

A Gift with all the Extras!

First Sun. after Christmas - 12/26/21 Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Colossians 3:12-17 Pastor Keith Besel

v.12 **“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,”**

v. 17 **“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.”**

Introduction

✘ So, how was your Christmas? Did you get some good gifts? Did you get anything you will be able to use on a regular basis as you enter into the New Year? Or did you get things that now require that you go out and buy more accessories before they are really useful?

I. God's Gift of a new YOU!

✘ Paul's letter to the Colossians talks about a gift. A gift that they have received from God – a gift that completely changed not only their lives, but who they actually were – a gift that came with a bonus. This gift came with all of the accessories included. And it came with a demonstration so that there would be no question as to whether or not the gift would actually work.

➔ The gift Paul is talking about, is one God gave not only to the Colossians but to all of us as well. It is of course the gift of God Himself – in human form, just like you and me except without sin. It was the gift of God's Son, born in a stable, grown and then sacrificed to become our Savior.

✘ Now before we can open up and unpack all the accessories and see how this gift affects our lives, we should look at first things first.

➔ The third word in our English translation is actually the very first word of the text in the original Greek. It seems like an innocent word, but it is crucial. It is the word “then” or “therefore”. “Therefore” means that whatever follows, hinges on what was said before.

➔ This “therefore” points two chapters back into chapter one of Colossians, verses 19 and 20 which says, “For in [God's Son] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

➔ That's the gift that God gave to each and every one of us on Christmas. He gave us the gift of a reconciler who would die on the cross; shedding His own blood for each and every human – past, present and future.

→ And how does one receive this gift? Chapter 2:11 says that we receive that gift through an operation. Not a physical operation with scalpels and medical teams, but a Spiritual operation; a surgery that necessitates cutting away the old harmful attributes and grafting in the new. Paul says the surgeon is Christ, “In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,”

✘ Now what does that mean? How are we all circumcised by Christ? Paul continues, “having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead” (Col. 2:12).

→ There you have it. We have been given a completely new and different life in our baptism. As Paul says in our text, we are now “chosen ones,” “holy,” and “beloved” by God Himself.

II. A new body receives a new wardrobe!

✘ From there, Paul uses the imagery of new clothes in our wardrobe to help us picture the big difference of our new Christian life. Just before our text, Paul described the old, worldly clothes that characterized our sinful ways. He lists them one by one and then he says, “On account of these the wrath of God is coming” (3:6). But “...you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in ... the image of its Creator” (3:9-10).

→ In our old, unhealthy body, we deserved eternal punishment and death. But God has miraculously transformed us and given us a new life; a new body; a body in the image of Christ. And although that is wonderful in itself, He goes on to offer us an entirely new wardrobe!

✘ Let’s illustrate this in a physical way. As I said, God has given each of us a brand new body in Christ. Now, I’ll leave it up to your imagination to picture the “new you”. However you imagine that new body, none of your old clothes fit any longer. They are simply inappropriate for the new You!

→ So, as a part of God’s gift, He has given you a brand new wardrobe. Imagine that this is your closet. Paul says, that before you can put in the new Christmas clothes you have to get rid of the old. What we have right now in our closet, are the spiritually filthy clothes that Paul lists before our text. And here in this box, we have the new clothes that God has given us as His chosen people. (Take hangers one at a time off a rod and replace them from a gift box with new hangers.) (Each hanger covered with old and new terms from Paul.)

As I read the description, think of it as if I’m reading you the label with the fabric content, describing the characteristics of each.

1. **Malice** - the intent and desire to harm or hurt the other person. God has replaced it with **Compassion** - actions motivated by deep and sincere concern for the needs of others before ourselves.
2. **Impurity** - focused only on selfish gain and the putting others down. God has replaced it with **Kindness** - actions that help others and build them up - not tearing them down.
3. **Evil Desires** - prideful and self-centered desires to have and control other people for our own benefit. God has replaced this with **Humility** - not weakness, but reliance on God's strength and His control instead of ours.
4. **Wrath** - feelings that boil inside of us, causing us our tempers to spew out and burn anything and everything. God has replaced this with **Meekness** - allowing us to remain calm and in control of our emotions especially when others are being hurtful toward us or others around us.
5. **Greed (Covetousness)** - seeking to get more for ourselves this moment. God replaces this with **Patience** - trusting that God knows our needs and waiting for His time and His gifts without worrying and stressing about it.
6. **Anger** - allowing unimportant things to control our emotions and our actions so that they add stress to our life. God has replaced it with **Peace** as it is found in the Body of Christ through faith and trust in God's control.
7. **Idolatry** - actions that show we are dissatisfied with God all that He has given to us and seeking to replace Him with something or someone else. God has replaced it with **Thankfulness** - acknowledging all that God does for us and expressing our gratitude and contentment with Him as our Lord.
8. **Lying** - finding pleasure and influence in falsehood and deception. God has replaced this with **The Word of Christ Dwelling in us** – this is the source of all truth which guides and directs our words and our actions.
9. **Sexual Immorality** - denial of God's design and intent for our bodies and disrespect for others. This God has replaced with His **Teaching and Admonition** – where we help each other to understand God's perfect design and “speaking the truth in love” when our brother or sister goes astray from God's truth.
10. **Slander** - allowing our words to speak badly of others, hoping to harm their reputation. God has replaced this with **Wisdom** – which is knowing when to speak, when to be quiet and how to apply the truth in a positive way.
11. **Obscene Talk** - speaking in offensive and disgusting ways, using curse words and taking the Lord's name in vain. God has replaced this with the **Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs** – this describes what we are doing right here as we gather for public worship; keeping God always before us throughout the day. Even weekdays!

✘ Now, Paul says in verse 14 that our entire new wardrobe is bound together and kept in “perfect harmony” with the gift of LOVE; a love that holds everything in place like a belt ties our clothes together and keeps them in place as we move around. It’s Christ’s love that he’s talking about; our Christian love for one another that imitates the love of Jesus so that now we are able to forgive each other as the Lord has forgiven us.

➔ His love is unconditional; loving us even when we continue to sin against Him, which is how He is still able to shower us with His undeserved forgiveness. Yes, this is how you and I are to forgive each other friends. He says that this forgiveness of each other is not optional. In verse 13 Paul says, “so you also must forgive”.

Conclusion

✘ What a great gift! At Christmas, you and I have received Christ. He came to earth and demonstrated a new and completely different way of life.

➔ For on the cross alone He showed almost all of the attributes that you and I just placed in our closet. Compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, all while He was suffering and dying in our place.

➔ He carried our burden, our old earthly clothes upon Himself and He buried them in the grave. It’s then that He won for us the forgiveness of sins and a brand new life.

✘ Friends, this Christmas gift lives on every day of this new year; every day of this new life. For only by Christ’s power do the new clothes find their way into our closet. You see, they are His clothes, His righteousness and His love.

➔ So in all that we do, whether “in word or deed”, we do it all “in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father” for His Wonderful Gift with all the Extras! Amen.