

The New Man and the New Community

Colossians 3:9b-11

07/05/2023

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Colossians 3:1-11, and we'll finish the section that we've been looking at over the last few weeks today before we look at the new man and the character of the new man. Colossians 3:1, the Bible reads, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 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: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these things: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, 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 in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

Father, we ask now that You would send the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our understanding, that we might rejoice in Christ Jesus our Lord with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

We've been looking at this text from the angle of mortification of sin. We've been considering that the believer has a fight to fight against sin, and that is a fight in which he puts to death sin but also a fight in which he puts off sin. We considered that last week, that it's like a garment that is to be put off, and how it is that we are to war a warfare against particular sins of anger and also in the week before that, the sins of lust. But what we also considered and made a point of, which we must continue to make a point of, is that the power to overcome sin in the life is rooted in the reality of the fact that those who believe in Jesus are a new creation, that they are a new creature, that they, as the passage says here, a new man, a new man.

But what is important to also recognize is that the new man does not live in

isolation to a Christian community. You see, God has taken and made old men new, but He has taken old men and made them new and put them in a new community. And the exhortations that we've been looking at, just like most epistles in the New Testament, actually have their primary application in the life of the New Testament Church. You see, the book of Colossians was written to the Saints which are in Christ Jesus in Colossae, right? The idea is that they belonged to Christ and were part of a community of Christ in the region in which they belonged.

And so when Paul writes this letter, yes, he's dealing with many personal things that relate to us personally, but one application that always applies in all the epistles that are written to the churches is that the things that we are learning have effects in the life of our relationships in the community in which God has placed us. In fact, in verse number 9, he says these words, "Do not lie," and then he says, "one to another." He's concerned that the people at the church at Colossae would not use lying and deceptive words in their relationships one with another. In fact, the sin of anger, the sin of lust, all these sins that we have looked at have application in the life of the church. He wants the church together to be pure, whole, as one body in Christ, and not only a new people individually but a new community, a new creation.

And that's important to realize because our fight against sin doesn't only affect us, but it affects those around us. And it's important to realize that the church body is affected by the sins of the individuals. For example, if I allow myself to have an angry spirit and don't put off anger, it will affect the way in which I relate to people in my community, just like it does in a home, just like it may do in the workplace, so it does in the life of the church. If people don't deal with lust in their hearts in the life of the local church, it plays out into the life of the community of the church. And so the important thing to realize is that Christians don't live in isolation; they've been saved to be part of a community, and that community is vital for our growth.

And what I'm saying by that is this: that as we look at this passage, Paul goes on in verse number 11 to really stress the importance of how the believers are to relate to one another in the community together with one another. And we'll look at that as we go on. But also, what Paul says here about the new man, which we haven't yet looked at yet, is in verse number 10. He says, "And you have put on the new man," and then he says, "who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him."

Now, we've been looking at the new man, realizing that this man has been made new at conversion, in Christ Jesus, at salvation. And that is true. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you are new; you are not the person you used to be; you are a new man. But the Bible here uses the words "re-

newed," that this man is being renewed. Now, the tense there of the verb is the present passive tense of that word "being renewed." Look at verse number 10; it says, "And I've put on the new man who is renewed." That's what the New King James reads, but in the ESV, it reads, "who is being renewed." And the unfortunate translation that we have here doesn't actually convey the meaning as clear as the ESV does, but the idea is that this man is a new man, but he's also under renewal.

And so the work of renewal is an ongoing, progressive work of God in the heart of the new man. And that is encouraging to us from the standpoint that God is not finished with the new man. He doesn't just save men and leave them; He continues to renew them and renew them and make them more and more like Jesus Christ. And if He just saved us and left us, there'd be no hope for us. But this passage teaches us that this is a progressive renewal that God does in the hearts of all new men.

Now, this is consistent with the rest of the New Testament because, in 2 Corinthians 4:16, it talks about that Paul basically says that though our outward man is perishing, he says our inward man is renewed day by day. And also, in 2 Corinthians 3:18, the same truth is there, that we are being transformed into His image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. And what Paul is saying to us is that even though you've been saved, we need renewal; we need daily renewal; we need to go on in our progressive newness of becoming more and more like the Lord. And this is important to realize. John Murray summarizes it well when he says, "The believer is a new man, not yet made perfect." The believer is a new man, not yet made perfect. And so, this passage teaches us that we are being renewed, but what are we being renewed unto? And he says we're being renewed unto knowledge, or renewed in knowledge.

You see, what God is trying to do is He's trying to renew our minds. What God is seeking to do in the Christian life and the Christian faith is to engage people's minds in biblical realities about Him, about His Word, about His expectations, about His will. And He, by the Spirit, makes those truths alive to us. He, by the Spirit, impresses those truths upon our hearts so that we go on renewed more day by day, day by day. And what God is seeking to do in the life of the new man is to help him to understand more fully and more completely the knowledge of God.

We don't know God as we ought to know God. We don't know His works as we ought to know His works. We don't know His ways as we ought to know His ways. We don't know His will as we ought to know His will. We don't know His person and His character and His attributes as we ought to know them. Yes, the new man knows God in the sense that he is saved and he has a relationship with God, but we must be renewed in our knowledge of

God and grow in that.

And this was Paul's great passion, even for himself. Paul says in Philip-
pians 3:10, "Oh, that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection,
the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto death." Here
is the new man who is a great leader in the Christian Church for other new
men in the new community, and he is simply saying, "Oh, that I might know
Him." What did Paul realize? That I don't know Him as much as I can know
Him, should know Him, desire to know Him.

And in fact, for the Colossians, Paul prays the same thing. He says in
Colossians 1:9, "For this reason, we also, since the day we heard it, do not
cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge
of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Why? "So that you
may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing unto Him, being fruitful in ev-
ery good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

The truth is, Christianity is a religion of the mind which affects the life.
And what God wants to do is engage people's minds. He wants to engage
people's intellects. He wants to engage people's faculty of the mind, and
He wants to infuse the Word of truth into their hearts so that they might
know Him.

Meditation, in the New Testament sense or in the biblical sense, is not
the emptying of the mind; it's the filling of the mind. And it's the very truth
that we receive, it's the knowledge of God Himself that actually makes the
mind new and renewed day by day, which by implication places upon us a
very important emphasis for our walk with God and being in His Word day
by day and studying Him.

In 2 Corinthians 3:18, he says, "As we behold His glory, that is when we
are changed from glory to glory. As we, with open face beholding as in a
glass the glory of the Lord, it is then that we are changed." It's not as we
behold nothing but empty space, but as we engage with God in His Word,
in His truth, in the things that we have heard of Him, know of Him, as we
study Him, as we look upon Him intently, then the Spirit of God takes the
truth of God and the knowledge of God and renews us day by day, day by
day, so that we can be more like Jesus Christ.

And so, in this passage, we are understanding already from the point here
that the new man is one who is being renewed but is being renewed in
knowledge. And God wants to deal with his mind. And not only that, but
to what end is he being renewed? And it says here he's being renewed in
knowledge, and these are the words, "according to the image of Him who
created him" or "after the image of his Creator."

Why is God so intent upon the minds of men and people knowing Him and coming to understand Him and studying Him? Why is God so intent upon that? Because that is the very means by which He will take the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God will take the Word of God and the truths of God and the character of God and will transform your life unto what? Unto the image of your Creator.

It was read to us already this morning that in Genesis 1, God was creating the world, and He began day one, day two, day three, day four. He made all the things that we see in creation today. But in day number six, God had got together and said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Nothing else in the whole of creation was made in such a manner. God took His image, as it were, and stamped it upon humanity. He put His resemblance upon them.

To be made in the image of God simply means to resemble God, to reflect God, to be in the likeness of Him. You see, man was created to mirror God. As one man said, if someone puts an image or a poster or an image of himself on every corner of the city, one thing you can be sure is that person wants to be known. And what God has done is that He put His image on all mankind so that when we look at man, we should see the resemblance of God because God, who is invisible, has revealed Himself in His creation, but He is most revealed in man in that He made man after His image to perfectly reflect that.

And what that meant for man is that man was different from the animals. He was a rational creature, one who had the power of reason, the one who had the ability to will, the one who has knowledge and can increase in knowledge. And because man can will to do things, because man can reason in his mind, because man can learn and increase in knowledge, man is capable of establishing new relationships and deep relationships, relationships more than just what we see in the animal kingdom where two lions go hunting together and share the food. Man's relational capacities are far greater than the animal kingdom, in so much that they can reflect God, who is a relational God.

But more than that, God made man in His image as a moral creature. God endued man with an original righteousness. Man was created in the image of God, even in morality. There was no sin to be found in Adam; there was no sin to be found in Eve. They were in pure innocence there in the garden, before God in holiness, in original and perfect righteousness. Their consciences were clear, clean, and they were recipients of law and were able to keep the law and obey the law. They were made in the image of God morally, made in the image of God, but also they were made in the

image of God in relationship to their position. And I mean that not that they were over God, but you know what God told man: that they were to rule and have dominion over the creation. They were like co-regents with God over the earth there in the garden. Adam calls the animals to himself, he names them just like God named him. He names the creatures, gives him dominion over the earth, to till the earth, to bring forth fruit from the earth, even to have children and multiply the earth. And that's what God intended for man to be.

In all these things, God set in man's heart, God gave to man, God blessed man with as the pinnacle of His creation. They represented God, and the perfections of God could be seen in man in the garden. The result of such a creation is that God sat back, as it were, on the sixth day and looked, and when He rested, He said on the sixth day, "Behold, everything I've made is very good." On the seventh day, He rested, and the result of this very good creation was a harmonious unity between God and man, man and man, and man and the creation. Adam and Eve, perfect unity; God and man, perfect harmony, walking in the garden; the creation, man, perfect dominion and rule and relation. This was the result of God's creation: tranquility.

But we know, as the chapters of Genesis go on to tell us, that it did not remain that way. You see, the image of God that was given to man was marred and distorted by sin, as Adam and Eve yielded to the temptation of Satan and disobeyed the law of God. The curse of sin entered into humanity, into their lives, into the created order, and their original righteousness was broken. Their standing before God was not the same; their rationality was darkened, their minds were darkened, and they no longer reflected the image of their Creator in the likeness that He originally intended it to be. Their rule was corrupted, and the image was not lost. Let's remember that it was not lost. In Genesis 9:6, it says, "Don't murder because man is made in the image of God." After the fall, it says the same thing in 1 Corinthians 11:7. It also says the same thing in James 3:9, that man is now, even though fallen, still made in the image of God. But man has been deeply marred by sin, so that he does not reflect the image of God as he ought to, as God intended it to be there at the beginning of the creation.

And so, this is the world that was what came about in Adam's sin and in Eve's sin. But now, the promise of hope comes to us in the text of Colossians 3, that although man's image has been marred, God is set upon making man renewed, and He's set upon renewing man in the image of his Creator. God is set upon making man new and redeeming man from that which was distorted, from that which was lost, as it were, in the beginning. So, God began a new creation, and Ephesians 4, which is a parallel passage to this, says He created the new man in true righteousness and in holiness. And so, when God saves the sinner, He encloses him with a new

man, makes them a new man, and that man is a man of true righteousness and true holiness. He's a man that is capable of true righteousness and a man capable of true holiness, to live to the glory of God, to fight sin, to put on godliness, to say no to anger, to say no to lust, and follow after righteousness. God is working in him to renew him, to bring him back to reflect more fully the image of God.

How is God doing that? Well, He's renewing him in his mind. He's giving him the knowledge of Himself, helping him to engage with the realities of God that he might be more reflective of God, the One who made him. The first creation not only ruined individuals, but it ruined the entire old creation community. So, you see, when Adam fell, sin so marred man that it didn't just affect their relationship to God, but it affected their relationship to one another. And when God is set on intending to restore man after the image of Himself, He's not only intending on restoring man to relationship to Himself, but helping him know how to relate to one another in true community life.

It says that in the book of Genesis that even after Adam and Eve sinned, we see that their children, Cain, rises up and murders his brother Abel. Anger, jealousy, rage, envy drives him mad, and he murders. This is the first children of Adam and Eve, and he murders his brother Abel. What's happened? Sin has not only affected people's relationship toward God, but it's affected their relationship toward one another. The tranquility and the union that existed between God and man was broken, and between man and man was broken, and the creation of man was broken. Although man still reflects the image of God in that he is still a king in one sense, and he's still, in one sense, a rational creature and all these things, he does not do so in a way that pleases God and properly reflects Him. He uses the things that God has gifted him against God, not for the glory of God.

So, the community life was so impacted that the God who made from one blood all the nations looked upon the world and saw it fractured, broken, torn, polluted by sin. And God looks upon this creation, and He sends His Son into the world to die, to redeem men from sin, to begin the work of new creation, to start calling people out of darkness into His light, making them new men, transforming them in His image. And He's building a community that is growing and growing and growing. And as we looked at many weeks ago in Colossians, He's going to reconcile all things to Himself that are in heaven and on earth, and He's doing that now through the lives of God's people.

He's restoring. Jesus is restoring. God is restoring through His death, through His resurrection. He is bringing life, true peace, true holiness, true righteousness, true knowledge of God into the hearts of sinful men.

He's forming new communities in which He is the head, in which He is Lord. And the divisions that are caused in the old creation and still remain in the old creation that we look upon now, like wars, fightings, envy, anger, murder, all the things that we look at in this world, resulted by sin, God is setting to make new in Christ Jesus.

And so, the divisions that exist now in the old creation, Paul is simply saying, have no place in the new creation. And this is what he gets down to here in verse number 11. Yes, in verse 10, we have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him. But he says these words here: "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

What he says is, "I am renewing men, and I'm bringing them into a new community, and here in this new community, in the community of the new man, the divisions of the old creation have no place. They have no place in God's society, in God's community. There is neither racial nor the past religious baggage that people have brought into Christ Jesus and have come to know Him. Those things which have been overcome in Christ have been done away. There is no Jew," he says. "There is no Greek," he says. "There is no circumcised or uncircumcised. The past religious baggage that was is now unrecognized in the Christian community."

You see, the pagan worship that people once did, which was very severe by the way back in the pagan days, offering sacrifices, some even drinking blood and pouring out blood offerings, he's saying all those things that were done for pagan gods, which were devils, now when people come into the new community of Christ, we don't ask the question, "Oh, well, we can't trust this guy because he belonged to that religion prior, and we don't know about that religion." It's not the way it works in the new Christian community.

He's simply saying there's no difference between Greek or Jew, your racial status, whether you're Lebanese or Asian or black or white or whatever it may be. In Christ Jesus, there's no distinction here in regards to these old creation distinctions that cause division. He says not only is there no religious or racial distinction, he says there's no cultural distinction. And what he says here, he says "barbarian or Scythian."

Now, the barbarians were barbaric. In fact, the sophisticated and educated Greeks made the term "barbarian," and they made it a term barbarian because when they heard them speak their language, it just sounded like "bah, bah, bah, bah, bah." And so they made the term "barbarian" because it was a derogatory term to say that these guys are just barbarian; they're

uncivilized people. And Paul is simply saying, "Hey, in this new community, it doesn't matter if you're barbarian or a Greek. It doesn't matter if you're Jew or barbarian. It actually doesn't matter if you're a Scythian."

Now, Scythians were somewhat worse than barbarians. They were also an uncivilized group of people, but they were so bad that they were so corrupted, actually, the Scythians, that what ended up happening is they would drink the blood of the first victim of war, and then they would turn the skulls of their enemy into drinking vessels. Imagine having one of those guys get converted and come to the church. You can see the problem. This is the problem that they had there in the early church. This is what was happening. You got Scythians, you got barbarians, you got Jews, you got Greeks, you got circumcised, you got uncircumcised.

And he says you got social differences. You got slaves, and you got free men. You got the people that are at the bottom rank of the society, slaves that are owned by other men, in bondage to slavery, to serve other men. There, in the church too. And guess who's sitting next to them? A master of slaves. And he's saying, "Okay, this is the Christian community."

But listen, what you have to realize is that it is God's community, and it's God's new community, and the distinctions that you were so set upon in your judgment towards others, you looked at their car or the area that they lived in or the job that they had, and you determined whether they'll make a good friend to you, you determined whether or not they would be someone you'd like to spend your time with, someone that you'd like to be in community with. God is saying, "Sorry, that's not how it works in the new community."

There's no church of the rich, and there's even no church of all the poor. And there's no church that is to be of all one kind of type, of all Arabs or of all Asians or of all Australians. This is not what the new community is about. What God is saying is, "I have done a new creation, and just like I set to make all the nations of one blood, but now they have made these distinctions and caused division amongst themselves." He's simply saying here that in the new creation, "I have made you one new man and part of one new community, and you have to fight against the inclinations of the old creation and the old divisions that you lived according to."

What He's simply saying is, "I want you to see the futility of the divisions that mark the old creation because of man marred by sin, and I want you to be renewed in knowledge in such a way that you don't bring those things into the community of God. There's no snobbery, no ostracization, no cold indifference. We ought to be none in the house of God, in the community of the people of God."

So then, where does the distinction lie if Paul is saying there's no distinction? Where should the distinction lie? Fair question. He gives us the answer in the text here: "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

Paul is simply trying to say here, "What matters is not your social status, not your cultural status, not your past religious baggage or your racial identity. What matters is your identity in Jesus Christ." The question that should be asked is not whether you're a barbarian or Scythian or a slave or free, but the question that should be asked is, "Are you a new man? Are you one who is being renewed in the knowledge of Him who is your Creator?"

This is what Paul wants the people to understand. This is what he wants them to see: that the distinction is with Christ. He says, "Christ is all. Christ becomes the standard. Christ becomes the test of the unity that exists within the new community. Christ becomes that. This is a place where all those earthly distinctions are not recognized, but one thing is recognized, one man is recognized, and it is Christ Jesus the Lord. He is the one who is exalted in the new community."

And so, what it should be like in the Christian community is that everyone who is a new man should be being renewed in the knowledge of the new man, in the knowledge after the image of his Creator, to be understanding and coming more and more to the reality that Jesus Christ is everything.

Everything, and I guess in one sense, that comes to us is that the believer understands this: that Jesus Christ is his glory, Jesus Christ is the reason for his existence, Jesus Christ is the reason for his salvation, Jesus Christ is the reason for his worship. He realizes that Jesus Christ is his thought life, his passion, his pursuit, his affection, his assurance, his comfort, his concern.

Jesus Christ, as Paul says in verse number four of this passage, is our life. He is our life. He is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. The point is simply this: in the Christian community, Christ is all, and in one sense, for every new man, Christ is everything to him. And so, when he finds Christ, he finds everything, and anyone. When he finds other people who find Christ, he knows that these are the people who also have found everything.

And for him, the distinctions don't lie in cultural, social issues or political issues. They lie in the relationship that they have with the one who saved them and made them new. You see, those outside the community

have Christ, but not as all. There are many unbelievers today that have Christ, but not as all. Christ, to them, is another idol that they may put on their shelf. Christ, to them, may be just a prophet or just a good man. He may just be one who is the cause for their ritualistic observances or their attendance to a certain particular denomination or church.

But what Paul is saying here is this: that Christ is all to those who belong to Him. He's all. He's not an addition. He's not one that you adopt because you enjoy Him because He makes you feel good about yourself. He becomes everything to those that know Him. He's all.

You see, to the religionist, He's just something that you add as part of your life to make yourself feel like you're doing good before God. But to the man of the world, Christ is nothing but just the name by which you curse or the one that you don't even think of, or the one that you don't have any time for, or the one who you don't let shape your opinions and your decisions, one you give no thought to.

But the Bible teaches that that's what it's like to the man of the world, and that's what it's like to the man who's set on self-righteous religion. But the Bible also says this: that even though we haven't seen Him, to those who believe, Christ is precious. And the same stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. The ones that, although man and the world look on Him as nothing, He is everything, and He is everything in particular to us who know Him.

And to those who disregard Him today, one day Jesus will say these words to you: "Depart from me, you that work iniquity." If He's not all to you today, then you will not be His in the final day. You see, Christ is all. He is the foundation upon which we rest. He is the reason for our salvation. But not only is He all, He is all in all.

The passage says, "Not only is He all, but He is in all." Think about that for a moment: Jesus Christ lives in every new man, every new believer. He lives in the slave that believes in Him, He lives in the rich man that believes in Him, He lives in the different racial groups that believe in Him. And what Paul is simply saying is, if you want to live in community life, realize this: the person sitting next to you that believes in Jesus is the temple of the living Christ. So treat them as one, love them as Christ, love them as the body of Christ. This tears down all the distinctions.

We're living in a society today that says we want peace, we want peace. But there is no peace, as you've heard it said, without the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. Yes, there are rallies, yes there are protests, yes there are people in political parties thinking this man can be our savior to bring peace to the

land. I'm telling you now, my friend, that even if they break down all the distinctions as they are simply trying to do in our society today, they will still find cause for division because division is set in man's heart because of the fall. He needs redemption, he needs renewal. Then there will be no division, then there will be life. He needs Christ, he needs to find Him as all.

We can set out to vote for political parties thinking that this is going to bring peace to the land, to the world. What will bring true peace to the world is Christ. When men set aside all variances and find Him who is all. But until men find Him who is all, men will be set on division, men will be set at variance one against another.

And so then, Christian, let me encourage you this morning as we come to a close, is that you should understand this very thing: that Christ should be our distinguishing mark. We should be known as Christians, people that have Christ as their all. Oh yes, you say, I work as an accountant, I work as a builder, I work as a painter, I work as a manager of a cleaning company, or as a cleaner, or I'm a slave, or I'm an Assyrian, or I'm bond, or I'm free. The issue is this, brethren: we should be known by one thing, that we are Christians. Yes, we work, yes we labor, but one thing that we should be set to be known for is that we have Christ as our all. That should be the one distinguishing mark that marks us out from the rest, filled with a life of knowledge, the knowledge of God that emanates out in our life of obedience and our love for Jesus Christ.

And not only should that be true of us, that we want to be known as the one who Christ is all in all to us, but we also need to realize this: the church needs to lay down this standard. The church has to lay down this rule that Christ is our supreme standard. Let our primary concern be in the life of this church: is Christ in you? Is Christ all in all to you? Are you being renewed in the knowledge after the image of your Creator? Let all other lesser, although important, but let all other lesser doctrinal and preferential distinctions be subservient to this reality: is Christ all in all to you? Is He in you? Is He your all? Are you being renewed after the image of your Creator?

Look, Christ will be the head of a Presbyterian Church, Christ will be the head of a Baptist Church, Christ will be the head of an Anglican Church, Christ will be head of an Arminian Church, Christ will be head of a Reformed Church, and a Fundamentalist Church. But Christ will have no part of a community in which He is not all in all. He will have no part in a community where there is no new man. He does not live in buildings made with hands, which are figures of the true, but He lives in heaven and He resides in the hearts of all those who believe in Him.

And so let it be the distinguishing mark of the Church of Jesus Christ

that we belong to Him, that He's everything to us in this place, that the one thing that concerns us about the brother next to us or the sister next to us is: do you know Him? Are you being renewed after the knowledge of your Creator? How is your knowledge of God? Are you increasing in understanding Him? Are you loving Him? Are you serving Him? Are you worshipping Him? Are you a new creation in Christ Jesus? Yes, let us talk about lesser things, but let all those things, as I said, be subservient to this grand truth that Christ is all in all.

Lest we add to the list of Scythian, slave, and all these other things which has happened in the fractured Church of the Lord Jesus today. As we sung in the church, "The Church's One Foundation," that's a hard thing to do. It's a really hard thing to do. It's a hard thing to do if you're not being renewed in the knowledge of your Creator. It's a very hard thing to do if you don't see the beauty of Christ and the glory of Christ. You will find it very, very hard to keep your heart fixed on those things that make for unity in the Christian Church.

And you know, in this community, we should never forget that each one of us that believe in Jesus are believers that are new men, that are not yet made perfect. There's an illustration of a man that walked into a carpenter shop, and he went to the carpenter shop, he must have gone through the side entry or something, but he started pointing out to the carpenter, "Look, mate, rough edges, touching the furniture, not polished well, wobbly, crooked, not shaved." And the carpenter immediately got upset with him and said to himself, "Listen, mate, listen, listen, these are not finished yet, these are not finished yet. I'm not done with these pieces of furniture." He said, "Come, come, come to this side of the workshop, let me show you the pattern after which these vessels, after which these pieces of furniture are being made, after which these pieces of furniture are being designed." And he took him and showed him the beautiful, polished, without any dents and problems, and the man was thoroughly rebuked.

You know, I think that relates so much to us today. The new community, the new men, not yet made perfect, and the God that made us is renewing us, each one of us, after the image of Himself. And that simply means that you and I are deeply imperfect, but God is deeply committed to imperfect people, to develop them, to make them into more and more this renewed image, to reflect His glory. And let us never forget, dear people of God, that even though you and I see differences and warts and all those things in one another, realize that we are unfinished business in the community of God, unfinished business. God is making us like Christ.

So look at the pattern after Him, to whom your brother or your sister is being renewed in knowledge after the image of the perfect, spotless, sinless

Lamb of God. Let's pray.