

# (Colossians) 09 in Christ-Old Man vs New Man

by Bob Utley

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*The sermon explores the transformation from the old self to the new self in Christ, emphasizing practical living based on doctrinal truths.*

**Duration:** 39:38

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:21, Romans 12:2, Galatians 5:22-23, Galatians 6:7, Ephesians 4:1, Ephesians 4:17, James 1:22

**Topics:** "Colossians"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power of our words and the importance of using them to bless rather than curse. He highlights the need for unity among believers, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or academic arrogance. The speaker emphasizes that there are only two kinds of people in the world: those who know Jesus Christ and those who need to know Him. He challenges listeners to examine their own lives and consider whether their actions and words reflect Jesus or bias. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the eternal life believers have in Christ, regardless of temporary circumstances.

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## Transcript

Well, it's so good to have families here today. Thank you all for coming to be with your mothers. I must admit I'm a little challenged by special cultural days.

It bothers me that flower sellers and candy sellers have picked a couple of days to honor special people in our lives. And we're drug around by the nose by those commercial interests. If you only love your mama one day a week, a plague and a pox on your house.

If you only take her out to eat one day a year, shame on you. Every day is holy. Every relationship is holy.

Every person is significant. Get over it. So this isn't a Mother's Day sermon.

But thank you for planning it and honoring them. I'm always sometimes... I guess my heart goes out to those. I'm glad we prayed for those who aren't mothers, who would like to be.

Single people who would like to be. Sometimes in us picking out groups to honor, even when we don't want it to, it reflects negatively on those. May I say to you, motherhood is a biological event.

Christian motherhood is Christian discipleship, amen? And there's a whole lot of difference between those two. Would you turn to Colossians chapter 3? I'm working my way through Colossians. When Colossians

get to mothers, I'll deal with mothers.

I try desperately not to bring my agenda to the Scripture. I try desperately not to let my culture dictate truth. And the only way, the only way to deal with all of the points of the good news is to work through books of the Bible in context.

Now, all of Paul's letters tend to have a doctrinal section and then a practical application because doctrine without life is an abomination to God. So all of Paul's letters, for the most part, though there's some exceptions where it's really hard to find this clear of an outline, have a doctrinal section for Colossians, that's chapters 1 and 2, and quite often there is a therefore, a significant therefore. There's one in Romans.

There's one in Ephesians. There's one in Philippians. And this therefore transcends from the truth.

Now, remember, all of Paul's letters are what we call occasional documents. Paul is writing because there's a crisis, there's a need, there's a problem, and he's writing to that need problem. So every one of the letters have some historical background.

So he pulls from the teachings of Jesus the truths that he can and the areas that Jesus did not address or he does not know that Jesus addressed, Paul would say, not the Lord but I say unto you, which is not a disclaimer of inspiration for Paul says, I too have the Spirit, but it's a way of showing that he's trying to bring to bear to the needs of these local congregations the body of truth from the teachings of Jesus. And so there are specific doctrinal needs for the crisis that faces a church or a group of churches. Now, in Colossians, it is this Gnostic false teaching and Ephesians and Colossians and the pastoral epistles and 1 John are all addressed to these false teachers.

Now, there comes a time to move from the truths to how do we apply those truths. From what is needed in how we think to what is needed in how we live. Now, have you noticed in your Bibles that there is a parallel between verse 1 and verse 2 and both of them talk about thinking.

And if you notice verse 5 when the list of vices and virtues begin that again we're called on to consider to think. Maybe we could call this a spiritual inventory. A spiritual inventory of now that I'm new.

Now that I'm different. Old creature, new creature. Old man, new man.

Before saved, after saved. Before the spirit, after the spirit. Is there a difference? Is it observable? These are the questions that the practical section is coming to.

And I think it is a wonderful spiritual inventory for us to take. For when our life is characterized by the things that we should put off but our mouth is characterized by religious platitudes the world doesn't get it. There's a disconnect between religious speech and irreligious acts.

Can I get an amen? There's a hypocrisy that breeds within the church. A hypocrisy of saying the right thing but living just like the culture that we're immersed in and not seeing a disconnect. So Paul comes to a time based on what he has said in chapters 1 and 2 about the false teachers about the centrality of Christ, fully God, fully man, dying on our behalf.

Based on those truths comes the therefore. And then it's followed by an if. Now I've told you how significant as far as Bible interpretation that the condition of these ifs are.

There are four conditions in Koine Greek and each of them has a very specific purpose. And again, the only proper way to interpret the Bible is not to flop it open and put your finger on it but is to follow the intent of the original author within his own culture throughout his writing. So what we must do is come back and say this is a first-class conditional sentence.

It is assumed to be true. He believes this has happened to the believers. Now what has happened? What is he affirming as their spiritual position, their spiritual condition? And because of that condition, what is their need to live out that position? Well, remember, 1 and 2 are parallel.

So in verse 1, you have been raised with Christ. Now this is kind of backwards from where this same kind of terminology occurs in Ephesians or in Romans because if you look at verse 2 real quick, we're going to talk about we have co-died and we have been co-raised. Now this is that soon compound.

And this is the... Usually we say we've died first and then we're raised. For some reason he puts it backwards here. So we're alive with Christ.

As he was raised from the dead, we are raised from the dead. Friends, heaven is not future. Heaven is now.

It's not someday out there we have intimate, immediate restoration of the image of God damaged in the fall when we trust Jesus Christ. And in verse 10 of this very chapter, this second paragraph, he's going to mention this image that was damaged but now is fulfilled. So I would say to you, today we still have physical life.

Thank God. Heart still pumps. Lungs still pump.

Life is good. But no matter what happens, if a bomb hits the place, if an asteroid falls on us, if a plague hits, we have eternal life. We walk in the joy of eternal life irregardless of the temporary circumstances that all of us find ourselves in.

We look to who we are in him, not to who we are in the world. Now, the Greeks made a big deal between the flesh and being out of the flesh. Paul makes a big deal between this age and the new age.

We are not citizens of this age. We are citizens of the kingdom of God. The hardest thing for us to realize is that we hold two passports.

We hold a passport to an earthly realm and we happen to live in a country that has magnified the individual, magnified personal choice, magnified materialism. We live in that context and we have rights and responsibilities in that context. Everything is not bad about where we live and how we live.

It's when where and how we live become ultimate, when they become the way we find peace and joy, when they become everything to us, then they become evil. No, no, no. We live and have responsibilities in a physical realm.

Yo mama is a physical responsibility. But we're also citizens of a spiritual realm. And we, as Christians, say that the spiritual realm is the ultimate of the two realms.

So we must seek the things that are above so we can handle properly the things that are below. But what characterizes us is being captured by the things that are below and giving lip surface and peripherality to the things that are above. Keep seeking the things that are above.

Now this, again, I don't want to get real grammatical with you, but this could be a statement or a command. I think since verse 1 and 2 are paralleled, I think they're two commands. Paul is saying, because of what I've said doctrinally, here is the way it ought to work out.

This is not just a statement of who you are, it's a command of who you should be. But there's a real possibility. Now I wanted to do a little theological aside here, if I could.

Beginning where it says, keep seeking the things that are above. You're dead, you've been raised, keep thinking of who you really are, keep your eyes on the ball, and the ball is above, not below. Now because of that, it says where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Now friends, this is, we call it an anthropomorphic statement. And that means how do you talk about an eternal, holy, spiritual being that is not affected by time and space, that is present throughout the created order, which we don't even know how big the created order is. All we have is the speed of light since creation.

We have no idea what's outside beyond that circle. That's a big circle, but I bet there's more beyond that. And yet the creator is present throughout it.

So we speak about God as if he was a man. Anthropomorphic is just the Greek word man, anthropos, and the word morphe, form. So we talk about God as if he was a man because we have no other vocabulary.

But God is not an old man. If the Bible was written in a patriarchal culture, he'd be an old woman. I mean a matriarchal culture.

Come on! God is not physical. He's not a he, he's not a she, he's not an it. What are we going to call him, the great who? So we call him a he.

In that culture that had significant, significant symbolic loving, caring father. Father catches that. Everything we say about God is an analogy, a negation, or a metaphor.

Everything. Now I'm not discouraged by that because I believe the Bible is supernaturally inspired. But I want to say that everything the Bible says is true, listen to me, but not exhaustive.

I think when our eyes are open, we're going to go, shazam, that's what it really was. We're going to have that aha moment in eternity. We are right now, we live in a glass darkly.

We see through a fog, a fog of self, a fog of sin, a fog of culture, a fog of whatever. We cannot even grasp what it is. God has put on the lowest shelf his nature, his purpose, his son.

It is far greater than this. So please don't tell me you're expecting to see an old man and a young man sitting on a gold throne and a white bird flying around them when you get to heaven. Please tell me you're not that trapped by literalness.

The throne is an Eastern metaphor for kingly power. In our day, it might be a platinum chair. It's just metaphorical.

God is in control and his son died in your place. Where it's the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above.

Quit dwelling on the things below. Quit thinking about the physical. You are not physical anymore.

Yes, you have a body. Yes, you live in this world. But you've died.

You've been raised. You're a new creature. Your mind's been touched.

Your mind's been restored. Set your mind on the thing above, not on the things that are on the earth. You have died.

This almost sounds like Romans 6 to me. A lot of parallel between these first 11 verses that I'm going to deal with and Romans 6. Just a lot of them. You have died.

The idea about your life is hidden. It's interesting to me that in the mystery religions, in the first century, we often say as theologians, why did Jesus come when he did? I mean, the Bible says at the right time, the right moment, God sent his son. What was the right moment? Well, none of us know for sure, but we try to... What was it about first century Mediterranean world that facilitated God sending his son then? One language used.

Borders you could cross freely. Think about that. The world was hungry for God.

The gods of Mount Olympus were failing in the minds of the people. The people wanted something more, something personal. And in this personal sense is where the mystery religions developed.

And these mystery religions promised an intimacy, a personal relationship with God. This word hidden is one of the key words of the mystery religions to show the intimacy of the initiate having full access to personal presence of the deity. Now, friends, that is exactly what Christianity has given to the world.

Many times I go in other countries and preach. Sometimes there's a dominant faith there. In Norway, it was Lutheran.

In South America, it's Catholic. The major religions that I get to preach to differ. But what I say to a person is, I'm not trying to get you to become a Baptist.

God forbid. I'm trying to get you to have a personal relationship with God through Christ. So this morning you can talk to him, not somebody else.

And tonight when tragedy strikes, you're not overwhelmed. And you can read his book for yourself. And there's an intimacy between you and God.

That is what I want to give to people. Not my particular version. Not my particular emphasis.

Not my particular denominational background. There's something far greater than that. And that is a, what should I call it? Intimacy? Life hidden with God in Christ? And that life is worked out in many different ways because of different personalities and backgrounds of people.

My hope is in Jesus Christ, not in any denominational flavor. People ask me, why are you a Baptist? Because my mother was. You say, that's trite.

Yeah, the reason you're a Baptist some of you is because you married one, so get over it. You never went out and looked at all the denominations and looked at all their theology and picked the one you liked the best. I don't know what you're here for.

But if you're looking for the perfect church, you're in the wrong place. You need to go down the street. They're the perfect one.

Wherever down the street is, I get tickled. People say, well, the church did something foolish. Really? You know why? It's made up of foolish people saved by Jesus Christ.

And we don't get over the foolish until we see him. We've died. We're hidden.

Christ, who is our life. I like this idea of exchange life. Maybe I'll put it in terms of Galatians 2.20. I'm crucified with Christ.

Yet I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. In the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

See, you've got a new life, but the new life doesn't belong to you. The new life belongs to him. He wants to take the strengths he created you with, Psalm 139, and use them for his honor and glory, for his agenda, as one of his resources, not of individual choices and cultural preferences.

Yes, we belong to him. We've exchanged our life. We've been bought with a price.

Glorify God. What's the rest? In your bodies. With your bodies.

When Christ is revealed. Now, this, of course, has got to be the second coming, does it not? When Christ is revealed. We're hidden.

Our life is hidden with Christ. The world may not know it yet. I hope they do by the way we live, but there'll come a day when you also would be revealed with him in glory.

Died with Christ. Raised with Christ. This is a rapture text.

This is the text that we're going to meet him in the air. This is 1 Thessalonians 4, 13 through 18. This is when he appears, we're going to be caught up with him.

When he is revealed, we are revealed because we are a part of the family. Hopefully because we reflect his nature. Now, Paul, in these first few verses, has summarized our position in Christ, indicative, and our imperative, what we ought to be.

He has fleshed out that we're new, we're different, we're children of the new age, not children of the old age. We're children of the spirit, not children of the flesh. Now, if he's going to spell out for us what that means.

Now, verses 5 through 11, Paul uses a metaphor that he uses a lot. I personally think it may come from Zechariah 3 where Joshua, the lineage of the high priest during the Babylonian exile is restored to power during the Persian period and where Zerubbabel, the prince of Judah, the line of David and the line of the high priest return to reduced Judah and set up the kingdom again under Cyrus. Now, in chapter 3 of Zechariah, Joshua stands before the Lord with dirty clothes.

Boy, the Hebrew is so graphic here, it'd shock you. Dirty, filthy clothes. And Satan is accusing him because of his dirty and filthy clothes.

And the Lord says, give him new clothes, give him a new miter, give him a new rope. In my mind, I always think about this. This is just one of those metaphors and it is metaphorical.

I see myself at salvation as a human being, poor choices, a terrible sin, no hope, dressed in the rags and ruins of what's in it for me, life. And suddenly, the God who has been searching for me, not me searching for him, searching for me, finds me in Christ and puts the royal, kingly robes of the crucified Christ around the naked body of a sinner made in the image and likeness of God. And suddenly, all of my faults are capsuled and covered in the person of Jesus Christ.

Yee-haw! Yee-haw! Yee-haw! Therefore, consider, the members of your earthly body is dead. Now, they're dead in reality, but they're not dead in the current reality. And then he mentions a bunch of these lists of negatives.

I don't know how much to go into this list. These lists are very common in Paul. Paul's lists are very similar to the Stoic philosophers.

Christians were not the only moral people in the first century. There were others who looked at the life of human beings and said, this is bad. This is good.

I mean, it's not all that hard to do. It's to look out how people treat each other and say, this is really negative. And the Greek philosophers did that, particularly the Stoics.

And Paul's lists are much like them. Maybe take just a few of these. And by the way, this is an aorist imperative.

There's an urgency about now that you're a Christian, now that you're a New Age person, consider, make a decisive act of spiritual inventory. You claim to know him. In reality, you've died with him.

You'll be raised with him. You're already raised. One day you'll be revealed with him.

Now, come on. Because of who you are, how then should we live? Well, first of all, there's a negative. How should we not live? And, of course, the background to this is the Gnostic false teachers' sexual exploitation.

Many of these have a sexual connotation to them. Immorality. That's the word pornea.

It's much bigger than we get pornography from it. I just wonder what percent of males in the U.S. are addicted to pornography. I know there's a whole bunch in Washington in certain administrative places.

Can you believe that somebody spends 80 hours a week at work looking at pornography? Holy moly, when do they do memos? People trapped by looking at the human body seeking for some pleasure, some desire, some fulfillment, and they can never find it because all of that is imagination. I used to tell kids at school, if you marry somebody because of big boobs and big muscles, you're going to be disappointed because both of those leave in time. Sexuality is a God thing.

Amen? God invented human sexuality. I vote for it every time. But as always happened, human beings take God-given gifts beyond God-given bounds.

And that which is wholesome and good and for the benefit of the human race becomes the destruction in self to the individual. Pornea is a much wider word. It means it covers much more than just unfaithfulness

in marriage.

The next one, impurity. You've heard the word catharsis. We talk about cleansing our mind in some kind of event, a catharsis experience.

Well, this is the negated word. Instead of being clean, it's unclean. You mean Christians can have minds that are trapped by pornea and a catharsis? Yeah, that's what I'm saying to you.

And Paul urges them to be different from what they used to be in their pagan lifestyle. The next one is passion and evil desires. Here again, this has that sexual connotation.

What about the greed? Greed is just more and more for me at any cost. It can be financial, it can be sexual, it can be fame. It's just the big me of the fall.

I want it. Whatever it takes, I'll get it. That's a disaster to the new man.

It's a disaster to the saved person. And yet how many of our families are trapped in that kind of model? Notice where it continues, which amounts to idolatry. Now, idolatry is putting anything in the place of God.

Would you allow that definition? Be it a statue, be it a human body, be it fame, be it things, be it experiences, be it power. And again, it's that essence of more and more for me at any cost. And notice what it says here.

The wrath of God will come. Now, the wrath of God, we love to talk about the love of God. How many theologies just talk about the love of God? Oh, God is love.

God forgives. God, certainly He does. That's revelatory.

But friends, you can't pick out one characteristic of God and miss the exact opposite that gives the balance. God is not only love, He is royally ticked off at what we've done to His creation, what we do to each other, what we do to His gospel, what we do to His church. And there is wrath that comes in time and there is wrath that comes at the end of time.

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he reap.

That's Galatians 6-7. It's a recurrent theme throughout the Old Testament news. Maybe the spiritual inventory ought to go like this.

What kinds of seed are you sowing? And if you want to know, ask those who know you well. Ask those who work with you. Ask those who live with you.

Ask those who go to school with you. Ask those who live in your neighborhood. What kind of seed? They know.

Sometimes we don't. Notice where it says, In them also you walked. Now, two points here.

Number one, walk is a biblical metaphor for lifestyle. I've tried to do this from Ephesians where it's so clear. Walk worthy of the calling wherewith you've been called.

Ephesians 4-1. No longer walk as the Gentiles walk. Ephesians 4-17.

Walk in love just as Christ also loved you. Ephesians 5-2. It's a metaphor for life.

So here we have you converts, you new believers, you who have been co-raised, co-buried, will be co-revealed, you, you persons, you pagans. You used to be this way, but. That's a big but.

That's a major contrast. You used to do this. You used to be every bad word, every negative vice, every propensity of the human mind fallen.

You used to be like this church. You used to be like this, but something's happened. You met Christ.

You no longer have to serve the Lord in nature with His desires. You've been freed because you've died with Him and your life is hidden in God. You don't have to do that anymore.

You do those things because you want to, not because you have to. Because Jesus Christ's death was good enough to fix it. Romans 6. But we love it.

We're addicted to it. And we return like a dog and a hog. From the strip off metaphor of take away these things from your life to the put on metaphor begins right there in verse 8. But now, put them aside.

Strip off. And what are we to strip off? Anger, wrath, malice. Now, what are these about? Well, anger is a long-lasting, simmering anger.

Wrath is a fast-burning outrage. I still feel some of you are mad about some things that happened in the past here. It's like one of those things.

Remember when you used to go to the drive-in movie and you bought that little wick to supposedly keep the mosquitoes away and it burned on your dashboard for hours supposedly? It's become now a free-floating anger that drops on everything that happens here. Poison the pool. You need to get over it.

Because Jesus died and we're supposed to be different. And we have to practice forgiveness as well as give forgiveness because no church does it perfectly. Amen? This one hasn't done it perfectly.

Amen? Amen? Now, I don't know who you're holding it against. I get so tickled. I mean, I told you, my mama got so mad because my sister died to a drunk truck driver that she quit praying.

I thought to myself, Mama, you have really hurt God. Mama hurt herself. What do we do to ourself when we let the cancer of anger and wrath develop in us and do not give it to God? We destroy our emotional possibility for contentment, joy, and worship.

You better give it to God. It'll eat your guts up and won't affect anybody who you're mad at. Amen? Won't affect them at all.

They don't even know about it. Can't change anything. It'll destroy you.

It will destroy you. Malice, just vicious thoughts. Desire to hurt others with your speech.

Go to the next one. Slander and abusive speech. May I say to you that speech reflects who we are? Speech reveals the heart where nothing else does.

May I remind you that we're going to give an account unto Jesus for every idle word? Maybe it's a good thing on Mother's Day to remind us that mothers have the power, fathers have the power, pastors have the

power, Sunday school teachers have the power, coaches have the power to say to young people and others, Good job. Boy, that was good. I'm praying for you.

Hang in there. Man, we love you. Boy, you did good here.

Well, you didn't win, but hey, you played well. You have the power to bless. Maybe I'll put it in James' terms.

It should not have cursing and blessing coming out of the same orifice. We have the power to be kind to each other and the power to be ugly to each other. We have the power to affirm or our words can destroy.

And I guarantee you when our words destroy, we will give an account to God for what we've done to people. And some of it is racial. And some of it is socioeconomic.

And some of it is academic arrogance. When we think we're something, we haven't got the unity of the New Age yet. Would you look at the rest of these verses to verse 11? There's no more Scythian.

There's no more barbarian. There's no more Jew. There's no more Greek.

There's no more male. Every division between human beings is down in Jesus Christ. Ought to be an amen there, church.

The minute for any reason, anybody walks in the doors of Jesus' house and does not feel comfortable, there's trouble in Jesus' house. Is anybody not welcome here? Then your heart's not right. What's the matter with us? Is this your agenda? Is this your place? You built this? It was your money? This is Jesus' place.

And there are no barriers in Him. He loves people made in His image and likeness. Wish I had more time to jump up and down on that, but I won't.

Verse 9, do not lie. You mean some of the church are lying? You mean this grammatical form means stop lying? Yes. And why do we have to be different? The new self is being renewed.

Something different has come. The true knowledge, not the false teacher's false knowledge, but the true knowledge. Look at verse 11.

And what does the true knowledge tell us? There's only two kind of people in the world. Those who know Jesus Christ and those who need to know Jesus Christ. It's not them and us.

It's human beings made in the image of God. Some have found Him. Some need to find Him.

Let me ask you. Would your spiritual inventory say that if they followed the Hansel and Gretel crumbs of your life, would they find Jesus or would they find bias? Every one of us is a witness by what we say and do. Sometimes what we say and do is louder than any other testimony we give.

You're a new creature. You've been washed in the blood of Christ. You have the indwelling Holy Spirit.

You have the Great Commission. You have the knowledge greater than the Old Testament prophets. You have the full revelation in Jesus Christ of the invisible God.

What are we doing with it? How are we modeling it? What does the world see when it sees us? If we took an inventory of a five block radius of this church and said, what do you think of Lakeside Baptist Church? What would that inventory reveal? The loving people of God, the accepting people of God, the open people of God, the caring people of God are what? It's the are what? It's the are what? Would you pray with me, please? You know, the but now and the are what bother me, Lord, because as hard as I try, as hard as I try, my personal preferences and biases, cultural conditioning keep popping out in such surprising ways in my speech and in my life. But I want to be rid of them as I have been rid of the stain of sin and guilt. I want you to wash my heart, mind, and mouth of anything that's a barrier to people for whom Jesus died coming to know Jesus.

I pray that you would forgive us for the things that we glory in that are not connected to who you are. I pray you would give us the freedom of a new mind and a new heart, the promise of the new covenant that would so radically change the way we live that it would not be captured by an individualistic, materialistic culture. I pray for radical Christianity, whatever it costs.

Forgive us for playing religious games. Forgive us for trying to make ourselves imparted with one group or another group. God, help us to be transparent, Jesus people.

And forgive us for the barriers instead of the bridges. And Lord, may this sermon not be able to be forgotten after a good lunch and driving in a nice car to a nice house. Open our eyes.

Open our minds. Open our hearts. Open our hands.

Open our doors. Amen.

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