**Put to Death Your Earthly Nature**

**The Word**

Read together Colossians 3:5-11

**The Big Idea**

Paul calls us to put to death the sins of our former life. As those who have died to our old way of life, these sins belong to our past and have no part of our future.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. On Sunday some fairly straightforward comments were made regarding the viewing habits of many church goers. How do you respond to that? For example, what have you observed among your friends, where are you personally convicted, or where would you want to push back a bit on the perspective shared on Sunday?

2. We talked about the insidious nature of greed on Sunday. Where do you see greed playing out in your own life (subtly or not subtly)? And what’s your sense of how living in our wealthy Orange County environment has impacted your own spiritual life?

3. Verses 9-11 paint a picture of Christian community that breaks through all human categories (Greek/Jew, slave/free, etc.) and is based instead on our mutual love for Christ (“Christ is all”) and our mutual experience of Christ indwelling each of us (“Christ is in all”). What’s been the closest thing to this kind of category-defying Christian community that you’ve experienced in your own life?

4. This passage is a wake-up call to Christians who have grown comfortable living lives of sin. Given the fact that we’ll never reach perfection in this life, how can someone know that they are adequately addressing the sin in their life such that they can feel confident before the Lord in the life they’re living?

**Digging Deeper**

Read together Ephesians 5:1-7 where Paul deals with very similar topics to our passage. How does this passage clarify and add to what we learn in Colossians 3:5-11?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Pauline Ethics = Be who you are

 A. What is a believer?

 1. Not just someone who believes a set of truths (even the demons believe)

2. But someone who, through faith, has been united to Jesus, such that they have died to an old life of self and been raised to a new life where Christ is all

 a. See 2:11-12, see Galatians 6:14

 B. Christian ethics = be who you are!

 1. Put to death what belongs to your old self

 2. Put on what belongs to your new life in Christ

II. Put to death greed (v. 5)

A. Greed is this inner insatiable thirst for more money and possessions

1. One of central tenants of Jesus’ teaching is that God gives us good gifts and his children have everything they need (see 1 Tim 6:17)

2. Our new life in Christ is governed by gratitude and contentment and a recognition that “Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions” (Lk 12:15)

3. Greed trades all that joy and contentment for an inner restlessness for more

B. Greed is “Idolatry”

1. Greed says to God, “you just don’t do it for me”

2. I need another God who will provide me with significance, satisfaction, and security

 C. Greed is so insidious

1. It often looks respectable (it just looks like wealth)

2. Almost no one thinks they have it because we always compare ourselves with those who have more than us

D. Greed is one of the biggest spiritual strongholds in our community (Consider the Church in Laodicea)

 1. Symptom: “lukewarm faith”

 2. Issue: “I have grown rich, I don’t need a thing”

3. Result: Jesus pushed to the outside: “Behold I stand at the door & knock”

III. Put to death sexual immorality (v. 5)

A. Sexual immorality is basically greed in the sexual arena

1. God is the author of sex and gave us this great gift to be experienced in the context of covenant

2. Sexual immorality says God’s context isn’t enough, I want more

B. Consider the last 60 years

 1. Invention of Pill/birth control: sex became disconnected from children

 2. Sexual revolution: sex disconnected from relational commitment

 3. Digital technology: sex disconnected from embodied connection

 C. Consider your own sources of temptation

1. Sex outside of marriage

2. Thought life

3. Pornography

4. Television

 a. “Sex is not a spectator’s sport” – John Piper

b. With our viewing habits we often ask, “How far is too far?” but a better question is, “How can I please my Lord with what I put before my eyes?”

IV. Put to death relational hostility (v. 8-11)

A. The central issue in these relational sins is ego and pride that easily gets offended

B. This list is such an accurate description of our world today (politics, media, business, etc.)

C. The church is to be a radically countercultural community of love and forgiveness

 1. The old natural distinctions no longer matter (Greek/Jew, slave/free, etc.)

 2. Instead our community is based on what we share in common

 a. Christ is all = Christ is the most important thing to each of us

b. Christ is in all = Christ’s indwelling presence in each of us unites us even in the midst of our differences