

**How the Gospel Enables Us to Worship**  
*The Gospel Changes Everything – Week 15*  
**Colossians 3:15-17**

Pastor Troy Dobbs | Grace Church  
**May 21, 2017**

Typically, the word “**surrender**” carries with it a negative connotation.

[Surrender is equated with Defeat]

- To **surrender** in boxing means **you’re getting a beat down.**
- To **surrender** in wrestling means **you’re getting pinned.**
- To **surrender** in checkers means **you’re out of moves.**
- To **surrender** in an argument means **you’re a smart husband.**
- To **surrender** to an enemy means **you’ve lost.**

The word surrender – means giving in / giving up – conceding to another.

And we are taught – **from an early age** that surrendering is a **BAD THING!**

However – there is at least **ONE** time when **surrendering** is a good and healthy choice to make – and that is in your relationship with Jesus Christ.<sup>i</sup>

**Conceding to Christ is always a brilliant decision!**

Surrendering to His will is always a great move!

Surrendering in this context – makes you a winner.

In particular – in our text for the day – **Paul calls us to surrender to Christ in 3 unique ways.**<sup>ii</sup>

◀ READ TEXT ▶

Colossians 3:15-17

**15 AND LET the PEACE OF CHRIST RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.**

**16 LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**

**17 AND WHATEVER YOU DO, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**<sup>iii</sup>

First – Paul says WE ARE TO SURRENDER TO THE PEACE OF CHRIST IN OUR HEARTS!

## ◀ OUTLINE ▶

We are to surrender by:

### 1) Letting the peace of Christ be the umpire. (v15)<sup>iv</sup>

We are to “let” the peace of Christ rule in our lives.

The word “rule” means umpire or **call the shots**... especially in the area of decision-making.

The peace of Christ is like an umpire that tells us what is in bounds and out of bounds.

Paul says there is (literally) a conscious choice we make to surrender to the peace of Christ.

You’ve got a **decision to make** > let the peace of Christ make that decision.

You’ve **got a problem to solve**> let the peace of Christ make that decision.

Never make a decision that would violate Christ’s peace in your heart.

You’re **caught in a trap** > let the peace of Christ make that decision.

Conversely then it’s NEVER God’s will for Christ-followers to be **RULED** by FEAR / WORRY.

**Fear** was a result of the fall in Genesis 3.

**Fear** made Adam & Eve hide from God and from one another.

So instead of letting fear RULE – we are to let Christ's peace RULE – **especially in decision-making.**

So – let me ask you:

**Do you surrender to PEACE or FEAR?**

Are you RULED by PEACE or FEAR?

People ruled by fear never make good decision – fear keeps us from moving ahead in faith.

Fear cares more about what man thinks than what God says.

Bottom line:

Christianity is about SURRENDERING. It's about relinquishing control!

It's about letting Christ live in us – work through us.

In particular, Paul says – we are to be RULED BY PEACE as we engage within the **church.**

**15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, TO WHICH INDEED YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE BODY. And be thankful.ʋ**

Paul essentially says there's no way to have the peace of Christ **ruling** in our hearts if we are in perpetual strife with **one another**.<sup>vi</sup>

Peace (in here-heart) precedes peace (out there-relationships).

Which raises a question –

How does Paul's last sentence "**and be thankful**" fit in here?

I think he's showing us that **grateful people** tend to be **peaceful** people.

The key to keeping your heart peaceful is to be thankful.

Be thankful that Christ's peace is the umpire in your life.

Christ's peace **rules** your life.

You see, gratitude leads to peace – because we know (deep down) that gratefulness does not come from acquiring more stuff but rather from an awareness of God's peace in our hearts.

Gratitude is essentially a lens through which you see life.

Gratitude is a worldview that says God is **always good** – and because He is **always good** – I am **always thankful**.

So surrendering to the peace of Christ in our hearts translates into peaceful relationships with others in the body of Christ.

So Paul calls us to surrender by:

**Secondly, we are to surrender by:**

**2) Letting the word of God dwell in you richly. (v16)<sup>vii</sup>**

**16 LET the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.<sup>viii</sup>**

The word "dwell" means to **"to live in"** or **"to be at home."**<sup>ix</sup>

IT MEANS TO DWELL AS A RESIDENT RATHER THAN AS A VISITOR.

Holiday Inns are good BUT a home is better.

And the problem with most Christians is that the Word of God is **like a visitor in our lives rather than a resident in our lives.**

People **visit** the Word of God on occasion, but the Word of God is not **living at home in them.**

It's not something they are living and abiding in all the time.

Moreover, the fact that Paul says "let" the Word of Christ dwell in us means **we have an active part in this process: and that active part is SURRENDERING.**<sup>x</sup>

Biblically speaking:

Surrendering is not giving up – it's giving in to Christ!<sup>xi</sup>

Paul then shows us how to let the Word of Christ dwell in us by highlighting the following characteristics in verse 16: **teaching, worshipping, and giving thanks.**

You all know this – but one of the best ways to LET the word of Christ dwell richly in you is by **teaching it.**

Paul refers to LEARNING BY TEACHING when he says:

**“teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom” (v16)**

Teaching has always been the best way to learn.

Teachers always learn more than students – right?

And so just coming and listening every Sunday is good – but it won't lead to explosive growth.

Here's what I've learned in that regard:

- people **really serious** about JESUS
- are **really serious** about His Word
- and those **really serious** about His Word
- are **really serious** about explaining it to others.<sup>xii</sup>

So if you really want to get the Word (in you) **start teaching the Word to others!**

Another way to let the word of Christ dwell richly (in you) is to **sing songs with thankful hearts.** (v16)

Notice, after talking about teaching, Paul says one of the ways the Word of God becomes (**at home in us**) is through worship as we sing **psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.**

Think about it –

**music has always been a means of teaching.**

For many of us, we learned our ABC's by singing it in a song.

(sing the ABC song)

**Similarly, worship (singing) codifies truth.**<sup>xiii</sup>

**SINGING IMPLANTS GOD'S WORD IN US!**



So Paul said, "**As you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (do so) with gratitude in your hearts to God.**"

So not only do we need to sing God's Word into us – we also have to have **hearts of gratitude.**

This is important because the Word of Christ cannot dwell in any other type of heart.

In the parable of the sower, Christ taught (a lot) about how our hearts affect our ability to receive **the Word of God.**

He said the deceitfulness of wealth can choke it, making it unfruitful."  
(Matthew 13:22)

He said: the worries of this life become thorns in our heart that choke the Word and make it unfruitful.

Literally - a person who is **worrying** about the future, **worrying** about the past and **complaining** about the present is a person who the Word of God will be unfruitful in.<sup>xiv</sup>

THE WORD CANNOT FIND A HOME IN THAT TYPE OF HEART.

Only a grateful heart can truly receive the Word of God.

**And then finally – we are to surrender by:**

**3) Letting the name of Christ guide you in everything. (v17)<sup>xv</sup>**

We are to surrender the totality of our lives to Christ!

**17 AND WHATEVER YOU DO, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.<sup>xvi</sup>**

Do everything (Paul says) **in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**

When Paul says to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, the word "name" does not mean something that we call someone.

"Name" in Hebrew thought, **reflected one's character.**

So to do everything “in the name of the Lord Jesus” meant to represent Him and reflect His characteristics.

So we:

- Reflect Christ's love in serving others.
- Reflect Christ's perseverance in difficult times.
- Reflect Christ's joy and rest in leisure and entertainment,
- Everything we do should give glory to God and reflect his characteristics.

Again –we are to do everything in the name of the Lord **with thankful hearts!**

Paul really encouraged these Christians to be thankful, which probably implies that the attack on this church from the Gnostic cult had **robbed them of their joy.**

So Paul is trying to stir up their gratitude.

He is trying to show them the power of surrendering to Christ's peace / Christ's Word / Christ Himself.

Now let me close out with **2 topics** from our text.

What is a threat to our gratitude: ENTITLEMENT.<sup>xvii</sup>

If I believe I am owed something, I will not be thankful for it because I think I'm entitled to it.

The sinful human race is naturally entitled: we believe our gifts rightfully belong to us.

**And the more we think we're entitled to, the less we will be grateful for.**<sup>xviii</sup>

Have you ever wondered:

Why do people who keep getting more and more, show less and less gratitude?

**I can tell you why:**

**The bigger our sense of entitlement, the smaller our sense of gratitude.**<sup>xix</sup>

And my sinful mind can convince me **I'm entitled** to anything I want, and if I don't get something I want, **other people must be messing up.**

They owe me, and they ought to pay me.

This has led to a proliferation of lawsuits: when we don't get something we really want, **we sue somebody.**

## **A few years ago:**

- The San Francisco Giants were sued for passing out Father's Day gifts **to men only**.
- A psychology professor sued for sexual harassment because of **the presence of mistletoe** at a Christmas party.
- A psychic was awarded \$986,000 when a doctor's CAT scan **impaired her psychic abilities**.

You have to wonder about this third one: If she really was a psychic, shouldn't she have known **not to go to that doctor in the first place?**

So in a Christian framework, **ingratitude** is not just a psychological problem.

It's not just an impoverishment of my emotional experience. **It's a sin.**

And Paul says it's the hallmark of a life opposed to God.

Think about it:

**If you're a parent, you don't want to raise an ungrateful child.**

Speaking about people living a life opposed to God, Paul says, "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God **nor gave thanks to him**, but their thinking became futile."<sup>xx</sup> (Romans 1:21)

Paul is saying there in Romans that:

They perceived themselves to be entitled, to be owed. They didn't see themselves as **grateful receivers of grace every moment**.

**Now the Bible's word for ingratitude is grumbling.**<sup>xxi</sup>

Paul says that grumbling is the quintessential mindset of life without God.

Have you ever heard of a church person grumbling?

**You can be lured away from God by grumbling quicker than almost anything else and God takes this quite seriously.**<sup>xxii</sup>

Paul heard about a grumbling spirit of complaint in the church at Corinth, so he wrote to them about how Israel grumbled at Mount Sinai.

He reminded them how God was so good to the Israelites.

- He gave them freedom
- took care of them

- gave them the Ten Commandments
- led them to the Promised Land
- but they just grumbled in response.

They were not grateful.

Paul says to the church at Corinth, "And do not grumble, as some of them did – **and were killed by the destroying Angel.**" (1 Corinthians 10:10)

Now how many of you who have grumbled **are a little worried right now?**

Bottom line:

It is so important that we take **thankfulness seriously!**

**Next thought: let's talk about singing!**

For the record: singing is not optional.

Paul does not see singing as an appendix to the Word – but as a critical part of it.

In other words, the songs that we sing prior to the preached word are **not the warm-up band to the main attraction.**

They preach a message as well; songs package truth – and that truth sung = blesses God and edifies us.

And so singing is not a waste of time. Nor is it just for the super talented amongst us.

Singing is integral to worship.

The entire service is **about worship** and we have different means to accomplish it.

We worship

- through singing,
- through praying
- through giving,
- through baptism,
- through preaching,
- and through responding to God.

Moreover – notice the diversity through which we worship through singing.

Paul talks about **psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs**.



I hear a lot of people denigrate anything / any type of music that is NOT a hymn – and that's biblically misguided.

I also hear a lot of people denigrate anything / any type of music that's not a praise song – and that's biblically misguided.

Paul is showing that

- singing drawn from Scripture (**Psalms**),
- singing drawn from deep doctrinal truths (**hymns**),
- and singing drawn from heart-felt love for God (**spiritual songs**)
- are all part of the dynamic of edification through music.

HIS POINT IS NOT THE FORM.

The point is the edification value singing TRUTH to God and about God leads us toward gratitude ("with thankfulness in your hearts to God").

And so:

**We sing because** our hearts are full of love for God...

**We sing because** God is worth singing to / about...

**We sing to** codify truth and implant it deeply in our hearts...

One pastor said it like this:

- Singing helps us remember God's Word.
- Singing helps us to respond to God's grace.
- Singing helps us reflect God's glory.

Amazingly, in the Bible we see that all 3 persons of the trinity sing.

**Zephaniah 3:17<sup>xxiii</sup>**

**The Lord your God is in your midst,  
a mighty one who will save;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness;  
he will quiet you by his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing.**

**Hebrews 2:12<sup>xxiv</sup>**

**12 saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers;  
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."**

**Ephesians 5:18-19<sup>xxv</sup>**

**18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled  
with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and  
spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,**

Worshipping God in song is simply a nice idea or for the vocally elite.

The question is not: Has God given me a voice? But has God given me a song.

And if you trust in the finished work of Christ on the cross – the answer is YES!!

---

<sup>i</sup> there is at least ONE time when surrendering is a good and healthy choice to make – and that is in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

<sup>ii</sup> in our text for the day – Paul calls us to surrender to Christ in 3 unique ways.

<sup>iii</sup> Colossians 3:15-17

<sup>iv</sup> 1) Letting the peace of Christ be the umpire.

<sup>v</sup> Verse 15

<sup>vi</sup> Paul essentially says there's no way to have the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts if we are in perpetual strife with one another.

<sup>vii</sup> 2) Letting the word of God dwell in you richly.

<sup>viii</sup> Verse 16

<sup>ix</sup> The word "dwell" means to "to live in" or "to be at home."

<sup>x</sup> Paul says "let" the Word of Christ dwell in us means **we have an active part in this process: and that active part is SURRENDERING.**

<sup>xi</sup> Biblically speaking:

Surrendering is not giving up – it's giving in to Christ!

<sup>xii</sup> Ultimately –

- people really serious about JESUS –
- are really serious about His Word
- and those really serious about His Word
- are really serious about explaining it to others.

<sup>xiii</sup> worship (singing) codifies truth

<sup>xiv</sup> a person who is worrying about the future, worrying about the past and complaining about the present is a person who the Word of God will be unfruitful in.

<sup>xv</sup> 3) Letting the name of Christ guide you in everything.

<sup>xvi</sup> Verse 17

<sup>xvii</sup> What is a threat to our gratitude: ENTITLEMENT.

<sup>xviii</sup> And the more we think we're entitled to, the less we will be grateful for.

<sup>xix</sup> The bigger our sense of entitlement, the smaller our sense of gratitude.

<sup>xx</sup> Paul says, "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile."

<sup>xxi</sup> the Bible's word for ingratitude is grumbling.

<sup>xxii</sup> You can be lured away from God by grumbling quicker than almost anything else and God takes this quite seriously.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Zeph 3:17

<sup>xxiv</sup> Heb 2:12

<sup>xxv</sup> Eph 5:18-19