

SUBVERSIVE COMMUNITY

(Colossians 3:11-4:6)

Intro: This last section of Colossians sees Paul dealing with a bulk of topics that highlight what a subversive community of Christ ought to look like.

READ Colossians 3:11

Q. Paul calls the Colossian church to be uniquely inclusive, denying the status-markers that often caused division in Roman communities. He outlines four social statuses that often caused division: Ethnic (Jew or Gentile), Religious (circumcised, uncircumcised), Racial (Barbarian, Scythian*) and Economic (slave or free). How can we at CBC become a more inclusive community by breaking down these social statuses?

**note: barbarian and Scythian referred to anyone who was not part of the Roman Empire. Scythians were a race that Romans despised. Paul mentions this group assumedly because there were Scythian believers in the church in Colossae.*

READ Colossians 3:12-15

Q. Paul unpacks a list of virtues that all believers (Holy and dearly loved & God's chosen people) are to be clothed in: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, forgiveness, love and peace. What do they tell us about God?

How do each one of these virtues stand out from the rest of our dominant culture?

READ Colossians 3:13-17

Q. Walter Brueggemann says that all worship is “*world-making*”, meaning, our worldviews are made and shaped as we worship both corporately and individually. How would singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs shape our worldviews as Christians? How would admonishing each other with all wisdom shape our worldviews? How would worshiping God in *whatever we do, whether word or deed* shape other people's worldviews to conform with God's story for their lives?

READ Colossians 3:18-4:1

Here, Paul has radically subverted the dominant view of Greco-Roman Philosophers such as Aristotle, who openly stated: *For the free rule the slave, the male the female, the man the child in different ways.*

We must remember that this section of the letter was read out publicly to the church in Colossae, with husbands, wives, children, slaves and masters all present. Paul radically chooses to address the women, children and slaves publicly and holds the husbands, fathers and masters to account with strong words. By doing this he has subverted the dominant voices of the Roman Philosophers and stood up for those seen as inferior in society.

Q. In what ways are we called to subvert the dominant public voices of the 21st century by standing up for those seen as inferior?

READ Colossians 4:2-6

Q. The early Christian church grew astronomically because it prayed rigorously and always looked to embracing outsiders. In looking at these verses, what are some of things we can apply to our prayer life and missional practice at CBC?