

FBC Service Sunday July 6, 2025, Colossians 3:12-17 The Power of What We Wear

Imagine walking into a formal event in pajamas or showing up to work on a construction site in a tuxedo. Clothing matters because it reflects purpose, identity, and preparation.

Paul writing to the Colossians, gives us not a fashion tip—but a transformation manual.

In Christ, we take off the old life and put on the garments of our new identity. This isn't about outer appearance; it's about being robed in virtues that mirror the character of Jesus.

Paul starts by reminding us who we are before telling us what to wear. As chosen, holy, and dearly loved people, our wardrobe should reflect our spiritual identity. **This begs the question.**

Is there such a thing as a Christian dress code? Well, it depends on what you mean. If you're talking about what clothes you wear to church on a Sunday morning, **the answer is no.**

But if you're talking about the old things you remove from your life as a Christian and the new things you put on in their place, **then the answer is yes.**

That's what our passage in Colossians this morning is all about. In Christ, we've been given a brand-new life, so let's clothe ourselves with attitudes and actions that truly reflect the transformation He's made in us.

It's like in sports. When you switch teams, you change your uniform. Your old uniform identified you with your old team; your new uniform identifies you with your new team. **It's the same way when you become a Christian.**

You've switched teams! Your old practices identified you with the world. Your new practices identify you with Christ and his church.

This kind of living worship spills over in how we speak, sing, serve, and even how we go about ordinary everyday routines.

Earlier in this chapter, Paul wrote about the old practices we are to put off. **This morning's passage tells us about the new things we're to put on in their place.** Paul tells us three things a Christian should do after they have received new life in Christ that will be a living testimony to the world.

- 1) Clothe yourself with Christ-like qualities he writes.
- 2) Live as members of the body of Christ.
- 3) Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus.

First of all, as people who have received new life in Christ, clothe yourself with Christ-like qualities. *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."* (Colossians 3:12)

Here Paul is talking to believers, and he addresses them as God's "chosen people, holy and dearly loved."

The word "holy" means that we've been set apart for God and should live accordingly.

God chose us not because of any-thing good in us but simply because He loved us.

So what should we do as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved?

"Clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Verse 12

First of all, we're to put on tenderhearted mercy or a heart of compassion, which is a sincere caring that comes deep from within our heart.

Secondly, we are to put on kindness.

This refers to good or kind deeds.

Humility is having a true estimate of yourself, not thinking too highly or lowly of yourself.

Gentleness is tender consideration towards others, characterized by a calm and tender approach.

Patience refers to a state of calm and endurance, especially being patient in suffering or misfortune.

And then Paul continues with another essential virtue in the Christian life, that of bearing with and forgiving each other. *"Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."* **Verse 13:**

Just as God forgave us all our sins, we're not to pick and choose what sins to forgive in others.

The word translated **"offends"** in this verse refers to any complaint that you might have against someone else. Most likely we all have some grievances from time to time.

And that's where the next part of the verse comes in. **"the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."** **It's because Christ forgave us that we can forgive others.** And just as Christ forgives us readily and repeatedly, we're to offer the same type of forgiveness to others.

Remember when Peter came up to Jesus and asked him: *"Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"*

"What did Jesus answer? *"No, not seven times, "but seventy times seven?"* (Matthew 18:21-22)

Ephesians 4:32 says: *"be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."*

And then Paul tells us, *"over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."*

Love is the virtue which unites and holds everything else together in perfect harmony. Love is like the belt which holds all the other items in place, like an outer garment which is worn over all the rest.

It's not just another virtue to put on along with the others. Rather it's the supreme virtue that binds all the other ones together.

Jesus told his disciples in John 13, *"A new command I give you: Love one another as I have loved you."*

“By this shall all men know you are my disciples when you love one another.”

Forgive as Jesus forgave you. Love as Jesus has loved you.

Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and love. These are all qualities that Christ demonstrated in his own life. Paul is telling us if you want to be fully dressed as a Christian, make sure you put all of these on. **Off with the old, on with the new!**

The next instruction on living our new life in Christ is to live as members of the body of Christ. **(15-16)**

This dressing up is not just for our benefit alone but for the whole body of Christ.

Paul gives us two specific instructions here in verse 15.

“Let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts, for as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.” The peace of Christ refers to the peace that Christ alone gives.

What Paul is saying here is let the peace of Christ be the ultimate referee or decision maker in your relationships with other believers.

And then at the end of verse 15 Paul reminds us to be thankful.

Peace in your heart will lead to praise and thanksgiving from your lips, and an attitude of continual thankfulness to God promotes peace in the body of Christ.

And O we have so much to give thanks for.

Spiritual Blessings: Thank God for the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, who died for our sins.

Forgiveness: Express gratitude for the forgiveness of sins, both past, present, and future.

God's Love and Grace:

Eternal Life: Give thanks for the promise of eternal life and the hope of heaven.

The Holy Spirit: Be grateful for the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Physical and Material Blessings:

Life and Health: Thank God for the gift of life and the physical health to enjoy it.

Provision: Express gratitude for God's provision of daily needs, including food, shelter, and clothing.

Creation: Marvel at and give thanks for the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

Family and Friends: Thank God for the love and support of family and friends.

Talents and Abilities: Recognize and be thankful for the talents and abilities that God has given us.

Other Blessings:

Answered Prayers: Give thanks when God answers prayers and provides for our needs.

The Church: Be grateful for the fellowship and support of the church community.

The Bible: Express thankfulness for the Bible as a source of truth, guidance, and inspiration.

Opportunities for Service: Recognize and be thankful for opportunities to serve God and others.

Peace and Protection: Give thanks for peace in our lives and God's protection from harm.

And then secondly, *“Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.”* **verse 16.**

Paul says, *“Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives.”* Paul is saying let God’s word find a home in your heart. Don’t make it a temporary visitor. Don’t treat it like a house guest.

Let God’s word live there, let it take up permanent residence day in and day out.

Let it fill your life, not just a little bit, but richly, abundantly. Eugene Peterson translates it in The Message: “Let the Word of Christ have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives.”

Just as Christ is central, the word of Christ must be central in all our preaching, teaching and worship.

Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives – Colossians 3:16

See the link here. **Teaching** refers to positive instruction, **admonishing** refers to warning and correction.

One of the ways we are to teach and counsel one another is through *“psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”*. In other words, we are to be a joyful singing body.

What a beautiful description of what we do in worship! We sing songs of praise to God.

Someone has said that "a successful Christian life involves attention to three books: **God's Book, the Pocketbook; and the Hymn book.**" **What a nugget of wisdom in those words!** There’s nothing that expresses and touches the depth of our emotions like music.

A well-placed song can drive home a point better than a myriad of words. It only makes sense to say that Christians should be using music to teach, worship and encourage each other. **Worship should be a joyful time.**

A young girl became a Christian in a stirring revival at her church and was baptized the closing Sunday morning. That afternoon she ran through the house singing and dancing.

Her sour grandfather rebuked her with these words, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself! Just joined the church and singing and dancing on the Lord’s Day!"

Crushed by her grandfather's attitude, the little girl went out to the barn, climbed up on the corral fence, and observed an old mule standing there with a sad, droopy face and bleary eyes.

As she reached over and patted the mule sympathetically, she said, "Don't cry ole mule. I guess you've just got the same kind of religion that grandpa has!"

Some of the greatest memories of my life are tied to music. Think about the lyrics of some of the great hymns of the faith:

Are you not stirred when you sing, "When peace like a river, attendeth my way; when sorrow like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say: It is well, it is well with my soul."

And isn't there something uplifting when we sing, "Amazing love! How can it be that thou my God should die for me?" Don't we nod in agreement when we sing "When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride"?

Can you really think about these words from "How Great Thou Art" and not be moved: "And when I think that God His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in . . . that on the cross my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin."

And wouldn't communion at First Baptist seem a little less special if we didn't sing "The Family of God," as we remember our fellowship with each other as a community of faith. Music is a part of who we are.

But it's not just the great hymns of the faith. Think of some of the choruses: the wonderful "Majesty, worship His majesty! Unto Jesus, be all glory, honour, and praise."

Many of us sing "Pass it On" and remember a campfire someplace.

A great deal has been made of trying to distinguish between Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual songs. We probably shouldn't go too far with making needless distinctions.

Our expression should take in a variety of forms and styles. **Christians endlessly debate what kinds of music are appropriate for worship.** For me all kinds of music can be used in worship.

A majestic theologically rich hymn, or a simple chorus. It can be Southern Gospel or classical.

What matters is the expression of the heart.

But above all, our music should be anchored in the Word of God.

It's just as easy to sing bad theology as to teach or read it.

Don't miss the point here: the person who has received God's grace is a person who wants to express their joy.

If you have a good voice, sing well, if you have a fair voice, sing fair, if you have a croaky voice, . . . croak out praises to the Lord. **Give expression to the joy that is in your heart.**

Paul's final instruction comes in verse 17: "*And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.*"

The very best way of taking off the old and putting on the new is whatever you do—**do it in Jesus' name**

This is a sweeping call: whatever you do, in word or action—make it all reflect the Lord.

- At work:

- At home: -

At church:

All things really means all things. There is no sacred or secular distinction here. You don't do Christ-centered things at church and then me-centered things at work or home.

What does it mean to do something in the name of Jesus? It means that whatever you do, wherever you go, whatever you say, you bear the name of Jesus in all that you say or do.

As believers this morning, we need to hear and embrace Paul's direction.

To bear Christ's name is both a great privilege and a great responsibility.

And then finally, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus – *“giving thanks through him to God the Father.”*

Be thankful to God through Jesus in all that you do. There is no such thing as a non-thankful Christian.

We have been given new life in Christ, **so off with the old, on with the new!**

Or as Paul puts it in Romans 13:14: *“Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Because that's what this is really all about.

We don't always realize it, but people **“read”** us before they listen to us. Our spiritual dress code can invite others to know the One who clothed us in righteousness. **So each morning, as you dress physically, dress spiritually too:**

- Before you put on your shoes—**put on patience.**

- Before you button your shirt—**wrap yourself in humility.**

- Before you zip your coat—**cover all with love.**

- Before you head out the door – **give thanks for all God has done for you.**

Forgive as Christ forgave you. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts and the word of Christ dwell in you richly. And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Prayer: “Lord, let Your message dwell in us richly. Let our lives be hymns of gratitude, sermons in action, and a reflection of Your name.” **Amen.**