

## Introduction

- How good a sense of direction do you have?
  - do you get turned around in a big city centre?
  - motor-ways, especially in cities, throw lots of people!
  - we once managed to get on the wrong motor-way on our way to Centre Parcs!! (and I think I've got a good sense of direction!)
- Journeys:
  - direction, destination, equipment
- Paul has been talking about the freedom these Colossian Christians now have, to live for Christ.
  - now he's going on to talk about how to work out that freedom in practical living;
  - "what does that freedom mean on a Monday morning?", kind of thing
- He's asking the question: 'What kind of life will demonstrate that freedom to live "in Christ"?'
  - Start by recapping on last week...
  - Is the Law dead?
    - yes - in terms of its effectiveness for salvation;
    - no - in terms of its importance; Christ came to fulfil the Law.
  - But obeying the Law, the 10C's does not, & cannot, win us salvation:
    - that was the prevalent confusion amongst Jews, the common understanding;
    - Law on its own makes us conscious of our sin, and our need of a Saviour!
  - So avoiding lying, for instance, will never win us favour with God, but it may reflect our love for him.

## Change Direction

**(v.1-4) Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**

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- Metaphor of a journey... as if been lost, aimlessly wandering through life, needing direction:
  - Christ comes and brings new life, freedom;
  - if we respond to him, accept his offer, then implies a change of direction!
  - "set your hearts on things above" - on God's priorities and standards.

## Travel Light

**(v.5-11) Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.**

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- Get rid on unhelpful, broken equipment:
  - hill-climbing illustration
  - all that extra weight...
- Personal illustration of SF books and studying...?
  - point is conscious, effort-filled, course of action to put to death that which is not

of God!

- Whole range of such behaviours are listed here - some will have more immediate impact for different of us.
  - maybe that if our struggle is with **lust**, we won't go to shops that carry top shelf magazines, or avoid late night TV, or take especial care when we are using the Internet;
  - maybe that if our struggle is with **greed**, we will create a routine whereby we give away "stuff" (family who, in run up to Christmas, go through their stuff and take extra to Oxfam);
  - maybe that if our struggle is with **anger**, we will try and identify when we get angry and try and avoid those situations - eg tiredness
- But whatever our own struggle, because Christ is now in us, we need to do some spring cleaning!

## Choose your Equipment with Care

**(v.12-14) Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.**

- Follow through on above illustration about toolkits
  - replace broken, unhelpful equipment with that which will benefit us.
- Again, a conscious choice of lifestyle:
  - **compassion**: get involved in some practical way - in Motherwell there was a homelessness drop-in centre called "Reachout" run by local churches...
  - **humility**: volunteer for one of the grotty jobs that no-one else likes doing?
  - **forgiveness**: take the first step, ask for forgiveness, or perhaps start praying God's blessing on the person you find it so hard to forgive...
  - **kindness**: be the one who goes to visit, or drops a card to someone...
- **Love grows when it is worked at**: anyone in a healthy marriage knows that!
  - our culture suggests love is a soppy feeling that just happens to you, but you can cultivate it, adopt practises which tend to promote it.
  - *that's actually a hard, counter-cultural lesson!*

## What's Your Destination?

**(v.15-17) Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

- As we do that:
  - **change direction**, travel light, **choose equipment with care**
  - ...already secure in what the Lord has done in giving us our freedom, our salvation, **the colour of our life will change**:
    - **peace, serenity, contentment** will **grow**: not full-grown instantly!
    - our lives will be marked by **thankfulness & gratitude**
    - and they will become increasingly **worship filled** - expressing that gratitude to God
- **In other words, together we will become a Christ centred community!**
  - and a reflection of the heavenly kingdom that is to come!
- **That's worth struggling for!!**