

Exod 03-09-28a

Oh, okay. Okay. Let's begin our worship this morning in the Word by pausing for just a moment to clear our minds, prepare our hearts, seek the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, remind ourselves that not only does it enable us to understand, remember, and apply God's Word, but God the Holy Spirit is the energizing force and the guidance for the exercise of our spiritual gifts.

You have a spiritual gifting from God, just as I do, and in the fellowship of believers, that's where that gift functions. And to be a blessing to others as well as to receive a blessing is a wonderful privilege that is a part of our heavenly citizenship. It's a part of being in the body of Christ, and it is also important for us to acknowledge the role of God's Holy Spirit in activating and energizing and guiding us in the exercise of our gift, whatever it may be.

It may be encouragement. It may be service. It may be explanation.

Sometimes just by a question that you ask or a comment that you make, you can enlighten and make clear something that maybe I have not explained too well or have obscured in some manner. We speak the truth to one another in love. We have the opportunity to be a blessing to each other in many ways, both known and unknown.

And just by being alive to the presence of God's Holy Spirit, you can be a blessing and offer service to others in ways that you may not know until Christ returns. But it is so important for us to walk by means of the Spirit, to keep in step with the Spirit, as it says in Greek. So part of the means by which we ensure that and accomplish that is to go to the Lord, acknowledge our known sins, recognize that we walk by faith and not by sight, and that it is God's Spirit that enables us to do so.

Shall we pray? Father, we thank you again for the privilege of assembling and being nourished up in your Word. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, his faithful life, the manifestation of your love that he brought to this earth and to our lost and fallen world. We thank you for the time and history in which we have been born.

It is such a wonderful privilege to be in the closing days of this age where so much is revealed and so much is available to us. And we thank you for the preservation of your Word that gives us insight and understanding as to who we are and where we are in your plan. We thank you for the country in which we live, the freedom that we enjoy, the prosperity and the blessings that are ours that enable us to spend time in fellowship and in the study of your Word.

And we ask that you would be with our governmental leaders, be with those who make our decisions, both foreign and domestic, whether they are in the executive or judiciary or legislative branches. We pray that you will continue to guide the course of our country in a way that will allow us to make progress and achieve the goals that you have destined for us in this life. We ask your blessing on us as we study your Word this morning.

Give us insight and understanding so that we may rightly divide the Word of truth. And having done so, under the ministry of your Spirit, be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. For our scripture reading this morning, as we continue our study in Exodus and begin a new chapter, chapter 17 in Exodus, our scripture reading comes from Colossians chapter 3. Colossians chapter 3. And like any well done mystery story, initially you will have no idea what the connection is between Colossians chapter 3 and Exodus chapter 17. But, after we read this and go back to Exodus, the link will become clear.

At least I hope it will. Chapter 3 in Colossians picks up in a thread of argumentation by the Apostle Paul to the believers at Colossae. Also those at Laodicea and elsewhere.

This was a circular letter that was transmitted from church to church in the valley there where Colossae and Laodicea and other towns were. He is encouraging these believers by teaching them some truth about the Lord Jesus Christ and about His resurrection, about how we join into the new life of Christ. It is important for us not to be bogged down in human frailties, in human viewpoint, in the subjectivity that we have talked about in recent weeks where we get our eyes on ourselves, our eyes on people or our eyes on circumstances.

An important part of what he has said in the first two chapters is in verse 16-18 of chapter 2. He says, Do not let anyone judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath, which are a shadow of things to come. The substance is in Christ. Yes, there was a time when the law given through Moses specified how the nation of Israel was to operate.

But it was never intended to be the yardstick by which an individual life is measured. And certainly with the change of dispensation and with the revelation that comes to the New Testament church, it is a great distraction and a great evil to create a little checklist that says whether or not you are spiritual by what you do, by your practices. Do not let anyone judge you in food or in drink.

Now, I can't control what someone thinks of me, can I? If someone decides that they are going to commit the sin of judging me in their heart, and yet I have a command from the word of God that says, Do not let anyone judge me. So, in what sense can I fulfill that command? If someone looks at me and says, Well, he doesn't go to a real church. He doesn't baptize in water.

He doesn't evangelize enough. He doesn't go house to house and door to door. There are certain activities that are a part of a quote-unquote healthy spiritual life.

He does not do those, so he is not spiritual. He is not living a healthy life before God. There is no way on God's earth I can stop people who are not well informed in the word of God from thinking wrong things.

So, how can I fulfill this command? Do not let anyone judge you. Well, what is the part that I can control? I can control whether or not I react to that judging. Whether or not it influences me

and causes me to try to live in a different way.

Because I know someone is looking at me with a jaundiced eye and has an expectation based on a false understanding of scripture and a corrupted view of the Christian life. If I let that influence me, if I decide like Peter, that well, even though I have been eating with the Gentiles, now that the men from James are coming and I know that they will find that offensive and they will decide that I am not a good Jew anymore. While they are here, I think I will just go over and sit at the Jewish table and leave the Greeks to themselves.

If I allow myself to be judged by someone in a way that alters my behavior, now I have fallen into sin. Now I have fallen into error. So, the way to fulfill this command is to judge ourselves not by the opinion of others.

Not by what someone thinks or the depth of the furrow between their eyebrows when they look at me. But by the standard of the word of God. Do not let anyone judge you in food or in drink regarding a festival, a new moon or Sabbaths.

This is lifestyle. These are operational details of life that are supposed to be essentials by those who came out of Judaism. Who say, well the law has not been abrogated.

Didn't the Lord Himself say, I have not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it? So we, you can see someone making an argument. We should continue to fulfill the law. You have your seven day Adventists and so on.

But look at what he says. He says, these are a shadow of things to come. Well, the thing that they shadowed has come.

It was the Lord Jesus Christ and His work. So why do you want to go back to the shadow? These are a shadow of things to come. The substance is of Christ.

Concentrate on the substance. Where is the reality? What does the word of God say about our life? The word of God is a critic or judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is why we do what we do that matters.

And if I do it because someone is watching and I am worried about their opinion. I am losing my crown. I am losing my reward.

This is what he says in verse 18. Do not let anyone cheat you of your reward. Taking delight in humility.

That false that is there in italics, ought to be in italics because it is not in Greek. Taking delight in humility. Whether it is false or not is immaterial.

If you glory in your humility, it is no longer humility, is it? I am so proud of my humility I can hardly stand it. Taking delight in humility and the worship of messengers. And I don't think that this is the worship of Gabriel and Michael so much as the same problem you find in 1

Corinthians chapter 1. I am of Paul.

I am of Apollos. I am of Cephas. Well, my pastor can beat up your pastor.

My pastor knows more than your pastor. My pastor has had more Greek than your pastor. Or my pastor goes deeper into the word of God than your pastor.

Or my pastor does more visitation and more evangelizing. Or he baptizes more people. Whatever the criteria might be, getting eyes on the messenger instead of the message.

This will cost you your reward, the Bible says. Taking delight in humility. Well, we don't go for that folly, Raul.

We don't wear robes and we don't ostentate. Taking delight in adulation of messengers. Intruding into things which he has not seen.

This, people think, is talking about the angels. And there was this going on. And this may be the literal meaning of the passage.

But the application for us is arguing and deciding, Well, you know, I've got the tribulation and the millennium figured out more than you do. And you don't understand, you know, infralapsarianism and superlapsarianism and sublapsarianism. And you don't know the seven different kinds of baptism.

And the twelve different kinds of death in scripture. And this, that and the other. Intruding into things that we have not seen.

And using that to beat people over the head. There are some things that we have a belief and a current understanding of that is subject to change. Because it is not part of what is clear and foundational in the scripture.

We build line upon line and precept upon precept. And as we learn and grow in the word, our understanding and our perception may be enhanced. And may become more clear on things.

And to intrude into things that are beyond our pay grade and beyond our grade level in school. And say, well, I can give you an answer for everything. Even things that I haven't fully studied out is going to cost us our reward.

Intruding into things that we have not seen. Some things we don't need to worry about right now because we are not at that point. Maybe down the road when we are further along in the word of God.

There are things that I am not prepared to study. I am not prepared to teach the book of Revelation. I am not far enough along to do a good job of studying that book.

I must rely on the labors of others when I go to that book. Because I am not qualified. And I am

not going to intrude myself into things that I personally cannot see.

I have to just put some of that on hold until I grow enough in my understanding to see it for myself. And to intrude ourselves and take positions and assume postures based on what others have said. And we haven't personally seen it.

Is a dangerous thing. And it partakes of pride. We don't want to say, I don't know.

If you watch Red Green, those are the three hardest words for a man to say. I don't know. And intruding into things that we have not seen.

That God the Holy Spirit has not ministered to our soul. And we want to try to defend a position. And we are not fully grounded in it.

Is a folly. It is making contentions over words. And the Bible condemns that elsewhere.

But look at the main thing here. Look at verse 19. Not holding fast to the head.

From whom all the body nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments. You know what those joints and ligaments are? This is not technical biology here. What do joints and ligaments do for the body? This speaks of movable parts, doesn't it? A joint and the ligaments, the muscles that control that joint and hold that joint together.

Give us a range of movement. Right? You think about an arm. You think about your strong right arm.

You've got several joints there. You've got the shoulder joint, the elbow joint. You've got the wrist.

And what happens with the ligaments? What does this do for the body? The joint and the ligament, there is a range of motion that is appropriate. And your elbow ought to stop. And for women, you know, it goes back like another ten degrees.

But eventually, the ligaments that hold your elbow together stop your forearm from going back the wrong way. You can see these freak show guys that overstress their joints and just look like they're made of rubber and bend themselves into pretzels and all. But a normal human body, the ligaments that hold your joints together give you a certain range of movement and give you power and control and direction in those movements and also limits.

That's what the joints and ligaments do for the body. It says nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments. And the idea in the ancient world was that, and we know this even today, that a big part of your circulation is tension and release of your muscles.

How does the blood in your legs get all the way back up to your heart when it has already gone through the capillaries? It's not pressure. Your heart does not produce enough pressure to push through the arteries all the way through all the individual capillaries and produce enough

pressure to pump your blood back up to your heart. Your blood largely returns in the vein system by the contraction and relaxation of muscles in the normal course of movement.

This is why people fidget. This is why you don't stay in one position when you sleep. It is the constant motion of our bodies and involuntary muscle contractions and so on that it largely assists our circulation, which is a part of our nourishment.

So movement, this is why you can't lay still for very long without getting embolisms and having bed sores and lots of other things because your whole circulatory system depends on movement. We're designed to move. So that is the background for Chapter 3. Look at the first verse of Chapter 3. If then you were raised with Christ, if you're alive in Him, seek those things which are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

You can see the incompatibility of looking at things on this earth and who is impressed and who is satisfied with what I'm doing and who's talking about me because they don't think I measure up. He says, seek the things that are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

It doesn't mean be so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good, as they like to say. But where is your focus? When someone falls in love and they're in the infatuation stage, you still go to work or go to school. You still dress yourself and bathe and eat and do laundry and drive your car and do these other things that are part of earthly life.

Every idle moment, your mind goes off to this person with whom you are enamored. That's really where your mindset is. When you dress, it's with them in mind.

I'm going to be seeing so-and-so later. I want to be sure I look my best. What am I going to be doing this evening when I get off work? I need to get my stuff squared away so I can go out.

Everything revolves around the thing where you have your mind set. Sometimes we set our mind on our job. Sometimes we set our mind on our family.

Sometimes we set our mind on a project. Especially those of us who are sort of obsessive compulsive. You have a thing that needs doing and you just can't rest until it's done.

You still do other things, but your mind is always returning to that other. It just nags and it's like an old bone. You try to bury it and it just pops back up.

It's like trying to sink a basketball in your pool. It just comes back up no matter how hard you suppress it. Well, this ought to be our mode of thinking when we set our mind on things above.

Yes, we're going to concentrate and immerse ourselves in things in this life. But we ought to be constantly returning to the fact that this life is short. I'm creating a record in heaven that's going to come up at the judgment.

What does the Lord Jesus Christ think? How much intercession is he having to do for me right

now at the right hand of the Father? How does this stack up from the divine point of view? Am I living a life that pleases God or am I living a life that pleases Sam? We have to ask ourselves. Of course, you wouldn't say that. Substitute your name in the blank for Sam.

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. That's where your life is.

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth. We just saw this picture of the spiritual body that is held together and nourished by that which every joint supplies.

You have that same idea over in Ephesians in chapter 4. The whole body is knit together and you have the head and you have the rest of the members mentioned there as well. Put to death your members which are on the earth. Think about that spiritual membership in the body of Christ and not this earthly one.

Fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry. Covetousness is the trickiest thing to identify and eradicate, I think, in our lives. We see how idolatry was the bane and the scourge in Israel for generation after generation.

God had to practically destroy the nation. It's kind of like you get a cancer and they have to nearly kill you to get that cancer into remission. Well, idolatry was the cancer in Israel and it just nearly wiped out the nation.

Getting rid of it in the captivities of the Northern Kingdom first and later 586 the Southern Kingdom going out. And it isn't until after this grievous loss of everything that was a part of the promises that Israel comes out free of idolatry. At least in the literal sense.

Covetousness which is idolatry. There are lots of things that we covet. Some of them are material and some of them are not.

But we get our eyes on this is what I need and this is what I want and this is what I must have. We can idolize, we can covet security. We can idolize and covet peace.

We can idolize and covet the good opinion of others. Intangibles as well as the tangible things of I want to build on, I want a new set of wheels, whatever it might be. Because of these things, verse 6, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

Notice, sons of disobedience. For whom is obedience an issue? Looking at the world divided into believers and unbelievers, does God care about the obedience of unbelievers? He does not. They have no requirement for obedience because they've got a bigger problem.

They are not... This is like trying to walk out here and find some little Cambodian woman walking around the park with her native dress on like we have here and saying, excuse me ma'am, but you're not walking your post in a military manner and you have not taken charge of

your post in all government property in view. What are you talking about? She's not a Marine. She hasn't been assigned guard duty.

Why are you trying to hold her to a standard of obedience when she's not a member of the organization? God does not hold unbelievers to a standard of obedience. It's pointless. They are dead in trespasses and sins.

They are alienated from the life of God. They are hopeless, helpless and useless. All of us are until we come to faith.

Obedience is the requirement of those who have the means to obey. You can't even try to obey when you have no ability. And the flesh has no ability to please God.

We cannot obey until we are in Christ and have the presence of the Holy Spirit, have the life of God within us. Now we have the ability to obey and the requirement to obey. So this is an important principle of interpretation.

When you look at your Bible and you see it talking about obedience, whether it's obedience of the faith, being a son of obedience or disobedience, you know you're talking about believers. Obedience is not an issue for an unbeliever. What credit would you get? Let's say you spit in the face of Christ and rejected His work on the cross and you are a rank unbeliever, but you're very moral and loving and you give to charities.

What book does that credit go into? What's the point of being obedient when you're an unbeliever? Where is the credit? Where is the benefit? You have not the Son of God and you have not life, and the wrath of God abides on you. What good is your obedience going to do? There are some people who say, well, you won't be in quite so hot a spot in hell. Show me the Scripture.

It is not there. People who have that point of view do not understand the difference between believers and unbelievers in Scripture. So the point here is, because of these things, because of what? Fornication? What is that? That's taking your pleasure outside the bounds of God's command.

This doesn't have to just be sexual relations outside of marriage. This fornication means you are taking a selfish pleasure outside the bounds of God's command. You can make tennis fornication.

If you go out and play tennis to the exclusion of your family responsibilities, to the exclusion of your work responsibilities, if you dishonor Christ because you can't do anything but go play tennis, that's fornication. You are taking a selfish pleasure outside the bounds of the Word of God. Uncleaness.

You sin and you do nothing about it. If someone goes and works out and gets all smelly and sweaty, what is the next thing they should do before they go to a social function? Clean yourself

up. Take a shower.

Right? I mean, I don't mean to be gross here, but if you walk around in uncleanness, you have committed a sin and you do not claim God's cleansing grace, your soul stinks. And you will sin against those you love. You will sin against God.

You will sin against your fellow believers. You create a stench that can only be remedied by the cleansing grace of God. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

David prays well into his spiritual life, well into his adulthood. He says, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me. If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse us.

We need that cleansing. Jesus wrapped the towel around His waist and knelt and washed the disciples' feet. And we've been through that picture many times.

You know that's a picture of forgiveness of road dirt, what we pick up in the course of walking through our day. We don't need a bath of salvation. We need daily cleansing from what we pick up as we go through life.

And Jesus says, what I have done for you, you should do for one another. We need to forgive each other when we sin against one another. When we offend one another with the stench of our soul because we have not remained clean and we have not remedied our uncleanness by washing in the grace of God.

Passion. We can become passionate about things on this earth. And you can say, but it's a good cause.

I'm working with the orphans. It's a good cause. I'm doing something that's beneficial and good.

I'm saving the whales or whatever it might be. If your passion is on this earth, you are not laying up treasure in heaven. You are not setting your mind on things above.

You are not seeking those things which are above. It tells us in verse 1, it tells us in verse 2, seek those things which are above. Because of these things, verse 6, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

We as believers, saved by grace, members of the body and bride of Christ, can experience and bring upon ourselves the wrath of God. Can a child incur the wrath of its parent? Yes. Absolutely.

God is our Heavenly Father. And His wrath can descend upon us. We're going to see it here in Exodus.

In which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them, but now you yourselves are to put off all these things. We used to walk in it and we couldn't help it when we were in the ranks of the unbelievers. When He says, but now, now you have an obligation for obedience.

Whether you like it or not, whether you read the fine print when you got saved or not, you are saved and you have an obligation for obedience. Now, you yourselves are to put off all these. Put off anger.

Put off wrath. Put off malice. Anytime I get the chance to put a little dig into that person, if I can just yank the rug a little bit, if I can just lay a tack or two on their chair when they're not looking, if I can just somehow stick it to that person, they deserve it, they've done me wrong, I just want to get a little bit of satisfaction in watching them suffer.

If I can damage their reputation, if I can let it slip in my conversation, what a rascal they are, and make them pay for their wrongness toward me, that's malice. And that is forbidden by the Word of God. We are not to indulge it.

We are not to allow it. When we see it cropping up in our soul, we have got to squelch it. If we do not forgive others, and it doesn't mean get them to do penance and decide that the scales have evened back up, they have done us a wrong.

And it was wrong. There's no two ways about it. It was wrong, is wrong, will always be wrong.

It was selfish. It was inconsiderate. It was abominable of them.

They have really hurt and wounded me. The Bible doesn't say, well, once they have sufficiently paid, then you can forgive. It says forgive.

And if you do not forgive, you are not forgiven. What if God had that attitude toward us? Well, you know, even though you slipped up and made this grievous error, and you've come to me and you've acknowledged, and you've homologued and claimed 1 John 1, 9, I just don't think you've suffered enough for that sin. I really think you need to pay for a while.

God, in His grace, does not do that to us. When we judge ourselves, we are not judged. And God wipes the slate clean.

Our sins are separated from us as far as the east is from the west. And we do not pay a penalty. And we may get ourselves into circumstances, but even those effects and results of our misbehavior are woven together for good.

God uses it as a training exercise. He incorporates it into His plan to make us stronger and more qualified to serve Him. So, put off malice.

Put off blasphemy. Don't be bringing in what you learn in Bible class to justify your misdeeds. I've seen people go get drunk and say they learned it in Bible class.

Didn't Paul say, all things are lawful? Yeah, it's not edifying, but it's lawful. And I can just, if I do drink too much and I am drunk, when it says, be not drunk, well, I'll just claim 1 John 1, 9, and God will separate us as far as the east is from the west. And so people, I've known people who would intentionally go sin with the plan of committing the sin because they wanted to, and that, well, I'll just confess it and then everything will be great.

No, it won't. If you sin willfully after you receive a knowledge of the truth, there remains no sacrifice for sin, Hebrews chapter 10. And these people are bringing the wrath of God down on themselves.

Do not blaspheme. Do not mock God. The Bible says, don't fool yourself.

God is not mocked. What you sow, you will reap. And if you sow to the flesh, you will of the flesh reap corruption.

Well, what if I confess? If you confess and if you are genuine in that, and if you return to walking in the light, then, yes, you're not going to reap the whirlwind. But people who practice that kind of thinking, that is covetousness, which is idolatry. You will note that in Revelation 20 and following, the people outside the gates of the city are idolaters, those who love and practice lies, fornicators, and so on.

And this becomes a way of life for believers. Yes, they are resurrected. Yes, they are eternally saved.

And yes, they are outside the privileged place of the presence of God because of the pattern of life they established. And even the millennium does not change it. You look at the eternal kingdom of the Father, and there are people outside the gates of the new Jerusalem who are not allowed in because of the way they live their life here.

And this is the new thought we were looking at the other day when we saw in Exodus the manna that is gathered on the sixth day, the double portion. And whatever you gather, that's what you live on in the seventh day. Boil what you will boil, bake what you will bake, save what you will save for the Sabbath because on the Sabbath you will do no work.

We are living in the day of Pentecost. We are living in the age of Pentecost. We are living on that Friday before the Sabbath.

We are in the sixth thousand of God's history. And what we do now, whether we endure and whether we are faithful, has everything to do with what's going to happen for the next 1,000 years and on into the kingdom of the Father. That is what the Word of God teaches.

And I would be remiss if I did not bring it up so that we all know and are warned to work out our salvation in fear and trembling and to remember that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Put these things off. Get the filthy language out of your mouth.

Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man who is renewed. How? Just what we are doing this morning. Renewed in knowledge.

This is how the image of God is restored in which Adam was originally created. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, sithian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all. You see people rip this out of context and say we should make no distinctions in the church.

Women can do everything men can do and so on. What is the context here? The new man renewed in knowledge is raceless and sexless. There is no distinction made for the new man.

That new man, it doesn't matter if you are a woman, it doesn't matter if you started out as a Jew, it doesn't matter what your background. The new man is renewed according to knowledge. There is no limitation on that renewal.

You are not limited. You are not held back in being renewed into a new man and restored to the image of God. There is no hindrance based on heredity, environment or any other factor.

You can be freely renewed. There is no limit. This is background for what we are going to see in Exodus chapter 17.

It is essential background. If you want to understand Moses on the hill as Joshua fights the battle with the Amalekites, you have to understand these principles of Colossians chapter 3. We reviewed them in detail as part of our scripture reading. When we come back from our break, we are going to look at Exodus chapter 17 and we will pull a Perry Mason and link everything together.

Let's pause here and take our break.