

## Col Ch 3 Vs 12-17

Clothed With Christ; What Ever shall I do?

### Vs12-17

Most of us have seen various interviews with various actors concerning various films and people are often awe struck at how convincingly they play a certain part. and Often times the actors will confess something to the effect of how they took the time prior to ever leaving their trailer that's there on set that they take the time to sort of "put on" this character. and Some times for the entire time their shooting the film they never take that character off, they just become that person for the endurance of the on location shooting of the film.

Not many people are familiar with the way that the sophisticated movie star Carey Grant's life ended. By the time he died, he'd been through 5 wives, he'd become a closet homosexual, he battled with depression and became alcoholic, all the while making millions and the people of the world thinking man this is a man who has it all together, but in reality his life was an empty mess. In fact during an interview shortly before his death when asked if he'd always been so suave and sophisticated that he burst out laughing and after the course of conversation stating that growing up he'd been anything but that he said, "I played the part so frequently that it became me ultimately. I put on this character so often, that it became who I am."

As a believer (if you'll allow me the shallow correlation) throughout the drama of life we're to so "put on Christ" that (obviously minus deity) that's who we become, we live as He lived, His character becomes our character, His personality becomes our personality. and In the portion that's before us the "character" of Christ is unveiled, the lifestyle, personality and disposition that we are to have as Christians is spelled out.

We've been learning in the past weeks the mind-blowing reality that Christ is our life- He not only gives us life, but the life He gives us, is a share *in His own* life. Christ is our life. You died, and since you died and Christ is now your life, put to death your earthly members, or sinful passions such as (read last ½ of vs 5).

Or to understand it another way crucify the flesh, reckon, or consider yourself to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ, lay aside those characteristics that reflect death that once clothed you (as it were) things such as we see in vs 8 like (read, anger etc, through vs 9). Because in Christ you've put on the new man, you've put on Christ and you're to continually be being renewed in and through the study, and knowledge of the Word of God into the image of Christ. In whom there is no nationality or ethnicity, there is no racial, gender or social differences whatsoever as far as value is concerned, Christ is not divided against Himself.

Now obviously God has prescribed different roles for the 2 genders, which we'll get into next time, but as far as value is concerned we're all the same. and I might add that nor is there any denominational differences in Christ. You won't get to heaven and be placed in the Baptist section, or the Assemblies section, or the Calvary Chapel section or the Methodist section, you won't say, "well I'm of Cephas" or "I'm of Paul" hey, was Paul crucified for you? Is being Baptist what makes you right with God? No, being in Christ is what makes you right with God, and in Him there are no distinctions, you're either in Christ, or you're not.

Now that's a basic summary of what we've learned in these 1<sup>st</sup> 11 vs. However, now the thrust of this epistle shifts just a *little* bit from our relationship to Jesus, who He is to us, and for us, what we find in Him, what we're to walk in and draw upon in Him, to our relationship with one another as we live *together* in Christ.

We've learned what we're not to do, we're not to lie to one another, blaspheme one another, covet each others things, those are the attributes of the old man, we've put those thing off, and we've "put on" the new man, but what all does that entail. Now that I'm clothed with Christ what are the things that I'm to do, what ever (or consistently) shall I do? How will I interact with my brothers and sisters, because the fact is things go wrong from time and again. If any of you have siblings you know that you're not always going to get along, but biblically speaking, retreat (from your family, that is your bro's and sisters in Christ) is never an option. (Now I'm not speaking of issues in theological differences that you can't agree on therefore you can't walk together). But I'm speaking of "family squabbles" you have a beef with a bro or a sister, how are you to deal with it? What should be your frame of mind and heart in the matter, and isolation is never an option, the bible says that the man who isolates himself seeks his own desire and rages against all wise judgment, or counsel, Prov 18:2 says, "*A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart.*"

Such attitudes and actions are not expressive of the new man, they don't demonstrate Christ, so now that Paul has spoken of the new man, now he expounds on the attitudes and actions of the new man, these are the "earmarks" of the new life. When Jesus dealt with this issue on the sermon on the Mt, we labeled that section the "Be attitudes" the attitudes that should be in your life, when Paul was writing to the Galatians he spoke there of these things as being the fruit, or the "out cropping" of the Spirit in the believers life. Both of those areas of scripture correlate very closely with what we've labeled here as the, "Character of Christ."

### Vs12-13

Now as I was going over this section I was confronted with a choice, because the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 words of vs 12 crash us headlong into this controversial issue of election. "*Therefore as the elect of God*", so the choice was do I spend the next 10 or 20 minutes going over the issue of election and freewill, God's sovereignty vs mans choice? Or do I simply glaze over this aspect of the vs touch it lightly and move on? I opted for the latter, and the primary reason is because I didn't feel like getting into it (so at least I'm honest), but the 2<sup>nd</sup> reason is because in the text that's not Paul's primary focus, that's the given, he's just titling them.

He's not getting into the theological aspects of freewill and election, or predestination, now, when we went through Eph ch 1 we spend a little bit of time in vs 4 and 5 speaking of this very issue. So if you would like, you can get that tape, but Paul's primary focus here is on the garments, the "grace garments" of the new man, vs the "grave garments" of the old man. This is just almost like a passing statement that segues him into the topic.

But as far as election goes, let me just state that the bible teaches election and freewill in equally passionate terms. Does God elect us before the foundation of the world? Yes, on what basis, well, we know that it has something to do with His foreknowledge. 1 Peter 1:1-2 says, "*To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*" Now as to what it is that God foreknew regarding us, I don't know, maybe it was the fact that we would choose Him, but the bible is equally clear that God doesn't discard the responsibility of man to choose this day who he's going to serve, the things of this world, or the 1 true living God. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that "whosoever" believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. Jesus didn't say, "so that the elect might believe upon Him for everlasting life." He said, "whoever" the door is open to all of mankind to believe upon Christ.

You say, "Jeff, then where do these 2 matters reconcile with one another." That's the question that's boggled the minds of theologians throughout the ages, only God knows. We're called to proclaim the gospel to the lost world, leave the reconciliation of election and freewill in God's hands, you just proclaim the gospel. D.L. Moody put it like this, he said, "The whosoever wills are the elect, and the whosoever won'ts are the non-elect." All I know is that Jesus said that the one who comes to Me, I will in know wise, or by no means cast out, so if you're heart longs for more, and you come to Christ, God will receive you, and you'll find that you've been elected from before the foundation of the world.

But Paul places his emphasis on the by products of election, and what the characteristics of the elect need to be. As God's elect, as God's children you're holy, and beloved. You see God doesn't elect you for no reason, He has a plan and a purpose for your life, and so as to where election has to do with people, predestination seems to occupy itself with purpose, or God's plan. Part of His plan for your life, is that you would be holy, and this word speaks of purity, and consecration, God has set you apart from the things of this world that you might be holy, for He is holy. 1 Peter 2:9 says that, "*you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, (for what purpose) that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*" That you might testify of the goodness and grace of God towards your life to a desperate people in need of Him, come out from among them (that is the world) and be separate says the Lord. And even as marriage sets a man a woman apart exclusively to one another, so salvation sets the believer apart exclusively to Jesus Christ I mean how horrible would it be to see the bridegroom run off with the best man after a marriage ceremony, and yet that's the equivalence of a believer living after the world and running off to the things of the world.

God has called you to holiness and He loves you as sons and daughters, and even as children take on the characteristics of their parents, even so, as children of God, you're to take on His attributes, they're to be growing and developing in your life. and Here Paul lists what some of those attributes are (read, tender mercies etc.)

Vs 12-14 are the things that you're to put on in place of the things in vs 5-9 that you've taken off. 1<sup>st</sup> of all he mentions "tender mercies" or maybe your bible says, "bowels of mercies" or "a heart of compassion" speaking of a deep, gut-level feeling of compassion. You remember in Matt ch 9 when Jesus saw the multitudes, we read that he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. James 5:11 tells us that "*the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.*" Jesus said, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy*" and Again James said, "*For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*" Put on tender mercies, if you would have God be merciful to you, then be merciful to others. "Yeah, but Jeff, you don't know what they did, they deserve what they got coming." Well, who doesn't deserve it, you and I deserve hell, but God has shown you mercy, Jesus looks upon you with a heart of compassion. So if you're clothed in Christ, allow His tender mercies to flow forth from your life, don't damn up the free flow of the mercies of God towards others through your life, but rather allow God to demonstrate His mercy through you.

"Kindness" now this word has for it's root the same word that Jesus used when He said, "My yoke is easy." It's the opposite of harsh, one commentator said, "The Greek term refers to the grace that pervades the whole person, mellowing all that might be harsh." (MacArthur) In other words it's not a momentary lapse of reasoning whereby you were strangely kind for a moment but then you snapped out of it. It's a grace that permeates and influences your whole being in a permanent fashion, you're genuine in kindness, that's who you are. Jesus illustrated this attribute in Luke ch 10: 25-37 in the story of the Good Samaritan, and Jesus said regarding his example to his fellow man, now go and do likewise. Don't pass the hurting by, show them kindness, lift them up, tend to their needs, kindness characterizes the new man.

"Humility", or "humbleness of mind" that quality of the Christian life through which nothing is exempt, there is no aspect of the Christian experience that can be disassociated from humility. You might say humility equals usability in the kingdom, and pride invites destruction, or a fall. and Of course of Himself, Jesus said that He was humble, and lowly of heart, the new man walks in humility.

"Meekness", "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*" Now as you know, meekness isn't weakness, it's that quality that comes to the ready defense of others, but never defends itself, one has defined it as strength under control. So that when aimed at me, I'll turn the other cheek, but when aimed at others, I'll stand in the gap.

Jesus never retaliated when animosity or physical violence was hurled at Him. But He drove the money changers out of the temple with a whip, He defended the woman caught in adultery, and lifted her up when everyone else was tearing her down. He led her to repentance, everyone else just wanted to kill her. But this is a quality closely related to humility; it's a gentleness of spirit.

“Longsuffering” or more literally, “long-tempered” it's the opposite of “short tempered”, basically we're speaking here of patience. I for one am so glad that God has patience with me and *had* patience with me when I was in the world floundering around refusing to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9 says, “*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, (that is of His judgment upon the wicked and His coming again to the earth) as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*” In 1<sup>st</sup> Tim 1:16 Paul said that his life was a model of the long-suffering or patience of God toward man, if He was patient with Paul, He'll be patient with anyone, and so to are we to be, put on patience, or long-suffering.

Vs13

Now you guys this is hardcore stuff to deal with, if you have a beef with your bro or sister, how are you to deal with it? with quick tempered zeal that lashes out in anger and culminates in leaving the church leaving a trail of discord as you leave? That's not what my bible says, we're reading here that we're to deal with one another in mercy, with compassion, that we're to be kind in our dealings and words towards one another, we're to be gentle, and patient with each other, “bearing with one another” being an exposition on longsuffering. “What do you mean be longsuffering?” “I mean bear with one another.” Endure, don't “escape”, “endure” be a model of maturity, be examples one to another, who knows your perspective on an issue, just might be wrong anyway. But by you purporting your conjecture as gospel facts on your way out the door, all that does, is divide the body, hurt the sheep, and sow discord among the brethren, and God hates that. and Besides as a believer you're called to promote unity, not disunity, in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor Paul says that in reality, it's just better to be wronged in a circumstance than to divide the body.

If someone said I could do something and then someone else starts doing it, I'm not to get all up in a tiff and just blow down the doors on my way out ranting and raving about what a lack of integrity that ministry has. and How unloving is that, be more mature than that, be patient, endure, bear with one another, if someone ripped you off for 50 bucks, don't take them to court, just suffer the loss, God knows what's happening, trust Him to take care of you. You forgive, complaints are a real part of ministry, but here Paul says that to the degree Christ has forgiven you, then you're to forgive.

Now I'm not talking about codling sin, but that in humility and kindness you deal with things biblically. and On your part, you forgive, it doesn't matter what the other person does, even if they don't seek your forgiveness, you can't hang on to that stuff, it'll eat you up from the inside out, it'll plant a root of bitterness in your heart, and the only one that will wind up hurt is you. If they don't seek your forgiveness, then you release it over to God, and if they do, you give it to them, even as Christ gave it to you, when you sought it from Him, and still do daily.

#### Vs14

As critical as all these other things are, Love supercedes them all, why? Because love fulfills them all, again MacArthur writes, "Love is the most important moral quality in the believer's life, for it is the very glue that produces unity in the church. Believers will never enjoy mutual fellowship through compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, or patience; they will not bear with each other or forgive each other unless they love one another." In fact Paul said in Rom 13:10, "*Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*" and without love these things just become a matter of legalism, you might say that love is the belt that pulls all these things together, because there's nothing acceptable to God that isn't motivated by love, again actions apart from love becomes legalism. I'd encourage you to read over 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 13 again in regards to that reality.

#### Vs15

People are often curious as to how to discern the will of God in their lives, and one thing I always encourage them with is this principal right here. Let the peace of God be the yardstick of discernment in your life, let it "rule" or "umpire" in your heart. Wiersbe makes this comment; "The peace of God is the "umpire" in our believing hearts. When we obey the will of God, we have His peace with in; but when we step out His will (even unintentionally), we lose His peace." (In other words the whistle blows in your heart and there's a flag on the field.) Now listen, he goes on, "We must beware, however, of a false peace in the heart. Jonah deliberately disobeyed God, yet he was able to go to sleep in the hold of Ship *in a storm!* "I had peace about it!" is not sufficient evidence that we are in the will of God. We must pray, surrender to His will, and seek His guidance in the Scriptures. The peace of the hear *alone* in not always the peace of God.

His point is that our hearts are wicked and can deceive us, give us false peace, but even if we have peace, if our actions, or the fruit of our doings doesn't line up with the word of God, then it doesn't matter what your heart tells you. The proverbs tells us that, "*He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.*" Prov 28:26 and Again James 3:17 tells us that, "*the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." So if your actions contrast any of these previously mentioned qualities, it doesn't matter what kind of peace you have, it's not the peace of God.*

Wiersbe concludes, “Something else is involved: if we have peace in our hearts, (in regards to the peace of God), we will be at peace with others in the church. We are called to one body, and our relationship in that body must be one of harmony and peace. If we are out of the will of God, we are certain to bring discord, and disharmony to the church. Jonah thought he was at peace, when actually his sins created a storm!”

#### Vs16

So if the new man is renewed in knowledge, then let the Word of God, dwell, or abide in you richly, dig into it, plumb the depths of it, study it, incorporate it into your life. “In all wisdom” let the Spirit of God, unfold the mind of God through the word of God. So many churches in America lack this essential aspect of Christian living, they just allow some scripture to trigger just a mindless flow of words, or they use a scripture as a springboard to get around to talking about whatever they want. Instead of causing the time they have in the word to be rich, and unfold before them in wisdom by the Spirit of God. and As you study the Word, you begin to see the correlation between the Word of God, and the worship of God. We should sing to one another, and to the Lord from a heart of gratitude and thankfulness for the grace of God that’s been shed in our hearts.

#### Vs17

Another good barometer of discernment, if you want to know, “well, can I do this and still be ok with God?” Just ask yourself, would I do this in the name of Jesus, would I identify Christ with this, would I stand in the authority of Christ regarding this issue. Is something I would do in the name of Jesus, if you wouldn’t say it, or do it, in the name of Jesus, then that should be telling us something, there should be a flag on the field of our hearts as the peace of God begins to evaporate in that situation. So in closing, “Clothed with Christ, whatever shall you *do*?”

You shall walk in holiness, God’s love, you’ll walk in tender mercy, kindness, compassion, patience, forgiveness will mark your life, and the love of God will course through your veins. You’ll be guided by God’s peace as governed in His word, which will dwell richly in you with all wisdom and the more you grow to know the Lord and are more and more familiar with all these attributes that He’s displayed towards you. The result will be a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving and worship.

But if you’re here today and never been a recipient of these things, you’ve never experienced the forgiveness of God, the kindness of God towards you in Christ, you don’t know what it’s like to have the peace of God in your heart that surpasses all understanding. That’s because you can’t know that peace “of” God, until you’ve 1<sup>st</sup> made peace “with” God. and Peace is made with God through the person of Jesus Christ who laid down His life that you might have life, who was willing to be broken that you might be made whole. and If He’s calling you to repentance today, don’t harden your heart, but rather open your heart, receive Him into your heart and into your life.