



**SCRIPTURE:**

Colossians 3:12-17

**RECAP:**

Go ahead and turn your bibles to Colossians chapter 3. Last week Pastor Erik preached on the offer of the gospel to all peoples and how in Christ there is no distinction. That Christ is all and in all.

If you remember the week before that Pastor Larry preached a message on Colossians 3:1-10 and in this passage Paul lays out the need for the Christian to put to death our sin. That if we are in Christ, we no walk in the darkness, we no longer set our minds on the things of this earth but we walk in the newness of life.

Today's message is a contrast to the things we are to put off and Paul begins to describe the things we are to put on. Paul calls the Colossians to a new, holy lifestyle. A lifestyle that is consistent with their new identity.

Paul is showing the Colossians that when you have been regenerated by Christ, you cannot possibly stay the same. We are new creations, we have been born again and we are to live in accordance to the will of the Spirit, no longer the will of the flesh. Every Christian must ask themselves the question, "who will I identify with, the world or Christ?"

**READ Colossians 3:12-17**

For those of you that know me you know that I love sports and I love to workout. When you go to the gym, there is certain attire that you want to have on.

For me, when I go to the gym I always make sure I have my gym shorts, crossfit shoes and of course a Victory Apparel t-shirt.

It wouldn't make a whole lot of sense to show up to the gym in golf shoes and a polo. In the same way, it wouldn't make sense to go to the golf course in workout clothes. (unless some of yall used to play at Hunter's Point haha) - Cow Pasture

There are certain occasions that require certain attire and we choose our clothes based on the occasion.

In contrast to that, as believers there's never a time when we are to take off the garments of practical righteousness. In the Christian life, we don't get to go into our closet and exchange our righteous clothes for earthly clothes.

If you have been covered by the righteousness of Christ, you never go back to the worthless garments of sin and selfishness. Like Paul said in verse 8, **"we put them away."** We put them to death, we throw them in the fire and never clothe ourselves in them again.

The new man puts on the ways of Jesus and never looks back. The good news of the gospel is that, no matter what you've done, no matter what you've been through, you're never too dirty to exchange your filthy clothes for new ones. Jesus offers you to come and take a hold of this new life found in Him.

And maybe that's why some of you are here this morning. God may have drawn you here that your eyes would be opened to your sin and your need to surrender everything to Him.

For a long time, I thought I could change my appearance based on who I was around. To put it more bluntly, I was living one life while professing another.

For the first time I truly understood, I could not walk in my sin and claim to know Christ. I had to be all in.

In the text today, Paul is contrasting just that. The life that we used to live versus the life that we now live, by faith in Jesus.

**When we come to saving faith in Christ, everything changes. We exchange our old lives known by sin for our new lives known by the righteousness of Christ.**

Let's look back to the text in Colossians 3. Now before we jump in, I want to point out that this is not an exhaustive list of the virtues of a Christian. However, it is a good synopsis of what our lives should look like, if we are in Christ.

Each one of these virtues speak to how we relate to others. If we do not see these in ourselves, we need to ask the Lord to begin to develop these within us.

### **Exegesis:**

***V12: Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,***

- Paul begins this section of his letter with what they are to put on and he addresses the audience as: **God's chosen ones, holy and beloved**
  - The people of God are **chosen** by God, we see this all throughout Scripture. We are His prized possession. Our names have been written in the book of life before the foundation of the world.
  - In Christ, we are **holy**. We are set apart from the world and therefore we no longer look like the world.
  - We are **beloved**. For those in Christ, we are the objects of God's special love. Like a husband loves His bride particularly, God loves His people specially.
  - This is who you are in Christ. You're chosen, you're holy, and you're beloved.
  - Paul then goes on to say, with this new identity in Christ wrap yourselves in these things. Like the clothes you wear, this is what you should be known by:
    - **Compassionate hearts** - we are to be deeply concerned with the needs of others, both physically and more importantly spiritually. Jesus was the perfect example of compassion for those who were overlooked and the lowly. How often do we only associate with those who are like us?
    - **Kindness** - Kindness is closely related to compassion. The opposite of being harsh. It's caring about the good of our neighbors. It's the same Greek word that Jesus used in **Matthew 11:30** when He says that His yoke is **EASY**.
    - **Humility** - to be selfless and rid yourself from pride. Humility was not a positive virtue in Greek culture at the time. This had a negative

connotation. Jesus flipped this idea upside down and came humbly. We are to do the same. Pride is the enemy of Christianity.

- **Meekness** - to be gentle. To be willing to suffer injury rather than inflict it. This doesn't mean to be weak or a pushover but simply gentle and gracious to those around us while standing firm in the truth.
- **Patience** - to be understanding with others and not quick to become angry. Not having resentment towards others but to be patient with them, in the same way that God is patient with us.

Now, I want to speak to the men in the room for a second. Some of you are hearing these things like compassion, humility and meekness and you're like, nah these things aren't for me.

But I want to say this, you can be the most masculine man in the room and still have these virtues. These things are a disposition of the heart, not necessarily the actions that you take. These virtues don't make us shy about speaking truth, they determine how we speak truth.

These virtues will look different in the life of a man than they will in the life of a woman but they should be evident in both the Christian man and the Christian woman.

- Notice, that all of these virtues can be seen in the life of Jesus. Nothing is expected of us that Jesus didn't already live out. This is why Paul in **Romans 13:14** says, *"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."*
- Jesus was humble and gracious and yet still offensive to many. You know why? Because the truth is offensive to many.
- As followers of Jesus we are to wrap ourselves in the righteousness and the virtues of Christ, looking to Him as the perfect example.

*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.*

- As believers we must **bear with one another**. Paul is teaching us that we should tolerate each other but at the same time not enabling the sin of others. One thing Paul was adamant about not tolerating **false teaching within the church**.
- **The life of the believer is also one marked with forgiveness**. To show grace to those who've wronged us, just as Christ has done to us.

- Jesus says in **Matthew 6:14-15** -- ***For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.***
- Simply put, unforgiving people are unforgiven people.
- As Christians, we have to be people who forgive others. This isn't an option. Forgiveness doesn't always mean reconciliation but to forgive means rather than taking revenge for ourselves we seek the good of the other person.
- This is completely counter-cultural. The world says to take revenge for yourself but we're not called to be like the world. Like Paul said in verse 5, "*Put to death everything that is earthly in you.*"
- We are to bear with one another and to show forgiveness.

*14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

*15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.*

- Love is the virtue that unites all the other virtues. Love is the outer garment that when people see us, the first thing they should recognize is our love.
- **John 13:35** -- ***“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”***
- Peace is what naturally happens in a community of believers that love God and desire for Him to be known. This love and peace creates unity within the body leading to fruitfulness.
- ***“Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification” (Romans 14:19)***
- When Jesus was asked “which is the great commandment in the Law?” He responded: ***“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt. 22:36-40)***
  - Love for God and love for people satisfy the entire law of God.
- Like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, if I show signs of the spirit, if I prophesy, if I have faith, if I give everything I have away, but do not have love, I am nothing. I gain nothing.
- You see, these other virtues and acts of obedience sought without love are useless.
- **N.T. Wright says, “The other virtues, pursued without love, become distorted and unbalanced.”**

- The life and the actions of the believer is one composed with love, above all things, this is the garment we are to be known by.

*16 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.*

- **“The word of Christ”** refers to the Scriptures and all the teachings of Jesus that were passed down. Jesus is the Word. Jesus is the truth.
- If we want to live a life pleasing to God. If we want to put to death what is earthly in us and put on the life of the new man we must indwell ourselves in the word of Christ, that is living and active and has the power to bring transformation into the life of the listener.
- We must let the Scriptures take residence in our heart. Invite them in and never let them leave.
- This is what we mean in our vision statement by **“letting the gospel shape every sphere of our lives”**
- We center our life on the Word and let it shape everything that we do. We teach others the truths of Scripture and we warn about the consequences of unrepentant sin.
- The result of having the **“word of Christ dwell in you richly”** is a heart of thankfulness which leads to giving our praises to God through worship and song.

*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.*

- To wrap it all up, Paul says in everything that you do, do it to the glory of God.
- As Christians, we don’t get to compartmentalize Jesus into certain areas of our lives. Every thought, action and decision should be consistent with who Christ is and the life He has called us to live, that Paul lays out so well here in Colossians 3.
- Wrap yourself in Christ. Put on the ways of Christ. And give thanks to God for leading you to new life found only in Him and out of the life you once lived.

### **Application:**

#### **1. Examine your life for the virtues of Christ**

- a. Good works and Christlikeness are not the root of your salvation and they cannot save you, but they are the fruit of your salvation.
- b. They are external evidence that you belong to Christ.

- c. Jesus says in **Matthew 7: 16-20** -- ***“You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”***
- d. What fruit is your life bearing? Is there external evidence that you are a follower of Jesus or do you look more like the world? Is your life clothed in the virtues of Christ or are you still wearing the garments that lead to destruction?
- e. In the same way that an apple tree cannot bear oranges and a golfer doesn't wear workout clothes to the golf course. A life lived in the flesh cannot bear the fruit of the Spirit. Examine your life and ask God to clothe you in His righteousness.

## **2. Don't go back to your old life**

- a. There's a false idea today in American Christianity that we can believe in Jesus and yet that belief has no implications on the life that we live.
- b. This idea is leading a lot of people to having false security in eternal life and true forgiveness of sins.
- c. We treat Jesus as if He is some kind of fire-insurance rather than Lord and Master of our lives.
- d. Jesus said in **Luke 9:62** -- ***“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”***
- e. Our flesh is at war with the spirit and we have to fight the tendency to go back to our old life and live in the sin that we once walked.
- f. **1 Corinthians 5:15** -- ***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”***

## **3. Go out of your way to love others**

- a. Remember verse 14 says, ***“above all these put on love, which binds everything together”***
- b. Our lives should be flowing with sacrificial love towards those around us. Desiring that their eyes would be opened to the beauty of God's glory that would lead them to repentance and reconciliation to the Father.
- c. If we truly love God, we will love His people which means compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience will follow.
- d. The apostle Peter says that, ***“love covers a multitude of sins”***

#### 4. Saturate yourself in the Word of God daily

- a. I can't stress this point enough. God has revealed Himself to us through His written Word and if we want to know Him more and become more like Him we must, **"Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly"**.
- b. Sunday morning can't be the only time that we hear the Word of God read. We must open the Word for ourselves and get alone with Him daily.
- c. Not because we want to impress God or we want to add some jewels to our crown of righteousness but because we absolutely need it.
- d. Do we view the Word of God like David does in Psalm 19?
  - i. Listen to His words: ***"7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."***
- e. Lord, give us a heart like David's for your Word.
- f. When I went from being a fan of Christ, to being a true follower of Christ, I stopped reading the Word to check the box and I began to meditate and study the Word for the very first time.
- g. This absolutely changed my life. God began to give me a thirst and a hunger to know Him more and to read the Scriptures, in a way that I never had.
- h. The Word of God brings transformation into our lives in ways that we could never imagine before this new life in Christ.
- i. So don't simply read the Word but study the Word, meditate on the Word, pray through the Word, and ask the Lord to help you live out His Word as you saturate yourself in it.
- j. Now, I'm going to say something crazy... you don't have to start a bible reading plan on January 1st.
  - i. We have reading plans available this morning at the connection point in the lobby. Grab one before you leave and start letting the words of Christ dwell in you richly.
  - ii. We also have a hermeneutics class (study of interpreting the bible) that will be led by Keith Jackson starting on August 10th. It's a 9 week class and will teach you how to read and study different



genres of the Bible. You can sign up for this through the connect card.

### 5. Bring Christ into all that you do

- a. Whether you're a plumber or a pastor. Whether you're a teacher or a technician. Whether you're an accountant or you're in the army. Whether you're a salesman or a stay at home mom, do everything you do to the Glory of God.
- b. God can use you in any and every career choice. And He can be gloried through you in every thought, action, and decision when you center your life on Him.
- c. Jesus is incomparably glorious. We have been created by Him and for Him.
- d. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20 -- "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."**
- e. All that we do is to the glory of God.

So as we close, I want to continue to drive home this point with an illustration that I've heard:

- suppose you had a meeting with someone and they showed up 30 minutes late and when they got there they said, "you have to forgive me. You see I got a flat tire and as I was changing it on the side of the road, I got run over by a 40,000 pound mack truck. And that's why I'm late."

Now there would only be two logical explanations. They're either a liar or a mad man. You would say it's absolutely impossible to have an encounter with something as large as a mack truck and not be changed.

So I ask you, which is larger? A 40,000 pound mack truck or the God of the universe? How is it that so many people profess to have had an encounter with God and have not been permanently changed?

If you're a believer in the room this morning. Examine yourself and ask the Lord to expose any sins in your life that you need to lay at His feet. Seek to glorify God in all that you do and draw closer to Him by letting His Word dwell in you richly. His commands are not burdensome but bring joy to the heart of the believer.

For those who are not in Christ this morning, Jesus has a garment of Righteousness waiting to clothe you with. He offers you to come and take a hold of new life found in Him. You see, we never get to a point where we are worthy to come to the Father based on our own merits.

Only by the finished work of Christ and the blood of Jesus can we be forgiven of our sins. Today is the day of salvation.

***“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2: 8-10)***

Church, let’s walk in those good works and new life today, being fully dependent on Jesus knowing that it is solely by His grace that we are forgiven of our sins.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

- 1) What are some of the major events in your life that changed you or helped shape you into the person you are today?
- 2) How does knowing you are chosen by God influence what you put on each day? (John 15:16, Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 2:4-5, 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, Ephesians 2:8-9, Psalm 136:1, James 1:17, (Ephesians 2:10)
- 3) Discuss what it practically looks like to:
  - a) Have compassionate hearts (Psalm 86:15, Ephesians 4:32, Mark 6:34, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
  - b) Show kindness (Luke 6:35, 1 Peter 3:9, Acts 28:2, Matthew 5:7)
  - c) Be humble (Luke 14:11, Romans 12:3, 12:6, Philippians 2:3-11)
  - d) Be meek (Titus 3:2, James 3:13, Romans 12:14, 1 Thessalonians 2:7)
  - e) Have patience (Galatians 6:9, 1 Corinthians 13:7, Romans 12:12, Proverbs 16:32, Psalm 103:8)
  - f) Bearing with others (Galatians 6:1-5, James 5:19-20)
  - g) Forgiving others (Luke 17:3-4, Matthew 6:14-15, Ephesians 4:31, 1 Peter 3:9)
- 4) How does love bind all of these things together?
- 5) How do we let the peace of Christ rule our hearts? (Romans 5:1, Matthew 11:28-30)
- 6) Does the word of Christ dwell richly in you? How do you know?
- 7) Why does Paul sum this section up with, “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus”? (Psalm 119:11, Psalm 1)