

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 whatever grievances you may have against one another. 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 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. 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.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly

- 1. It is essential to our spiritual health.***
- 2. It needs to be the focus of our daily routine.***

Last week temperatures reached the mid-90's with high humidity and a heat index of 100 or above. It was nasty out there, and because of that you heard the same thing from radio personalities and news anchors, as well as friends and family, neighbors and maybe even from people you hardly knew. They were all saying, "Drink plenty of water." "Stay hydrated."

Water is essential to our bodies. The body is made of primarily water and we use up water as our body functions. Getting plenty of water is a vital need to keep the body functioning properly. Drinking plenty of water can help a person relieve and prevent pain and illness. It can help a person feel better and even look better as drinking water has been linked to such things as better skin and shinier hair.

Drinking water is an easy way to help your body to function better. The lack of water, however, can have severe effects. If your body is dehydrated, it cannot cool itself properly, leading to heat exhaustion or heat stroke. When the body becomes dehydrated, you start to feel the effects of it both physically and mentally. Muscles begin to cramp up as circulation and blood cells suffers. With severe dehydration confusion and weakness will occur as the brain and other body organs receive less blood. Brain function suffers. A person will begin to feel groggy and slow. A person's kidneys won't be able carry away waste products, so toxins will

build up in your system, making that person feel ill. Finally, coma, complete organ failure, and death eventually will occur if the dehydration remains untreated.

Drink plenty of water. It is a simple direction that has great benefit if followed. But if neglected there are dire consequences. But of course this is not simply a speech about drinking water, this is a sermon about the vital importance of hearing God's Word. It is a simple command that we hear time and time again. Be in God's Word. Take time for Bible Study, set aside devotional time; be here in God's House and sit at Jesus' feet. It is a simple direction that has great benefits if followed but if neglected there are dire consequences.

It is nasty out there in this fallen world every day because of sin. The intense heat of temptation, the irritation, and agitation of the sinful ways of this world, they wear on a person. I don't have to tell you that, you feel that every day. We live in a world so saturated with sin we can't help but breathe in and be affected by the polluted thoughts and actions of this world. We ourselves, as born sinners, naturally produce toxins that pollute our lives from within as well. We live in as sin-sick sinners in a sin-sick world. And so we are in need of a remedy. We are in need of a cure. We need the spiritual reprieve of God's Word. We need the living water that Jesus gives. He takes away our sin. He refreshes our souls. His peace rules in our hearts. His Word helps us to function as God's chosen people.

As Paul writes to the Colossians he is writing to sinners living in a sinful world as well. The heat and pressure of sin was oppressive around them. They too had been infected and troubled by the sin-sick world and their own sin. In the previous verses Paul makes note of some of the symptoms of sin that were prevalent in that day, in that area, and are certainly still prevalent in our day today as well. He urges the Colossians to put to death whatever belongs to the sinful nature, including such things as: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed. He also includes the sins of anger, rage, malice, slander, using filthy language, and telling lies to and about each other (Colossians 3:5-9). These were all the common symptoms of spiritual dehydration of sorts that the Colossians were currently suffering through. These are the symptoms of a life lacking the Word of Christ and love of Jesus.

In answer to this Paul prescribes the simple cure that will greatly impact the life of any Christian. ***“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.”*** We need to be filled up with the good news of Jesus. We need a steady diet of God's Word. Paul doesn't exactly use the idea of water like Jesus did with the woman at the well. But he does give us the simple direction that has great benefit if followed. ***“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.”*** For when a person has the Word of Christ in them, when a person has the gospel dwelling with them and coursing through their veins,

when a person is daily taking in the living water of the Word, and listening to God's commands; when a person hears the Word of God regularly and uses it and applies the Word to their life that Word makes a considerable difference for the spiritual life of a believer both on the inside and outside.

The Word of Christ is essential. Without it we as Christians cannot function properly as children of God. Without regular intake of God's Word we both feel the effects of it within us and see the effects in our daily life. After as while away from God's Word you may feel lethargic in your spiritual life and you may cramp up so that you are unable to function properly as a child of God. This spiritual dehydration shows itself in the way that we think and the decisions that we make. Without his word we begin to make decisions that are contrary to God's Word, we break his commandments and we fail to do what we should more and more. Without the Word there is nothing to flush out spiritual toxins from our system. Evil grows from inside of us unchecked. The hatred and the anger and the lust and the greed, false teachings, and flawed worldviews that we breathe in like humid air from this sinful world; it all overwhelms us. We are weakened, and made spiritually ill, and if this spiritual dehydration continues we could break down completely and return to spiritual death.

We need that word of Christ. We need it daily. Just as water flushes out of our bodies that which is harmful so too the good news of Jesus can flush out that which is harmful in our spiritual lives. The bible tells us that we are peace with God. It tells us how the Lord Jesus has forgiven us of our sins. The Word of God tells us how Christ Jesus has appeased God's anger over our sin and has given us the free gift of eternal life. That peace of Jesus flushes out the anger of our lives. The love of Jesus flushes out the hate. It gives us contentment that chases away the greed. The peace of Jesus strengthens us to live as Christians, to function as God's chosen people. Renewed and refreshed inside and out we are reenergized to serve the Lord.

But that can't happen if we keep neglecting this great need. Be in God's Word. It is a simple reminder that has great benefit if followed. But like that reminder to drink water we can and we do forget to follow through and take appropriate action. On an average day our lives are filled with some many things we may forget to stay hydrated. We get distracted by this and that and we don't take the time to replenish our bodies like we should. In the same way we often fail to take a break from the daily routine to replenish our souls. We need to make it a habit. We need to make it part of the routine for the sake of our spiritual health. More than that, we need to not only make it part of our daily routine but it has to be a central part of what we do each day. It is that vital.

Jesus told Mary and Martha that sitting at his feet and listening to his word was the one thing needful. How often don't we take the study of God's Word and put it at the end of our "to do" list. We treat it like the snack that we can skip instead of the essential living water, which we need. If the day gets busy, if life gets frantic, what often gets left out? In these summer days if an added joy, or an extra opportunity for leisure gets added to our schedule what is often forgotten? Time in God word is left out. That should not be. This is the one thing needful. This is the one thing that we can't do without.

If we fail to replenish our souls with the living water of God's Word it won't be long until we feel and see the effects in our thinking and in our lives as God's children. But if we are in God's Word, if we daily replenish our souls with his living water that will be evident, as well. As the Word of Christ dwells within us, his peace fills us, and that will radiate through our lives. His goodness, his compassion, his kindness... his humility, his gentleness, patience, and forgiveness and his love will be clearly seen in our lives as we will be strengthened and enabled to function as his chosen people. His love will be in us and his love will cover us and touch and effect everything that we do. If the word dwells inside of us richly than we will be able to, as Paul says here, clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, love, and forgiveness.

It is a simple reminder that has great benefit if followed. Be in God's Word. Following this reminder will have a positive impact on the way that we feel and the way that we live. It will have a positive impact on our lives inside and out.

There are plenty of distractions in this life. Take time for Bible Study, set aside devotional time; be here in God's House and sit as Jesus' feet. Make God's Word a priority, make time with God a regular and central part of your life. For being in God's Word is the one thing needed.

So dear friends, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." It is essential to our spiritual health. It needs to be the focus of our daily routine. May God give you a hunger and thirst for Scripture and may he bless your time in his Word. Amen.