Exponential - Part Three

# Renewed

## (Colossians 3:10)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church, I’m excited to share God’s Word with you today. We’re in part three of our series “Exponential” and I wonder how many of you have been blessed by God’s Word? I have been blessed to see so many lives being touched, hearts being changed, and it’s been amazing because we’re not just celebrating the favor of God; we’re living in the favor of God. I believe this isn’t just a moment with God, but it’s the movement of God, and yet he wants to do so much more in our lives.

The thing is that so often as Christians, we know that God wants to do so much more, but the reality is that we’re struggling, because life just keeps coming at us. Problems keep crashing into us like waves, one after another, and so many times we find ourselves just trying to keep our heads above water. Many of us are in survival mode, just maintaining, reacting to life rather than being proactive in life, because we haven’t learned the art of putting on the new self. For many of you, you’re feeling tired, worn out, physically run down and God wants to do exceedingly abundantly more in your lives.

There is a verse in Colossians chapter 3 that really sums up what we’re talking about today. The Bible tells us to:

“Put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Colossians 3:10).

The Greek word used in the original text translated renewed means to make like new. It means to give new strength or to refresh. And I wonder if there are any of you here today, any of you listening that would like to be renewed?

Wouldn’t that be great to get up each morning renewed, refreshed, so that you’re able to live more like Jesus?

Well, the Bible tells us that you can, you can put on the new self which is being renewed day by day. You can put on that new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your creator and become like him. And yet, many of us recognize that we could be doing so much better, we’re a little inconsistent spiritually, because as we awaken each day, we find ourselves living by sight and not by faith, coming face-to-face with the struggles and the challenges of our circumstances without really believing the promises.

And so, what happens is that often in our minds we’ve become slaves, captive to our spiritual enemy, and we begin our day on the wrong foot. We get up on the wrong side of the bed, when we could be starting our day with God, acknowledging first and foremost, that we’ve been forgiven, we’ve been bought with a price, that we’re new creations, and praying, “Lord, I surrender, I am yours, help me today.” And so, even though “outwardly we are wasting away,” as the apostle Paul said, “inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16). And that’s what happens as we step into who we are in Christ, when we put on the new self, because there’s this confidence, this faith, this boldness that comes as we are being renewed.

Now, in this series, we’ve been looking at Joshua and the Israelites and if there’s one thing that Israel really suffered from it was spiritual inconsistency. The Bible says that these things were written for our instruction, and so we can learn from Israel when we’ve been defeated, when we’re discouraged, or maybe you look at your situation and you’re feeling a little hopeless. I want to encourage you to look beyond the defeat, the pain, the suffering, and the brokenness that you have experienced and change your perspective as you put on the new self which is being renewed day by day in the knowledge of Christ.

You see, no matter what we see or experience, we need to remain in Christ because he is the vine and we are the branches. He said,

"If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Today there may be some of you who are fighting a disease, you may be fighting symptoms, you may be fighting weakness or fighting temptation, but you need to remain in him, remain in the vine, because apart from him you can do nothing.

The Bible says in Proverbs,

“Though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again…” (Proverbs 24:15).

And what makes a man or woman righteous is not that they don’t fall, but it’s the fact that they rise again, they get up, they shake themselves off, and they stand firm in who they are in Christ. You see, all of us will experience times where we’re set free, we’re delivered, we’re healed, and then we’ll fall into the same sin or we’ll be attacked in the exactly the same way. The key to your victory is to rise again, to get back up, and take your position in authority as a believer in Christ.

Today, if we’re going to experience victory, breakthrough in life, we must acknowledge who our enemy is and the fact that we live in a spiritual world. You see, if you’re a believer in Jesus Christ and you’ve been filled with the Holy Spirit, you’ve been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. In other words, you already were in a kingdom, a spiritual world, but now the Bible says,

“Our citizenship is in heaven…” (Philippians 3:20).

And so, the secret to overcoming is acknowledging who our enemy is and engaging in spiritual warfare.

Therefore, it’s important to understand that we have something more than citizenship in heaven, we are more than ambassadors, we have been given authority and the power of the Holy Spirit to tear down strongholds in the spiritual world. The Bible tells us,

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4).

And so, in Jesus’ name, in a believer’s authority, you can set things straight in the spiritual world, and you can command spirits to be gone from your house in the spiritual world.

You see, the spiritual world is more real and more powerful than the physical world that we live in, but Jesus gave us authority over it. He said,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, go therefore and make disciples, teaching them and baptizing them.” And how do we do that? He says, “In the name” or in the authority… “of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

And so, Jesus gives his authority to his followers, he says that the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4). And I’m believing today for freedom from things that have been spoken over you, deliverance from temptation and repeated cycles of sin, because you’re going to put on the new self. You’re going to crush your spiritual enemy by the power of the Holy Spirit because Jesus has given you…

“Authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19).

You see, we’ve been given this authority, but the problem is that most of us don’t use it and most Christians don’t engage in spiritual warfare.

Even though we live in a spiritual world, very few of us are engaged in spiritual warfare. In fact, for the most part humanity has always been fighting the wrong battles. We’ve been fighting each other, fighting other religions, fighting other nations, when the real enemy is our spiritual enemy. I believe when we identify who our real enemy is and begin to engage in the right battles we will see more salvations, more healings, more deliverances, just all kinds of things defeated in the name of Jesus.

You see, when we engage our enemy in spiritual warfare, we are advancing the kingdom of God. In fact, when the Israelites engaged in war in the promised land the first city they attacked was Jericho and they experienced a great supernatural victory. However, immediately after that victory, things didn’t go so well for them, because Satan is relentless. The Bible says in Joshua chapter 7, that after conquering Jericho,

“Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, “Go up and spy out the region.” So, the men went up and spied out Ai. When they returned to Joshua, they said, “Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there.” So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, who killed about thirty-six of them (Joshua 7:2–5).

And so, even though this city was smaller than Jericho they experienced a great defeat because of their disobedience. Now, not every defeat is caused by disobedience, but sometimes it is, and sometimes it can be caused by somebody else’s disobedience. At Ai Israel’s defeat wasn’t God’s plan, but it wasn’t by accident either, because the Bible says in Jericho:

“The Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. And so, the Lord's anger burned against Israel” (Joshua 7:1).

I want you to notice that the Israelites acted unfaithfully, but it was really Achan son of Carmi who had acted unfaithfully, and so it was his sin that caused the defeat of all of God’s people.

Some of you may be experiencing a heaviness and you’re wondering why you’re suffering, why you’re being defeated, when it’s actually caused by someone else’s disobedience. We can see an illustration of this many centuries later at the church in Corinth. There was a man that was part of the church that was openly living in sin, he refused to repent, and so the apostle Paul told the church,

“When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed, and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

Now, I know that sounds harsh, but he advised them to find the root of evil and pluck it out so that they could experience victory again. And so, if God reveals to you the cause of your defeat, you’ll want to deal with it, overcome it, and move forward. Paul warned the church about the spiritual influence of sin saying,

“Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast…” (1 Corinthians 5:6-7).

You see, God is wanting to do new things, there is so much more that God wants to do in our lives, and so when there is that yeast, that sin in our lives we need to deal with it aggressively.

In fact, Jesus said the same thing, but he was a little more radical, because he suggests amputation. In Matthew chapter 18, he said,

“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire” (Matthew 18:8).

And so, when we experience defeat in our lives, we should examine ourselves, we should pray about it, always remembering that no matter how many times you’ve tried, no matter how many times you’ve come forward for prayer, the promise still remains.

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

The Bible says that Joshua finally defeats Ai after being defeated the first time because of Achan’s disobedience. Now, after conquering Ai the Bible tells us in Joshua chapter 9,

“When the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us" (Joshua 9:3-6).

And so, the Gibeonites deceived them, telling them we’re not your enemies, we’ve heard about how you have been used by God, and we’ve come from a very distant country to make a covenant with you. The Bible says that Joshua and…

“The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath. Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them” (Joshua 9:14-16).

Instead of seeking the Lord in prayer, Joshua made a decision based on what he saw, that the bread was dry and moldy, their wineskins were aged and cracked, and their clothes and sandals were worn out. And so, it seemed obvious to him that they had traveled a great distance, and he made a treaty with people that God had called him to conquer.

I believe there is an important lesson here for us to learn because sometimes we make a covenant with things that God has called us to conquer. Sometimes we do what Joshua did, we make deals with the enemy because he is so deceptive. When it comes to spiritual warfare sometimes he will just wear you out. You will fight and fight and fight against a particular disease or sickness for so long without seeing victory that you begin to think that maybe it’s God’s will for you to be like that.

However, that is a dangerous place to be theologically, when you let your circumstances dictate what God’s will is. You see, God’s will is not based upon my circumstances, it’s not what I feel, it’s not even what I see. But Jesus said, this then is how you should pray:

“Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

Jesus tells us that we have the right to pray, “Father, whatever is in heaven, let it be done on earth.” He says, “Your kingdom come.” And so, even though I may still wear glasses, even though I may still have pain in my back, just because I’m tired of fighting, it doesn’t change God’s will. And so, we can’t give up, but we want to let God’s will change our situation.

Therefore, we can’t make a covenant with things that God has called us to conquer. In fact, he has anointed us to confront the enemy, not to make a covenant with the enemy, but to stand against it. The apostle Peter said it this way, he said,

“Resist him, standing firm in the faith…” (1 Peter 5:9).

Because the devil will try to wear you out so that you make an agreement with your sin, with your sickness, and you just stay in that place. He says, “Let’s just get along, let us be at peace with one another, just hold on, hang in there, stay in that place and I won’t touch you.”

You see, your spiritual enemy wants you to make a deal with him so that you don’t go deeper in your faith. The problem with that is that when you come to a church, I’m going to challenge you to go deeper in the Word of God. I’m going to challenge you to put on the armor of God, to take your offensive weapon and let the enemy have it. You see, the Bible tells us to suit up so that when the day of evil comes, you’re able to stand your ground. It says, take the helmet of salvation and your offensive weapon…

“The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests…” (Ephesians 6:17-18).

This is spiritual warfare, coming against every demonic spirit, against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12).

Now, I know that we can make all kinds of excuses, like how God has been using it for our good, but we’ve got to recognize that we’re defending our enemy. And there’s only one reason why you would ever defend your enemy and that is because you made a treaty with him.

The Bible says that when the people of the land heard that Joshua had taken Ai and totally destroyed it, doing to it what he had done to Jericho, and that the people of Gibeon had made a treaty of peace with Israel, they were very much alarmed. And so, the five kings of the Amorites joined forces and moved into position against Gibeon and attacked it.

“The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: "Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us…" (Joshua 10:6).

The Bible says that Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army.

“After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. The Lord threw them into confusion before Israel, who defeated them in a great victory at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah” (Joshua 10:9-10).

When you make a covenant with your enemy, with your issue, you will always defend it even though God wants you to defeat it. Joshua felt like he had to defend the Gibeonites because he had made a covenant with them.

I hope that many of you will recognize where you’ve made a treaty with things that God has called you to defeat. Some of you have been deceived, you’ve been cheated, and you’ve been tricked because you’ve been listening to your feelings or listening to your culture instead of listening to what is happening in heaven. Some of you have partnered with the enemy but the Bible says,

“Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people” (2 Corinthians 6:14-16, NLT).

And so, my prayer is that you have only one covenant and it’s with Jesus Christ, not with the world, not with the devil, not with your sickness or your situation, but that you are faithful to your commanding officer.

The apostle Paul said it this way, he pleaded with young pastor Timothy,

“Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer” (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

And so, we don’t want to get entangled in the things of this world because we’ve been delivered from that, we’re more than conquerors. We’ve been delivered from Egypt, delivered from our sin, and as good soldiers of Jesus Christ we are defeating the enemy in the promised land.

God has given us his Spirit, he gives us his Word, and he changes our way of thinking, because we’re no longer slaves needing deliverance, we are soldiers defeating the enemy. This is a new mindset, the Bible calls it renewing your mind, Romans chapter 12 says,

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).

It’s important that we understand this, because we need to renew our minds from the mentality of a slave to the mindset of a conqueror, otherwise you will be waiting for God to deliver you from something that he’s called you to defeat. It’s a different way of thinking, but now you come with authority, now you take possession of the land with confidence, because you realize it belongs to you anyway, and you put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator (Colossians 3:10).

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