

The Expulsive Power of a New Affection

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[0 : 00] You know, some of the songs that we sing are especially songs that I think we'll sing that one in heaven. I don't know. That's one of them.

Maybe just changing the words up a little bit to talk about how wonderful it is in heaven now. No more stuff. Well, beloved, I have you today in Colossians 3 and I have in mind some things that I want to say now take this in love.

I don't want to exclude anyone as I say it. Especially with my heart for the people who are coming on Wednesday nights and studying with us of late as we try and apply truth to some very practical struggles that we all have with deceitful desires.

Desires that camouflage themselves in our hearts as legitimate. Sometimes even being good desires in and of themselves but morphing or changing into deceitful desires as they come to rule our hearts more than our love for Jesus rules our hearts.

And that's when we get in trouble. We've been going over that on Wednesday nights now for a number of weeks. Really drilling down. We put the pause button on dealing with the questions the theological questions on Wednesday night that we're going through and we camped out on this one question and I think we've been there now for going on five weeks or so just drilling down to help our folks think carefully about how do I deal with the desires of my heart that do not honor the Lord Jesus Christ in any given moment when I sin because every time you and I sin we sin out of a wrong desire in our heart.

[1 : 59] That's where it comes from and where it starts. And we've been going over that now for weeks together. I wanted to come here today and talk to us as a church family gathered on the Lord's Day about some of these issues surrounding, dealing with these kinds of desires and honoring the Lord in the midst of all of that.

So if you'll join me in Colossians chapter 3 let me begin reading in verse 1. After two chapters of exalting the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord of creation the Lord of the church and our only hope for salvation from sin through the blood of His cross Paul comes to chapter 3 and says therefore.

Therefore. Since you have been raised up with Jesus Christ keep seeking the things above where Christ is.

Seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind. You can also slash that right there and say set your heart. Because that's what he's talking about. Set your mind or set your heart on the things above.

Not on the things that are on earth. For you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.

[3 : 27] When Christ who is our life is manifested or shown then you also will be manifested or shown with Him in glory.

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to sexual immorality impurity passion evil desire and greed which is notice idolatry.

And that's what we've been talking about a lot on Wednesday nights. Overcoming idolatrous desires. God substitutes or God replacements that we exalt in any given moment of sin over being devoted fully to the Lord Jesus.

Again let me just help you understand what we're talking about. We're not talking about idols that you construct that out of wood or stone or something like that and set it up in your house and bow down to it.

We're talking about the idols and altars of your heart that we construct and that we bow down to in any given moment of sin.

[4 : 40] In the moment of your sinning you are not being loyal and devoted to Jesus. You're being loyal and devoted to some desire of your heart that is ruling you in that moment.

And so we want to help you understand how the Bible explains that and more importantly perhaps what you're to do about it in the heat of the battle. The heat of the moment.

How do we deal with those moments of sin in our lives? Is there a way that we can proactively deal with them? And the answers are yes and yes.

Therefore, he says, put all of these things away because in verse 6 on account of these things these categories of sin that he's recounting here the wrath of God is coming upon people he calls the sons and daughters of disobedience.

Disobedience characterizes the central feature of our sin nature. Verse 7 And in them in these kinds of sins you also once walked when you were living in them.

[5 : 53] But now you also lay them all aside. Wrath, anger, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

Do not lie to one another since you put off the old man with its evil practices and have put on the new man who's being renewed to a full knowledge according to the image of the one who created him.

A renewal, that is a spiritual renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew or a circumcised person, an uncircumcised person, a barbarian, a Scythian, a slave, a free man, but Christ is all and in all.

So, as the elect of God, your Bible might say chosen, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, that is marked by God's love, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and graciously forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord graciously forgave you, so also should you.

Above all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity, and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful.

[7 : 42] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratefulness in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

This is a treatise dealing with what it is for you and I to love one another as God's community or God's family so that that love brings us together in a bond that is unbreakable by the world, by your sin, by my sin, by our sin, so that nothing can shatter that bond of unity created by a sincere love for each other.

Not only does this love pull all of these character qualities of Christ together into one whole, this particular love is the most powerful force in the universe, binding us together as a spiritual family and helping us move through the issues of life together as a family.

God. That's what he's concerned about. Only God provides this kind of thing. You can't manufacture this. It isn't something of man.

[9 : 15] It's something of God. And it's very, very powerful. Look, folks, this is a power-packed passage. It is absolutely packed full of practical truth for godly living.

And some of the folks in here were back almost nine years ago when I was preaching through this for the first time for them. When I first came here, I preached through the book of Colossians.

All that time ago when I preached this, by the time we got to what we're going to look at in 12 through 14, I would have already preached nine sermons for you in chapter 3 alone.

And so by the time we get down to verse 12 and I start talking to you about all that, nine other sermons would have been preached in just chapter 3, getting you ready for what I want to tell you in verse 14.

I don't have that luxury today. So I'm going to have to kind of pull this all together and help you understand that Paul is wanting us to carefully and soberly highlight what he would refer to as a contrast of lifestyles being emphasized in this passage.

[10 : 32] In other words, beloved, you were once this, but now in Christ you are this, and they are diametrically different and opposed. One is antithetical to the other.

And so you should be living like this new person, this new creation, creation, that God has made you by bringing Jesus Christ to live in you.

How does that even work? How does that even happen, Fred? That the Lord of glory, he spent two chapters exalting, has come to take up residence in the human soul.

You can't explain it, and I can't either. All we can do is go to the word of God and see that it's true. Now you would think and I would think that if the Lord of glory, the Lord of the universe that he's been exalting all this time, would come to take up residence in a human soul, it would make a radical change in that soul.

Don't you think? A radical change. That's what he's talking about. The way that we love each other as the community of faith, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, ought to be a radical change and difference from what the world calls love.

[11 : 50] And how the world approaches family. How we approach family, vastly different from how they approach family. And today you're going to see the main difference in that.

The way they approach marriage, vastly different from the way believers approach marriage. That difference is a person, Jesus. The difference is Jesus himself living in us.

That's what Paul wants to highlight in all of this. So, if you'll join me here, just scanning, in verses 1 through 4, you heard me emphasize being raised up with Jesus so that we keep seeking the things above and we set our mind on the things above.

So, Paul is stressing our new identities in our miraculous spiritual union with Jesus. Our miraculous spiritual union with Jesus.

That union is going to create what you see up here on the screen in the way of my title. An expulsive power of a new affection. I'm going to explain what that is later in my message.

[13 : 04] The contrast of lifestyles in this passage has everything to do with the reality that Jesus Christ is now union with us or us with him.

He lives in us. Since Jesus lives in us by the power of the Holy Spirit, his life in us creates a marked contrast between us, us, now folks, not just you as an individual, but us as a gathered family, as related human beings by the blood of the Lord Jesus.

He creates that difference in us. That spiritual contrast between us, between you and the world shows up in our ongoing lifestyle of, in this verse, verses 1-4, seeking things above and setting our hearts on things above instead of seeking and setting our heart on earthly things.

we are not grounded in this planet, in the things of this planet. The things of this planet, the priorities and the systems and the pursuits of this world do not define us as Jesus people.

We can't afford that. Pursuing the world will not allow us to showcase Jesus. We're going to have one master overall. Again, I'll talk more about that this coming Wednesday night.

[14 : 36] As Christ people, how we live, what we pursue and prioritize and give ourselves to are all defined by heaven's priorities for us in our walk with Jesus.

Heaven's priorities for us. When I became a Christian, when you became a Christian, we laid aside self and adopted the priorities of heaven for our life. No longer am I trying to chart my own course, pursue my own goals.

Jesus is my goal. Jesus is everything to me. I owe him everything. And so my heart beats to serve the Lord. Your heart beats to serve the Lord.

That's the way of it. Look, we learn to spiritually interpret every aspect of life through our heavenly mindedness.

we think and we live heaven on earth because Jesus lives in us. Look, this is what I'm not saying. I'm not trying to give you some syrupy, sappy sentimentality here when I talk about this kind of pursuit in life.

[15 : 44] That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about something with substance here when I talk about heaven on earth. This is not a hallmark heaven on earth or anything like that.

Oh, heaven on earth. No, when I talk about heaven on earth, I'm talking about the wisdom of God and the character of God at work in your life.

What you will be in heaven in completed form, you are striving for now as you live on this planet. You're striving to live in the wisdom of God and you're striving to form the character of Jesus and showcase that character in your life.

And so in that way, we are trying to live heaven on earth. And we live it imperfectly, don't we? Hence this instruction. Because we live in a broken world, we need this instruction.

So in verses then 5 through 9, you and I as Christ's followers are told to, notice the language that he uses here in the text, put to death or put off or lay aside the sinful thoughts, the sinful desires, the sinful behaviors which once characterized what he calls our former life of sinful thinking, sinful desiring, sinful behaving.

[17 : 09] That is, what we were before we became Christians by the will of God in Christ. Why is he having to say this? He's having to tell them this because some of these Christians are living as Christians like they were before they were Christians.

and he's saying, look, that won't work. You've got your priorities and desires out of whack and so there are some things that need to be put off. There are some things that need to be further put to death in the way of those desires.

There are things that you need to lay aside and move away from. You've picked them back up again in your life. No, no, no. There's no room for that and serving Jesus.

Now, Paul is going to give us real quickly here, friends, two sobering reasons why we need to be active, intentional, faithful, and following through with this putting off of sinful desires, thoughts, and actions.

The first reason that he gives us in our text comes as he tells us that in verse 6, on account of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

[18 : 19] the wrath of God is coming. It's a guarantee. That's a promise. We were once characterized by the sinful disobedience of our former lives.

That was the character of our life. Disobeying God. Disobeying authority. That's a life where we did not belong to God.

We were separated from Him spiritually and our life reflected that reality. we live then under God's holy anger as His enemy. We deserve to suffer God's ultimate judgment by being thrown into hell for all eternity.

So, this is a person, these are people, this is a life lived where we are no longer people who are in any way seeking after what is right good or good or true.

True. That's not who we are. When we come to Jesus Christ, that's not who we are anymore. We're living a life now to seek Jesus and to please Jesus in every aspect of our lives.

[19 : 33] listen, just this morning I've been engaging some counseling with someone out of state for a while now and just this morning in some text that I was sending to encourage this person, I said, I try to say every time I conclude with this person in this relationship with me, I say, remember to make it about Jesus today.

And this person knows exactly what I mean because I'm outlining it. How do I make it about Jesus and not about me? Isn't that our struggle? In any given moment, isn't that your struggle?

How do I make this more about Jesus in this moment than about me? See, I don't, you hear what I'm not saying, folks? I did not say to you, how do I make this more about Jesus in this moment than my wife?

Why? Because my wife is not the main issue in my battle with making Jesus the issue in the moment. My battles with me and my heart.

That's where I need prayer. That's where I need work. That's where I need the truth of the Lord. The second reason that Paul comes up with this, setting aside all of these former issues of your previous life, is he tells us that in our former life before Jesus, we sabotage our relationships with selfish, sinful desires.

[21 : 05] Hard to hear, but true. You were characterized by wrath. You were characterized by anger, malice, slander, abusive speech, lying.

And then, if you look at those and say, well, not really, Jeff. I mean, I did those every once in a while, a couple of those, but not really. OK, fine, then we'll just put you under this last one, evil practices.

That takes in whatever sins weren't mentioned in the previous list. All of these sins led to destruction, divisiveness, and deceit in our relationships with each other.

That characterized my life before Christ, and it characterized yours too. These are the sins, beloved, no surprise, behind divorce, divorce, these are the sins behind church splits, disunity, and all fractured relationships.

These are the sins which rip away the very fabric of what makes for trust, and honesty, and peace, and purity, and love, and kindness, and gentleness, patience, and forgiveness, and self-control in relationships.

[22 : 25] They work against all that. So Paul comes and he says, so now you also lay these things, them all aside.

Put off the old man, put on the new man who is being renewed to a full knowledge according to the image of the one who created him.

The whole sermon on that. Being renewed. That's a process. You're in a process spiritually of growing, being renewed in your mind, your heart, to a what?

Full knowledge. That is a mature, complete, spiritual knowledge of who Jesus is and how he works, how to honor him, how to please him. Now friends, look, we engage in this put off and put on motif because we are not in heaven yet.

We're still in the thick of the battle, aren't we? Here on earth, we are in continual spiritual conflict with whom?

[23 : 40] With the world, the flesh, and the devil. Again, this is stuff we're going through on Wednesday night. What that means is you and I are in need of maintaining what I'm going to call a spiritual fighting footing.

Do you understand what I mean when I say that? Your footing is that of spiritual readiness in the fight. The difference is this is a visual of a non-spiritual fight.

in terms of your footing as you're ready to approach life. Here's you apart from that. I'm just going through life. It's fine.

I can be ignorant of all this stuff. No big deal. I show up on church. I check the box. But in terms of my spiritual life and my sin, that's very different from this.

Now, this isn't for you to fight people. This is your spiritual fighting footing stance against sin in your own heart. This is a call for you to be spiritually sober-minded and alert.

[24 : 52] You know why? Because you have an enemy that prowls around like what? Looking for amen. He's active, isn't he?

You have a world system out there that is built on an entire focus on self.

And then you have your own heart's desires that are deceitful and constantly wage war against you being devoted to the Lord Jesus. 2 Corinthians 11.

So the world, the flesh, and the devil are constantly working against you, so you need that footing. You need that spiritual fighting stance. You need to be ready. Or you're going to get blown all over by every wind of doctrine and issue that comes and every trial and challenge that comes into your life will find you easily toppled and pushed around.

Now that's what this is saying. I'm just trying to help you get a visual of what this is like. So what did the put off and put on help us do? How does that help us focus?

[26 : 03] Look, put off and put on help us apply God's wisdom to worldly problems as we fight a spiritual battle against the deceitful desires of our hearts.

Again, we're not fighting other people. I'm not running around all day long trying to point out Suzanne's deceitful desires in her heart.

I use her as an example because I'm with Suzanne. She's my wife. I'm not doing that. I'm applying this wisdom to my own life and heart that God would check me and expose in my heart what I bring to the table in the way of what's contributing to a sin issue between us maybe.

Look, I know my knee jerk is to point at her, point at Suzanne and say, you get your act together, you change this, you deal with this, you stop doing that. I get that. I get that.

But what the Lord is telling us here in this way of put off and put on is, I'm not putting off and putting on her issues, I'm dealing putting off and putting on with mine.

[27 : 14] Because I can't do that with her, you can't do it with other people either, you can't make them do this. You can't do it. I can't do it. This is you dealing with your heart as you walk with the Lord.

That's what I'm trying to tell us. We seek Jesus and we set our hearts on Jesus because this world has absolutely no idea how to help us resolve these inner conflicts of our hearts, which then work to produce the outer conflicts, the manifestations of what's going on inside.

The world thinks they know how to deal with this. They don't. They don't have a clue how to deal with this. Why? Listen, because the Lord defines these issues spiritually and they don't.

These are spiritual problems with a spiritual source or origin. And only the truth of God drives deep down into the soul and marrow and joints to search out and reveal what is going on in your heart.

I can't do that for you, but the word can. So I sit knee to knee with you, you sit knee to knee with me and we go into the word of God and we ask God to use his word to do that, to drive down Hebrews 4 12 and reveal these issues to us.

[28 : 47] I'll tell you more about that in just a moment. That's what we're trying to deal with in this as we face these issues of our heart. I'll go further. I'll go further about this issue with the world and how confused it is.

Just think of this, friends. The world has a dizzying array of diagnoses and remedies for what the Bible calls sin. Of course, they won't call it that, right?

Lord, help us if we use the S word, sin. That's so unsophisticated. It's got to be schizophrenia. It's got to be multiple personality disorder.

It's got to be some label this long with pill lists this long to remedy it. Only it doesn't remedy. It doesn't even really help you cope well.

No. In the field of psychology alone, for example, the world provides its best answers for soul care.

[29 : 50] And there are over 300 distinct psychotherapeutic modalities for diagnosing and treating what they wrongly call mental health issues.

That is a mislabeling of the issue. Mental health, there's so many things they throw under that category of mental health issues. Lord, help us.

before, say, the very late 1800s into the early 1900s, we didn't even know, people didn't even know about mental health issues.

How did they cope? How did they function in life? How did they get through the issues of life? This is not like saying, well, yeah, but just all those many years ago, they didn't have open heart surgery either.

Think about all the people who are helped today. Those are apples and oranges, folks. We're talking about your soul. Has God left us bereft of soul care until the early 1900s when William Wundt invented all this nonsense about psychology when Pavlov visited his experiments to make dogs spit?

[31 : 05] And now we're all good because we know how behavior mod works. It's ridiculous. I get angry about it because I think about how hoodwink the world is, how deceived we are over issues of the cure of souls that have nothing to do with God and his truth and nothing to do with Jesus Christ.

It is a ploy of Satan to draw us away from hope and teach us to cope. And I hate it. Now don't hear me say I hate the people.

I hate the system. I hate the system. 300 modalities for diagnosing what they call mental health issues which the Bible rightly says are the issues of the human heart.

In other words, these are matters, matters of life related to your mind, your will, your emotions, and your desires or your affections.

That's what makes up your heart. That is the core of your personhood. Look, if there's anybody in the world that I'm going to listen to in the way of defining personhood, it's going to be the God who made it.

[32 : 17] Personhood. Amen? God made the human soul. So I'm going to listen to what he has to say about it. God doesn't need all these differing opinions and treatments.

He doesn't need this. He's not helped by what man thinks are the sophisticated answers to the human soul. No. No. The dilemmas of our souls. No. God's diagnosis is clear, it's true, and it drives to, no pun intended, the heart of the matter.

He calls the problem sin and he locates the source or the root of these sins and conflicts in our own hearts. Society did not make me this way.

The devil did not make me do it. My parents, being imperfect people, were not responsible for me being who I am today and the choices that I make in my life.

Can I be influenced? Yes. But I make my decisions about how I relate to other people and what I do with my life out of my own heart.

[33 : 22] In other words, when I stand before the Lord and I give an account for my life before him, he's not going to listen to me say, yeah, but my parents, what about them? Yeah, but my wife, what about her?

Yeah, but the world around me, who doesn't care? No. No. I sin out of my heart, you sin out of your heart, don't you? I do too. That's where it comes from.

That's the source. It doesn't do us any good to candy coat that. Speaking the truth in love is telling the truth about what our issues are, where they come from and why, and what we can do about them in Christ.

Or why would I be up here preaching this? So let me say it again. You and I produce the wrong and the conflicts in our relationships with others, in our conflicts with the world around us, from within us.

The devil didn't make me do it. Society didn't make me do it. My parents raising me the way they did don't make me do what I do today in the way of making choices about my life. I'm making those choices.

[34 : 29] Regardless of how influenced I was, you say, Jeff, are you absolutely sure about this? Yes, I'm absolutely sure because it's written in the Bible. Will you turn to the book of James with me?

Some of you knew that I'd be going right here because I'm saying it over and over again the way James says it. James is right before the book of 1 Peter and right after the book of Hebrews.

And we're going to be in chapter 4. Now I'm asking you to turn here rather than putting on the screen because I want you to see this written in your own Bibles in the translation that you have. James 4, 1 and 2.

And the issue that we're dealing with is this. Where does God locate the source of all relational conflict of any kind? What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?

Answer. is not the source of all is not the source of all your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and don't have, so you murder.

[35 : 36] You envy and cannot obtain, so you fight and you quarrel. You don't have because you don't ask. And then he goes on to say, and when you do ask, you ask selfishly and God doesn't answer the prayer because you're not dealing with your heart.

What is the source? What is the root of the quarrels and conflicts in human relationships? Answer. The source is the desires, pleasures, passions could also be a translation there in the Greek.

It is your pleasures, your passions, your desires that are waging war in your own life, your own heart. You have certain desires, certain expectations that you want fulfilled in that relationship and for whatever reason, that's not happening.

And so what do you do? You let those pleasures or desires that are becoming unfulfilled cause you to be unforgiving and bitter, et cetera, et cetera. Exactly what Paul's talking about.

Those things begin to drive our lives. Those ruling desires are the problem because what's not ruling our life is the peace of God. And our life begins to show that there's no peace.

[36 : 51] There's conflict. Now, what we see in the way then of these quarrels, these hurts, the harshness, the selfishness, the pride, the other sins in our relationships is defined by scripture as the products of sinful desires, waging war inside us and being expressed in sinful actions toward other people.

In other words, listen to this how I'll put it up here, please. In other words, the Bible tells us that when we sin against others and when others sin against us, I'm not denying that happens, 100% of the time, the truth about what is going on is that the war of sinful desires in our own hearts is creating the conflict in our relationships.

So it's a heart problem as our sinful desires wage war inside of us and look for ways to get their way. And folks, these are so deceitful.

They camouflage themselves. They don't want to be seen for what they are. And I want you to understand, I am not saying that people don't hurt us.

I know they do. I know they do. We hurt people. But we have God's antidote to this kind of sinful conflict.

[38 : 13] In Colossians 3, Paul is telling us that our spiritual union with Jesus has seen the death of the old self in its ways and the birth of a new life, new self, with its now new life in Jesus.

So what I'm saying is this new life in Jesus has opened the way for a much greater, much higher desire for defining our relationships.

This stuff, this is going to blow us right past all of this self and help us reach for this greater motive in how we relate to each other.

This higher motive. We see this new life. We see this new desire and that is what we are characterized for us in the remainder of what this chapter is saying. So I'm limiting or narrowing our focus.

Look now with me at verses 12 through 14 and particularly verse 14. So as the chosen of God or the elect of God, holy, that means set apart to God.

[39 : 23] As those who are chosen of God or elect of God, set apart to God and beloved by God, marked by God's love, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and graciously forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord graciously forgave you, so also should you.

And above all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. But the question now begs, how do I do this in the heat of battle with sin and self?

It's all fine to have this in theory as we're talking here and now. But what about in the heat of battle? Well, friends, there's a powerful reason why Paul tells us to put on each of these character qualities of Jesus and then and then above all these things put on love.

There's a reason he does that. Each one of us is in God's process of God making us more like Jesus. And that's the point of our Christian walk.

To increasingly reflect the character of Jesus to other people as they encounter us and relate to us. It's to become more like Jesus in every aspect of our lives and in our walk with him.

[40 : 44] Now, I want to put this up on the screen because as I rehearse this to you, I want you to see it for what it is. This is where we really, really start to struggle. Look, God knows how to bring just the right pressure, just the right people and just the right circumstances and just the right timing to your life to keep shaping you and growing you in likeness to Jesus.

What does the word say? He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day that Christ Jesus comes back to get you. That's what the Bible says.

In other words, what I'm telling you here is that these conflicts that we enter into with other people, these pressures that come on us in life, these difficult situations and matters of life that hit us maritally, that hit us in our jobs, with our coworkers, with our friends, with our relatives, our extended, all of this relational conflict is not only allowed, but ordained by God in that he would reveal to us our hearts.

God is not making you sin. What does 1 Corinthians 10, 13 tell us? That in the way of you and I being tempted, which is the way of all people being tempted, because it's common to human beings, God is faithful and he'll provide a way of escape also.

But he provides that way through the issue, doesn't he? So again, we have a choice. Nobody makes you sin. You sin out of the desire of your own heart.

[42 : 21] So do I. And so what we're learning in this reality is that God, God through his truth, is giving us a way of looking to his faithfulness in this work that he's doing in us to make us more like Jesus in those moments by helping us to repent, to confess, and to replace those desires with desires that honor him.

And that's what this whole sermon is about. That's what we want to do in honoring the Lord. As he brings these things into our life to reveal our hearts, we get to see then what's been camouflaged for what it is.

Now it's out in the open. Boy, I shouldn't have said that. Boy, you know what? Because nowhere in the Bible does it tell me that it's okay for me to return sin for being sinned again.

It's not okay for me to do that. So a sinful response to sin toward me, that's always wrong and that's my problem.

That's my thing. But what do I do in that thing? Every single encounter, circumstance, situation of our now new spiritual life in Christ become opportunity for you to demonstrate the supernatural life of Jesus in you.

[43 : 50] Just as it's described in 12 through 14. You might read 12 through 14 and think, no way, Jose. Well, yeah.

This is all part and parcel to Jesus living in us so that his character is revealed from who we are in him. We're living out who he's made us to be.

We are working out what he has worked in. The capstone of your Christ-like character should be love.

The same love that God shows you and sustains you with each moment of your life. That same love that God shows you is what he's requiring you to show others.

You know, the ones who are harsh to you, the ones who do things that hurt you, just as the Lord graciously forgave you, so should you graciously forgive others.

[44 : 58] And look what he says. And beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Paul is having to say this to us because why?

Because we will sin against... Did I have this up there? Yes. Because we will sin against others and we will be sinned against. Do you understand that, what he's doing? Friends, please hear this.

Paul is having to say this because of the reality that we will sin against each other and people will sin against you. Or he wouldn't have to say this.

He's not saying this because we're all lovey-dovey. He's saying this because it's just a matter of time before one of us hurts one of the other.

Let's you down. Disappoints you. Whether it's in marriage or in something going on in our church community or whatever, what do we need, especially in those moments? What he's telling us.

[46 : 03] Just as God forgave you, you forgive. We don't have any right to hold on to unforgiveness. None. Zero. Yeah, but you don't know what they did to me. You don't know what she said to me.

You don't know what it's been like for me. Look, folks, I'm just reading the Scripture to you and you're not going to find an escape clause in the Scriptures. It's not going to happen. How do I know?

Fred, I look. I did. There's got to be a way out. There is. It's dealing with my sin.

It's dealing with my sin. Look, don't you want to base your life on what is genuine?

I think you do or you wouldn't be here. Well, what he's reading to us here in the way of 12 through 14, he's describing a life of honest intimacy.

[47 : 03] Not perfect, but honest. He's describing genuine caring. Not perfect, but sincere. Because it's lived in true spiritual unity based on the love of Jesus.

It's not perfect. It's messy. The quality of our now new life in Christ is built on the love of God.

That's what he's saying. He chose to love us. He chose us. He set us apart for himself. He marked us with his love.

Now, you, in light of that reality, you put on. He's not telling, he's not saying, I'll make the Holy Spirit put this on for you. He's saying, you put this on in the power of the Holy Spirit.

You put this on. So friends, this is the same love God has for you that he's telling you to give to each other. It's the key to you putting sin to death.

[48 : 07] You want to know how to deal with your sin and put it to death. This is it. You're not going to get any deeper in Scripture than what you're hearing right now from this passage. You look to Jesus.

You turn to loving others with a heart brimming over with, what does he say? Brimming over with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other.

Love produces these expressions of our hearts. That's why he's putting the emphasis there. Commentator Curtis Vaughn explains this way.

Look at this with me. All the virtues listed in verses 12 and 13 are on the highest level manifestations of love, but love is larger than any one of them.

Indeed, larger than all of them combined. That's the thrust. So true Christian love, that is genuine love for Jesus, has a dual power in our lives.

[49 : 14] What is that dual power? Well, it works both to expel and compel. Now, this is very important. This is where we get down to the applicational nature of what I wanted to bring to you this morning as I set up more of what I'll say on Wednesday night.

Look, this is the way it works. Love is working to expel and compel. What do I mean? All right? Expel means to drive out, to force out, to force away, to discharge or eject.

If we speak of something having an expulsive power, the title of my message, the expulsive power of a new affection. If we're talking about something having an expulsive power or effect, we mean that it serves to expel or drive out something.

All right? That's the expel part. And then we have compel. Compel. Now, we often use and think of this word in a negative sense.

And one meaning of this word is like that. To force. To force. To overpower. Or to push towards a course of action.

[50 : 22] That's not the way that it's being used here. There's another meaning for compel. Here it is. To have a powerful and irresistible effect or influence upon.

That's what we're talking about. The love of God is compelling in the sense of having a powerful and irresistible effect requiring acute admiration, attention, or respect.

Listen. Acute. Admiration. Attention. Focus. Respect. Regard. Devotion. Devotion. Now, this acute admiration and respect are what the Bible refers to as the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord. What does the fear of the Lord mean? Right here at the bottom. The fear of the Lord. It means having a deep and life-defining sense of awe, reverence, and honor towards God.

And that's what this expulsive power and compelling power of love work in your heart. The fear of the Lord. It helps you cultivate this high and holy regard for Jesus above self and above all other things so that if these matters and circumstances of life hit you, you are expelling self and you are being compelled by this high, high, holy view of the Lord to want to please God in those moments more than anything else in your life.

[51 : 50] That's what we're working toward in our life. That's why Paul is giving us this put-off, put-on motif. The love of God, the love for God powerfully and irresistibly grows us and moves us along in a life-defining, character-conforming fear of the Lord.

The Puritans wrote a lot about this. I don't have to tell you but I will. The most powerful force in the universe is the love of God. Nothing more powerful than that.

The cross of Jesus Christ's crucifixion is the most powerful demonstration of love in the history of mankind. In the crucifixion of the Lord, God overcame the forces of sin's power and penalty in the lives of His chosen one, His electing, His beloved.

God's love for you in Christ and His cross made loving Him irresistible for you. As you get to know the Lord and walk with the Lord, as you see the Lord faithfully, faithfully loving you and forgiving you, as you weep over the forgiveness that God extends to you because you know you don't deserve it, you grow closer and closer to Him.

He becomes more and more dear and precious to you as He brings you through the matters of life so faithfully and tenderly. Why? All because you know you don't deserve it.

[53 : 20] I don't deserve it. And it makes your heart grow fonder in Him. As God blesses you and enriches your life, you realize, I don't deserve this. I don't.

And it draws your heart into deeper fellowship with Him, doesn't it? It should. This is the same love of God now living in you through your spiritual union with Jesus which is the power of expelling and compelling in your fight against remaining sin.

Now look, your most powerful weapon against personal sin and for personal holiness is the expulsive power of a new affection.

This is the title of a sermon given by Thomas Chalmers back in the early 1800s. So I stole it with no shame. I stole it. Hear what I'm saying to you here.

It is the expulsive power of a new affection that is your greatest weapon in fighting personal sin in your life. So in other words, I'm not asking us to focus on the problem.

[54 : 37] I'm not asking you to focus on solving the problem, the problem or its solution. so often we spend so much time talking about and obsessing on what's wrong, what's broken.

I understand that. We have to come to terms with talking about what's going on. I understand that. But what is it that's going to help us truly deal with moving through and beyond the problem in a way that pleases Jesus?

Because as Christians, that's what we're most concerned about. Not even the solution as much as how can I bring myself to the place in the midst of this to please Jesus in the way that I'm speaking and thinking and the desires of my heart, the life I'm living.

How do I do that when I feel so beaten down? How do I do that when I feel like I'm just full of so much pain? How do I do that when I'm so angry?

See? That's real life. Well, your most powerful weapon in dealing with all of that is this explosive power of this new affection.

[55 : 49] Here's where Chalmers explains what he means by this. I'm going to let him tell you real quickly as I move toward a closer. Look at this. We know of no other way by which to keep the love of the world out of our heart than to keep in our hearts the love of God.

And no other way by which to keep our hearts in the love of God than building ourselves up on our most holy faith. That's the truth. In other words, you're basing this love on the truth of the Lord.

Faith works by love. And the way of expelling from the heart the love which transgresses God's law is to admit into the heart the love which fulfills God's law.

That's another way of saying the love that wants to please God and obey God in all things. And then finally, he says, the best way of casting out or expelling an impure desire is to admit a pure one.

And by the love of what is good to expel the love of what is evil. Isn't that good? That's the key, folks. J.I. Packer summed up Chalmers' teaching this way.

[57 : 04] He said, love to Father and the Son simply drains the life out of love for sin and for the particular habits in which sin expresses itself.

That's very good. So friends, all sinful attitudes and behaviors are the result of you satisfying sinful desires in your heart.

If the greatest desire of your heart is love for Jesus Christ in any given moment or situation, no matter how painful, no matter how difficult or hard, if the greatest desire of your heart is love for God, then your attitudes and actions will follow in a course of godly living resulting in more faithfulness so that you consistently live a life pleasing to God even with difficult people in difficult situations.

You forgive because God has forgiven you. You offer compassion not because they deserve it. You offer humility not because they deserve it.

You offer kindness and gentleness, etc. Why? Because that's what you get and that's who Jesus is living in you. Is that straightforward or what?

[58 : 26] The Christ-like quality of our life is motivated and measured by God's love. The great love with which God first loved us is what brought you and I into spiritual union or spiritual unity with the Lord Jesus.

So it's no wonder at all that the Lord tells us that this same heavenly love is what will also bind you and I together in a perfect he calls it a perfect bond of unity.

Jeff, what will unify us? What will help us be a church family that isn't just coming here on Sunday and going through the motions but who is wading into the mess of who we are and loving each other through it?

It's the love of God at work in our heart knowing that we're doing what we're doing toward each other not because we deserve it but because we've been called to it in the Lord and it's what we're receiving from Him.

How can I withhold from you what God so graciously gives to me in such blessing overflowing? How can I withhold that from you?

[59 : 39] How can I stand in judgment of you and play God over you and say get your act together and then I'll think about it? I'll end with this scripture.

Beloved, those marked by the love of the Lord Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

The one who does not love does not know God because God is left. Will you pray with me? Well, our Father in Heaven, this is a sermon and a message from Scripture, Lord, that especially comes and stands in our face and challenges us with believing the truth over the conventions of our day because our world system is built exactly on the opposite teaching of what we've heard today from the Word of God.

We are told, Lord, that so many other things justify us being sinfully responsive to people when they do certain things, say certain things, withhold certain things.

But I pray, Father, You'll help us to deal with our own hearts knowing that that's the only escape that we have. That's the only wonder of healing that we can know is if we are allowing You through the truth of Your Word to reveal to us our own stuff so that we can trust You and walk with You and see You do mighty and wonderful things in the human heart.

[61 : 28] So I pray for my brothers and sisters today knowing that all of us at some level or another have a need for You to show us our hearts and lead us in repentance and help us to embrace and replace what that bad desire or evil or selfish desire is with loving You and desiring to be loyal to You in all things.

We don't discount the hurt, Lord. You know the hurt better than you do. We don't discount the confusion or the turmoil of our hearts but we bring all of that to You and we trust that You'll be God for us.

Father, I love these people. I love it that You are working in their souls and we love You. And so help us to be a people of love.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen.