who can't control his emotions or his passions, is disqualified from any position of spiritual leadership in the church because you can't teach someone else how to win a battle that you've never won. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

We brought nothing into this world, it is certain we can carry nothing out. This is the origin of the old statement, you can't take it with you. Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

This, by the way, is a reminder to us that God is going to provide us food and He's going to provide us clothing. It is a promise, it's been called logistical grace, it's been called a lot of things, but we will not lack, David says, I've not seen the seed of the righteous begging bread, and God will provide for all of our needs. Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

But those who desire to be rich, who want more than what is adequate, more than what is necessary, more than what is required, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith. He's talking about believers here who have given in to the love of money or these other passions.

Strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. An extract from the Fruit of the Spirit list in Galatians.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. Does Timothy have eternal life? Sure he does. Why does Paul say lay hold on it? Because there's a difference in positional truth and experiential truth.

We all possess eternal life as believers, but not all of us lay hold of eternal life in the sense of exploiting the victory and the grace of God, and qualifying for that great inheritance that awaits us at Christ's return. Lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called. All of us are called to lay hold on eternal life.

All of us are called to fight the good fight of faith. It's not the good fight of ministry. It's not the good fight of works.

It's not a good fight of emotional stimulation. It's a good fight of faith, and faith is internal. It happens in the quietude and the solitude of each believer's heart and soul.

That's where the good fight is fought. That's where it's won. That's where the struggle against the principalities and powers takes place.

This is to what Paul says, this fight, this laying hold on eternal life is something that we are called to. Timothy has confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God, who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus, who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless, for how long? Until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which he will manifest in his own time, he who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power.

Amen. You say, wait a minute. It seems to me like a lot of people have seen the Lord.

When the Lord returns, nobody has seen him like they're going to see him when he returns. In his revealed glory, the image that you see in Revelation chapter 1, where his face is blazing with fire, his eyes are piercing, his feet are burnished bronze, and so forth, this is just an image of the glory of Jesus Christ that will be revealed when he returns. He is going to manifest that in his own time.

But once again, you see the juxtaposition. In Paul's mind, he says, fight the good fight of faith. Separate yourself from this useless, empty Christianity that people engage in.

Fight the good fight of faith because the Lord Jesus Christ is going to return. His glory is going to be revealed. That's the reality.

That's what counts. That's what ought to motivate. That's what ought to encourage us to look at

ourselves and see, am I fighting the good fight of faith? Am I putting to death the members that are on the earth that don't reflect the fruit of the Spirit? Is there something that's constantly dragging me into death? Is there something that's constantly dragging me into gossip or dragging me into compromise? Dragging me away from concentration on the things that tend to eternal life.

The good and noble and lovely and righteous things that I'm supposed to be concentrating on. If there's something that constantly drags me down, I've got to put that thing to death. I've got to get rid of it.

Why? Because Jesus Christ is coming back. We constantly see this association. Turn a few pages over to 2 Timothy chapter 4. The second letter that we have preserved from Paul to Timothy.

I charge you therefore in chapter 4, verse 1, I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing in his kingdom. When Paul charges Timothy, he says, look, I'm giving you this charge. You remember, Jesus Christ is coming back.

He's going to judge the living and the dead at his appearance in his kingdom. Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season.

Convince, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires. This word desires, by the way, comes up in our Colossians passage in the list of the things that we are to put to death.

According to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers. They will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. All you have to do is look around in the Christian world today and see the fulfillment of this prophetic statement by Paul.

You be watchful in all things. Endure afflictions. Do the work of the evangelist.

Fulfill your ministry. He talks about his own status, poured out as a drink offering, time of departure at hand. I have fought the good fight.

He told Timothy in the first letter, fight the good fight of faith. He can look back at his life and say, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race.

I have kept the faith. There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day. What has motivated Paul? What has sustained him? What has enabled him to fight that good fight? The constant reminder in his mind.

He reminds himself. He thinks about the fact the Lord is going to return. It will be worth it all when

we see Christ.

He knows, even if the world is unappreciative, even if the world locks you up, stones you, whips you, beats you, drives you out of town, stones you and leaves you for dead, rejects your message, ridicules you, belittles you, claims that you are out of the faith, that you are not following the God of Israel, all of the other abuses that were heaped on Paul. He says, I have got a crown of righteousness laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, not to be only, but also to all who have loved his appearing. To be motivated on a daily basis to fulfill our calling.

That's loving the Lord's appearing. To live in the light of it. To be motivated by it.

To think about it day by day. Does it really matter if I compromise in this situation? Does it really matter? Will anybody really know what's going on in my heart if I fantasize or if I indulge myself in some hate or some bitterness or some impatience or some anger? It's just in my mind. It's not hurting anybody.

It makes a difference. If we think about the appearing of the Lord, we're not going to indulge the passions. We're not going to indulge the desires.

We're not going to gratify the flesh and all the things that tend to death. We're going to put that stuff to death. We're going to separate from it.

We're going to cast it aside and think about the return of the Lord and think about the things that will be honoring and pleasing in His sight on that day. It's one thing to know that you shouldn't have bad attitudes. It's one thing to know that you ought to be patient.

You ought to be loving. You ought to be kind. But all of us have been in situations where that knowledge is there and you say, you know, I just hate myself for feeling the way I do, but I can't help it.

I just can't seem to help it. Well, this is how to help it. The next time, and you know how it is, we learn these things and then we get tested.

So something will probably happen just in the coming days. Another test, another challenge will face us. Well, this is how to do it.

When you say, I just can't help it, here's how to help it. Think about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think about the possibility of walking up and receiving the crown of righteousness because you loved His appearing, because you thought about His appearing and it made a difference to you.

It was more important to be pleasing in His sight than to indulge in some self-gratifying spat of hatred or vindictiveness or maligning, whether mentally or verbally, or any other non-productive,

death-trending type of thing. This is the victory. We so much overlook the value of our thought life.

Christianity at large today, teaching and preaching and books and stuff, don't tell us that the value of our life is what we think. And that's the whole thing. That's the basis of our evaluation.

The Word of God is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Actions are nothing more than a manifestation of what has already taken place in the heart. The battle is in the heart.

The victory is in the heart. This is the victory that overcomes the world. What? Our ministry? Our evangelism? No, it's our faith.

And to recognize that your daily thoughts, no matter what the mundane activity is that you're engaged in, driving here and there, executing the responsibilities of employment or of housekeeping or child training or whatever it may be, every moment you have the choice of winning the victory. Every moment you have the choice of living in the light of the Lord's appearing, loving His appearing, recognizing His value, recognizing the eternal nature of the rewards that are going to be given on that day, the nature of the righteous judge who's going to ask us for an account of every word and every thought, and realizing, acknowledging, and expressing in our thoughts and attitudes and actions that the Lord's evaluation is more important to us than anything else in life. It's more important than some petty gratification we're going to get by thinking bad thoughts about somebody or by indulging in sort of a... It's a funny thing.

Sometimes we can almost delight in our problems. We get around somebody and they say, Oh boy, I'm having a really bad day. I'm having a bad week.

Oh, you think you've got problems? Let me tell you what happened to me today. Let me tell you about the car wreck I was in. Or let me tell you about the problem I had or the abuse that I took.

And we delight in things. That's not edifying. That's not glorifying.

That doesn't reflect loving the Lord's appearing. When the Lord comes back and sits on His throne at the judgment seat, are we going to say, Oh Lord, let me tell you about my day. Let me tell you about how hard it was on me when somebody said a bad word.

You're talking to the Lord Jesus Christ who took more abuse than anyone, who was wrongfully accused. People's mouths are going to be shut and their knees are going to bend, and they're going to say, I have no business saying anything. Well, if we think about the Lord's appearing, it will shut our minds and shut off these things that trend toward death.

This is how to do it. This is how to win the battle. This is how to glorify God in our bodies.

This is how to glorify God in our hearts. There has to be a way to do it. We know it ought to be done.

And we say, you know, I just can't seem to get there. Well, this is how to get there. Time and again we have the same thing.

Look over in Titus 2, verse 11. The very next book, another letter to a pastor. Titus 2, verse 11.

He's warning Titus about the same things he warned Timothy about. There's all of these people that don't know how to act. You should be a pattern of good works, he says in verse 7 of Titus 2. In doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

Bond servants, in verse 10, should not pilfer, but show good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of the God our Savior in all things. To adorn the doctrine. Isn't that a wonderful thing? Our lives and our conduct can adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, this is putting those things to death, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age. And that's saying a lot. Look at the present age.

Look at the corruption and the loss of integrity and the lack of moral fabric that surrounds us in the present age. And yet we are called to live soberly, righteously, and godly. The emphasis in the New Testament for church age believers is never on ministry.

It's on integrity. It's never on preaching to others. It's on adorning doctrine ourselves.

These other things will take place. And I don't mean to belittle their importance. But first things first.

You can't go out and be a witness when you yourself are not a reflection of the glory of Christ. You've got to have these things absorbed in the soul. And what is the motivation? Look at verse 13.

Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. If we are purified, if we're looking for His appearing, if we're living in that light, we will be zealous for good works. It will be as natural and instinctive and Spirit-guided and Spirit-empowered and producing of divine good.

That's the key, is to get these things in order. If we are purified, we will be zealous for good works. Speak these things, Paul says to Titus, exhort and rebuke with all authority.

Let no one despise you. Don't let anyone intimidate you into not speaking the truth of these things. And it's a little bit awkward when it seems like sometimes the entire Christian world is preaching a different gospel and exhorting people to a different way of living.

And it seems a little unseemly. It seems like it would be easier to just kind of go with the flow. And I think a lot of guys, especially younger guys and women who go to seminary and get trained in these things, think, well, you know, this is the way it is.

This is the common theme. This is what we all believe. And this is what we should say.

And nobody wants to buck the trend or speak up for the truth. There's intimidation. If a seminary professor furrows his brow and says, who do you think you are? We've got theologians going back to Luther and Calvin.

You think you know something they don't? You think that after my 50-odd years in the study of the Word of God, you're a lowly seminary student here and you think you've got it figured out and I don't? You think that you're out there and we've all missed it? And it's intimidating. Paul says to Titus, don't be intimidated. Stand up for the truth.

And this is the truth. And this truth is not being preached in Christianity at large today. It's not being preached in pulpits.

It's not being preached in the conservative evangelical seminaries. It has been missed. And I'm sorry, but that's just the way it is.

And we can't afford to be led astray. That's the message of the letter to the Colossians. Don't be led astray.

Don't decide that because it's a majority opinion, it's the right opinion. Just look at our national polls and think for yourself if the majority is right. Speak these things.

Exhort and rebuke. So, consider these things to have spoken, exhorted, and rebuked. 1 Peter 1, not only in the letters of Paul, but also in Peter and John we find these things.

1 Peter 1.7, he's talking about suffering. You're kept by the power of God through faith for salvation. Ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1.5, you're kept by faith. You're kept through faith for salvation by the power of God. That salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter says, remember, your deliverance is going to be revealed. It's coming. Jesus Christ is going to appear.

He's going to return. In this you greatly rejoice, verse 6. Though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials. So that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

You see the first word in verse 7? That. So that. You persevere.

You rejoice. You maintain your faith. So that the genuineness of your faith will be vindicated.

The genuineness of your faith will be revealed and rewarded and will reflect the glory of Jesus Christ at his revelation. That faith, not your ministry, not your works, not your accomplishments, it's your faith that will be found to the praise, honor, and glory of Jesus Christ at his revelation. Whom having not seen, you love.

Though now you do not see him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. Receiving the end or the goal of your faith, the deliverance of your soul. This is daily deliverance.

This is the deliverance that Paul talks about in Romans. Trusting Jesus Christ, loving his appearance. This is the motivation.

This is what ought to make the difference. Look a little bit further forward in 1 Peter 4. Verse 1. Therefore, since Christ suffered for us into flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind. For he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts or desires of men, but for the will of God.

Same idea that Paul expresses. We've spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles when we've walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. They think it's strange that you don't run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

They will give an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. What's the idea? Keep in mind, people who don't think about the accounting, who don't think about the return of Christ, who don't think about the judgment, have no motivation to refrain from these attractive, stimulating things. Verse 13 of the same chapter.

Rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings so that when his glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. How can you rejoice in sufferings? How can you not get bitter and indulge yourself in all the things that trend toward death? Bitterness, vindictiveness, backbiting, revenge, all of the destructive things that are part of the earthly members. Just remember, when his glory is revealed, you will be glad with exceeding joy.

Because to the extent that you partake of his sufferings, you partake of his glory. Over and over again, the exhortation to godly living, the exhortation to setting our minds on things above is tied to the return of Christ. That's the motivation.

The next chapter, 1 Peter 5, verse 4. When the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. If you're faithful, he's talking to shepherds. He says, you elders, shepherd the flock of God, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but

eagerly.

Eschew, turn aside from, get rid of, push away wrong motivation. Don't lord it over those that have been entrusted to you. Be an example.

Because when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory. That's your motivation. That's your hope.

That's the thing you put your faith in. Likewise, you younger people, verse 5, submit yourself to your elders. All of you be submissive to one another and be clothed with humility.

God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble, therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so that he may exalt you in due time. When is that due time? It's the return of Christ. Humbling ourselves now, being submissive to the will of God, absorbing and enduring whatever abuse or whatever bad circumstances may result in this life bears with it an eternal weight of glory.

To the extent that that's real to us, that's how we're going to be able to accomplish that goal. 1 John 2, verse 28, Now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. Will there be shame at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Yes.

There's no doubt. There's no equivocation. A lot of believers refuse to believe that.

But it's a fact. The only way to avoid being ashamed at his coming is to abide in him. Many believers don't.

The appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ should be a powerful motivation in our minds. Abide in him so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. Look at chapter 3, verses 2 and 3. Beloved, now we are children of God.

It has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. Maintaining that hope, keeping that flame alive, thinking about partaking of that cup of wine in the kingdom when Jesus drinks it new with us, looking forward to that event, that hope purifies us.

It gives us perspective. It gives us the motivation that is acceptable in God's sight, that enables us to live the life we're called to live. So not only are we called to these things, but we're given the means.

We're given the motivation. The means is faith. The motivation is hope.

It's the hope of his appearing. Time and time again throughout the scriptures, I could give you as

many more passages as the ones we've looked at where godly living is tied directly to the motivation of waiting for and watching for and being joyful at the Lord's return. You can see this as we have seen in Romans 8, verses 14 through 26.

I'll let you look that up on your own. But you'll remember in Romans 14 where he talks about I am persuaded that this momentary light affliction is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed. Any time Paul thought about his afflictions, which were many and were severe, he said this is minuscule compared to the glory that is about to be revealed in the sons of God.

So returning now to Colossians chapter 3, we're not just given a pie-in-the-sky idea of how great it would be if we could be a great Christian, if we could be living a holy life. Paul, even before he gives us the list, gives us the motivation and gives us the means. Christ who is our life will appear.

You also will appear with him in glory. Therefore, put to death these members, put to death the members which are on the earth, these earthly things that are manifestations of death. They are fruitless.

They bear no eternal weight. What are they? The very first one in the New Kings James is translated fornication. This is the Greek word *pornia*, p-o-r-n-e-i-a.

Pornia is often translated fornication, especially in the King James and New King James. This is not the best translation. It limits it too much.

You may recall that back in the Gospels, Jesus says that one of the grounds, legitimate grounds for divorce is *pornia*. *Pornia*, and I thought about bringing my big Liddell and Scott Greek lexicon. It weighs about 16 pounds.

It's thick enough to boost a small child up to eating level at a high table. But instead I brought the small version here. This is the condensed Reader's Digest version of Liddell and Scott.

But if you look at *Pornia*, Liddell and Scott, by the way, is the classical Greek lexicon. Classical Greek is the mother load. It's the bedrock on which Koine Greek in the New Testament was written.

This is its origin. This is where it came from. Whether you look in a Greek lexicon that addresses the New Testament, such as Balor, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker, or you look at Liddell and Scott, when you look at *Pornia*, the fundamental meaning of this word is not fornication.

It is prostitution. For example, let me just give you a few of the meanings of the word group here. *Pornia* in classical Greek was used for prostitution.

That can include fornication, but that's not really at the heart of the meaning. The idea is

prostitution. Pornion was the noun that meant a brothel.

There's lots of different kinds of fornication, aren't there? There's things that happen when people are dating. There's things that happen before people get married. There's things that happen in an extramarital affair of all different sorts.

That's not in view with Pornia. Pornia is talking about the commercialization, the selling. It's a transaction that takes place in connection with gratifying a desire.

You sell out. You pay for gratification. This is not someone falling so deeply in love, or they think they're in love and they forget their vows, or Debbie Boone, it can't be wrong if it feels so right, this kind of thing.

We're talking about prostitution. Pornion is a brothel. Pornuo is a prostitute of a woman to be or become a harlot.

Not to sleep with a man out of wedlock. To become a harlot. To sell your body for money.

Porné is another noun that means a harlot. Pornidion is a diminutive of porné. This is a young prostitute.

Pornikos, of or for harlots. Pornoboskeo. Boskeo is the Greek verb that means to merchandise, to sell, to market.

So what do you think a pornoboskeo is? It means to be a brothel keeper. To be the madam of a brothel. Or to be the guy that owns and runs and manages the brothel.

A pornoboskea is brothel keeping. Pornoboskos, a brothel keeper. So the root at the center of this word is more than an illicit relationship, which is implied by fornication.

When we think of fornication, we think, well, teenagers hopping in the sack together. Extramarital things happening before or after marriage. But this is either being controlled by that desire or catering to those who are controlled by that desire.

People who reach the point of paying for prostitutes are so desperate to gratify that desire that there's no semblance or pretension of a love relationship. This is, I'm going to plunk down my money and I'm going to get my desire gratified. It is the far limit of control by desire.

You are controlled by this desire. You have sold out, you sell out, or you sell to those who are controlled by this desire. It's commercialized.

There's no shred of, or even a pretense of relationship or of covenant love or of vow or promise. It's a sell out. It is those who are controlled by that desire to the extent that they are going to go into that dingy environment.

So this is the root of the word. And when you look at its use in the Bible, it is used in that light. Look, for example, at Galatians 5.19. This is a very close parallel to our passage.

The works of the flesh are evident. These works that we're supposed to cut off, what are they? The works of the flesh that are evident are, in the New King James it says, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envies, murder, drunkenness, revelry, and the like. Interesting thing when you look at this in Galatians is that the first word there, Galatians 5.19, is *pornea*.

The second word is *akatharsia*, which is uncleanness. That's also the second word in our Colossians passage. What leads the list is *pornea*, because all of these things are a reflection of someone who has buckled under and is now controlled by this desire, this illicit evil desire, some form of gratification.

Why do people engage in these things? Why do people engage in hatred and contentions and jealousies and outbursts of wrath? Because it's gratifying. In fact, they use the word *katharsis* for this in psychology. You vent all of this anger.

They have people go to clinics and seminars and psychological things, and they'll get the pugil sticks or they'll get a phone thing and beat on a dummy that represents their enemy or their spouse or something. They want them to vent their wrath and get it out of their system. They say, well, this is good for you to vent all this anger and express it and get it out.

Scream, holler, shriek and all this. Why do they say that? Because these people are controlled by this passion. They're controlled by this emotion or this feeling of injustice or wrong done to self.

And they're trying to purge it, but they can't purge it. They can't get a *katharsis*. People have to come back and keep beating on the dummy and keep whacking with the pugil sticks because it can't be gotten rid of.

They're controlled by it. We as believers have the means for these to be cleansed and eradicated. The power of God can take these away.

Nothing else can. You can disguise it. You can put cosmetics on it.

You can bury it. You can transfer it. You can alter it.

You can put a mask on it. But human power can't get rid of these things, these passions and these built-in weaknesses and flaws and cracks in the soul. Only the power of God can do it.

We as believers can have these cracks and flaws, but there's no excuse for them to linger for long because the power of God can eradicate them, but you have to want it. We have to trust in the power of God. We have to operate by faith.

We have to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. We have to think about his appearing. We have to think about whether we really want to please him as our first and foremost goal.

And if we do, all of these things will follow. Faith will heal the soul. Hope will cleanse the soul.

The one who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as Christ is pure. How can you be purified of these things? All of this list in Galatians 5, 19 through 21. What's the penalty if we don't, as believers, if we don't avail ourselves of the grace of God, if we don't use the means of faith and hope to cleanse ourselves of these and reach the place where we have genuine love? What's going to happen? Of which I tell you in verse 21 beforehand, just as I've told you in times past, those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

If we don't purge ourselves, if we don't put these things to death through the grace and the power of God that's been made available to us, we forfeit our inheritance. He's talking to believers. This is chapter 5 of Galatians.

It's not chapter 1. It's chapter 5. He's in the practical section to believers. How shall we then live? He says you've got to purge these passions. You've got to purge these things.

And we think, oh, well, I'm not engaging in lewdness and sorcery and so forth. Well, how about selfish ambition? How about dissension? How about selfishness? How about murders in the mind because we can't stand someone? We assassinate them with our tongue. How about idolatry, covetousness? He's going to talk about that in Colossians 2. We look over the fence and we think, oh, I wish I had that situation.

I wish I had that spouse. I wish I had that house. I wish I had that set of furniture.

I wish I had that job. I wish I had that income. I wish I had that standing in the eyes of others.

I wish people looked up to me and respected me the way they look up to so-and-so and respect so-and-so. I wish that I had what somebody else has in whatever area it may be. I wish I had such a devoted spouse.

I wish I had such great kids. I wish I had such parents. Whatever it may be.

Just rack your brain and think. Whatever it is that you might look over the fence and wish that you had that somebody else has got, guess what? You've just engaged in idolatry. Because what you said is, God is not sufficient to provide my needs.

God isn't capable of blessing me in the way that I deserve to be blessed. I wish I had what somebody else has got. I'm dissatisfied.

The grace of God isn't sufficient for me. And you said, I need a different God. Well, you might as

well just get your little totem, get your little South American idol thing and say, bring me prosperity.

Bring me what I want. Bring me the love of my life. Bring me happiness.

Bring me peace. God can't give it to me, so I need to look elsewhere. That's why Paul says, covetousness is idolatry.

Over and over again, these ideas are parallel. Turn quickly with me to 1 Corinthians 5, verse 9. We were in 1 Corinthians 5 a little bit earlier. Let's refresh our minds.

1 Corinthians 5, verse 9. I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. That's pornia. Not to keep company with pornia people.

I certainly did not mean with the pornia people of this world or with the covetous or extortioners or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written you not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is pornia. And it says, or covetous, or an idolater, or a revolter.

These are all synonyms. When you look at this in the Greek, these are in parallel. They're all facets of the very same thing.

These are descriptions and expansions of pornia. Just like we saw in Galatians 5. What does it mean to be pornia? To prostitute your soul. It means to give yourself over to coveting, idolatry, reviling others, excess in some substance.

And people can get drunk on a lot of things. You don't just get drunk on alcohol or drugs. You can get drunk on pleasure.

There are people who just almost get giddy when they engage in things that they enjoy. They become almost illogical. Just give themselves over to the pleasure of the moment.

Some people, I mean, even on like rollercoaster rides or some people like the nightlife. They go out in the nightlife and they just dance and they just like the stimulation of it. There are people who give themselves over to emotional drunkenness in praise and worship services who are there for the experience, who are looking for that emotional high.

That's drunkenness. Giving yourself over to an emotional high is drunkenness. That's what it is.

Extortion, controlling others, manipulating others, pulling strings just to watch things jerk. There are some people who just can't help themselves. That's their compulsion.

It gives them a sense of being and a fulfillment to watch things move that they pull the strings on. Don't even eat with such a person. You've got to put those things to death.

We first of all have to look for them in ourselves. We have to separate from them in others because it's contagious. It's infectious.

That's why we have to separate. The positive side of this is what we're going to look at next time. Paul, in the first part of Colossians chapter 3, verses 5 through 11 really, talks about the negative side of this.

But we want to move on through the negative and see the positive side. We have to drive out the enemies before the presence of God can come in and dwell in our lives. And so we have to identify those negative things, identify them as the enemy and purge them out, treat them as dead, put them to death.

Once we do that, all of the positive things are possible. All of these things are potential for us. And so we'll concentrate on the good side of things next time.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you that even though we are in the grip of a fallen nature and living in a fallen world, through the deliverance that comes to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it is possible for these things to be put to death. We can escape the grip of our passions.

We can escape the grip of sin. We can escape the grip of evil. We thank you for the divine power that you have placed at our disposal in your Word and in your Spirit.

And we pray that these things will come to our minds when we need them the most, that we will be fully equipped and armed with the sword of the Spirit, with the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, our feet shod with the Gospel, so that as we...