

## 2007-08-26 Colossians ch3 v12-17 (Ignite UK)

### Story

Has anyone ever seen the movie “Pursuit of Happiness”? You have a man that loses everything. He is struggling to survive as you watch him have to sleep in a bathroom with his son, staying the night in homeless shelters and giving everything, he has to try to change his luck. It really is a sad sight to watch.

Then what happens? He gets an amazing opportunity to be an intern at a large company. If he makes it through this grueling internship then he gets an amazing job that sets him up to make a very nice living. Well, he makes it. He gets the job and he makes some money.

Now while he is homeless he is wearing whatever ragged clothes he can. He is sleeping wherever he can and eating whatever he can get. But then the money comes and you see a change. He discards the old clothes and the old way of life and puts on better clothes. He goes to the grocery and stocks up, you can imagine him getting a nice place to live and finally getting a good nights rest. Things had changed and you can be sure that his life-style reflected it.

### Connection to Passage

The apostle Paul has just finished calling us to live differently, to crucify our fleshly, worldly, and sinful desires and habits. He calls us to live differently in light of our position in Christ that we have obtained through faith. And now he closes by pointing to what that should look like.

If we are going to honor Christ with our lives then there are certain things that Paul says should mark our lives. These are non-negotiable. These characteristics should naturally flow out of the person who has been *“born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” (1 Peter 1:23)*

The man in the “Pursuit of Happiness” was marked by new things. He was marked by the things that were the very antithesis of the characteristics of his old life. And as his life reflected a change, so should those whose life is hidden with Christ.

In next couple of weeks, we will look at this from a general standpoint, dealing with our relationships with one another and then move into some specific relationships. How does that look like in general and then next week what does that look like in more specific relational terms.

In this first part however, I see Paul dealing with general relationships, or even relationships within the church. And He calls the believers in Colossae to display three characteristics that will serve to point people towards Jesus.

### CONTENT

*“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 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. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” (vs. 12-14)*

The first thing Paul calls us to:

**1. Be Clothed in Righteousness.**

The first thing Paul says is to “*Put on*”. This simply refers to putting some clothes on. Since he has told us previously to take off the old, he knows we cannot walk around in the nude. So, naturally after taking your clothes off you put new ones or fresh ones on. And that is his point here. You have taken off, discarded the “clothes” of this world, and are now to “*clothe*” yourself with the clothes of righteousness.

This carries on the same thought that he began back in verses 1 and 2.

*“Seek the things that are above . . . set your minds on things above.”*  
(vs.1-2)

By setting our minds on the things that are above, namely Christ, then we are drawn to the Scriptures that in turn reveal to us the type of life that we should be living. Paul tells us to imitate him as he imitated Christ. And so, Paul here is saying... “As you think of Christ and his life then **PUT ON THAT TYPE OF LIFE**”. That is what is meant by “Put on then”. And this is something we should want to do. Why?

Because we are “*God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved,*” (vs. 12) it is God who has called us to Himself and through Christ set us apart as His people. We did not love Him first; He loved us before the foundation of the world.

But Paul does not just leave us having to run through the Scriptures and try to figure out what those righteous clothes should look like; he gives us a good list to begin with. You can read so I am not going to go through every single word and break it down for you. But I do want to mention a couple of things.

He lists things like compassion, kindness, and meekness. And those are important attributes to display and practice. We must be a people who are compassionate and kind to one another. We are meek and humble. Those are not negotiable. But the one I want to look at is:

- a. **Patience:** Here Paul decides to elaborate on this word so I figure it would not be a bad idea for me to do the same.

*“bearing with one another...forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive.” (vs. 13)*

Here Paul points us towards an aspect that should permeate our community of believers. This is an attitude that we should naturally and gladly live out in the context of our relationships with others, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Here Paul is calling us to be patient with each other. We can all wrap our heads around that. As we are patient with one another we learn to let things go. We do not hold onto grudges, we do not bring up past wrongs. Instead, we forgive. Which means, not that we say its “ok” that someone did something to us, but instead we say that we are not God and it is God who will repay. And that either the person who has done the wrong will repent and find forgiveness at the cross or one day they will be judged by God.

And that leads into the basis for us forgiving others. Paul says we forgive because we have been forgiven. We forgive because we remember that we wronged God that we sinned against Him. But what did God do! He forgave us because of the cross.

*“having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” (2:13-14)*

We are patient because God is patient with us and we forgive because God forgave us, nailing our sins to His Son. And we can see that as we “put on” these righteous clothes, in our relationships we point people to Christ for the glory of God.

Not only do we want to “Clothe ourselves in Righteousness”, we also want to:

## **2. Let the Peace of Christ Rule in us.**

*“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.” (vs. 15)*

When I look at this word peace, I am drawn to the objective reality that we are at an external peace with God through Christ. I am reminded that before coming to saving faith in Jesus I was a literal enemy of God (Rom. 5:10). If I had continued in that state then one day I would have stood before God and felt His wrath poured out on me. But, through my faith in Christ, I am now a friend of God. This is the meaning of that great biblical word “propitiation”.

- Propitiation: This is a word that is used in scripture and it pictures an offering that turns away the wrath of God. That is exactly what Christ has done. Because of His death on the cross, the wrath of God has been turned away from us.
- BB Warfield has said that he believes a good translation for this word is “satisfaction”. That God’s wrath was satisfied at Calvary. Praise the Lord I did not have to be the one to bear that penalty.

So, when I think of peace or think of that. But is that what Paul has in view here? Paul here is pointing towards relationships that should be guided by the peace that Christ has given. He tells us in the book of John that it is His peace that he leaves with us. And as Christ has made peace with God on our behalf, we seek to live that out in our relationships. That we seek to be at peace with our brothers and sisters in Christ just as we are at peace with our heavenly Father. As we are at peace with each other, we seek to point people towards the peace that they can have with God through Christ Jesus.

So, how does that apply to our lives? Put others before yourself, seek to show others hospitality and honor. Let your decisions be based on whether or not they will glorify God and keep the bond of unity. That may mean confronting someone over sin so that the church will not be divided through gossip and slander and so on. In all things we let the “peace of Christ rule in our hearts.”

So, our new lives are clothed in righteousness, have the peace of Christ ruling within them and Paul says we are to:

### 3. Be Richly Saturated with the Word of God.

*“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.” (vs. 16)*

Here Paul calls us to store the Word within our hearts. When he refers to the “Word of Christ”, he is referring to the revelation of Christ, the Word of God...namely your Bible. And Paul says let it “dwell in you richly”, which is a nice way of saying that we need to be saturated by it. The Word should permeate us. I think of the old Puritan John Bunyan. It was said of him that if he was cut he would bleed Bible. The Word of Christ dwelt in him richly just as it is to be with us.

- That is a call to Bible study if I have ever seen or heard one. To wake up early and seek the God in his word. To seek to satisfy your soul with God as He speaks to you through the Scriptures. We cannot let it “dwell” in us “richly” if we do not study it.

But in the context of relationships what is Paul saying? When we let the Word of Christ dwell in us then we are able to:

- a. “Teach”: This has positive connotations as we seek to impart truth to others. As we learn, we want to help others learn.
- b. “Admonishing”: Now this is the negative side of teaching! It means to warn people of the consequences that flow from certain behaviors.
- c. “Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs”: All these things point us towards the emotions that are created as we study the Word of Christ. We desire to sing out to God, praising Him and thanking Him for what He has done.
  - i. As we sing, and sing Bible-saturated songs, we not only worship but truth is also imparted. When we sing these songs pay attention to the words. They teach us as well as allow us to worship.

When we let the “Word of Christ dwell in us richly,” we are better prepared to cultivate and maintain relationships that are driven by the biblical principles. And as our relationships reflect the design that God has given, then they point people towards Christ. As we love, we point people towards a loving God. As we practice humility, we direct attention towards Christ who humbled Himself to the point of death on the cross. We are prepared to do this as God’s Word saturates us and guides us.

Paul says to do all these things and ultimately your relationships should point, once again to Jesus.

*“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.” (vs. 17)*

This is the ultimate view of everything. Our relationships within this body of believers, the way we act towards each other, the way we talk to each other, the way we talk about each other...all our actions within our relationships should be done with the mindset that I want honor Christ!

Is Ignite that type of place? Are we a people who have taken off the worldly clothes and clothed ourselves in righteousness? Does the peace of Christ rule in our hearts? Are we richly saturated with the Word of Christ? Do these things mark us as a community of believers so that we point people towards their Creator and give glory to Him?