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This week on Chosen and Cherished, we talked about something that is so important for us to grasp... Spiritual oneness is the foundation of all intimacy, and spiritual oneness starts with Jesus. If you'd like to listen to the episode, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Colossians 3:12-17

Last week we studied how spiritual oneness helps us build a godly home. Spiritual oneness is foundational, and it starts with my relationship with Jesus... Then it spills over to my relationships with others. And now this week, we get to learn about relational oneness. It's way more than just "getting along." Truly, relational oneness starts with Jesus as well.

In today's passage, right away I'm going to see the word "then" which can also be translated "therefore". If I look back to vs. 1, I'll see what the therefore is therefore. "I have been raised with Christ." I need to let that settle. Everything I think, say, and do centers on how well I grasp that one point. I WAS dead in my sins. BUT GOD gave me life IN CHRIST, who paid the debt I couldn't pay. If Jesus had not paid my debt, I would spend eternity separated from God... from His love, from His goodness, from His holiness, from everything that has any real value. He did that for me WHILE I WAS HOSTILE TO HIM, spiritually dead and spiritually blind. IF I HAVE BEEN RAISED IN CHRIST, then anything He calls me to is worth seeking.

First, in vs. 1-4, He calls me to seek Him and everything above where nothing is destroyed or wasted, and my life is hidden, protected with Christ in God.

In vs. 5-11, I see that to seek the things above is to put to death the things below... the earthly things... outward acts that I once embraced. And I need to put away the inward emotions that destroy relational oneness.

Now I come to vs. 12-17 where God shows me what seeking the things above and setting my mind on things above actually means.

I love how Paul reminds me of the reason WHY once again. He reminds me of who I am in Christ. I am His chosen one... part of the body and bride of Christ. I am His beloved... He loves me sacrificially, tenderly, unconditionally. He calls me holy... consecrated to Him, set apart for Him. So... the command that's coming next is not to be done in order to earn God's favor, but because I already have God's favor.

He wants me to put some things on my heart. My heart is where my feelings, desires, and choices are found. Just as I'm called in Ephesians 6 to "put on the whole armor of God," I'm called here to put on what is already mine. But I will only know to put these things on AS I'm seeking the things of Jesus and not the earthly things because of which "the wrath of God is coming." Seeking the earthly things feeds my flesh and blinds me to what is truly good.

So... as God's chosen, set apart, unconditionally loved daughter, what does He want me to put on my heart? (The ESV looks like it's just a heart of compassion, but actually, the Greek shows that everything in the next few verses comes from the heart.)

My heart is to be clothed in...

- *Compassion... rather than judgment*
- *Kindness... rather than cruelty or indifference*
- *Humility... rather than arrogance*
- *Meekness (gentleness)... rather than harshness*
- *Patience (macro-suffering)... rather than impatience or demanding immediate change*
- *Bearing with others (enduring our differences)... rather than shutting others out or avoiding them*
- *Forgiving others (showing them grace)... rather than holding grudges. The Greek word for "forgive" is "charizomai," which means "extending grace that cancels."*

The motivation for me extending grace to others is not whether or not they treat me as I think I should be treated. It's treating them according to how Jesus has treated me. He has extended to me a grace that canceled my debt when I repented. I need to do the same for others. If I truly forgive as Jesus forgave me, when someone comes to me and apologizes, my answer will never be, "I'm going to have to think about that for a while" or "Talk to the hand" or "You're going to have to earn my forgiveness." What if Jesus did that with me? I would be hopeless. In truth, anything anyone can do against me, I've already done against Jesus in some way. If Jesus, the perfect one who never sinned even once, can cancel my debt, how can I, a sinful person who needs Jesus, refuse to forgive someone else?

That being said, when a sin is egregious, I can forgive... but trust still has to be rebuilt.

Forgiveness and trust are not the same thing. But I need to be careful not to use the need for rebuilding trust as an excuse not to forgive.

I look at this list of things I need to "put on" and I have to examine my heart. How am I doing with this? What trips me up the most? Honestly, I think my biggest problem is arrogance. God opposes arrogance for a reason. It blocks relational oneness. Arrogance can keep me from being compassionate. It definitely gets in the way of humility by its very definition. It also justifies harsh responses when I feel stepped on. It makes me feel right in being impatient. It just ruins everything! I am constantly recognizing arrogance in my thoughts and words, and I'm constantly asking the Lord to remove the arrogance from my heart. Praise God, He does... one degree of glory to the next.

One other thing arrogance definitely destroys is... Love. Vs. 14 says, "Above all these, put on love." Love unites. Arrogance divides. The Greek word for "above" can also be translated "beyond, over." In other words, this is the main piece of clothing under which all other "put ons" fit. I love how the Berean Literal Translation says it, "And over all these, put on love, which is the bond of perfection." Love is what matures us to completion. I will know that I'm growing more mature in Christ the more I sacrificially, tenderly, unconditionally love others... without arrogance getting in my way.

With God's love flowing in me and through me, I am free to "let the peace of Christ rule in my heart." This is so huge. I was called to peace by the Lord for the body of Christ. God wants me to pursue peace with other believers. Romans 14:19 calls us to "pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding" ~ relational oneness. How much pain and dissension would believers avoid if our first thought was to pursue peace... to pursue US and not ME? O Lord, please help me to pursue peace! Please help me to LET it RULE in my heart. I "let" peace rule by letting go of grudges. I let it rule by refusing to let ME take the throne. It is the peace OF CHRIST... a perfect peace from a perfect, loving God.

Next, I'm called to be thankful. Why? Because I could not have this love or peace in my heart if I didn't have Jesus. I did nothing to earn it, and I do nothing to keep it. It all comes from Jesus. It's so easy to get caught up in the "earthly" circumstances and think God owes me something. So my temptation is to not be thankful if I'm not getting what I want... and I may not really be thankful if I am... Let me never think, "I deserve to get what I want." The truth is, I deserve nothing. He graciously lavishes me with His grace and love and peace. All I can do is have a heart of gratitude.

The next thing Paul says that fosters relational oneness is letting "the word of God dwell in me richly." I NEED to let His word have preeminence over my thoughts and feelings because His word is constant and always true. My thoughts and feelings can drastically change in a 5 minute period. His word leads me to wisdom. My thoughts and feelings never have the whole picture. They're foolish. His word changes me.

If I do need to teach and even admonish someone else cautiously and gently, I need to speak

from the wisdom of God's word. Speaking from my feelings or opinions if I haven't aligned myself with God's word will often be wrong... and not helpful.

Speaking from the word and wisdom of God will help me to gently warn others in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs... words that restore and not break... words that point to Jesus and not me... words that bless and not corrupt.

Most translations end vs. 16 with something like, "with thankfulness in your hearts to God." The Berean Literal Translation uses the Greek word more closely. It says, "In grace singing in your hearts to God." It's about blessing God from my heart. Why? Because I'm grateful. All of this stems from a grateful heart.

Finally, as part of all this pursuit of relational oneness, Paul says, "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. "No matter what I'm doing... whether it's in my words or in my actions... could God's stamp of approval be on it? Could I say, "I come in the name of Jesus" and know that Jesus is saying, "Yes, that's true"? O Lord, in everything I say and do??? There's more work to be done... more removing of the earthly apparel and putting on the clothes that Jesus wears.

My motivation? Gratitude to the Father who sent His Son to pay my debt and be my Savior. I would have no heavenly clothing without Him. I would have no ability to seek the things above without Him. I would be stuck in lies and deception without Him. O Lord, please don't let me take Your goodness, mercy, and love for granted or think You owe them to me. But let me live in the gratitude of knowing that YOUR motivation is love. And please help me to let that spill out into love for others.