

### **Colossians 3:12-17**

As believers have an old wardrobe that needs to be thrown away and a new one that needs to be put on. Since you have been raised up with Christ (3:1), and since your life is hidden with Christ in God (3:3), and since Christ is your life and when he is revealed we will be revealed with him in glory (3:4) therefore put off the old man and put on the new man.

In case those reasons are not enough to motivate you to put on the new man Paul reminds us in vs.12 that we are chosen, holy and beloved – that is who we are. Because of who we are there is character attire that needs to be put on that is appropriate for who we are in Christ. This is our “Sunday best” if you will, that is to be worn daily.

Two weeks ago we focused on the ‘why’ of the Christians wardrobe. Roman numeral I on the outline. This morning we will focus on the wardrobe itself. Roman numerals II-IV on the outline.

## **II. The Wardrobe Described Col. 3:12b-14**

I’ve divided this wardrobe into 2 pieces – (1) general treatment of others which includes compassion, kindness, humility and gentleness followed by (2) reaction to others – patience, forbearance and forgiveness. The entire context is slanted toward harmony in the church.

### **A. General Treatment of Others 3:12b**

#### **1. Compassion – οἰκτιρισμός (oiktirmos')**

It is literally “*bowels of mercy*”. For the Greek mind the bowels/intestines – your gut is the seat of emotions and affection. It has to do with sensitivity to those suffering and in need.

The verb “*feel compassion*” is only used 12x in the NT; 9x it refers to Christ. In every instance when he “*felt compassion*” towards another it was in response to noticing another’s needs and then immediately acting to provide for that need. Matt. 9:36-10:1; Matt. 15:32ff. Compassion is not idle. You can see it. It is active, reaching out to help the object of compassion.

#### **2. Kindness - χρηστοτης (khreystotace)**

Appears 10x in the NT – means generosity – primarily ascribed to God. Titus 3:4; Eph. 2:7; Rom. 2:4; 11:22. It is an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit – Gal. 5:22. Practically speaking it is doing something for someone on the basis of grace. It comes from the person exercising it and does not depend on the receiver or the response. Kindness is active. You can see it.

In essence compassion and kindness are acts that meet the needs of others whether they deserve it or not. In order to do that we must think correctly about ourselves.

#### **3. Humility – ταπεινοτητα (tapeinophrosune)**

Humility – a proper self - estimate; rejects haughtiness and pride; rejects woe is me and poor self-image. Rom 12:3. A humble Christian never sees himself as a zero or of no value because we have been chosen, holy and beloved. In Christ we are children of God with family status and full access – bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. A humble Christian will not be proud or haughty because we know our depravity and God’s grace. Every good thing we possess comes from God.

All of us are in one way or another in the people business – home, neighborhood, church, and workplace.

Humility is how I see myself so that I effectively meet the needs of others. It is putting Phil. 2:3-5 into practice.

#### **4. Gentleness – πραυτες (prautes)**

Meekness; power under control. A soothing wind but not a hurricane; a medicine but not a poison. John MacArthur defines gentleness as “*the ability to suffer injury rather than inflict it...the ability to sacrifice our rights for the sake of others*”.

You have the right to an opinion; a right to do something your way; a right to express yourself but you “*yield*” – you exercise gentleness. Put on gentleness every day.

### **B. Reaction to Others**

#### **1. Patience – μακροθυμια (makrothumia)**

Long suffering – literally – long tempered: prolonged restraint of anger. Endurance in the light of difficulties. Persistence in being kind and compassionate.

God is patient with us – Rom. 2:4; 9:22; 1 Tim 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:15. Since we are being conformed into the image of Christ, put on patience.

#### **2. Forbearance – ανεχημοι (anekomai)**

Patience goes hand in hand with forbearance – literally to bear with or put up with. It is the attitude of putting up with the personalities, mistakes and idiosyncrasies or weird habits of those in the church – the body of Christ.

In the church (the family of God) there are infants, teens and adults spiritually. We must learn to put up with each other. Christians make mistakes, some make messes, and some are immature, demanding and rude. But they are still part of the family and we need to put up with them. When we struggle with forbearance we must exercise forgiveness.

#### **3. Forgiveness – χηριζομαι (charizomai)**

The root word of forgive is “*be gracious*” – to give freely as a favor even if it is undeserved. Note that the forgiveness is just as the Lord forgave us – *charizomai*. How has the Lord forgiven us? Col. 2:13-14. Freely, unconditionally, and completely.

“*Whoever has a complaint*” – a wrong may have been done and pain inflicted. It obviously speaks to the offended party, not the offending one. It may be that the offending person had little, if any, awareness of what he had done. The offended should take initiative in enduring and forgiving, rather than waiting for the offender to apologize. Don’t allow the hurt and pain to produce resentment, bitterness and revenge – instead forgive – let it go. Anyone can hold grudges, but the mark of Christians is that they do not. They forgive regardless. The pattern for this behavior is Christ forgiving the believer.

Most of us struggle with forgiveness and have a difficult time letting go of the pain. We want the other party to hurt like we hurt. Why? On one side that is human nature but as believers it is most likely because we are still trying to grasp the unfathomable grace of God. Somehow in our minds we struggle with making the connection between his forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of others.

### **III. The Thread that Holds it all Together Col. 3:14**

To all the virtues just listed, add love. Literally it is “*the love*”. Perhaps he had in mind a specific expression of love since he used the definite article and perhaps it referenced “*the love of God*”. We are to love like God loves. Or it is the love that holds the garment together.

NET Bible translates love as “*the perfect bond*”. Love is the ultimate binding agent. We are to love God and we are to love others and that sums up the law.

*Agape* love - Self-sacrificial caring love. The thrust of the verb, the imperative is continuous: keep putting on love over and over and over again. Why? It's the thread that makes unity possible. How will the world know that we belong to Jesus? By our love – John 13:34-35.

The believers' wardrobe can only be worn in community, with others, in relationships. It doesn't do you any good to dress up and stay home. Christians become better Christians in community, in their families, among their associates, in school among friends and in the church.

Once the wardrobe is put on there are three perspectives that need to be adopted to make them effective – (1) peace, (2) the Word of God and (3) name of Jesus.

#### **IV. Evidence that you are Wearing Christian Attire Col. 3:15-17**

##### **A. Allow the Peace of Christ to Rule 3:15**

The peace of Christ takes us back to Colossians 1:20. We have been reconciled to God by the blood of the cross and are therefore at peace with God. The Old Testament word is "*shalom*" meaning soundness, well-being, completeness. We have been placed into a relationship of harmony with God all because of what Jesus Christ has done.

That peace is then to be the rule, arbiter or umpire in our hearts, particularly when we encounter conflict in the body of Christ. Note the context – one body. We are one body in Christ. This echoes Paul's statement in Eph. 2:14-22. The command is to allow the peace of Christ to be the umpire in your heart. The umpire determines the contestants' eligibility and keeps them playing by the rules.

When anxiety creates inner turmoil let the peace of Christ arbitrate the inner conflicts. When there is conflict with others let the peace of Christ settle the dispute.

When you let the peace of Christ rule, don't do it begrudgingly – be thankful. The text doesn't say "*feel thankful*" it says "*be thankful*". Thankful for the gift of Christ's peace to you purchased by the blood of Christ. Thankful for the peace of Christ in the lives of brothers and sisters in Christ. Thankful for this church family.

##### **B. Allow the Word of God to Saturate your Mind and Words 3:16**

The Word of Christ is that which is spoken by him or about him – Scripture. We are to allow the Scripture to take up residence with abundance in our lives. Let it have ample room and remain as a rich treasure. It is to dwell in our lives. We are to submit to the demands of the Word and let it become so deeply implanted in us that it controls all our thinking.

How does that occur? Well according to this verse the Word of God richly dwells within us both individually and corporately. Think about the word " *dwell*" in contrast to 'visit' or 'simply spend time there'. If you own a lakehouse or mountain house or even a timeshare, those are places where you spend time but you do not dwell there. Your main home is the one in which you dwell. *As the rabbis later pointed out, he who dwells in a house is the master of the house, not just a passing guest.*

For the Word of God to dwell means that the Word is our master. We submit to its authority. It determines our actions, motivations, and decisions. We learn to think biblically about marriage, government, music, the arts, culture, morality. So how can we get to the place where we think biblically about the church as well as our response to the culture? Primarily through teaching and admonishing.

Teaching is the orderly arrangement of truth and the effective communication of it. Admonishing differs from teaching. Admonishing has the element of strong encouragement. It is generally practical and moral, rather than abstract or theological. It is the way teaching is reinforced in the lives of the hearers.

Surprisingly enough the specific vehicle for teaching and admonition is song. Christians have always sung their faith, and here is a biblical basis for it. Three terms provide insight into the nature of early Christian singing. Although there is a consensus that the terms have significant overlap and cannot be distinguished sharply, there is some help in seeing where they most differ. “*Psalms*” are, no doubt, the psalms of the Old Testament. The word “*hymn*” occurs only twice in the New Testament, here and Eph. 5:19. It may describe a ‘festive hymn of praise’. “*Spiritual*” songs seem to describe other musical compositions, perhaps like gospel songs. Whatever they were, Paul cautioned that they must be spiritual, not secular. Together, these three terms address the entire scope of musical expression in early church worship.

Music is a vehicle through which a message is delivered. The medium of music however must remain secondary to the message it conveys. Music is legitimate only when it is a medium pointing beyond itself to the exhorting and encouraging of other believers and the evangelization of unbelievers.

What do your children or grandchildren remember most from church? Pastor’s sermon or songs?

Your singing is a significant part of the spiritual growth of the body of Christ. Music as a medium touches your heart, while the words touch your mind and thoughts. Together they enable you to mature and grow. By the way, as you sing, do it with joy and gratitude. Or as one commentator stated: *singing with an understanding of grace because of the working of grace in the life.*

### **C. Live to God’s Glory 3:17**

All of life is addressed with the words “*whatever you do*” and “*in word or deed.*” Deeds can be preaching, teaching, eating, exercising, driving, cleaning house, shopping, visiting, working, playing, worshipping – everything. Our words are every sound that passes our lips. Everything we say or do is to be said or done in the name of the Lord Jesus. Reminiscent of Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 10:13 – “*whether you eat or drink or whatever you do....*”.

The New Testament does not contain a detailed code of rules for the Christian, like those which were elaborated with ever increasing particularity in rabbinical reasoning. The basic principle, as opposed to a set of specific rules, is this: We should say all words and practice all deeds in harmony with the revelation of Jesus Christ, namely, under His authority and as His followers. As you do so – be grateful, giving thanks to God the Father.

Have you noticed a common phrase in all 3 aspects? Thankful. We are to be people overflowing with gratitude and gratefulness for all that God has done, who he is, and what he enables us to do as well.

### **Conclusion**

There you have it, the Christian’s attire from suits to sweats all put on with joy and thankfulness. Why? Because of who we are in Christ – chosen, holy, and beloved. Risen with Christ, hidden with Christ and someday to be revealed with Christ.

Start with prayer asking God to remind you of your position – chosen, holy and loved. Second, ask God to make you willing to put on the wardrobe. Third, pick one of the garments and make a conscious effort to wear it well.

Finally, relax and enjoy the process.

## **I. The Rationale for Putting on Christian Attire**

### **A. You are a new person in Christ 3:9-11**

### **B. You are special to God 3:12a**

**1. You are Chosen**

**2. You are Holy**

**3. You are Beloved**

## **II. The Wardrobe Described 3:12b-14**

### **A. General Treatment of Others 3:12b**

**1. Compassion**

**2. Kindness**

**3. Humility**

**4. Gentleness**

### **B. Reaction to Others**

**1. Patience**

**2. Forbearance**

**3. Forgiveness**

## **III. The Thread that Holds the Wardrobe Together 3:14**

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**B. Allow the Word of God to Saturate your mind  
and words 3:16**

### **C. Live to God's Glory with Thankfulness 3:17**