

Col 3:12-17

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Paul said in Eph that the Lord chose us before the foundation of the world

- that we should be holy
- and without blame before Him in love.

Jesus said in John that, no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.

When God tugs at a person's heart,

- He's allowing them to choose.
- And He makes that choice easier
- by Him choosing us first.

Jesus said to the disciples in Jn 15, You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit,

God's words to Israel through Moses help us to understand the meaning of salvation by grace.

Deut 7:7-8

7 The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

We no longer belong to this world, we belong to Christ.

- 1 Cor 6 says that we've been purchased,

John Newton once said when speaking of the Christian life:

I am not what I ought to be...

- Not what I might be...
- Not what I wish to be...
- I am not what I hope to be;

[But I am] not what I once was, a child of sin, and slave of the devil...

- I think I can truly say with the apostle,
- “By the grace of God I am what I am”.¹

Not only has God set us apart, but we are beloved by Him.

The deepest form of love is agape love.

- And that’s what “beloved” means in this verse, “to be loved.”

This verb “beloved” is only used 6 times in the NT with the meaning “to be loved.”

John 14:21

21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me **will be loved** by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

Paul used the word in a negative sense when speaking to the Corinthians.

2 Cor 12:15

And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

Paul, Silas and Timothy remembered the Thessalonians always in their prayers without ceasing.

Why did this trio of men pray continually for the church of Thessalonica?

He gives us the reason in verses 4 & 5:

1 Thess 1:4-5

4 knowing, **beloved brethren**, your election by God. (Paul understood the church was beloved of the Lord and they were elected by God. But then Paul says, not only did we know that, but we lived it before you) 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

Love is an action word,

Paul was encouraging the church to stand fast.

¹ Barnes, M. (2023) *John Henry Newton: A Guide to His Life and Writings*. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife (Faithlife Author Guides).

2 Thess 2:13

13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, **brethren beloved** by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

Rev 20:9

9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the **beloved city (Jerusalem)**. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

Col 3:12

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Paul is saying, since we are God's elect, holy and **beloved**, we are to put on, **that is, to EXEMPLIFY the following,** tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Each of these describe what should be Christian characters.

tender mercies -

Col 3:10

10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.

Tender mercies speak of compassion.

The word compassion as used here comes from the Greek word "oiktirmós" meaning "the pity or compassion" one shows for the suffering of others.

Phil 2:1-2

1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

The King James version of verse 12 says to put on the bowels of mercies.

In other words, put on the intestines of mercies. This includes the heart, the lungs and the liver.

In ancient times, people believed that the deepest feelings

- were felt in the stomach.

When we read that Jesus was filled with compassion on the multitudes

- it's the same Greek word meaning "bowel."
- He invested everything into people.
- He had a heart for them.

One of the greatest acts of kindness shown from one individual to another is in 2 Sam:

David wanted to show God's kindness to a member of Saul's family because of his love for Saul's son Jonathan. Had David acted justly he would have condemned Mephibosheth. Instead he showed grace and mercy.

7 So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually." 2 Sam 9:7

Someone once said: Speak your kind words soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.²

Then Paul closes verse 12, put on humility, meekness and longsuffering.

In Eph 4:2 where he told the believers to walk worthy of their calling with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

Lowliness and humility are the same word.

Griffith Thomas the British Theologian defines humility as "the unconscious self-forgetfulness." In other words, when you know you're humble, you're not!

When the disciples disputed amongst themselves over who would be the greatest Jesus said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

Ps 138:6

6 Though the Lord is on high,
Yet He regards the lowly;
But the proud He knows from afar.

Then Paul mentions meekness which is similar to humility.

Some think of meekness as weakness, but it's not.

- It means power under control.

² Blanchard, J. (2006) *The Complete Gathered Gold: A Treasury of Quotations for Christians*. Webster, New York; Darlington, England: Evangelical Press.

Look at Eph 4:2 again, Paul says to be gentle and to:

- bear with one another in love,

1 Tim 6:11 - gentleness is one of the characteristics Paul said we should chase after.

Col 3:13

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Longsuffering is the same as Patience.

- How patient am I!

Longsuffering is a special word to putting up with problem people, not just circumstances.

It's the ability to hold and not react, but to respond with restraint.

Moses endured the struggles of Egypt. But when he was at Kadesh,

- he couldn't endure the complaining people
- and he beat the rock and failed to enter
- the promise land because of that.

Paul failed at long suffering when Mark wanted to go on the second missionary journey.

- He didn't want him along with him.

Long suffering is the ability to hold and not react. It's responding with restraint.

Col 3:13

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

To bear with one another literally means "to hold up" or "to hold back."

Woman caught in adultery: "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

To bear with one another also means

- to have patience with someone
- in regard to their errors or weaknesses.

Therefore, we are to forgive one another.

- This means to graciously release someone from guilt or penalty.

When we don't forgive,

- we're taking justice into our own hands.

Matt 7:1-2

1 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Peter once asked Jesus how many times

- he should forgive his brother,
- should I forgive up to seven times?

Jesus replied, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

In other words, that's an indefinite number of times we are to forgive.

Biblically speaking, if anyone has a grievance or complaint against another

- we are to forgive just as Christ forgave us.

James 1:19

¹⁹My dearly loved brothers, understand this: Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, ²⁰for man's anger does not accomplish God's righteousness³

Col 3:14-15

14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Paul has been telling the church which characteristics

- they and we are to have.

We are to be merciful, kind, meek, longsuffering,

- we are to bear with one another
- and forgive one another.

Now he says:

above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Paul is in a sense saying, cover yourself with love.

"Love is the outer garment that brings everything else together."

Each of the aforementioned characteristics are manifestations of love.

³ Guthrie, G.H. (2011) *Reading God's Story: A Chronological Daily Bible*. Nashville TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

It's thru the Father's love for us in Jesus

- that we have the opportunity to be identified
- with God for all of eternity.

And it's by demonstrating our love for others

- that we have the opportunity to be identified
- with God here on earth. It's a win, win, situation.

Notice the transaction that takes place when person surrenders his life to Christ.

Verse 3 - "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."

Verse 5 - "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature."

And as we remove these things:

- Paul added in verse 12 that we are to
- "clothe yourselves with compassion,
- kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

How do we actually demonstrate in our actions and attitudes

- that our lives have been changed?

First is the method:

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,

The word "rule" originally meant to act as an umpire. To determine or to judge!

Interestingly, this is the only time in the NT this word "rule" is used with this meaning. When we obey the will of God we will experience His peace.

So, we have to first purpose in our heart

- that we are going to allow the peace of God
- to rule or control our heart.

If He's the ruler of your heart, He will give you peace.

There is an old saying,

- "darkness about going is light about staying."

15b to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Paul said to the Romans:

Rom 12:18

18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

You do your part, if the other party doesn't want anything to do with you, that's on them.

- The Lord will deal with the other party.

Finally Paul says in verse 15 to be thankful.

- When we are working within God's will, we will be thankful.

When we're working out our differences,

- when we're seeking and working at honoring God's word,
- He will bless that and we will be thankful!

Col 3:16-17

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.