

**“Christ Is All and In All”
Paul’s Call to Be Renewed in Christ #2
(Col. 3:12-14)**

Intro: When we read the Gospels we often focus on the great claims and mighty miracles that Jesus performed. With good reason we do that because they establish that He is what the Gospels claim He is—the Son of God.

However, a feature of the Gospels that is not always readily seen is how Jesus revealed the character of God. Often the gospel writers would not only reveal Jesus’ mighty deeds, but also His heart—the inward motivations of His outward actions. Consider some verses that show...

The “Heart” of Jesus’ Actions

And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36)

And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and felt compassion for them, and healed their sick. (Matthew 14:14)

Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29)

But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34)

And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” (Mark 10:21)

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. (John 15:9)

It is this background of Jesus’ heart that guides Paul in His exhortations to the Colossians in the 3rd chapter.

Last week we showed that the goal of Paul’s letter is to encourage the Colossians to be renewed according to the image of Christ.

It is a renewal that is 1) according to the image of the Creator; 2) by the word of God; 3) to oneness in Christ.

That oneness is the result of: 1) the Preeminence of Christ over us; 2) the presence of Christ in us!

Consequently that means first that we ask, “What would Jesus not do” and answering that question, we must “put off” the manifestations of lust, anger, and dishonesty”. For such things were never a part of Jesus’ character.

But now it also means that we ask affirmatively, “What would Jesus do” and “put on” the attitudes that He demonstrated.

The Call to Put on the Heart of Christ

Listen now to Paul’s affirmative exhortation:

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. (Colossians 3:12-14)
Paul's exhortation is a call to put on the heart of Christ!

The Grounds of this call

As those chosen of God—The grounds of our conduct is the privilege of God's choice of us. It is not individual election as Calvinism teaches; but divine foreordination based on the eternal purposes of God. God chose to save those who would believe in His Son. In that sense we have been chosen of God and this choice should motivated us to fulfill the call to be like Jesus.

Holy & beloved—These two descriptions remind us of two other important things about all Christians:

We have been consecrated by God to serve Him. It is interesting that often people in the Bible who were called "saints" or "holy" did not seem to have much of the quality implied by their description. When we are saved, we are made holy by position; but now in Christ we must become holy in practice! Paul not only urges the Colossians to put on Christ in order to be holy, but also because they have already been made holy!

We are loved deeply by God. There is no greater incentive to Christ-like character than to remember how greatly He has loved us! This is the motivation to be like Him.

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:1-3)

The "Garments" of this call (A heart of...)

Notice first that the word "garment" might suggest what is outwardly seen; but in this case Paul is speaking of a spiritual and internal adorning. We are "putting on" a new heart like Christ's! We must put on a heart of...

Compassion—It means to put yourself in the position of others and feel what they must be feeling

Kindness—It means that we treat others with consideration

Humility—It means that we are down to earth and do not exalt ourselves over others but stoop to serve them

Gentleness—It means that we are not harsh and angry, but controlled and gentle

Patience—It means that we are not soon angry or short-tempered

Forbearance—It means that we put up with the failings and flaws of others

Forgiveness—It means we extend to the others the forgiveness that we ourselves have received from the Lord.

Love—It means that we consider their needs and fulfill them.

And Paul enlarges upon this thought by showing that this virtue bind together all others.

Have you noticed the correspondence between the verses we read about Jesus earlier and this list of virtues? Paul is calling upon us to be everything that Christ Himself has demonstrated that He was and is!

Conclusion: And so Paul wanted to the Colossians to see that the real goal of discipleship is Christ-likeness, eliminating what He would not do and becoming everything He showed Himself to be. Every day our challenge is to let that renewal continue in us always using Him as the standard. Each day we need to pray about these qualities and look for opportunity to live them out.

For only then can we truly say, “Christ is all!... and in all!”