**Whatever You Do, Do It unto the Lord**

**The Word**

Read together Colossians 3:17-4:1

**The Big Idea**

Life in Christ involves every facet of our lives, including the dramatic and exciting as well as the mundane and ordinary. The essence of the Christian life is doing everything we do as a response of grateful worship to Christ and a desire to please and glorify him.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Consider the pie chart shown on Sunday and the difference between including spirituality as a component of our lives vs. making glorifying Christ in all things the point of our lives. How do you respond to that idea?

2. Paul’s words in this passage land us squarely in the very mundane and ordinary relationships and responsibilities of our lives. What is one daily context where you find it particularly hard to consciously bring Jesus into your moments and responsibilities? And what might it look like to begin to do that more intentionally?

3. Stepping back from this series on Colossians, what will you remember most from Paul’s letter? What is your main takeaway from this series as a whole?

**Digging Deeper**

Read Ephesians 5:22-6:8 where Paul expounds on the ideas of the Colossians passage. What new information and perspectives does he share there that are particularly helpful for you?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Some big-picture considerations of this passage

A. We are often more interested in the dramatic and exciting aspects of spirituality, but Pauls’ words land us squarely in the entirely ordinary and mundane daily relationships and responsibilities of life

1. These are the relationships where our true selves come out, where there’s no hiding

2. Life with Jesus isn’t something “out there” but rather our walk with him can infuse meaning into our ordinary lives exactly as they are.

B. The goal is not to add spirituality as one more component to our lives in order to make them more fulfilling. Rather the goal is to do everything in our lives to the glory of Christ

 1. Consider the phrase “whatever you do” in v. 17 and 23

2. Every single aspect of our lives is to be done “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (v. 17)

a. That is, done in gratitude for who he is and what he has done (“giving thanks to the Father through him” v. 17)

b. That is, done as a way of pleasing him and bringing glory to him (“as working for the Lord”)

II. Marriage lived “in the name of Jesus” (v. 18-19)

 A. Paul’s theology of marriage comes from Genesis 2

1. God creates Adam, then creates Eve from Adam’s rib, than reunites the two in marriage, and creates a “one-flesh” union between them.

2. God built a creational mystery into marriage: the one flesh union between husband and wife was always intended to point to the one flesh union between Christ and the church. So marriage is an enacted drama reflecting the love and covenant between Jesus and his church.

a. In this drama, husbands play the role of Christ in sacrificial love, commitment, provision, and care for their wives

b. In this drama, husbands play the role of the church in courageous submission, love, and care for their husbands

B. Paul is getting at the “why” behind why we love our spouses: “As is fitting in the Lord.” Consider why you love your spouse:

 a. For his/her sake?

 b. For your own sake?

c. For Christ’s sake: Christ is the third person in the marriage that is it’s living center

1) Marriages where we love our spouses out of obedience to Christ can stand through trials

2) When we’ve argued and need to repair and apologize, we do so not just for our spouses sake or our own sake but as an obedient response of worship to Christ

3) When our spouse’s hearts are hardened in some area, we keep on loving them ultimately not so we get what we want or in order to change them, but out of obedience to Christ.

III. Parenting in the name of Jesus

A. Again Paul is getting at the why for parents and children: “for this pleases the Lord.”

1. Children are to love their parents not simply to please their parents but to please Jesus himself

2. Parents are to love and shepherd their children not just for their children’s sake (so that they become healthy, thriving, successful adults), nor just for the parent’s sake (so that their children reflect well on them), but for Christ’s sake (out of obedience to him)

B. Family relationships are some of the messiest of all, but family is precisely the context where we can experience the love, truth, grace, and forgiveness of Jesus.

IV. First century slavery

A. This passage may raise problems for us, but Paul is simply not seeking to address certain things we might want him to address

 1. Abolition isn’t on the table in 1st century Roman society

2. Paul’s words actually have the seeds of abolition in how he equalizes slaves and masters in the Lord

3. Elsewhere Paul is clear about his thoughts on slavery (see the book of Philemon and 1 Corinthians 7:21-23)

 B. But consider applying the principles of this passage to our work/occupation

1. Paul encourages slaves to imagine that they are working for Jesus and ought to seek to please him in their work.

 2. So as we go about the tasks of our work, who are we working for

 a. For our sake (to earn money, get a promotion, find identity, etc.)

 b. Or for Christ’s sake

3. Consider Brother Lawrence who did very mundane tasks while practicing the presence of God: “Think often on Jesus, by day, by night, in your business and even in your diversions. He is always near you and with you. . . Our sanctification doesn’t depend upon changing our works, but in doing that for Jesus’s sake, which we commonly do for our own. . . We ought to give ourselves up to him in all things, and seek our satisfaction only in the fulfilling of his will, whether he lead us by suffering or by consolation, for all would be equal to a soul truly resigned.”