



**Christ Over All**  
**Part 5 – A New Way of Life**  
Pastor Ted Cunningham

We are turning the page and looking at the application from all of the theology that we learn in chapters one and two. And as we dig into this today, we're looking at a new way of living. And then next week, we're going to jump into a new way of loving.

I have this obsession now. I can't fully understand where it came from, but I've really gotten into power tools lately. It all started with buying a battery powered blower at Lowes earlier this year that came with a battery. I started using it, and I told Amy, "We will no longer be held back by extension cords. It's never going to happen." I didn't realize how many tools now come with a battery. I even saw a commercial yesterday for Ryobi... This is Kobalt, my brand, just because I bought the first tool as a Kobalt. Ryobi says they have 175 tools now that are powered by a battery. I didn't even know there were such things as 175 tools, but I'm well on my way. Can I get an amen on that one? Most of them I don't need, most of them I don't use, but I have them at home.

I bought this drill after I got the blower and then... Y'all, I bought a chain saw that runs on a battery. I will no longer be a slave to gummed up carburetors. Can I get an amen on that one? I will never have to mix oil and gas and sit there for hours trying to get a weed eater going. It's over; I own one that has a battery. The guy at Lowes has so gotten to know me. I try to sneak into that section and I just try to look to see what else I don't need. But now the guy goes, "Hey, Ted."

This week, I got... They have a shop vac that runs off of a battery. I called Amy and I go, "Do we need this?" She said, "What do you think?" Well, we got it. We're waiting for the first big spill. I can't wait because it runs on a battery.

So, my question today for you.... I don't know about you... This one is at three quarters, and I love the dots because when I have a battery that's full, I feel it myself. When it's down to one beep or one little dot, I feel that too. It's kind of like your phone. Here's what I'm experiencing today with a lot of our church family. I'm seeing it today with a lot of Christians in our country and around the world: Christians running on low batteries... dead batteries.

I want to start with asking this question this morning. How is your battery? Are you running on low or dead battery? I received texts after the first service saying, "Very low, very low. It's been low for a while." Many are fatigued. Today, as we jump into Chapter 3, where the source of living with power in your faith comes from and what we have to be careful with. There is something we need to be very careful of and make sure we avoid if we're going to live as powered up, fully charged Christians today.

My buddy, Brit Windel, pastors DayBreak Church in Downtown Kenosha, Wisconsin. So, you can imagine what he's been dealing the last couple of months. He planted the church six years ago. Today we say happy birthday to DayBreak. Your generosity has supported that church plant over the years. When the riots hit Kenosha, I knew Brit was going to be in for the leadership of his life.

We do a replenish retreat every year and we rotate in our church staff, but then we invite pastors and church leaders that we know have had a difficult season. This year, we had no idea when we were planning it for October, where our leaders and their batteries would be by the time they showed up on Monday. We just do 48 hours.

We were finishing that retreat on Wednesday and I got this text from Brit up in Kenosha Wisconsin. He says, "How do you remain chipper and positive leading in 2020? I'm stressed out of my mind these days." I asked permission to share his text. He goes, "This is why people don't text you, Ted. You put it up on the screen."

I'm seeing chipper. I bet they have a battery powered one of those too now that I see the word chipper. I'll probably get that today.

"I'm stressed out of my mind these days." I know we just took offering, but if I can just say thank you to Woodland Hills. With your generosity, we were able to send a check to Brit and Stacie up at DayBreak. If you ever saw the churches and ministries feeding the volunteers that were cleaning up and feeding law enforcement, your generosity went a long way in Kenosha during those riots, so I say thank you for that. Brit is celebrating their 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a church and we're saying happy birthday, happy anniversary to their church today.

A lot of Christians are feeling this a lot right now. They are fatigued and running on low batteries. As we think about this season, as we think about what we've been going through, there are too many believers... People have asked me, "What's the church like right now?" "Ted, are you frustrated, are you tired?" "Are people exhausting you?" I think the sad part for me... Again, I'll say it. As you know, it can kind of go without saying. I have a ton of opinions just like you have a ton of opinions. I've got opinions on the virus. I've got opinions on the mask. I've got an opinion on the election. I've got opinions.

But just like in marriage, my opinions do not get me in trouble with Amy. My approach gets me in trouble with Amy. We have a different opinion on a lot of unnecessary purchases, but it's in my approach with her. I think the sad thing for me, when it comes to approach these days, because I think a lot of the bitterness, the rage, the anger that I'm seeing in followers of Jesus is coming from a place of being low or dead battery. They've got nothing in the tank. They know who the true and only source of life is, but the question for us today is are you plugged into your true and only source of life? Is He truly your source? We're saying *Christ Over All*.

I have a lot of opinions right now, but I'm sad and I'm seeing a lot of Christians today that are so fatigued and drained it's coming out of their mouth and out in their behavior. Actually, it's just bizarre to me. Sometimes I see lost people acting more Christlike than Christians in the way they care for people and

the way they love. It's bizarre to me, follower of Jesus, we need to get back to a place where we're living from a full cup, a full battery.

Today, as talk about temptation, as we talk about fighting sin, a lot of people just want to fight it with willpower. "We're just going to muscle our way through this." "I'm going to say no to the stuff I know I shouldn't be doing and yes to the stuff I should be doing." But at this church, we do not believe in willpower. We do not believe in willpower. We don't run on willpower; we run on His power.

That's what we want to look at in Colossians 3. If you have your Bible's, turn there. We're going to jump into Verse 1. It's very important today, as we look at these first eight verses of Chapter 3. Where we start in Verses 1-4 is where we stay as we get into Verses 5-8. The priority in Verses 1-4, that's the "yes" faith. That's who our true and only source of life is.

As we get into the list of the things we don't do... Many of you grew up in a church, grew up in a home that faith was defined by the "don't do" lists. Faith was defined by don't say that, don't do that, stop it, quit it, don't touch that, don't eat that, don't drink that. And everything was don't, don't, don't. That became the priority for many of you and many walked away from the faith. The majority of the youth group I grew up in are no longer serving Christ, no longer walking out their faith that they proclaimed as children. Many of them said, "I can't do this anymore." I would argue and I submit to you it's because they no longer knew who the true and only source of life was. As Adam and Shay shared two weeks ago, works will never save you. What you do or don't do will never save you; it does not have the power to save. Only Jesus has the power to save. Your works are the overflow of your salvation, not the source of it.

We read this in Colossians 3 – ***1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ...*** The first four verses are all about the death and resurrection of Jesus and our place in that. ***...set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*** We're going to break this first down into three parts, look at it in theological terms so we can know where we're starting today, where we're rooting today, and where we are going to continue.

Jesus is at the right hand of God, the place of highest honor, dignity, power, and authority. Not below, not above God, but acting as God and God acting through him. What does it mean that he is seated? This is very important and why Paul uses this word *seated*. He's not just at the right hand of the father, he is seated. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the father because seated means his great, decisive, saving work is finished. There's nothing you can do, there's nothing I can do to add to it or take away from it. His work is completely finished. Just like you and I would complete a task and we would take a seat, He is in that position. The work of the cross is complete.

What we want to look at is if he's seated at the right had of the father, why does Paul tell the Colossians set your heart? In a second, we're going to see to set your mind, set you will, set your emotions on the saving work of Jesus. This is an ongoing decision to fix your attention. We're going to see it twice today. Fix your attention... Don't just start with faith in Jesus. Remember what we said early on. The gospel is not just for lost people, so they become saved, the gospel is for saved people too. It is an ongoing, fixing our heart and our mind on things above, as we are going to see.

This week, as part of our ministry retreat, we like to care for these leaders, and Gregg and Janell Bettis, who were in the last service... I guess you're just partying in all three services today, Greg and Janell. They came and we were able to take them out to eat at Top of the Rock. There were 14 of us. It was a beautiful setting. If you've been there, you know it's a beautiful setting. If you haven't been there, you've seen plenty of pictures online and on Facebook posts. We were able to be in Johnny's Turkey Federation Room. It's just unbelievable.

We were all gathered around, we had ordered appetizers, but no food had come yet. The bagpipes started. If you don't know, that means the sunset is happening. Gregg, who I think does a better job than I do by far of living in awe, wanted to get everybody outside to see the sunset over the chapel.

Amy asked me, "Are you going to go see the sunset?" And then this flowed out of my mouth because it was in my heart. She asked, "Are you going to go see the sunset?" I said, "I've already seen one." I thought, *Where did that just come from?* Because I can see another one. Now, truth be told, I needed to be there to receive the appetizers. I wanted to make sure somebody was there, so we knew where to set everything, and we got everything that we needed. I thought about that later thinking how many of us take that same approach when it comes to coming to God's word.

Lance spoke last week, and he shared his ministry retreat. He said, "Research shows us that to find satisfaction and joy in life, you need to spend time every day in awe. As you're running, as you're going about, as you're scurrying here and there, just pausing, even in three seconds of awe, to look at a sunset. But for the follower of Jesus, it goes way beyond that. We know the sunset, but we know the one that created it. We fix our attention and our minds on Him.

I just wonder how many of us hear the truth of the realities of heaven. We hear the truth of God's word. We hear who we are in Christ as we are going to read in Verses 2-4, and have moments as believer where we go, "I know that. I've heard that before. This is nothing new." That's like me sitting there going I'm not going to see the sunset because I've already seen one. To set your mind, to set your heart on things above, meaning it's an ongoing decision to reflect on the finished work of Jesus as he is in his place of authority. Look at what Verse 2 goes on to say. We looked at setting our hearts; what about concentrating our minds.

**2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things...** This is very important. How do we get through difficult seasons? We're not called, followers of Jesus, to fix our hearts and minds on what's going on right now. That's called the news. We are called to fix our hearts and minds on that which is above, and keep the ongoing attention focused there. **3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God...** I love this word *hidden*. It really has two meanings. Hidden, in that it is concealed and it is safe. You are in Christ, hidden, concealed, safe.

**4 When Christ, who is your life...** What does Paul tell the Areopagus? In him we live and move and have our being. When he ***...appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*** This is a reminder to us that you and I do not live in glorified bodies yet. Meaning we will experience much upon this earth and if we are not careful, our attention and our focus and our ongoing decision will be focused on everything around us rather on things above. He's calling us here to fix our attention.

I know I get poked at a lot for obsessing over funerals, but funerals are recalibrating events. They get us thinking about eternity. It's why we read in Ecclesiastes 7 – take to heart the death of someone. Why? Because death is the destiny of every man and the living should take this to heart.

I heard this story this week. Lance Witt, who spoke last week, was a pastor in Arkansas in his twenties. A man in the church died and his music minister... This is a true story. The music minister asked the widow, "We'd like to play music that your husband enjoyed at his service. What was your husband's favorite song?" The widow said, "He loves Jingle Bells." Would you raise your hand if you've heard Jingle Bells at a funeral? A funeral in July?

The music minister was like... He had the same heart that we have here at this church. We love to honor families during this time, so he looked it up. There are no versions of Jingle Bells for funerals. You kind of have to make that one up as you go. But he got up and he gave it his best shot at this man's funeral. Can you imagine the people gathered at that funeral when the music minister starts singing Jingle Bells, trying to do it in somber way? After the funeral, the widow comes up to him and says, "I don't know what I was thinking. His favorite song is "When They Ring those Golden Bells." Now that's more fitting for a funeral.

We are to set our minds, concentrate on the eternal, not the temporal. Whatever difficult season or stage of life you're in, set your heart, set your mind on things above. That is the priority. And you have to keep those first four verses in as we go to the last four verses this morning because sometimes in the church... If you grew up in church, verses 5-8 may have been the emphases, they may have been the priority. Not here. This is the overflow of what we just read in verses 1-4

**5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...** Why? Because you are hidden with Christ. The focus is there. **...sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.** I heard a great definition this week of this word *idolatry* in Verse 5. It's seeking power and satisfaction from things upon the earth, rather than hearts and minds fixed on Jesus. Many of us grew up with this list and this list was a priority.

**6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.** But now your life is in Christ. **8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.**

Many of us had these two lists as a priority in our churches growing up. I'm convinced it's one of the primary reasons we live powerless lives. We live on one dot, a quarter battery, or a dead battery. Why? Powerless Christianity prioritizes the "don't do" list over all. But Christ is over all. He is our source of life, not the lists we do or don't do.

One campus pastor with Campus Outreach, Matt Bradner I heard him say it this way and I love it, "Christian power comes from the Yes (Jesus) we pursue, not the No we avoid."

Amy and I have been reflecting on this all week as parents. When we sit down and try to talk to our teenagers... I know there are a lot of nos. There are a lot of guidelines. There is a lot that goes into our

home, but does it always begin and end with Jesus? He is our life. The no is the protection. The no is the overflow, but Jesus is the priority.

Matt Bradner tells a great story about his ministry on college campuses. He says this, *“As a campus ministry leader, I would regularly ask the student leaders, “Are there any girls that you have an interest in dating?” Although I had heard many responses over the years, nothing compared to the one I heard one summer afternoon in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.*

*“To be honest,” he replied, “I don’t think marriage is for me. It seems like marriage is all about saying no to stuff. ‘No’ to spontaneous decisions with the guys and midnight runs to Waffle House. ‘No’ to no-shave November or dressing however you want. ‘No’ to this; ‘no’ to that. I just don’t think it’s for me.”*

*After pausing for a second so he would know I heard him, I calmly replied, “You obviously haven’t met your yes.”*

*Over the next couple of years, I had the privilege of walking alongside this young Christian leader as he fell in love with an amazing woman. I’ll never forget the day he told me he was ready to propose. I suddenly put on a serious face and said in a somber tone, “Wait, are you sure about this? Think about all you are saying ‘no’ to. Midnight runs to Waffle House, no-shave November, untucked and unwashed T-shirts — are you sure you want to do this?” We both erupted in laughter. The no’s that he once felt so daunting now seemed so insignificant in light of his yes.*

There are many of you here at this church today visiting or you are guests, maybe coming for a while. The “nos” are so daunting. This list is so daunting. That’s because your life is not yet rooted in Christ. It’s because you’ve not said “yes” to Christ. He is the priority.

Some of you grew up with a “no” faith. You’re still pursuing a “no” faith or a “no” Christianity. Matt says, *“The “no” Christian faith, when you live this life, is mainly a conception of what not to do. When successful Christians living, in area of your life, is reduced to not doing something, not saying something, not looking here, not thinking about that. But we are yes faith. We are yes Christians.”* He says, *“After pointing out his list of “do nots” and the fact that they have no value...”* We read this is chapter 2 of Colossians and we’re seeing it again, *they have no value in stopping the flesh.”* For those of you in recovery, I just want not to encourage you. I know I get in trouble when I say this, but please hear and let the words speak to you through it. We do not believe in a higher power; we believe in the higher power. Call on the name of Jesus in your recovery.

He says, *“Paul immediately directs the church to what does bring power to your life and that is pursue Jesus, period. Seek after Jesus by setting your mind on who he is to you and for you and who you are in him. Set your mind on the things of God and his good purposes in this world.”*

Matt Bradner ends by saying this, *“What we seek to avoid doesn’t really matter if we’re not clear on whom we are pursuing.”*

What happens when you pursue the “no,” though. I just reflected in three areas of application and how we can apply prioritizing the yes faith, yes to Jesus, hearts and minds focused on Jesus. Hearts and minds focused on who we are in Christ, hidden in Christ, safe in Christ, concealed in Christ. Daily making the decision, the ongoing decision to place our attention, our concentration, our heart, our emotions there.

When we seek power from the “no,” Christians have a mouth full of scripture and heart full of hate. You’ve seen this maybe online. I think that’s one of the exhausting parts of what I’m seeing today among the leaders, and, frankly, members of our church. I see the attacks and the name calling and the “F” bomb dropping from people who have signed membership covenants. What? Don’t allow a pandemic and don’t allow an election to turn your hearts, to turn your attention, to turn your minds towards what’s going on here. You want to get through this pandemic? And you want to get through this election? Focus your mind, set your mind, set your heart on things above.

**When we seek power from the “no,” churches focus on rules, not relationships.** We are about a relationship in Jesus and people will constantly ask us, “What’s your policy on this?” “We ain’t got one.” “Well you should have one.” “Nah.” Sometimes people with money are like, “Are they bad with money?” No, we have accountants, and we do audits on the money. We don’t play loose and liberal with money. We use generally accepted accounting principles. Everybody wants the rules. What’s this church’s list of “do nots?” We stick pretty clear to the scripture.

In our home, if the scripture doesn’t give it a hard no, we don’t give it a hard no. We want our kids to know to focus their attention on Christ. Hearts and minds on Jesus.

This one really got Amy and I this week. As we sit down to guide our children... That’s what I’ve always loved... I said it at the first part of this series with Joe White. What I love about Joe White is he begins his conversation and he ends his conversation with Jesus. Begins and ends and Jesus is all throughout.

As a parent, I want that. Whatever I’m saying to my kids, whatever I’m instructing my kids. I’m at the season of life where I’m moving way out of the control with teenagers and moving into influence. May my mouth constantly be sharing a relationship with Jesus. May my words constantly be pointing my kids to Jesus because if I prioritize the “no,” if I start seeking power from the “no” as a parent... And if you do this as a parent, you’re just going to raise well behaved heathens. There’s not a person in here that wants that. We’re not set out in this church to raise moral children. We’re set out in this church to lead our children to Jesus, to lead our children to Christ, and let the rest be the overflow. Some of you are like, “He’s a good kid, he’s a good kid.” I have a better question for you. Is he a believer in Christ Jesus?

I forgot the pastor who said it, but it’s another sacred echo in my heart. So many of us are focused on getting our kids into Harvard more than heaven. May our focus be on pointing our kids to Jesus, raising a good kid is not enough for me. Kids who know and love Jesus and have their hearts and minds fixed on Jesus.

The bottom line this morning is this. **There is no power in the “no.”** We call this salvation by addition, salvation by subtraction. There are some of you who think you just have to add a bunch of good stuff to our life to find Jesus and get saved. No, you need to place faith alone in Christ alone to be saved.

Some of you are like, “If I just stop doing a bunch of stuff. The two list you just shared, that’s a good place to start. I’m just going to will that.” You will not ever have the willpower to do it. But through His power, you can. Because there is no power in the “no.” That’s salvation by subtraction. It doesn’t work. Salvation comes through one person. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the father except through me.” There is no power in the no. There is only power, and your power comes from Jesus. And that you, this week, would set your hearts and minds, whatever you do. To turn on the news, limit it, but you’ll get through this election, you’ll get through this pandemic, you’ll get through the loss in your business because you and I are not called to fix our attention and our mind on that. We are called to concentrate on the eternal reality of heaven, not temporal circumstances. We process everything that happens to us upon this earth in the light of eternity.

With that, I’m going to invite you to pray with me. Father, we want to be a church that has power. We want to be believers that have power. We want parents to have power. We want parents to raise children that have power and power that only comes from Jesus. May we leave here today, heading into our week, heading into work, heading into relationships with hearts and minds fixed on Jesus. He completed the work on the cross. There’s nothing I must do, there’s nothing I can do, there’s nothing I can try that will bring salvation. That work has been completed in Jesus. I have received that work. I have received Jesus as my savior. We have watched many step into the water today to point people to Jesus because they made the decision to follow Jesus, and now they are pointing to others to say, “I have followed Jesus. Will you?”

I pray for the one that has visited churches, has grown up in a church, has been to this church for a little bit, but they don’t have a relationship with Christ. That today would be the day that they realize the list, that is the overflow, and they put to death that. But it begins with lives that are hidden in Christ Jesus, concealed and safe in Christ because in him we live and move and have our being. I pray that if they have not placed faith in Jesus, that today would be the day that they confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that he has been raised from the dead that they will be saved.

Thank you for the work you are doing here. May we be believers with batteries fully charged as we go throughout our week, as we raise our children, as minister to one another in this congregation. We love you, we are grateful for the good work that you’re doing here. Continue to use this church family and this community and to the ends of the earth.

We pray all of this in the name of Jesus. And everyone agreed and said... Amen.