

Victory of the Lamb – September 10, 2017 – Pastor Bill Limmer

Colossians 3:12-17 Learn, Love, Live

Prayer: Teach me to do your will. For you are my God. May your good Spirit lead me on level ground. Amen.

The calendar says we have about a week and a half of summer left but our schedules tell us some is over, don't they. Did you get to go anywhere? Every now and then Pastor Ben and I go for little trips. We even kid around and say we are making another chapter in the wild adventures of Ben and Bill. I don't know if you know but Pastor Ben and I actually went to Rome this past summer looking for peace. I am serious. It was Rome, Wisconsin not Rome, Italy but it was still Rome. Rome is where we go to work on the sermon series for the upcoming year. When we were on our way back home, I had our Honda Odyssey on cruise control and Pastor Ben asks me: what would you like the member and regular attendee of Victory of the Lamb to look like. I blurted out a lot like the TNT Small Group – Learning, Loving, and Living. The next day when we had arrived back from Rome . . . WI, Pastor Ben related to me that he had been looking through some of his notes of hopes for Victory and he ran across the same three words that he had written years early, Learn, Love, Live! So that's kinda cool right. But God had the discipleship vision long before we had it. And so this morning I want to lay out before you a discipleship vision for spiritual growth.

This morning we are going to look at Colossians 3:12-17. And I have to tell you to start out the message is really set for believers so if you are here today just checking things out, I'm going to ask you to bear with us as we go through this teaching and maybe you can just ask yourself the question as we go along step by step, What if that were me? Could that be me? And I want you to know, it could be. In fact, I invite you to join with us in following Jesus! So I'm going to read it all at once and then will go back and look at a few sections. This reading by the way is often chosen by couples to be a reading for their wedding ceremony. And as I read, I would like you to think about the unity that this passage is talking about, keeping in mind that this section of Scripture is not really for wedding but for you and me, God's community. Colossians 3:12-17 **Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.** ¹³ **Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** ¹⁴ **And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.** ¹⁵ **Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.** ¹⁶ **Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.** ¹⁷ **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.**

Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved. Since you are chosen by God, remember when you were in grade school and it was time to choose teams, God chose you. He chose you before the very foundations of the world, since you are on the team, since you are made holy through the blood of Christ and dearly loved by God: **"Let the message of Christ dwell in you richly."** The Packers and Seahawks are playing later this afternoon and Aaron Rodgers and the team have spent a lot of time studying their play book so they could learn the plays. Just makes sense that they would do that, right? As people of God, it just makes sense that you and I would study the Word of God so that we can learn it and apply it to our lives. So, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, deeply moving not only our mind

but your heart. It will remodel you, reshape, replace, rejuvenate. I want you to know, if you don't know this already that as you spend time in God's Word you will run into many refreshing "Aha moment." Now we all have different likes and different needs and we are in different seasons in life. Some of us like history the Passover/Lord's Supper, some of like music – rejoice over us in singing, some like math God has taken away the sins of the whole world. The more you and I learn from God, that is read, meditate, memorize God's Word, the more peace and joy we will have in our day to day lives.

It will also protect us from fake news. Fake news is what temptation. Let me give you an example of fake news: the devil saying to Eve in the garden of Eden, "you will not surely die." She bit on it. I don't want you to bite into fake news and lies of Satan. Fake news is making something bad look good. Here is another example of fake news: you don't have time for a relationship with God right now. Yikes.

One of our core values here at Victory is **Intentional Discipleship**. And I want you to know that when we rub shoulders with God's Word we have something to share with the world besides sports and weather. We have something to share with the world that changes everything, which is another one of our core values **Outward Focus**.

Colossians 3:14 put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Since you are chosen, holy, and dearly loved you don't have to settle for lust, for pornography, for fantasy, for voyeurism, for coveting people or things that are not yours but since God loves you first you can love God and you can put on love and you can love others. **1 Corinthians 13:4-8a Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails.** Love is unifying, edifying, love is attractive and attracting. This love is a thrill. It shocks people because it is so often over the top, unexpected shocking. It delights in encouraging people, going another unexpected step. Love is a **Christ Centered Mindset** which is a core value of our messages and motivation. Love puts others first. Love reaches others where they are at, not necessarily where you are at or where you would like the person to be at. One of the ways that we have decided purposefully to express love is through **Youth Engagement**. We have a whole wing dedicated to all these little blessings in our lives, staffed and secured with love. We have our confirmation class for 6th-8th graders where we are planting seeds upon seeds of God's Word into their lives so that we can help parents build a foundation of faith for their children. Quest is loaded with great leaders who truly love our high-schoolers and put a lot of effort into engaging them at the intersection of truth and life. Love . . .

Colossians 3:17 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. Since you are heaven bound, since you are sin, guilt, and shame free, since you are dearly love by God you are free to live for God. Free to use the gifts, talents and abilities that God has given you to serve God and others. You are Jesus' hands, Jesus' feet, Jesus' eyes, mouth, heart, and ears to all those around you from your family, to those in church, to your community, to the people you work with, to those you recreate with, to those of the opposing political party, to people who believe differently than you do. You get to live in the freedom and love of God. One of our core Values is **Volunteer Involvement**. We believe the church works best when we role up our leaves get involved. Have you been blessed by the Victory Café? Have you been blessed by our Host Team? How about our music team? This is what I know, when we are in God's Word, God is in our live and He touches our hearts, our minds, our mouths, our attitudes, our works all over. His DNA is on us

and is left wherever we go. When we do the ordinary to the glory of God the secular is made sacred; the everyday is edified, the mundane is made majestic. It is an act of God.

Learn, Love and Live it doesn't happen very well in the self-centeredness of alone nor does it happen all that well in an auditorium full of people. But it does happen really well in the **Trusting Relationships** that are built up in small groups. This is the wonder of **Reformation Relevance**. Small groups make big impacts. I enjoy all of our classes. But I remember one especially. The course of our time just brought out that we have all been hurt deeply by people, situations, and circumstances. I'm not going to share with you all those things that were said that night because that's part of the small group too. It stays there. But I want you to know there was real hurt, real pain, and tears. And by the end of that night we were one – like melted crayon shavings. I want you to have that love, joy and unity and peace too. I want you to have the joy of sticking together with brothers and sisters of Christ, stuck on Christ. Where you learn about God word and let it dwell in you richly, where you love others not for your sake but as a child of God for their sake, and where you are encouraged to do all things to the glory of God.

Here are some quotes from the small group I'm in – “We share the fact that we all have imperfections (mostly Pastor Bill)” and learn from them. Here are some reflections from the Tuesday Night Small Group . . .

So when Pastor Ben asked me what do you want a member or regular attender at Victory to look like , now you know. Learning, loving, living with God with each other.

So, on your connection cards, there is the little box called small groups, if you would like to be a part of a small group go ahead and just make a check in that spot because over the next five months we will be unveiling more and more opportunities for you to not only be a part of a friendly church, but to be friends and family in a church learning, loving and living to the glory of God!

Victory is learning, loving and living to the glory of God through:

Volunteer Involvement

Intentional Discipleship

Christ Centered Mindset

Trusting Relationships

Outward Focus

Reformation Relevance

Youth Engagement