

Coastal Community Church Vision

Hope beyond our brokenness

Trust in our Risen Savior

Restoration for our city, nation, and world

Today... I choose to be changed by Jesus, I choose to seek Jesus first, and I choose to join Jesus in His resurrection work.

Ear Tug. Ask Permission

I had a conversation this week with a bunch of people and we were all trying to help our friend see a remarkable truth: You and I are not just carrying a message of God's love into this weary world, we are a message. The message isn't just in what we say, it's in how we conduct ourselves, especially when no one is looking. Does my spouse, my children, my grandchildren see through my own actions the heart of my Heavenly Father, a dad who loves. Do my coworkers and my friends and my family see me leading and loving in the same way that Jesus led the world? Jesus was given authority to do something in this world, and what he did with his authority was to love and serve so that others could live. He didn't dominate, didn't control, didn't condemn when people stepped out of line...he proved to everyone that he loved them so that there could be no argument: He died for us. He laid his life down for their sake.

How we speak the truth is just as important as the truth you speak. How you love is just as important as the feeling of love you have in your heart. The delivery is as important as what you deliver. I'll never forget being 19 years old and my task was to deliver \$800,000 worth of custom iron work from Seattle to Missoula, MT, for the bass player of Pearl Jam. I was part of the construction crew that was building his new house. My boss put his hands on my shoulders and with a quiet, gentle, and firm voice said, "You're going to drive this UHAUL at 55mph no matter who is behind you. You're going to take corners slow. You're going to drive with care and not slam on the breaks. Why?" I gulped and replied, "Because you'll kill me if I smash \$800,000 worth of work because I'm being reckless?" And nodded and replied in a tone even more quiet and more gentle, and with a smile on his face he said, "Yes. And I'll kill your family too." I believed him. Not a single piece of ironwork was damaged on that drive. How we say things matters just as much as what we say.

You are a message of hope and life and forgiveness and love. So last week Paul tells us to put to death those zombies of greed, lust, selfishness, pride, anger...those things that just keep coming back and that sabotage our love for others. Put them to death. It doesn't matter that they come back. What, you just stop doing laundry because your clothes keep on getting dirty? No! Do the laundry! Again and again!

Put to death the things that get in the way of trusting Jesus, again and again, that would make someone think, "I don't think Jesus would ever say or do this to me."

This week is about the good things we get to choose over and over again so that we can have abundant life. It's all positive. We choose the quiet strength of walking with Jesus in crazy times so that our lives are the message...so that what we say and do is literally the same as Jesus. So can I can speak to the part of your heart that desperately wants to bring life to your family? Can I speak to the part of your heart that wants to building something beautiful? Can I show you God's heart for you and teach you what it looks like to trust Jesus moment by moment? **Pray**

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Back in Paul's day, when guilds were a thing...think of them like unions...people would clothe themselves to show you what they did for a living. Paul says, "Clothe yourself with a different uniform." **Compassion** is when you open your heart to what a person is going through and let yourself feel their pain, their hurt, their joy...and then love them with that in mind.

Kindness is an actions- it is treating someone how you want to be treated. It's the smile, the generosity, the consideration of another before yourself.

Humility is knowing your great worth and also your great need. You don't have to always be right. You see others needs as just as important as your. Humility is being able to win any race but giving another person a chance to win because you know it would bless them. Humility is a quiet confidence; it's sacrificial.

Gentleness is going slow, being careful, intentional, soft. It's your tone and your pace and your awareness that your words and actions can do damage so that you speak and act in order to bless and do no harm.

Patience is rushing ahead and getting what you want exactly when you want it no matter how many people you have to run over.

Patience is waiting with faith. It's not rushing ahead but slowing down, listening, trusting, and not moving until God says to move.

So back to verse 12. Can I just say it kind of feels impossible to hold all these things in your head at one time? That's why Paul starts the verse with the truth that Jesus already loves you in the exact same way! Jesus has compassion for you; he feels what you feel. Jesus is gentle and kind towards you, putting you first and being so attentive to you. Jesus is patient with you. This is what love looks like. Then Paul turns on the turbo...

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

In all the crunchy parts of my life, I currently have friends who tell me when I hurt them...the bear with me and forgive me. Shahrads told me this week how much he loves me and also that me being distant and stressed while I micromanage him is really painful for him. That's not a fun text to get. But I'm glad I did. Shahrads bore my hurt with me, even though it was hurting him, and he told me the truth while forgiving me at the exact same time. What I didn't know was that he was doing all this in front of his daughter, Simone, telling Simone that real friends will apologize and repent when confronted. And as I apologized immediately over text to Shahrads, he was showing Simone and saying, "See, this is what true friendship looks like. Real friends apologize. Real friends forgive. Real friends talk it out and stay." Why? Because that's

what Jesus did for me. When I blew it, He didn't leave me and even now Jesus carries the weight of my pain and heartache and forgives my sins because Jesus is never tired or sick of me. Jesus loves me.

Forgive those who hurt you. Tell them the truth. Talk to them. Stick around long enough for them to wake up and change. Bear the pain of their foolishness so the relationship can continue. And if they don't repent, because you're not going to dominate and control them...you'll let them live with their choices even if that means they walk away. This isn't easy, but love isn't supposed to be easy.

Colossians 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Love people in the same way that Jesus loves you. It's not complicated. Love is not a feeling—it's an action. Love is how we live, our tone, our approach, our generosity, our expressions...we love because we are loved. Because love is an action, rather than a feeling, love is choice. And this is why Paul says 'clothe yourself' and 'put on' these things. Love is a choice.

You can turn your heart off or be compassionate. The choice is yours. Compassion brings unity. You can rush and insist or be patient. The choice is yours. Patience brings unity. You can forgive or hold onto

your bitterness and resentment. It's your choice. Forgiveness brings unity. Choose to love or not love...but only love can bring unity.

Your choice matters. A lot. When we first get to know Jesus as new believers we are overwhelmed with His love and kindness and forgiveness towards us. And it's like a home cleaning...all of a sudden the house is clean and the drapes are open and fresh air and a whole lot of lemon pledge is used and it just feels good to be home. And then all of a sudden Jesus starts remodeling. I don't know if you've ever been through a remodel or construction at your house, but it's annoying. Why? Because your rhythms are messed up. You're doing dishes in the bathtub because your kitchen is gone. You're sleeping in the living room because your bedroom is torn apart. You're watching TV in the garage because the windows are gone in your living room. We get annoyed that the patterns and little comforts of our life are all torn up when the remodel starts. We complain. We get stressed. We want it all done now. We say, "God, this healing is taking too long. This changing is too much. This repentance is exhausting. I don't want to take the time to have this wound healed." What we don't realize in our healing, in the remodel, is that Jesus is blowing the walls out of our little life and turning our little life into a palace for one reason only: The King Himself has moved in.

Paul was once the guy who wanted to fix all the problems, to get all his friends and family on the right track, who was uniquely equipped with all the passion and intelligence to point out exactly what was wrong and then to fix it. And Paul tried to fix all the wrong believing and wrong living of this friends and extended family by crushing them. He brought pain, anger, domination, condemnation...all in the attempt to stamp out what the beliefs in others he thought was bad, horrible, and evil. And what Paul realized when he got knocked off his high horse by Jesus himself was that anger, control, resentment, and threats never changed a single person...they only deform you. Jesus was the only person compassionate enough and loving enough and forgiving enough to love a murderer...Paul himself...and transform His heart by moving into it.

Thus Paul says over and over and over again in this letter....Love others just like you're being loved by Jesus. In other words, let the Jesus move in...here in your heart...and let Jesus love you so that you can have love to give away. Or as Paul puts it:

Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

You want to bring peace to your home? Let Jesus give you His peace. Be thankful Jesus made peace with you and you'll all have all the patience you need with the twits that are acting as you once did.

Yeah, Andy, but the people in my life actually need to be told the truth. I can't just let them run over me. I need good boundaries. I need to tell them they are hurting me. I need to speak to them in such a way that they will understand and get it. Paul understands. Thus he says:

Colossians 3:16 Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense.

You want to speak the truth to your family and friends and coworkers? Then let the Gospel message soak into your own heart first. Yes, you're more broken than you want to admit. You have changes that need to happen. And you also are more loved than you could ever dare to hope. So when you confront those in your life, speak to them in the same way Jesus speaks the hard truths you don't want to hear: with love, gentleness, kindness, and compassion; with forgiveness ready to give.

Zoom out for me for a moment. Take a breath. Look at the big picture with me. God himself now dwells with us. Our life and purpose and way forward in every situation is found in asking Him what to do next. Here's what I'm learning in my life right now: In times of crisis, my first instinct is to go it alone and push everyone, including Jesus, out so I deal with the crisis by myself. It's a terrible strategy that I'm unlearning right now in real time. And so when Shahrads or other friends confront me, I

get to apologize and then thank them for sticking with me despite me pushing them out. Paul says: Do the same with God. Thank God for sticking with you, providing for you, forgiving you, and loving you through the moments when you push Him out.

Colossians 3:16-17 And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

Worship isn't about us. Worship isn't about whether we like the music or whether it's the style we enjoy the most. Worship is simply the chance to turn towards God and to say thank you. Don't ask yourself if you really enjoyed worship. Ask God, at the end of worship, if He felt loved and appreciated by you. Thus all of our lives become an act of worship...our words, our actions, it's all for the purpose of expressing to God in every way our gratitude that Jesus has chosen us...moved into our hearts...forgiven us...loved us...exactly when we didn't deserve it.

You have a quiet strength in these crazy times and it's Jesus himself. You're not just speaking a message; you are the message. As you pray and ask Jesus what to do in each step you take, you will live and love in such a way that people will finally understand the compassion, patience, forgiveness, and kindness of our Heavenly Father's heart. Set your heart and mind focused on Jesus because Jesus knows every inch of that

narrow path that will bring you through the fire. Drive slow, follow his directions, and do your best to not damage His precious cargo. God won't kill you if you do...or your family. In fact, the hope and wonder of the Gospel is this: when you damaged everything and everyone around you, God himself paid the price so that you may live. God himself died in your place... because He loves you. So we sing...we sing to give Him thanks. We sing to honor and bless Him. We sing to offer our hearts and entire lives to Him once again. It's the best gift we can give our Savior.

Pray

Table Talk

Benediction