

A Deeper Journey



A Deeper Journey is designed for those who would like a guide that supports self-study and self-reflection related to a teaching topic.

Message Date: April 7, 2013 Message Title: *The Walking Dead: Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid*

Review Colossians 3:1-17. What do you notice?

In this series, we have been looking in the mirror to see our condition – and the word that describes our condition is DEAD. First, we saw that we are dead in our sins – our sins have separated us from God, but Jesus fixed that. On Easter, we asked, If Jesus rose from the dead, then why do we still live in guilt? Why do we live by rules when the same power that raised Jesus from the grave and rescued the world lives in us?

What have you learned about being free from living in sin?

What have you learned about being free from religious rules?

Today, we move into Colossians 3: 1-17 where “dead” pops up again to describe us. We were dead. Jesus made us alive. Now we are dead again? This Christianity stuff is crazy! To help us, Paul talks to us about clothes.

Read Colossians 3:1-17 and find each place that Paul talks about death, life, or clothing and pay close attention. Make any notes you need here:

In preparation for this year's Grammy Awards, CBS issued an advisory to cover up – to make sure the ladies' back sides and top parts are kept private. No more J Lo dress of 2000. I didn't watch the Grammy's so I don't know if the stars complied. Stars are renegades at heart. Give them a rule and they'll feel honor-bound to tweak it. In Colossians today, Paul issues an advisory – watch what you wear.

Wear identity-appropriate clothes. Denise and I have reached a stage in our lives where we find ourselves asking this question: “Am I too old to wear this?” Never ask a sales clerk, “Do these \$200 jeans make me look young?” What clerk on commission is going to say, “Ma'am, this is the Juniors department. You should be in Mature or the Big Mama's department, I'm just saying.” Yes, 50 is the new 30 but that doesn't mean we should be dressing like 30-year-olds. Paul says the same thing: Wear clothes that match your identity as a Christ-follower. What's wrong with plaid? For our purposes today....

1. **Plaid doesn't match our identity.** Colossians 3:1-3, 9-10. What words does Paul use to describe the Christ followers identity? Write them here:
 - a. **Following Christ means death to the old person – the old identity.** Romans 6:6. When a person becomes a Christ-follower, he dies. God writes an obituary for our sinful nature. The old nature is gone; the new has come. What has God freed you from that you are struggling to let go of?
 - b. Following Christ means becoming a new person. 2 Corinthians 5:17/ Romans 7: 19-20. Look at it like this: God installs a new OS (operating system). Jesus takes out the sin nature and puts in a saint nature. You want to do good. You want to please God. And you're frustrated when you don't. This new self is programmed to love God and desire to please Him. Review these two passages. Identify times in your life when you WANTED to please God, but ended up dishonoring Him with your attitudes, actions and behavior patterns. Describe how you WANT to act in those situations – the desire God has given you to follow Him:

2. **Get rid of the plaid.** Colossians 3:5-9. Your new identity comes equipped with God's power. Taking on this new identity is not so much about your resisting temptation or living responsibility as it is about your response to God's ability – He has given us victory, power to choose differently- over the sinful things that are lurking around the corner waiting to steal our joy in this life. Look at who you are, then look at your clothes: your behavior. Get rid of the behaviors that don't match your identity.

Paul is saying we have no fashion sense, that we're wearing stuff that is inappropriate. We are hanging on to behaviors that are inappropriate. Our behaviors don't match who we are in Christ. Read Colossians 3:5-9 again and look closely at anything you are clinging to that God has given you permission to let go of: sexual immorality, lust, evil desires and attitudes, greed, worshipping the things of this world instead of God, anger attitudes and behaviors, rage attitudes and behaviors, malicious behavior, slander, dirty language.... Identify these things and let God know that you are handing them over into His victory.

3. **Get the Jesus look.** Colossians 3:10-17. Paul is reminding us that Jesus lives in us. We can choose to die to our old selves and release God's power in our lives. We can choose to accept God's ability in spite of our inability. Paul says the Jesus clothes are in our closet. We received Jesus clothes when He filled our lives. So, put them on. Put on tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, making allowance for others' faults and forgiving those who offend you. Wow! That's a great look! What strikes you about living this way?
4. **Remember, we are people in process.** Colossians 3:10 – "being renewed". I still think bad thoughts. I still do bad things. I still wear the wrong clothes at times. We need to understand this about ourselves and each other. None of us has it all together. When we get that, we'll be tolerant, open, forgiving, and compassionate with each other. When people fall, it will be like falling on a pillow. Not like falling on your face on concrete with a crowd gawking. If we don't get that, then we are harsh and unforgiving like the gawking crowd. We must purpose to be part of the pillow that breaks another's fall and helps them back up.

What does it look like in your life to be the person who softens another's fall and helps them up?

What would it be like for someone to help soften your fall and help you in those situations?

Purpose to be the good you want to see in the world -- Purpose to live in God's ability daily.

Prayer Focus

Jesus, how thankful we are that You have given us rich clothing to wear, stylish clothing that is beyond our ability to buy for ourselves and even beyond our limited fashion sense. Thank you for choosing to give us a closet full of that beautiful clothing so that we can shed our rags and put on your style. Help us to choose YOU daily. Give us eyes to see those that are falling so that we can help soften their landing and help them stand back up. Give us eyes to see when they need to be reminded about the clothing that you have already given them in their closet so that we can link arms with them as they choose to find their identity in You. Help us to see when they have not met the Master Designer yet and need to be gifted with knowing You – help us to be representing You to the point that we naturally, easily find the way You would have us introduce them to You – You who can change lives forever, You who makes this life worth living well, You who loves us to eternity and back. Help us to more fully understand who You are in our lives and to reflect that to the world around us. By Your Power, may it be true.

Family Focus

This week, the students have looked at prophecies from the book of Isaiah – foreshadowing the coolest man that ever walked the planet. Today we studied that God had an Operation for “No More Tears!” We learned that God cares when you have wandered away from Him and He has sent a Rescuer to keep you safe and that God has a plan to be forever friends with each of us through His Son, Jesus.

We talked about what it means to explore, to consider, to investigate something. We discussed what we would do if we wanted to investigate bugs – collect information about them, look closely at how they live, look at how they make friends and get along with others, and how they work together to do a job. We discussed how we would look at the bug’s place in God’s design. Then we discussed how that is exactly what we are going to do with the person of Jesus this spring – we will look at who He is, consider how He lived, investigate how He made friends and how He got along with others and look at our place and His in God’s design.

Help reinforce your child’s growing picture of Jesus as the coolest person who ever walked the planet. Help reinforce how much God loves each of us more than we can even understand right now and how He sent Jesus so that we could be forever friends with God.

We are learning to use our Bible as a tool to know more about Jesus, and we are growing in our understanding that the Bible is God’s love letter just to us. Today, we found the book of Isaiah in the Bible and discussed how Isaiah helped the people to know that God would send a Rescuer to heal the world and make a way for God to have a forever friendship with us. We talked about how Isaiah was one of the men that God used to help spread the word that Jesus was coming. We reviewed that the Old Testament gives us stories about how God used what the people were going through and life circumstances to show them that they NEED JESUS. Just like He uses our circumstances today to show us WE NEED JESUS.

Your child can practice finding the Old Testament and the New Testament in the Bible. If your child does not have a Bible, we have Bibles upstairs for each child to have one at church and one to take home. Please ask for your take-home Bible to take home and use if your child does not already have a favorite one to use at home. Practice finding Isaiah again and talk about how Isaiah was used by God to help spread the word about His good plan.

Students also learned this month’s Bible verse:

Psalm 119:105: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Keep an eye on <http://thevenues.org> as we will be creating a children’s ministry area and uploading a video of Amy teaching the verse and showing the hand motions to go along with the verse. Your child can pull up the video on the computer and practice this verse all month. Then we will have a memory showdown and celebration the last week of April and earn our first level of “color” to celebrate. Review with your child that God gave us the Bible so that we can know more about Him and so that He can show us the very best that life has to offer.

In our service station, we began learning about serving others and what it means to have a heart of service. We tried on serving our friends and talked about how it felt to be served and to be the one serving. We talked about putting others first.

Review with your child a time when he/ she put someone else first on purpose and chose to have a heart of service and love toward that other person. Be watching for that attitude in your child and help point out how God is working when you see those good attitudes.

Thank you, parents, for partnering with us to love on kids, connect to them, and introduce them to the Man who will change their lives forever for the better! Thank you for allowing us the honor of partnering with you to reinforce what you are teaching at home. Our prayer is that God strengthens the connection between the teaching we are each doing at home and what we introduce at church to end up with a cohesive, solid picture for each child of who God can be in their lives and how much He loves them. Thank you for praying over the children and their time of learning in the Wellington. And, thank you for volunteering to help us love on kids so that their picture of their value and of what they mean to God grows each week.

Thank you!