

Thought For The Week

Articles: [Says Who? - 400 words](#), [1200 words](#)

Acting in the Authority of Christ

A Deep Dive into Colossians 3 and Biblical Living

John's sermon on Colossians 3:12-17 delivers a profound message on Christian conduct, rooted in Paul's epistle to the church in Colossae. As the apostle writes under the Holy Spirit's inspiration, he addresses "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ" in this ancient city, akin to other New Testament letters like those to Philippi, Galatia, Rome, Ephesus, and Thessalonica. The passage urges believers to clothe themselves in Christ-like attributes: tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with and forgiving one another as Christ forgave. Love crowns these as the "bond of perfection," with God's peace ruling hearts, thankfulness prevailing, and Christ's Word dwelling richly through wisdom, teaching, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. All actions, in word or deed, must honor the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

John begins by unpacking the sermon's closing phrase: "whatever you do... do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." He likens it to the authoritative command "stop in the name of the law," tracing its origins to 1829 London under Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel. Peel's "Bobbies" or "Peelers" enforced order, commanding suspects to halt under legal authority. Similarly, "in the name of" denotes delegated power from a higher source. For Christians, this means putting on Christ and acting solely according to God's will, not personal desires. As Romans 13:13-14 instructs, believers should walk properly, avoiding revelry, drunkenness, lewdness, lust, strife, and envy, while making no provision for the flesh.

Contextualizing within Colossians 3, John notes Paul speaks to those "raised with Christ" through baptism (referencing chapter 2). Believers must seek heavenly things, setting minds above earthly ones, for they have died to sin and their lives are hidden in Christ. Upon Christ's return, they will appear with Him in glory. Thus, they must mortify earthly members: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness (idolatry). John delves into "passion," from the Greek "pathos," meaning inordinate, disordered affection or lust—contrasting it with positive uses like "passion for excellence" in modern contexts. This ungodly passion invites God's wrath on the disobedient, a path believers once walked but must now abandon.

Verse 8 commands putting off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, and lying, having shed the "old man" for the "new man" renewed in God's image. Here, distinctions like Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, slave or free dissolve—Christ is all in all. As God's elect, believers don the virtues listed, forgiving as Christ did.

John probes: Does this mean Christians can do anything, claiming it's "in Jesus' name"? Emphatically no, as human desires often conflict with Scripture. He cites 2 Timothy 3:16-17: All Scripture, inspired by God, profits for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, equipping the man of God completely. Thus, actions must align with biblical authority.

To illustrate misuse of authority, John turns to the Old Testament. In Leviticus 8:31-32, God commands Aaron and sons to boil and eat consecration ram flesh at the tabernacle door, burning remnants. Yet, in 1 Samuel 2:12-17, Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas—corrupt Levite priests who "did not know the Lord"—abused this. While meat boiled, their servant thrust a three-pronged fork into the pot, taking whatever came up for the priests, even before burning the fat. Worse, they demanded raw meat, threatening force if refused. This sin was "very great," causing people to abhor God's offerings. Though acting "in God's name," they defied His decrees, showing authority must follow divine intent.

Echoing Hebrews 1:1-4, John notes God once spoke through prophets but now through His Son, the express image of God, who purged sins and sits at His right hand, superior to angels with a more excellent name. Christians act under this name but only as authorized.

Observing the wicked prosper, John admits discouragement but warns against envy. Psalm 92:6-7 declares senseless fools ignore that evildoers, flourishing like grass, face eternal destruction. Life's brevity—James 4:14 calls it a vanishing mist—demands immediate decisions. Philippians 2:10-11 affirms every knee will bow and tongue confess Jesus as Lord. Hophni and Phinehas, long dead, rejected truth for self-will; no reincarnation or "do-over" exists, as some falsely believe.

Judgment is certain: 2 Corinthians 5:10 states all appear before Christ's seat, receiving according to deeds done in the body, good or bad. For Christians, assurance comes in Hebrews 4:14-16: Jesus, our ascended high priest, empathizes with weaknesses, tempted yet sinless, inviting bold approach to God's throne for mercy and grace. Conversely, Hebrews 10:26-27 warns: Deliberate sin after knowing truth leaves no sacrifice, only fearful judgment and consuming fire for God's enemies.

Quoting Theodore Roosevelt—"In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing... the worst thing you can do is nothing"—John urges proactive choice. The sermon's title, "Says Who?," reveals it's "you and me." God opened the door through Christ's sacrifice and resurrection—proving His identity via miracles and fulfilled prophecy. Yet, we decide: Follow His specified path to Christianity or not.

Scripture's reliability—bolstered by manuscripts, archaeology, prophecy, and scientific foreknowledge—provides objective truth. To act in Jesus' name means aligning with His will, as revealed in the Bible. John closes by inviting response, emphasizing now is the time for decision, whether believer or seeker.

This sermon challenges modern complacency, calling for lives to be authentically surrendered to Christ's authority, clothed in virtue, and directed by divine correction. In a world of fleeting pursuits, it reminds us that eternity hinges on choices made today.

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Living in the Name of the Lord

Lessons from Colossians 3

In his sermon on Colossians 3:12-17, John emphasizes the transformative call for Christians to live under the authority of Jesus Christ. Drawing from Paul's letter to the saints in Colossae, John explains that believers, as the "elect of God, holy and beloved," must "put on" virtues like tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, and forgiveness. Above all, love binds these qualities in perfection, allowing God's peace to rule in hearts and the Word of Christ to dwell richly through teaching, psalms, and songs.

John illustrates the phrase "in the name of the Lord Jesus" by comparing it to historical police commands like "stop in the name of the law," originating in 19th-century England under Sir Robert Peel. This signifies acting with delegated authority, not personal whim. Christians are to embody Christ, as Romans 13:13-14 urges, walking properly and making no provision for fleshly lusts.

Referencing Colossians 3's earlier verses, John notes believers have died to sin through baptism and must put off vices like fornication, uncleanness, passion (defined as disordered lust), anger, and lying. He warns against misusing authority, citing the corrupt sons of Eli in 1 Samuel 2:12-17. These priests, Hophni and Phinehas, abused sacrifices by demanding raw meat prematurely, leading to great sin and abhorrence of God's offerings.

John cautions against envying the wicked who seem to prosper, quoting Psalm 92:6-7: evildoers flourish like grass but face eternal destruction. Life is fleeting, a "mist" per James 4:14, and all will bow before Jesus (Philippians 2:10-11). He urges immediate decisions for Christ, as judgment awaits (2 Corinthians 5:10).

For believers, Hebrews 4:14-16 offers assurance: Jesus, our empathetic high priest, invites confident approach to God's throne for mercy. Yet, deliberate sin post-truth brings fearful judgment (Hebrews 10:26-27).

Ultimately, John stresses that "says who?" points to personal choice. God provides the path through Scripture—supported by manuscripts, archaeology, and prophecy—but individuals decide to follow, acting only as authorized in Jesus' name. This sermon calls for authentic Christian living, aligned with divine will.

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