

Well, good morning; how are we? Good, good! I want to give a quick shout-out to my people joining us in our online community! I'm so glad you are a part of the Foothills Family and that you're with us in worship and studying God's Word from wherever and whenever you're at. Well, If I haven't been able to meet you, my name is Doug; I'm one of the Pastors here, and I would love to connect with you on the patio after we worship together. So, be sure to come and say hi.

We're continuing our way through Paul's letter to the Colossians. So if you've got your Bibles, which I hope you do, if you could open up with me to Colossians, chapter 3, that's where we'll be.

In this portion of the letter, Paul, remember this is the same Paul who was anti-Christian and had plans to destroy the entire movement of Jesus followers, that is, until he encounters Jesus after Jesus had been crucified and died. Paul's world is completely flipped upside down because he realizes everything he thought about life, about God, about Jesus, was completely wrong.

So here, in this portion of this letter that he's writing to the Christians in Colossae, Paul paints a vivid picture of what it means to embrace our identity in Christ and to allow His transformative power to permeate every aspect of our existence.

Within this letter that Paul is writing to Christians, people like us, people who have jobs, families, wants, hurts, fears, concerns, and hopes, within this writing lies the key to unlocking a life of unparalleled fulfillment, joy, and purpose. These words, hold the secret to experiencing a level of love, and unity, and peace that defies logic and surpasses all understanding. If we can grasp what Paul is pushing us towards, we will experience life transformation from the inside out.

So, friends, get the text in front of you, grab a pen and let's lean in to the blueprint for living the life that Christ promised—a life that calls us to dive deeper and walk in the fullness of His grace.

<sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in

perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Paul's exhortation here, or his strong urging in the first couple of verses carries profound significance for the Christian life, he's urging believers to embody, to personify or to give form to a transformative mindset and lifestyle that reflects Jesus's nature.

He says in verse 12 to “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.”

He’s using the imagery of actively putting on clothes. He’s saying that just as you deliberately and intentionally put on clothing, you consciously pick it out, you take the time to put it on, and you do so with intentionality, so to you must consciously choose to be compassionate, to be kind and humble and patient. You have to take the time to do these things and that takes you being intentional. You have to go out of your way to choose to put this on. It’s not a Harry Potter movie. They clothes aren’t gonna magically fly off the hanger and put themselves on you and button you up and straighten you out.

No, instead Paul is saying, “hey Christian, when you wake up in the morning, you consciously make the decision to be Jesus to the people around you today. You grab compassion, you grab kindness and humility and patience, and you intentionally be that for the people you engage.

Friends, to live with these clothes on means to reflect a deep empathy and concern for others’ well-being. Just as Jesus did. It’s mirroring the heart of Christ who looked at them at sheep without a shepherd having compassion on them (Matt. 9:36). It’s acting with gentleness, generosity, and grace towards others, mirroring Jesus’s kindness both to us and all of humanity. It’s embracing a posture of selflessness and humility, recognizing our utter dependence and need of the grace of Jesus and acknowledging the value and worth that others have above ourselves. It’s choosing to be patient with others in our relationships, outside of our relationships, imitating the same patience that Jesus has with us.

This is what Paul is urging us as followers of Jesus to do. “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.”

Paul goes on to emphasize the importance of maintaining unity and harmony within the Christian family, the body of believers. Check out verse 13, “bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” Friends, whenever there’s more than one person involved in your life, there’s gonna be issues.

So, of course Paul is urging “God’s chosen ones, who are holy and beloved,” to “bear with one another and to forgive one another.”

There’s danger if we as Christians are not unified and in harmony. When there’s a division among us as believers, it tarnishes the credibility of the gospel message, and it can negatively impact those who don’t believe. It stunts our spiritual growth as it distracts us from focusing on our relationship with Jesus and His purposes for us. It takes away from our ministry effectiveness. As we put energy into our divisiveness rather than putting our energy toward accomplishing the mission.

There’s just no room for it.

Instead, Paul is urging us to maintain unity as the Triune God is in unity and reflects the character of Jesus, demonstrating to the world around us the transformative power of God in our lives. Our unity, our health as a body and family is a witness that draws others to Christ as they see us.

That’s what happened to me. I was at Cornwall Park Church in Bellingham, Washington, and week after week I saw these people worshipping passionately together, engaged in study of the scriptures together, serving in the church and community together and I’m just like how do you get that? How do you have those types of relationships and that sort of joy. It drew me to the point that I went up to the lead pastor, Bob Marvel after service one morning and asked him, I do I get this? How do I get what all of you have? And Bob shared the gospel with me.

Friends, Paul's emphasis here on maintaining unity within the Christian family is rooted in the desire to reflect Jesus’ nature and to strengthen the witness of the Church. So, Paul is urging Christians to pursue peace, reconciliation, and unity. He wants each one of us, not just the professional Christians, each one of us, to recognize our vital role in fulfilling God's purposes and advancing His kingdom on earth.

So, He says, consciously, intentionally, choose to put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another, meaning patiently endure with others, tolerating, and supporting each other in the Christian family. Whether we’d like to admit it or

not, we all need others to bear with us. As much as I tell my wife, "I'm perfect" ...I'm just not. And so, I need her and all of you to "bear with me" in dealing with my shortcomings, differences, and challenges that arise in our interactions.

And I really don't think I'm alone in that. The reality is every single one of us are a work in progress. And that's good. That's relieving. Instead of trying to build this façade for the world to see, instead of struggling internally and trying to hide it to put off some sort of image is not futile, but miserable. I mean, Paul! Paul was so honest and transparent. In Romans 7:15 he declares, "The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate!" So, friends, let's bear with one another,

And part of that bearing is having the ability to forgive. Paul didn't leave that out. He said there in verse 13, "if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."

Notice that nowhere in this text does Paul ever give qualifications or say, "none of this is hard." No! He just says, look, this is what it is to be like Christ. This is what it is to be a follower of Jesus. No excuses about how much someone hurt you or offended you, he says, listen, "God forgave you." "He wiped your plate clean." "He has not only forgiven you, but He took on your punishment consciously, intentionally, He put on the cross for the sake of your relationship with Him." He doesn't imply that it is easy either. He's not discounting that an offense has happened. In fact, he's recognizing that it did and that it is wrong and has caused you pain...hence the reason forgiveness is needed.

So forgive. This is a central teaching of Jesus. And it is so important to remember what Christ did for us because it's a powerful reminder of the depth and extent of God's forgiveness toward us, which should compel us to extend that same forgiveness.

So my call for you now is really reflect on what you're putting on each day. Maybe for some of you the goal this week is to just be intentional about putting on these things. Making the conscious decision to live your life like Jesus has called us to live. Look for opportunities in your daily interactions with people to be compassionate, kind, humble and patient. Maybe for some of you it's intentionally putting on a time each morning to pray and get into God's Word and depend on Him. Depend on Him for each day. Rarely does a week come and go that we don't have opportunities to offer gentleness and patience. So, put it on and break in these Jesus clothes this week.

Just as we clothe ourselves with the character of Jesus and extend grace and understanding to one another, so too are we called to allow the peace of Christ to reign supreme within us. Paul oriented our hearts and minds towards others in verse 12-14, but now he takes us inward. All of what Paul is getting at has to do with life transformation. That transformation overflows out of us into our interactions with the people around us. But, that transformation effect on us so that it can affect those around us. Check out verse 15, “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

The peace of Christ transcends a mere “absence of conflict;” instead it embodies a wholeness, a restoration of our relationship with God through Jesus. It’s this deep sense of calm and peace and contentment, unaffected by external circumstances. It’s a peace that surpasses understanding (Philippians 4:7), this peace is rooted in the assurance of God’s love, His forgiveness, and His sovereignty despite the difficulties and pain of life. This peace is a fruit of our salvation.

And so we “let” or “allow” the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts by surrendering our anxieties, our fears, and our worries to Him. We submit, we yield to His Lordship over every aspect of our lives. It means making a conscious choice to trust in God’s provision and directing and rest in His peace, regardless of what life throws at us. As Jesus said in John 14, “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid (John 14:27).”

Notice how Paul brings it back to the Jesus family. See there at the end of verse 15, “and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.” Paul is connecting the peace of Christ with the unity of believers as members of one body. As followers of Jesus, we are called to pursue peace not only in our individual lives but also in our relationships within the body of Christ. Now, hear this, this unity is not based on uniformity but on a shared identity in Christ. We’re not all robots that are wired exactly the same. Man, that would be lame. Instead, we are a diverse body with various backgrounds, life experiences, giftings, strengths, and weaknesses. And so we are not surprised by conflict within the body. Instead, knowing that it is inevitable we “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

What this does is it allows the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts leading to a transformational way of living and relating to others. It empowers us to extend grace and kindness and

restoration in our relationships and interactions, creating a church body of understanding and mutual encouragement.

But Paul knows there's more to this transformation within our lives than just "putting on" and letting that peace dwell within us. In verse 16 he says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

Just as we are called to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, so too we are called to "let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly." Friends, this underscores the profound impact that Scripture has on our personal lives and our community as a whole. We are to allow God's Word to saturate every aspect of our existence, leading us to a life of worship and gratitude, and mutual edification or building up within the body of Christ.

Paul's emphasis of Jesus's message underscores the boundless depth and richness of Scripture, which serves as a fountain of wisdom and guidance and spiritual nourishment for us as believers. The Word of God plays a pivotal role in the life of a follower of Jesus and that of family of God. See what Paul knows, and what you and I have to grasp is that the "Word of Christ" is not merely a collection of words on a page, but the scriptures, hear me! The Scriptures are living and active and has the power to transform and shape hearts and to renew minds. And so for the follower of Jesus, Scripture MUST be central to our daily lives. We must allow it to inform our thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

If you're feeling stuck in your faith. If you're not seeing the growth and transformation in your life as Jesus follower. You're not "hearing" Jesus, or you're not "feeling" close to Jesus. This is where you start. Not one time, not a familiar verse. No, you consciously and intentionally set aside time to pick up the Word and devour it, to meditate on it, chew on it and allow the Word to do a work in you.

Oh man, I have heard so many people say, I'm just not getting fed enough at church. It's not deep enough for me.

I'm calling it out. Nope. Nope. Friends, if this...30 minutes once a week is all you're getting in the Word...you're sick. You're unhealthy. You're not nourished. Having someone force feed you, fine, maybe Sunday's isn't force feeding, it's like the baby in the high chair and the pastor going, "here comes the airplane (makes swooping motion with pretend spoon into the babies mouth)." No, time together in the Word on Sundays is in addition to your daily nourishment. That's where it's at.

You want deep? You want to get fed? Spend time each day letting the “Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” This looks like regular reading, study, and meditation on God's Word, both individually and together here. It involves seeking to understand and apply the principles and truths found in the Scriptures to every aspect of life, including relationships, work, and decision-making. If that is new to you, or overwhelming to you then ask for help. We offer so many classes and small groups at this church. The ability for you to learn and grow through this family is abundant. Whether you take one of our classes on a Sunday morning, our join Foothills Academy, or jump into our midweek seniors ministry or bible studies that are happening for men and women or small groups, there are people who will help teach you how to dig into the Word. You just have to “do.” You have to seek it out and get yourself plugged in.

This is not a valet church. Where someone else is gonna do it for you. This is not a “consumer” driven church where you come in and everything is done for you. Nope. Paul made it clear, this is a you thing. And it’s a me thing. And as we “do”...we’ll do it together.

So, we let the Word dwell in us richly by creating deliberate and intentional engagement with the Scriptures. It entails a lifestyle that is characterized by worship and gratitude. It involves expressing praise and adoration to God for His goodness, faithfulness, and grace, as well as cultivating a spirit of thankfulness for all of the blessings and provisions He has willingly given. This posture of worship and gratitude reveals the transformative work of God's Word in our hearts as believers, which in turn leads to a life that is marked by joy, peace, and contentment.

Paul closes this portion of his letter with one final exhortation or urging. Verse 17, “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Paul has a singular focus. Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him. He says, “this is how you approach every aspect of your life, whether in word or deed, this is what we do as Jesus followers.”

This verse captures the essence of Christ-like living, calling us to integrate our faith into every facet of our existence and to offer everything we do as an act of worship and gratitude to God. Friends, this encompasses both our inward motives and the outward expressions of our faith.

“Whatever you do!” This reveals Jesus's Lordship over every area of our lives and the transformative power of living with a Jesus-centered perspective.

We are to align our thoughts, words, and actions with the character and teachings of Jesus. This means acknowledging Jesus as the ultimate authority and example for our lives and seeking to emulate His love, compassion, and obedience in all that we do.

And by emphasizing the act of “giving thanks to God the Father through Jesus,” Paul is highlighting the importance of having a spirit of gratitude and dependence on God's grace and provision each day. This means that we deliberately and intentionally integrate our faith into every aspect of our existence. It involves seeking to honor Jesus in our thoughts, words, and deeds, whether in our personal relationships, our professional endeavors, or our interactions with the wider world. This means speaking words of kindness and encouragement, acting with integrity and honesty, and demonstrating love and compassion to those around us. It also means having an attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving, recognizing how God has blessed and provided for you in big moments and small moments throughout your life.

“Whatever you do!” involves discerning and prioritizing God's will in our decision-making. It requires seeking guidance through prayer and Scripture and submitting our plans and aspirations to the Lordship of Jesus. This may mean sacrificing or laying down our own desires and ambitions in favor of God's purposes and priorities, trusting that His plans are ultimately for our good and His glory.

Friends, Paul is calling on believers to a life of wholehearted devotion and obedience to Jesus Christ. He is not content with a half-hearted effort. Whether it's from the mundane to the significant, whatever we do, we do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, living with a Jesus-centered perspective and offering everything we do as an act of worship and thanksgiving.

Friends, each one of us have been confronted with the Word of God. And so we find ourselves at a crossroads of profound significance. God's Word call us to cast off the old self and to “put on,” to clothe ourselves with the virtues of Jesus. Just trying to avoid sin isn't the answer. You must take the initiative to “put on.” It's a call to radical transformation, a call to embrace a new way of being that transcends the patterns of this world. It requires us to make a conscious and intentional decision to submit yourself fully to the work of the Triune God in your life.

So, whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

May our lives be a witness, a testament to the transformative power of the gospel, as we live out our faith with authenticity and boldness in a world that desperately needs the light of Christ. Have a great week living with and for Jesus! See you next time!