

Colossians 3:12-17; 5th Sunday of Easter [Cantate] - 24.4.2016

Doing everything - in the Name of Jesus

¹² Since God chose you to be the holy people whom he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

¹⁶ Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father. [NLT]

What is your 'lifesong'? What is it that determines whether your life is in tune? This is not simply a question of your musical abilities. Rather it is the question of what it is that determines how you think, speak and act.

We are Christians, yet - just as it was when Paul first wrote this letter - we need the reminder to

Do everything in the Name of Jesus

Doing everything in the Name of Jesus - this appeal is made to us, because we have been made new in the image of God. God has chosen us to be the people - his children - whom he loves. That is what is to determine how our lifesong now sounds.

In the verses leading up to our passage Paul writes that we have been raised to new life through Christ. Now our life is to reflect the fact that we have received the most incredible news of all times: the news that God has given us this new life as a gift - and he makes it possible for us to live this new life. This message is to determine the tune by which we live - the song we sing with our lives.

When learning to play a musical instruments one has to practise scales over and over. The scale here is somewhat different from the one you may have learnt

then, but it needs practise nonetheless. The notes which determine your and my lifesong are these: **you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.** ¹³ **You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you.**

From these verses it becomes clear, that our lifesong is not sung in isolation - it is part of our relationship with the people around us. Those people who have gone through difficult times; those who have not been loved - and may even be difficult to love. It's about people who have hurt us - and that we are prepared to forgive them.

This is not meant to be a new law for Christians: be merciful, kind, humble, gentle, patient and forgiving - and then you will be true Christians! When this is an expectation which we must fulfill, the sound of our lifesong will go horribly astray. We will sound like an instrument that is out of tune, because these notes don't just lie in us!

Thankfully it is not what we do to make a sweet sound of our lives, but what God has done for us: He has chosen us to be **the holy people whom he loves**. God has made us new - and he lovingly tunes our life so that we can bring forth a lovely sound. Because we have been loved, the way in which we deal with one another has been changed. Because God has forgiven us, we are able to treat those who have hurt us differently.

Central to this new sound for our lifesong is love. Paul writes: **Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony.** Not the love which we struggle to find in our relationships, but the love which God has showered on us. This love of God is what is to 'hold us together' - it is this love which brings our life into tune again. Where God's love holds me, we will be at peace with one another - because this love is always concerned with doing what is in the best interest of others. The thing is, we don't just sing just lifesong as a solo - it is part of a whole. And when we all together are in harmony, the sound is like a wonderful symphony.

Do everything in the Name of Jesus. Those who play in an orchestra or a band,

need to tune their instruments- even after the break this has to be repeated. When an instrument is moved to a different climate zone this tuning is even more important. The same is true for our lives - in changing circumstances we have to find the one thing that keeps our lifesong in tune. That is why we need to calibrate our life on Jesus: **Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise.**

We have much to read and do each day. If our lives are to be really renewed and in tune with God's will for us, however, his word in all its richness needs to be central in our lives. It is his Word that must determine how we live, as - through the Word - we allow him to live in us.

So, as we seek for answers to the questions of our lives and the lives of those around us, **use his words to teach and counsel each other.** We pride ourselves on being free to do as we choose - and mostly we only recognise much too late the result of our actions: the pain and hurt we cause, because we make decisions which seem right for us at the moment, but so often lead us down the path of destruction.

Hearing what God's Word says - for us, and for others. Does that not mean finding opportunities to hear and speak about his Word together with others? We, after all, are not just a group of people which happens to meet together here once a week - like a book club. We are family. We belong together as people who have been brought together in this body of Christ, which we call the church. We may all come from different homes, even from different cultural backgrounds, but what unites us all is the peace Christ has brought into our lives.

God has given us a rich new life, and sometimes the only way we can respond to what he has brought about in us, is to **sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.**

Not everyone has a tuneful voice - and we may be a bit self-conscious when sitting next to someone who is quite musical. God - who gave us our voice and the musical abilities we have - yet, to God it is not so much the wonderful

singing voice which matters, but the grateful heart from which our song comes.

Doing everything in the Name of Jesus - where he determines the sound of our lifesong, things will sound quite different in our lives. There are many things which may cause us to be out of tune - but as the peace of God becomes, and is, part of our lives, our life will be in tune with God - and that will be a wonderful sound!