

mistakes. Then, I look at myself and realise that I am no better. *I am very grateful that God is longsuffering toward me. I need to be as patient with others as God is with me.*

- 6) **Forbearing one another** – bearing with one another. The idea here is to endure or tolerate the wrong words or actions of others. This is not excusing what they did or justifying a sin. It is simply enduring their mistreatment without retaliation. This duty is reciprocal. I must bear with you, and you must bear with me. It is a warning against being super sensitive. As humans, we may, without intent, come across rudely, lack tact, speak sharper than we ought or be forgetful. *With God's help, we need to put on the quality of bearing with one another.*
- 7) **Forgiving one another** – granting forgiveness to each other. **If any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.** We have no right to refuse to forgive anyone, since Christ forgave us our lifetime of eternally-damning sin. Once again, this is a reciprocal duty. I must forgive you, and you must forgive me. *Until we reach heaven, we will never be without need of forgiveness; therefore, we must never withhold forgiveness from anyone.*
- 8) **And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness** – love. Love is giving ourselves to meet the needs of others. It is treating others as we want to be treated. The word “above” literally means on or over. Love is like a belt that goes over the top of all this clothing to bind it together perfectly.

Conclusion: Review! Living in this sin-cursed world, with other sinners who will at times irritate and offend us, is not easy. God has warned us to put off social sins that harm relationships. He then commanded us to put on spiritual clothing that improve relationships. To do so, we are going to need God's help.

Song: More Like the Master - 325

A Christian's Spiritual Clothing

23 July 2023 PM – Colossians 3:12-14 – Col23 – Scott Childs

Introduction: I played the trombone in my high school marching band. We had a uniform that we had to wear when we marched. It included maroon wool pants, a maroon and white wool double-breasted coat, white shoes and a hat. Our band director was very strict about our dress. Paul gives us a similar analogy in our text this evening.

Transition: Much of this chapter is about getting dressed spiritually. In Colossians 3:12-14, Paul tells us why we are to put on spiritual clothing, how we are to put it on, and what this clothing must include.

1. Why are we to put on spiritual clothing?

a. Notice the important word “therefore.”

- 1) Never overlook this word. It points us back to what has already been said.
- 2) In many Bible passages, it is the **key** to rightly understanding God's message.

b. The context gives us the answer to “why”.

- 1) We must put on spiritual clothing if we have put off carnal, fleshly clothing [*social sins*] (v.8-9).
 - a) Someone wisely said, “Bad habits are like comfortable beds—easy to get into but hard to get out of.”
 - b) The principle of replacement is very important for victory over sin. If you put off a social sin, you must replace it with something good, or you will likely go back to it.
- 2) Another reason for putting on spiritual clothing is that we have already put on the new man, which is patterned after Christ (v.10-11).
- 3) If in the past, you have made a spiritual decision to put off a social sin, but you have fallen back into that sinful habit, you did not truly put on the needed spiritual clothing.

2. How are we to put on spiritual clothing?

a. Note the little word “as”.

- 1) This word means like, as, just as, or in the manner of.
- 2) It is a qualifying word.

b. The word “as” identifies three standards to meet.

- 1) We are to act **as the elect of God**. If you are a true Christian, you are one of God’s elect children. You are part of His family. You are a child of the KING of kings. God wants you to dress like one!
- 2) We are to act **as saints of God**. Yes, holy ones are saints. Christ’s salvation set us apart from sin, and set us apart for God’s glory. We must wear spiritual clothing fitting for a holy saint.
- 3) We are to act **as those dearly loved by God**. God loves us. He died in our place to evidence that love for us. Because God loves us, and He hurts deeply when we sin, we must put on spiritual clothing in gratitude to Him.

3. What are we to put on as spiritual clothing?

a. Our spiritual clothing repels social sins.

- 1) Many workers are required to wear protective clothing. Manufactures design protective clothing (e.g., shoes, gloves, earplugs, hard-hats, boots, goggles, etc.) to repel dangers that the worker may face.
- 2) The spiritual clothing listed in these verses (v.12-14) works to repel the social sins listed earlier (v.8-9).
- 3) This spiritual clothing will protect your marriage, your home, your work environment, your friendships, your testimony for the Lord, and every other social situation.

b. Paul lists eight pieces of this spiritual clothing.

- 1) **Bowels of mercies** – compassionate hearts. The word “bowels” refers to our tender inner feelings. The word “mercies” speaks of pity or compassion. It may even imply sympathy or empathy. Those who irritate us need our compassion, not our harsh or sinful outburst. A pitiful, compassionate heart will look beneath their irritating ways to find the cause of their behaviour. Have they had a bad day? Are they hurting emotionally? Are they in pain? Have we frustrated them? Are they unsaved? **When the devil urges us to do to others as they have done to us, God wants us to put on the spiritual clothing of a compassionate heart.**
- 2) **Kindness** – kindness or moral goodness. This word

describes the response that is *opposite to harshness*.

Kindness is both an attitude and an action. When someone has cut us off, criticised us, been rude to us, hurt our feelings, or disobeyed us, we are to put on the spiritual clothing of kindness. We are not to respond in anger, ill will, or belittling language (v.8). Such sinful responses are sharp, cutting, and harsh. **With God’s help, we must be kind, even if others do not deserve it.**

- 3) **Humbleness of mind** – a humble opinion of self. When we respond to others with the thought, “*They can’t treat me like that,*” we are reacting in pride. We believe we deserve better treatment. Responding with a humble opinion of self is not putting ourselves down. It is remembering that, but by God’s grace, we could be the one mistreating others. In addition, a humble mind will recall past personal failures in similar ways. We will also recall the times we have treated God no better than we are being treated. **Satan wants us to demand our rights by returning the attack; God wants us to have a humble opinion of ourselves and not react sinfully.**
- 4) **Meekness** – gentle, mild, meekness. When someone is in our face, slandering us, verbally abusing us, or lying about us, we need to put on the spiritual coat of gentle meekness. God’s counsel through Solomon applies here. (Proverbs 15:1) “**A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.**” Moses endured criticism, slander, verbal abuse, lies, and hatred, yet note what God says about him in Numbers 12:3. “**(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)**” How can we be meeker? **Because meekness is a fruit of the Spirit, if we will walk in harmony with the Holy Spirit, God will enable us to put on meekness.**
- 5) **Longsuffering** – patience, slow to anger. This is a primary attribute of God. He has the right and the power to fry us instantly when we sin against Him, yet He is patient with us. I get upset with Israel as I read how often they rebelled against God and did not learn from their