

Become a Christ-Centered Christian:

Preaching from Colossians

THE POWER OF YOUR HIDDEN LIFE

The Hidden Power of Your New Clothes; Col. 3:9-14

9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Intro: I thought about wearing my Baylor shirt today to let you know that I am a proud alumnus of Baylor. I also have merch from New Orleans Seminary, the Saints, and the Astros.

But how about those Eagles! I have chosen this morning to wear my Goldthwaite Eagles shirt. The Friday Night Lights in Goldthwaite are the present, not the past, for us. Everywhere I go I tell them about the excellence of our Goldthwaite schools and the educators here who are training and shaping young people in both body and spirit.

"Well done," teachers, administrators, coaches, and staff. You are part of a legacy we value as a community. As a citizen of this community, and a grandparent of students here, I am happy to pay my school taxes. I mean that from the bottom of my heart.

***When I was a reporter I would show up every afternoon at the newsroom in a sports jacket, business casual. I seldom knew what my assignment would be that day. Some days I would end up at a formal affair with everyone in gowns and tuxedos. I was one of the few guests one evening at the International Wine-taster's Ball where everyone else was wearing flowing robes with silver spoons hanging around their necks.

Many very positive and helpful developments occur when you wear these new clothes the Apostle identifies here. I want to mention just a few:

I. Conquer Your Insecurities with Your New Clothes;
Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly
loved... (v12a).

***You know how you feel when you show up at an event and you are over-dressed or under-dressed? You are self-conscious. You are worried about what others are thinking and saying about you. You are having difficulty engaging because you feel like you have egg on your face.

And you know how it feels to be appropriately dressed, well-dressed? You are relieved that you chose this outfit. Someone says, "Like those shoes," and your confidence takes a boost. These new spiritual clothes:

A. Remind You of your identity--Who You Are: chosen
***I wore an Astros shirt recently to a committee meeting. Coach Spradley and Brandi Roundtree, rabid Ranger fans, thought I had committed the unforgiveable sin. I explained to them how the Astros were part of my story, especially the era of the Killer B's. I was a pastor in Houston for five years, then moved to FBC Temple. Drayton McLane asked me to come and see him at his office. I didn't know what was up. He told me that day that he was thinking about buying the Houston Astros and wanted to know my thoughts about Houston and about a Christian businessman owning a sports franchise. After he bought them, Janet and I ate with Drayton and Elizabeth in the Diamond Club and sat with them behind home plate. We met some of the players, including Nolan Ryan.

B. Remind you of Your Position (self-awareness): **holy**

1. You have been set apart for God's purposes. You are separated spiritually from the crowd. You belong to Christ.
2. Your position is continuous regardless of your condition.

C. Remind you of your affections—**dearly loved**

1. The affections that flow from God to you.
2. The affections that flow from you to God.
3. The affections that flow between believers.
4. The affections that flow out to a lost world.

II. Overcome Depilitating Self-Consciousness with Your New Clothes; **Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (v12b)**

***If you are wearing work boots and gloves, I assume you are about to work outside. If you are wearing pajamas, I assume you are about to go to bed. If you are wearing a tuxedo, I assume you are going to a formal occasion, a wedding maybe, or the opera. If you have on warmups and tennis shoes, I suspect you may be about to work out, go to the gym. Our clothes are an indication of what we intend to do.

A. Surround your spiritual body with these virtues, as they are called in verse 14. The word there is "things," but supplying the descriptive noun "virtues" helps us know what Paul is talking about.

We are to wrap our lives in these virtues, cover with these qualities, and be surrounded by these attributes.

B. Dress in Your Best. This is the ACADEMY AWARD of virtues, their HALL OF FAME. You cannot do better than these.

C. Declare your purpose.

***When you see someone in a police uniform, you know that they are there to keep the peace. If they are dressed in green scrubs, you know they are assisting in medical procedures. If you see someone dressed in these virtues, you know they are there to keep the peace, to assist in spiritual procedures, and to move everyone toward a higher level of living.

III. Repair and Restore Relationships with Your New Clothes; Put Up Bear with each other and forgive whatever...
(v13)

***School uniforms are not popular with everyone. But they do serve a good purpose. When you see another person wearing that uniform, you are reminded of your common interest and concern, not the things that divide you. If you are "bear with" and "forgiving," people know that you are seeking harmony, not war.

A. God knows this is not easy. "Bear with" implies the hardship and difficulty involved in getting along with people and keeping the unity intact.

B. God knows it cuts both ways. "Each other" communicates that my problem with you is your problem with me.

With so much diversity of personality and purpose and inclination, we are obligated to bear with EACH OTHER.

C. God knows offenses have to be let go. "Forgive" is in part the letting go of offenses—sending them away, as the scapegoat is driven into the wilderness, the boat is cut from its moorings to drift with the current and disappear, and the offense is buried in the depths of the sea and "remembered no more against."

D. God knows this must cover ALL. "Whatever" is the statement that there are no offenses excluded from this obligation. We must learn to forgive whatever.

E. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** Here is the key to our forgiveness. We remember at all times how we have experienced the overwhelming and complete forgiveness of Jesus. We cannot withhold our forgiveness from others when we remember how he has forgiven us.

IV. Develop Personal Integrity with Your New Clothes; Over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity (v14). Love is our first impulse and the key to Christian response in every situation.

***My brothers spun me round and round in a swing with long ropes tied to a high branch. (I wore the coat of many colors, and they persecuted me). They knotted up those ropes until they couldn't reach me anymore, then turned me loose. I spun around and around, a hundred times, maybe, and when the spinning quit I fell to the ground and couldn't stand up. It was three days before I regained my balance enough to walk by myself.

A. Put on the Overcoat that completes and unites the ensemble. Here is the perfect touch to finalize your outerwear: LOVE.

***I have a friend who spends real money on clothes. He is wearing something new every time I see him, his outfits always fitting well and looking good. I am wondering if Paul was a clothes hound, able to match colors and patterns, with an eye to pick the perfect coat for his outfit. I think not, him being chained and incarcerated during the writing of this letter. Perhaps Paul knew from his previous life about clothes that communicate thoughtfulness and practicality. Maybe he had a companion or jailer who visited him often and wore the latest fashions.

B. Put on the overcoat that unites all aspects of your life: LOVE.

It is the defining quality of God, and it is to be your defining characteristic as well.

C. Put on the GREATEST of all: love.

1. Now I will show you the most excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:31).
2. Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8).
3. Now abide faith, hope, and love, these three. But the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

D. Without this final spiritual garment, your words will ring like a hollow barrel and clang like a noisy gong. Your sacrifices will amount to nothing, and your life will add up to NOTHING.

1. I wish I could communicate to you the true power of love both to bind up your life and to unite all its energies and resources.

2. You will gather your life around some guiding principle, some overriding purpose. Inevitably, we must do this. And we will

do our goal-setting and our decision-making based on that principle,

stated or unstated, that trumps all other priorities.

3. To be healthy spiritually, that guiding purpose, that overriding concern, **MUST BE LOVE**. Anything else will pull you away from the purposes of God, make you less like your Savior and Master, and eventually bring you heartache and despair.

CONCLUSION: There is a great deal riding on our willingness to come clean with God and put on these clothes. The church of Jesus Christ in this city will never be clearly identified with her Lord until we are all wearing these shoes. The words that we speak and preach will never have the power that they ought to have until we are speaking them with these clothes on. And the good works that we do in our community will not bring about the new day we pray for until we ourselves are repentant before God and wearing these clothes that he has prepared for us.

DAILY JOURNAL PROMPTS

October 5- What does submission to God look like in my everyday choices?

October 6- How can I love more selflessly in my closest relationships today?

October 7- Am I resisting any godly authority in my life? Why?

October 8- What does it mean to obey with the right heart, not just outward actions?

October 9- Where is pride keeping me from living in harmony with others?

October 10- How can I honor my family today in a way that reflects Christ?

October 11- In what relationship do I need to show more grace and understanding?