

Colossians

The New

Colossians 3:12-14

October 9, 2022

HDBC

I **enjoy** going to Sam's Club, just to walk around and see what new things they have at a particular time. I always check out the men's shirts. I like a deal, so when I see a price that says \$70 and note that I can buy it there for \$15, I'm feeling pretty good. If I like the shirt, I'll buy it. My closet is probably a bit overcrowded with shirts. So, often when I buy one or two new ones, I get rid of one or two old ones. That's what we do, isn't it. We trade the old for the new.

In a similar way when a person becomes a Christian he exchanges an old way of living for a new way of living. In the verses that preceded these, Paul described our old. What we are to take off and lay aside. In the verses that we look at today, he is describing the new. What we are to put on.

He begins this section with a wonderful description of believers. Each of these three was an honored Old Testament description of Israel. They are words of assurance & encouragement and they are also applied to us. We'll see them first, then look at the kinds of things we are to put on. Finally, we will consider the effect of putting on the right kinds of things.

Read the text. Colossians 3:12-14

1. Words of encouragement

- **God's Chosen People**

God's choice for us is based not upon our worthiness, but His love. The truth of divine election is taught in Scripture. It is misunderstood by some and can be difficult for us to get our heads around, particularly when we are trying to make it fit into our finite logic. However, it is truth. If you have been born again, you have been chosen by God.

No one becomes a Christian solely by their own choice. Everyone who ultimately ends up in Heaven will be there because God chose them to be there and because they responded in faith to His call.

- **Holy**

Set apart for God. God chose us not simply to go to Heaven when we die but to be separate, different, set apart for Him while in this life. He has made us to be holy in terms of our standing before Him. He has given us the holiness of His Son, Jesus and therefore declares that we are holy. That holiness is what allows us to get into Heaven.

But He also calls us to be holy in our actions and attitudes. For that to happen, we must be obedient to His word and to His promptings. You can't live a holy life while doing the things He has told you not to do. You are not living a holy life when you are not doing the things He tells you to do. We live holy lives when we obey His word in action, attitude, thoughts, words, etc. **Student given and "A" or worker given promotion and raise.**

- **Beloved**

What a great title. Those who are loved by God. You are an object of God's eternal unconditional love. His love for us is not dependent upon our ability to live perfect lives. In fact His love for us is not dependent upon us at all. He loves us because He has chosen to do so.

What a marvelous description of our position with God. Paul offers these descriptive terms before reminding us of the characteristics that we are supposed to exhibit. He has reminded us of our position with God. Then he moves on to our walk with Christ. Practical application.

Last week we look at the old clothes that have to go. This week we look at the new clothes that need to be put on. These virtues stand in brilliant contrast to the vices which we are commanded to put off.

2. Things to put on

1) **Compassion**

The old King James renders this more literally **bowels of mercy**. The word literally refers to the inward parts, including the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, etc. It is used figuratively as the seat of the our emotions.

The ancient world, was merciless. The maimed, sickly and aged were discarded; the mentally ill were subjected to inhumanities. But

Christianity brought compassion, and it still does. The gospel brings with it a sympathy and tenderness of heart.

We show compassion when we resist the temptation to judge or condemn others when they offend us. We show compassion when we embrace those who are rejected by others. We show compassion when we sacrifice our time to communicate the love of God to others. We show compassion when we see a need and jump in to meet that need. The classic example is **the good Samaritan** that Jesus spoke about.

2) Kindness

Kindness is closely related to compassion. It refers to the grace in a person **that mellows all that might be harsh** and softens what might be hard. Jesus used this word when He said, *My yoke is easy. Easy*, meaning not hard to bear, nor harsh. We are kind when we use sandpaper on our rough edges so that our interaction with other people is pleasant and warm. **You show compassion when, like the good Samaritan, you stop to help someone in need. You show kindness when you do it with a sweet spirit.**

3) Humility

This was a word the Greeks never applied to themselves. It was thought of as an undesirable trait. But the gospel took this word of contempt and made it one of its chief graces. It was used to describe Christ's humbling himself by becoming obedient to death. It is almost impossible for us to be humble while comparing ourselves to others. It is not so hard when we compare ourselves to Jesus. When we see ourselves in the light of who Christ is, our self-illumination will be lost in His glory.

We are humble when we give God the glory for every good thing that we accomplish. We are humble when we think others as more important than ourselves. We are humble when we resist the temptation to dominate the room, enjoying the attention of others. We are humble when listen to what another person is saying while rejecting the temptation to change the focus to ourselves. **Another person shares something that happened to them and rather than affirming them or asking for more details, we just can't wait to bust in with our own story.**

4) Gentleness

It is translated by the English word **meek** in many translations. It does not refer to weakness. It refers to strength that is under control. **Moses was considered a meek (gentle) man.** However, he was a strong leader. He could act decisively, be as hard as nails, and rise in anger at the proper time. But it was under control.

A.W. Tozer once wrote, *The meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather he may be in his moral life as bold as a lion and as strong as Samson; but he has stopped being fooled about himself. He has accepted God's estimate of his own life. He knows he is as weak and helpless as God declared him to be, but paradoxically, he knows at the same time that he is in the sight of God of more importance than angels. In himself, nothing; in God, everything. That is his motto.*

5) Patience

Often translated “long-suffering.” It refers to the ability to enduring insult or injury without retaliation or giving up. Here’s a little poem.

Patience is a virtue, possess it if you can.
Found seldom in a woman, never in a man.

It is based on an unwavering trust in the sovereignty of God. Belief that He knows what you are experiencing and will deal with it. Only in the power of the Holy Spirit can we remain patient without becoming bitter and ultimately explosive. Patience is not the ability to delay anger, retaliation or revenge, it is the ability to forever lay it aside and rest in God’s peace, regardless of how long the insult or suffer lasts.

Kent Hughes calls this Heaven’s wardrobe from the hand of the ultimate tailor.

I would remind you that all of these were worn beautifully by our Lord. Therefore when we put on these characteristics, we look and act just like Christ. Each one of these impacts how we relate to others. They are not simply inward traits, but outward responses, specifically toward other people who are flawed, broken and sinful.

3. Expected Results

What happens when we wear these clothes?

A. Bear with each other

It is the outward expression of patience. It means to endure or to hold out regardless of insult, persecution or threats. When it comes to describing what we do with other believers, as Paul is doing here, it means we hold onto our relationship and refuse to let things come between us. Our relationships with other believers is worth **bearing some insult or abuse** to maintain.

This is no small accomplishment. It is sometimes difficult to live peaceably with other people.

B. Forgive each other

This will also lead to an ability and willingness to be forgiving of one another. Forgiveness has never been an easy thing to do.

John Perkins knows about forgiveness. He was beaten and tortured mercilessly throughout a night spent in a Mississippi jail. He was beaten by the guards. At one point the beating was so severe that he passed out. He later regained consciousness and it resumed. One man even pushed a fork down his throat. Another man took an unloaded pistol, put it to his head and pulled the trigger. He had great reason to hate. But he learned to forgive. Listen to his testimony.

The Spirit of God worked on me as I lay in that bed. An image formed in my mind. The image of the cross, Christ on the cross. It blotted out everything else in my mind. This Jesus knew what I had suffered. He understood. And He cared. Because He had experienced it all Himself. This Jesus, this one who had brought good news directly from God in heaven, had lived what he preached.

Yet He was arrested and falsely accused. Like me, He went through an unjust trial. He also faced a lynch mob and got beaten. But even more than that, He was nailed to rough wooden planks and killed. Killed like a common criminal. At the crucial moment, it seemed to Jesus that even God Himself had deserted Him.

The suffering was so great, He cried out in agony. He was dying. But when He looked at that mob who had lynched Him, He didn't hate them. He forgave them. And he prayed God to forgive them. "Father forgive these people, for they don't know what they are doing." His enemies hated. But Jesus forgave.

I couldn't get away from that . . . It's a profound, mysterious truth, Jesus' concept of love overpowering hate. I may not see its victory in my lifetime. But I know it's true. I know it's true, because it happened to me.

On that bed, full of bruises & stitches, God made it true in me. He washed my hatred away and replaced it with a love for the white man in rural Mississippi. I felt strong again. Stronger than ever. What doesn't destroy me makes me stronger. I know it's true. Because it happened to me.

When you struggle with forgiveness, look to the cross!

C. Love each other

This is the grace that binds all the others together. It rises above all others, undergirding them, supporting them. If we don't love each other we will never be able to embrace those other things we just talked about.

Dr. David Thrasher, who is a pulmonologist on the frontline treating Covid-19 patients, said that he was asked by medical students what was the best medicine he had ever seen. He replied, "love."

They laughed and then asked, "What if that doesn't work?" Dr. Thrasher said, "increase the dose." Some treatments are very restrictive in what they can do. Not love. Love is a remedy for all kinds of problems. Maybe for many of us what we really need to do is increase dosage.

Love more.

Love more people more often.

Love more people more often with more depth.

The beloved apostle John put it like this. *Little children, let us love one another, for love is of God.*