

Putting on the New Man

INTRODUCTION:

- I. The New Testament is literally filled with passages that are not only crucial for our salvation, but essential for us to be able to continue living faithful, productive lives as children of God.
 - A. In the third chapter of Colossians, the apostle Paul discusses the characteristics with which we need to clothe ourselves – characteristics that are also seen in the life of Jesus Christ.
 1. Paul begins this chapter by telling the Colossians there were some things they needed to "*put to death*" or to "*put off*" or remove from their lives since they were Christians.
 - a. **Colossians 3:1-9** – *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds...

3. Then Paul adds:

a. **Colossians 3:10-11** – *...put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.*

4. So what is this "new man" that we are to "put on?"

B. The answer to that question brings us to the specific verses we want to examine this evening.

1. They're the next six verses in Colossians chapter 3.

a. **Colossians 3:12-17** – *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.

- b. The apostle Paul wrote something quite similar to the church at Ephesus. **(Ephesians 4:22-32)**
- 2. So, in the time we have remaining, let's do four things that will help us understand what it means to *"put on the new man."*
 - a. First, we need to look at these specific verses in context, so that we can truly understand what it means to *"seek those things which are above."*
 - b. Second, we want to understand the difference between the *"old man"* that we are to *"put off"* and the *"new man"* that we are to *"put on."*

- c. Third, we want to look closely at the specific characteristics Paul mentions that need to be in our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- d. And then lastly, we want to make some application of these verses to our own lives.

BODY:

- I. So, let's begin by understanding something about the context in which these verses appear.
 - A. The apostle Paul is writing to Christians who have been *"raised with Christ."* (**Colossians 3:1a**)
 - 1. What does this mean?
 - a. **Colossians 2:12** – *...buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*
 - b. **Romans 6:3-4** – *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

2. These verses say that since we have been baptized into Christ for the remission of our past sins, there should be a difference between who we were before we were baptized, and who we are after we have been baptized.
 - a. There needs to have been a transformation – a change from an old way of life, to a new life in Christ.
- B. So, that's the context of the specific verses we will be looking at in a moment.
 1. But what are the things we need to *"put off"* and the things we need to *"put on"* – and why is it so important that this transition take place in our lives?
- II. To answer that question, notice that the apostle Paul says since we have been *"raised with Christ"* to walk in a new life, we need to *"seek those things which are above."* (**Colossians 3:1b**)
 - A. This means the focus of our whole life needs to be Jesus Christ – we need to seek heavenly things, whereas in our past, we sought the things of this world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life that John talks about. (**cf. 1 John 2:16**)

1. When we truly seek heavenly things, then we will have no problem putting off the *"old man"* – our old nature, or the person we used to be.
 - a. We will have no problem putting to death such things as:
"fornication, uncleanness, passion (lust), evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." **(Colossians 3:5)**
 - b. We will have no problem putting off: *"anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of [our] mouth, or lying."*
(Colossians 3:8-9)
2. And, when we are truly seeking heavenly things, then we will have no problem putting on the *"new man"* – or become a new person.
 - a. We will want to: *"put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another."* **(Colossians 3:12-14)**
 - b. And we will *"put on love, and let the peace of God rule in [our] hearts, and be thankful for all God and Christ have done for us."* **(Colossians 3:15)**
 - c. When we are truly seeking things above, *"the word of Christ will dwell in [us] richly in all wisdom."* **(Colossians 3:16)**

B. That's the difference between the "*old man*" (our old nature) and the "*new man*", since we have been "*raised with Christ*" and since we are truly seeking "*those things which are above.*"

1. But now I want us to turn our attention to the specific characteristics Paul says we need in our lives to be disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. These are things we must "*put on*" or "*clothe*" ourselves with.
3. However, we need to keep in mind that all of these things are necessary for us to be properly clothed with the character of Christ.
 - a. We can't clothe ourselves with some of these characteristics and leave others hanging in the closet.
 - b. We must have them ALL!

III. So, let's focus on these characteristics we so desperately need to clothe ourselves with to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

A. The first characteristic we need to clothe ourselves with is "*tender mercies*" – other versions use the word "compassion." (**v 12**)

1. The word used here by Paul simply means one who shows pity or sympathy for another.

- a. It speaks of one whose heart is characterized by showing compassion toward those who are in distress for any reason – whether physical, financial or spiritual.
 2. The King James version uses the words "*bowels of mercies*."
 - a. That's because the stomach and the bowels were once believed to be the center from which all emotions sprang.
 - b. However, today we would use the word heart in the same figurative sense as bowels was used four hundred years ago.
- B. Closely related to "*tender mercies*" or "*compassion*" is "*kindness*."

(v 12)

 1. Kindness simply means that our actions toward others will always be for their good, and never to harm or hurt them in any way.
 - a. In other words, we have kind feelings toward another person.
 - b. Kindness goes hand-in-hand with such qualities as sympathy and gentleness, and displaying consideration for the feelings of others.
 2. A person who is compassionate will also be kind toward others – especially those in distress.
- C. In addition to "*compassion*" and "*kindness*," those who are clothed with the qualities of Christ will also display "*humility*" or "*humbleness of mind*." **(v 12)**

1. Humility, which is an acute awareness of one's own faults and short-comings, is a rare commodity today.
 - a. The humble person would be the last to sit in judgment of another since they are deeply aware of areas in their own life that are far from perfect.
 - b. Thayer describes humility as one who has a "deep sense of one's (moral) littleness."
 2. Those who display this characteristic have what is often called "an unassuming nature" – meaning they are just simple, down-to-earth people.
- D. *"Meekness" or "gentleness"* is the next characteristic with which we need to be clothed. **(v 12)**
1. The word here describes someone who is calm, quiet, composed, unruffled, and who is mild-mannered.
 - a. Meekness and gentleness are first an inward condition of the heart, and then are displayed outwardly in a calm, composed manner toward others.
 2. Obviously, there is a direct correlation between humility and meekness.

- a. The proud and arrogant, judgmental person, who values their opinions above all others is incapable of being meek and gentle.
 - b. The qualities of meekness and gentleness can only come from a heart that is compassionate, kind and humble.
- E. Another characteristic that is clearly identified as a characteristic of the Lord is *"longsuffering"* or *"patience."* (**v 12**)
- 1. Peter reminds us that the Lord *"is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* (**2 Peter 3:9**)
 - 2. The word longsuffering or patience comes from two Greek words – "makros" (mack-ros) which is translated "long" and "thumos" which is translated "temper."
 - a. In other words, longsuffering describes someone who has a long fuse – not a short fuse – but a long fuse, and who is not quickly angered, or one who doesn't "fly off the handle".
 - b. Longsuffering speaks of one who is forgiving and tolerant – not tolerant in the sense of compromising – but lenient and merciful toward others.
 - c. But the word also describes a willingness to give someone time to mend areas of their life, just as the Lord is giving us

time to mend areas of our life that are still not under His complete control.

F. Another characteristic with which we must clothe ourselves is *"bearing with one another"* or *"forbearing one another."* **(v 13)**

1. In a literal sense, the word means to "hold up" – or we would say to "put up" with someone.
 - a. Obviously, to put up with someone – especially when they seem out of line - requires everything we've just described.
 - b. We must be compassionate, kind, humble, meek, gentle and longsuffering or patient before we can "put up" with or forbear one another.
2. This word speaks of the ability to "sustain" or to "endure" whereas the antithesis of forbearing is impatience and hostility toward someone that is not especially likable.

G. But, in addition to being forbearing, we are also expected to adorn ourselves with another characteristic of the Lord – namely to be *"forgiving"*. **(v 13)**

1. The word literally means to pardon, absolve or exonerate someone who has caused an offense or has done wrong.
 - a. Coupled with the idea of forgiveness is also the need to completely release the offender from the guilt of the offense.

- b. Thayer says forgiveness means to also "show oneself gracious, kind, and benevolent." (Thayer's Greek Lexicon)
 - 2. And the way we are to forgive is described in the words: *"if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."* **(Colossians 3:13)**
 - a. In a literal sense, we forgive as God forgives us – by refusing to remember our sins any longer and casting our sins into the depths of the sea.
- H. And the capstone of the characteristics with which we need to adorn ourselves is *"love"* – which is the glue that binds together all the characteristics mentioned in this passage. **(v 14)**
 - 1. The word *"love"* in this passage is "agape," which is the highest and purest form of love.
 - a. This word doesn't simply speak of an attitude of the heart, but speaks of active goodwill toward others.
 - b. It is displayed in the way we treat one another, and act toward one another.
 - 2. Without real, genuine love, we will never succeed in being compassionate, kind, humble, meek, gentle, longsuffering or patient, forbearing with one another or forgiving one another.

3. Love is the key ingredient that is essential to making all the previous characteristics possible.
- I. Once we have adorned ourselves with all these characteristics, look at what we are able to accomplish.
 1. We will be able to *"let the peace of God rule in our hearts"*
(Colossians 3:15a)
 - a. That peace will permeate the body of Christ of which we are a member – the church will be at peace because we are doing everything in our power to promote and keep peace.
 2. We will be thankful. **(Colossians 3:15b)**
 - a. In other words, we will be thankful for everything we have in Christ – such as redemption from our sins – and we will be thankful to be associated with others who likewise share our love for the Lord and for His church.
 3. And, the word of Christ will dwell in us richly in all wisdom.
(Colossians 3:16)
 - a. There is a big difference between someone who knows the word, and someone in whom the word dwells – especially someone in whom the word dwells richly.
 - b. They don't merely have an academic knowledge of the word – they live it in everything they say and do.

IV. So, now that we know the characteristics with which we need to adorn ourselves – the "new man" – let's make some application of these things.

A. Obviously, putting on the "*new man*" begins with being "*raised with Christ*."

1. As we said earlier, this is speaking about the time when we were baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins, and "put on Christ" in the sense that we now seek to be like Him.
2. But along with being "*raised with Christ*" is a sense of "*setting our minds*" on things above – or of having what we might call a new "mindset."
 - a. It's a mindset where we are actively seeking those things which are above where Christ is, and not setting our mind or our affections on things of this earth.
 - b. This simply means our life is characterized by looking in a new direction for peace, contentment, and lasting happiness.
 - c. And, most importantly, we live our lives like those who truly believe in Christ and who want heaven to be our home.

CONCLUSION:

- I. This passage – Colossians chapter 3 – is one of those passages of Scripture that show us the wonderful opportunities God has given us IF we have truly adorned ourselves with the apparel of Christ.
 - A. Have you done that? Are you adorned with Christ by having put on the "new man"?
 1. If it weren't for Christ coming to this earth and offering Himself on the cross for the redemption of our sins, none of this would be possible.
 2. We would never have an opportunity to be "*raised with Christ*" and we would never have the example we have in Jesus of the wonderful qualities we need to develop in our own lives.
 3. And for sure, we would never be able to "*put off the old man*", and "*put on the new*".
 - B. But all these wonderful opportunities are only for those who have been buried with Christ in baptism, and then raised with Him.
 1. Those who have done that have been forgiven of all their past sins, and they are now able to put off the old man, with all its sinful corruption, and put on the new man, that is created in the image of Christ.

2. And, only those who have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised with Him are able to truly set their minds on things above, and adorn themselves with the "new man".

II. Have you done that?

- A. Have you been buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in a newness of life?

1. If not, you can come to Christ right now in complete faith, believing Him to be the Son of God, repenting of your past sins, confessing your faith in Him, and be baptized for the remission of your sins.

- B. And if you've done that, are you truly adorned with Christ?

1. If you haven't seen a dramatic change in the way you were before baptism with the way you are now, then maybe you either weren't sincere about making a change, or you failed to progress after becoming a child of God.

2. Either way, you need to make some changes right now.

- a. Don't leave here claiming to be a Christian, but not living it out in your life.
- b. You may be fooling others – maybe even fooling yourself – but for sure you aren't fooling the Lord.