



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Something Old, Something New -Pt. 2 (Colossians 3:10-14)

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule

• **Tuesday, April 12, 7 AM in HHR #5**

-Breakfast Provided

• **Tuesday, April 12, 8:30 PM in Room #225**

(Sen. Bob Dixon's office)

A Quick Reminder: Our Capitol Commission Bible Studies are open to all who are interested. We are non-denominational and non-partisan. Anyone who desires to know about the life of a Christian is welcome to join us.

A governing official who is a follower of Jesus Christ should be noticeably different than his or her colleagues who do not follow Jesus. It is not to be seen in an arrogant, "better than thou" manner. It ought to be seen in one's actions, attitudes, votes and values. The new life is the focus of the Apostle Paul's teaching in Colossians 3 & 4.

INTRODUCTION

In this section of his letter, the Apostle Paul is discussing the new life one has after he or she has been raised from spiritual death. The new life is a life focused on things above, no longer upon the things of earth (Colossians 3:1-4). Sexual sins and greed were to be cut off or "killed"; no longer a part of one's pattern for life. Also put off and set aside were wrath, hot-temperedness, deception, harsh words and malice (3:5-9).

The imagery was used in the last study concerning a baseball player who goes to a new team. That player does not go onto the field with the uniform of the old team nor does he talk about the games of the old team when he is at a post-game news conference of the new team. He has on the new team's uniform, promotes the new team's aspirations and goals, and discusses the new team's game in the post-game interview.

In a similar way, when one has gone from spiritual death to spiritual life, there will be drastic changes in one's behavior, one's thoughts and one's outlook.

In the last study, the "old uniform" was discussed--the things which needed to be killed and discarded. This study (and the next) will describe the "new uniform"--the actions and attitudes of one who has been raised to a new life.

Colossians 3:10-14 ...and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him¹¹- a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.¹² And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.¹⁴ And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

In this study and the next, we will look at a number of the new things that will be found in the life of the "new self".

THE NEW HAS A NEW KNOWLEDGE (3:10)

Since Adam's fall the mind of a person has been in a constant battle against God—against His sovereignty, His authority, His ways, His law. Due to this enmity, mankind's ability to think properly has been damaged and given over to deceptions and the notions of his emotions.

THE OLD IDENTIFICATION FOR A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST WAS ONE OF AN ENEMY, SEPARATED FROM GOD. BUT THE NEW IDENTITY SAYS THAT ONE IS A CHOSEN BY GOD TO BE RECONCILED TO HIM.

When one has been resurrected with Christ, he or she is also given a new spirit and mind renewed by the Holy Spirit. The new knowledge is in accord with God; who created the person physically and recreated him or her spiritually. The new knowledge now desires the things of God; as opposed to despising the things of God in the past.

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, ROOM #225

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, BROADWAY BUILDING 3RD FLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

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While there is a new knowledge, there is not an immediate maturity. Thus, the Apostle Paul constantly instructed the church to grow in this true knowledge for there is no growth in the new life without growth in the knowledge of God (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22).

And this knowledge comes from the all sufficient Word of God. It is the Scriptures that are “inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16b-17; cf. 1 Peter 2:2). A follower of Jesus grows to be more like Jesus. This comes the more one practices what he or she learns from the Bible. And God’s plan for the one He has renewed is for that person to be like His Son: *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren...* (Romans 8:29).

THE NEW HAS NEW RELATIONSHIPS (3:11)

For the new person in Christ Jesus, the various barriers that have divided mankind have been erased. In this passage, Paul highlights these barriers:

- *Racial*—“Greek and Jew”. The Jews saw themselves as God’s people who will one day restore them to the top of the world’s nations and will have His vengeance on the all the unclean, especially these dogs who were ruling over them now. The Romans & Greeks saw the Jews as backward hillbillies who were overly simple-minded.
- *Religious*—“circumcised and uncircumcised”. The differences in culture were also seen in the differences in former religions.
- *Cultural*—“barbarian, Scythian”. The “Barbarians” were uncultured folks that were neither Roman, Greek nor Jewish; mainly anyone who did not speak the Greek language. The “Scythian” was the lowest kind of barbarian; probably in reference to a tribe up around the Black Sea. They were known for their bloody acts of cruelty and their uncouth ways, and were figures of fun in Greek comedies.
- *Social*—“slave and freeman”. Peter O’Brien notes that “A slave in the ancient world was, legally speaking, not a person but a piece of property, ‘a living tool’ according to Aristotle.”¹

But for the new, these distinctions in class and person are removed. For Christ “is all and in all.” In other words, all that really matters is Jesus Christ; and the Jesus found in one believer is the same Jesus in all believers. And it is this Jesus Christ that binds all believers to each other. O’Brien states it better: “The first half states in an emphatic way that Christ is “absolutely everything” or “all that matters”, while the words ‘in all’...mean that He permeates and indwells all members of the new man, regardless of race, class or background. Christ lives in those who believe.”²

Ephesians 3:26-28 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with

Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (cf. Ephesians 2:13-16)

For the follower of Jesus Christ, there is absolutely no room for racial, cultural or class discrimination. Those who, in the name of Christ, exhibit bigotry are in grievous violation of Scripture. All the dividing walls found in society have been broken down in the Kingdom of God. Thus, those who attempt to rebuild them are living in serious rebellion to the King—who is forming “*a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb”* (Revelation 7:9-10).

THE NEW HAS A NEW INDENTITY (3:12)

While one’s given name usually follows the believer into one’s new life, his or her identity does change. Paul used three words in verse 12 to describe the new identity of the believer--chosen, holy, beloved. It is this status that compels the new behavior that will be discussed in the following verses (3:12-14).

The first word Paul used to describe the identity is “chosen” or “elect” -- the “chosen of God”. Make note in the sentence of the passive tense of the verb. These are not people who chose God--for they cannot. Scripture says that people do not seek after God (Romans 3:11; Psalm 14:1-3). It is God who seeks and chooses His people.

Paul addressed the church in Ephesus as those whom God chose in Him before the creation (Ephesians 1:4). He also stated to another church that he always gave thanks for God “has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification...” (2 Thessalonians 2:13; cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:4). God did not choose based upon the goodness of people for all sinned and turned their backs on Him. He chose His people based upon His goodness, His purposes and His grace (2 Timothy 1:9).

The old identification for a follower of Christ was one of an enemy, separated from God (Romans 5:8). But the new identity says that one is a chosen by God to be reconciled to Him (2 Corinthians 5:16-21).

“Holy” is the second word Paul used to describe the new identity of a disciple of Jesus. While one aspect of the idea of “holiness” is moral purity, the context favors the other aspect and that is one of “separateness.” God has chosen His people and have drawn them out of the world to be His (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

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The third word is “beloved”. God’s election and the separation of His people from the world does not come from some cold, senseless act of duty. It is driven by His great love for His people. “In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself...” (Ephesians 1:4).

God’s election, separation and amazing love remove all vestiges of pride from the life of anyone made new. It is all the great work of God—He chose, He redeemed, He called, He forgave, He sustains and one day He will be the One who glorifies. He is the One who gives a new status to His people.

THE NEW HAS NEW “CLOTHES” (3:12-14)

In the previous section, Paul gave a list of things that followers of Jesus should “put off” (3:5-9). And so they don’t walk around “spiritually naked”, he also gave them a list of things to put on so that they better resemble the One who has redeemed them.

The believers, in light of the great work of God in their lives, are to put on “new clothes” which are centered on “the things above” (3:1-4). These “new clothes” consist of a:

- *heart of compassion* - The heart could literally be translated as the inside parts of the body. Figuratively, it is speaking of the seat of the emotions, where our emotions are felt. The emotions are to be filled with compassion, mercy, sympathy. John MacArthur states that believers are to “have a deep, gut-level feeling of compassion.”³

Micah 6:8 He has shown thee, O man, what is good and what does the LORD require of thee? But to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God.

A heart of compassion is seen in the person looking for ways in which to help others. It is not simply helping when someone needs it, but looking, being ready and willing to serve.

- *kindness* - This is seen in one’s goodness, excellence, uprightness, generosity. It is an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The person who is filled and living by the Holy Spirit **WILL** have this manifest in their life.
- *humility* - One is to “regard others as more important than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3-4). Paul commanded this attitude

to the church in Philippi. He went on to say that this humility was found first in the supreme example of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- *gentleness* - Understood here as a consideration for others. This is another of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. The gentle are the ones Jesus referred to in the Beatitudes: “Blessed are the meek” (Matthew 5:5).

Again, an example of this consideration, along with humility, is found Jesus Christ who appealed to people, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30).

- *patience* - The people of God are to be noted for their willingness to endure with others rather than flying into a rage. This too is a part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

When God passed by in front of Moses on Mt. Sinai, He showed Himself to be a God of patience (Exodus 34:6). He continued to show Himself patient calling men to repent (2 Peter 3:9). Love is patient (1 Corinthians 13:4) and is to be found in God’s people (Ephesians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).

- *Bearing & forgiving* - These go hand-in-hand as one lives within the Kingdom of God. These can be seen as an explanation to being patient. To “bear with one another” means to endure in spite of conflict, persecution, indifference, struggles, miscommunication, misunderstandings, etc. If one has a complaint, they should be willing to forgive. These are both continual works that need to be done as people live together.

Paul gave both a reason and example of why believers are to bear and forgive. Their own savior, Jesus Christ, did the very same thing for each of them. And this included the brother or sister that has “offended” the believer who has a complaint. This is a reminder back to the greatness of Jesus Christ and the work He did on behalf of God’s people that The Apostle wrote of earlier in his letter. When a follower understands what

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has been done for him or her, how can he or she be so foolish as to withhold forgiveness after it has been freely given?

- *love* - This is not the superficial, emotion-based, feeling that passes off as “love” today. Paul is discussing the type of love that is motivated by a person’s will and is seen in his or her action. It is conscious decision to care for and to look out for the interests of God and of others.

If the other characteristics of a believer’s new life are the “new clothes” that one is to put on, then “love” is the belt or sash that holds it all in place. It is the all-encompassing attitude and action that enables the others. “Love is the fulfillment of the law of God because it does a neighbor nothing but good.”⁴

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

CONCLUSION

All of these traits are seen first in our God and in His Son Jesus Christ. And the new self was “being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him” (3:10b). Therefore, the followers of Jesus are to put on the clothes that reflect the image of our Creator and Redeemer. They are not to continue in the old, which stirs up the wrath of God (3:6) but are to put on that which resembles Him—compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and love.

Friend, God can forgive you of your sins and you can be made new—are you interested?

¹ Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 44 (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1982), 193.

² Ibid.

³ John MacArthur, *Colossians & Philemon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 155.

⁴ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 156.