

THE CLOTHING OF THE NEW LIFE

COLOSSIANS 03:12–14

Introduction

Once a person has accepted Christ he has a new life. As seen in the former passage, the believer is to strip off the clothing of his old life, for the garments of his old life are unbecoming to his new life. Now, there are some garments that the believer is to put on, some garments that are becoming to his new life in Christ.

- I. Are the chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (v. 12).
- II. The garment of compassion (v. 12).
- III. The garment of kindness (v. 12).
- IV. The garment of humility (v. 12).
- V. The garment of gentleness (v. 12).
- VI. The garment of patience (v. 12).
- VII. The garment of forbearance (v. 13).
- VIII. The garment of forgiveness (v. 13).
- IX. The garment of love (v. 14).

I. *Colossians 03:12–14 New Life*

The clothing of the chosen. Believers are the “chosen of God.” They are the persons whom God has chosen to be His holy and beloved people.

=> Believers have been elected to be *holy*. The word *holy* (hagios) means separated or set apart. God called believers out of the world and away from the old life it offered, the old life of sin and death. He called believers to be separated and set apart unto Himself and the new life He offers, the new life of righteousness and eternity.

=> Believers have been elected to be the *dearly loved* of God. God has called believers to turn away from the old life that showed hatred toward God, the old life that rejected, rebelled, ignored, denied and was constantly cursing in the face of God. God has called believers to be the beloved of God, the persons who receive His love in Christ Jesus and who allow Him to shower His love upon them.

The point is this: the elect of God, holy and dearly loved, are those who have really believed and trusted Jesus Christ as their Saviour. It is these persons, the believers, who now have a *new life* in Christ. Therefore, this passage is for the believer. Note one other thing: the command *clothe yourselves* (enduno). This is the picture of putting on clothing; the believer is to *clothe the new person*. The new person must not be left naked; he must be clothed. What are the garments to be put on? There are eight garments of clothing for the new person.

II. *Colossians 03:12 Mercy and Compassion*

The believer must put on the garment of compassion. *Compassion* (oiktirmou) means mercy, pity, tender-heartedness. God has had so much mercy upon us, the one thing we should do is to show mercy to others. Compassion and pity should flood our hearts for the...

- lost
- wayward
- lonely
- hurting
- diseased
- poor
- homeless
- hungry
- aged
- empty
- unclothed
- orphaned

Of course, the list could go on and on. The point is that the believer no longer has the right to overlook the needy of the world. He is now a new person, a part of the clothing of the new person is the garment of compassion. The believer is to be clothed with compassion. He is to have compassion and reach out to meet the needs of the world — reach out with all he is and has, holding back nothing so long as a single need exists.

Isa 58:07 *Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter — when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?*

Acts 20:35 *“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

Heb 13:03 *Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.*

III. *Colossians 03:12 Kindness*

The believer must put on the garment of *kindness* (chrestotes): it is being kind and good, useful and helpful, gentle and sweet, considerate and gracious through all situations no matter the circumstances. A person who is kind does not act...

- hard
- unconcerned
- indifferent
- too busy
- harsh
- bitter

Kindness cares for the feelings of others and feels with them. It experiences the full depth of sympathy and empathy. It shows care and gets right into the situation with a person. Kindness suffers with those who suffer, and struggles with those who struggle, and works with those who work.

=> God is kind.

Luke 6:35 *“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.”*

Eph 2:04-7 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you*

have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

⇒ Believers are to be kind to one another.

Rom 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.*

Eph 4:32 *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Col 3:12 *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

2 Pet 1:5-7 *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.*

IV. Colossians 03:12 Humility

The believer must put on the garment of *humility*. There is the trait of humility or lowliness of mind. Note two significant points.

1. A strong and active church will always have two problems to stick their ugly heads up: *selfish ambition and vain conceit*.
- a. Some people are just going to *be selfish* with others. They are not mature in the Lord, not yet; therefore, they give in to...
 - talking about differences
 - desire for position
 - desire for recognition
 - jealousy
 - loving flattery
 - opposition
 - envy
 - forming cliques

If they do not get their way or what they want, they strive against the church or other members. The result is disunity and divisiveness, one of the most terrible crimes within the church to God.

Phil 2:3 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*

2 Tim 2:14 *Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.*

2 Tim 2:24 *And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.*

James 3:14 *But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.*

Prov 3:30 *Do not accuse a man for no reason - when he has done you no harm.*

Prov 20:3 *It is to a man's honour to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.*

- b. Some people are going to *display vain conceit* within the church. Vain conceit means empty glory. Some people just want the attention, the recognition, the position, the flattery, the praise, the honour. They want people seeking their advice and counsel and opinion. They want to be on the major committees and acknowledged as a leader of the church.

Mat 23:12 *“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Luke 22:24 *Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.*

John 5:44 *“How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?”*

Prov 17:19 *He who loves a quarrel loves sin; he who builds a high gate invites destruction.*

Oba 1:4 *Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,” declares the Lord.*

2. The spirit that must prevail in a strong church is that of humility or lowliness of mind. In fact, the only way a church can remain strong and be blessed by God is for its people to walk in a spirit of humility (see *Humility*, Phil. 2:3).

PHILIPPIANS 02:03

HUMILITY (TAPEINOPHROSUNE), LOWLINESS OF MIND (TAPEINOS)

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. **Philippians 02:03***

To offer oneself as lowly and submissive; to walk in a spirit of lowliness; to present oneself as lowly and low-lying in mind; to be of low degree and low rank; not to be high-minded, proud, haughty, arrogant or assertive.

Note: a humble person may have a high position, power, wealth, fame and much more; but he carries himself in a spirit of lowliness and submission. He denies himself for the sake of Christ and in order to help others.

Men have always looked upon humility as a vice. A lowly man is often looked upon as a coward, a cringing, despicable, slavish type of person. Men fear humility. They feel humility is a sign of weakness and will make them the object of contempt and abuse and cause them to be shunned and overlooked.

Because of all this, men ignore and shun the teaching of Christ on humility. This is tragic:

=> for a humble spirit is necessary for salvation (Mt. 18:3-4).

=> for God's idea of humility is not weakness and cowardice.

God makes people strong, the strongest they can possibly be. By humility God does not mean what men mean. God infuses a new and strong spirit within a person and causes that person to conquer all throughout life. He just does not want the person walking around in pride. He wants the person to do what the definition says: *to offer himself in a spirit of submissiveness and lowliness; not to act high-minded, proud, haughty, arrogant or assertive.*

Humility is to be developed. Scripture tells us how:

Mat 11:29 *“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.”*

Mat 18:3-4 *And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”*

Mat 23:12 *“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Rom 12:16 *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

Eph 4:1-2 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

Phil 2:3-4 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Col 3:12-13 *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

1 Pet 5:6 *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

Contrary to what the world thinks, humility reaps unbelievable benefits. A close study of the above verses shows this.

1. Humility results in a person coming to Christ and learning of Him. It leads to self-evaluation, an honest and courageous evaluation. When a person looks at

Jesus Christ, he sees what he should be and it motivates him to become what he should be. He sees where he needs improvement and he is driven to fill in the gaps.

2. Humility results in conversion, assuring our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
3. Humility results in our being exalted by Christ in that glorious day of redemption.
4. Humility results in healthy relationships and in community and social benefits (see Rom. 12:16; Eph. 4:1-2; Phil. 2:3-4; Col. 3:12-13; 1 Pet. 5:6). For example...
 - It acknowledges and boosts others
 - It leads to better relationships
 - It encourages and helps others
 - It motivates others to grow and do more

Christ demands that His followers walk in humility. Practicing humility demands two things.

1. Humility requires an honest evaluation of oneself. Barclay points this out (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians*, p. 39). Humility comes from knowing ourselves, just who we really are. It comes from an honest appraisal of ourselves. It takes courage to look at ourselves and it takes honesty to see ourselves as we really are: basically self-centred, a bundle of self-admiration and self-love. We tend to dramatize ourselves. We tend to see ourselves unrealistically. We see ourselves...
 - at the centre of action.
 - as the hero of some spectacular rescue.
 - as the great politician marching to victory.
 - as the renown sportsman saving the game in the last second or bagging a record catch.
 - as the beauty queen dazzling the crowds.
 - as the labourer of brilliance.
 - as Prince Charming or Cinderella sweeping others off their feet.

We are always at the centre of the picture. Humility begins to come when we honestly face ourselves and admit our self-centredness. Self-centredness weakens and limits relationships and achievements. Humility reaches its height when we lose our lives in the cause of Christ and welfare of others.

2. Humility requires courage. It takes courage to be honest about our self-centredness, and courage to convert or to change by coming to Christ as a small

child (Mt. 18:3-4). It takes courage to become Christ-centred and people-centred and to give ourselves to the cause of Christ and others.

Rom 12:16 *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

1 Cor 8:2 *The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.*

Gal 6:3 *If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

1 John 2:16 *For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.*

2 Sam 22:28 *You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.*

Prov 11:2 *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*

Prov 13:10 *Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.*

Prov 21:4 *Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!*

Prov 26:12 *Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

Isa 5:21 *Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.*

Isa 24:4 *The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish.*

Oba 1:4 *Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,” declares the Lord.*

Hab 2:4 *“See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright — but the righteous will live by his faith.”*

Zep 3:11 *On that day you will not be put to shame for all the wrongs you have done to me, because I will remove from this city those who rejoice in their pride. Never again will you be haughty on my holy hill. □*

V. **Colossians 03:12** **Gentleness**

The believer must put on the garment of *gentleness* (prautes): it means to be tender, humble, mild and considerate, but strongly so. Gentleness has the strength to control and discipline and it does so at the right time.

- a. Gentleness has a *humble state of mind*. But this does not mean the person is weak, cowardly and bowing. The gentle person simply loves people and loves peace; therefore, he walks humbly among men regardless of their status and circumstance in life. Associating with the poor and lowly of this earth does not bother the gentle person. He desires to be a friend to all and to help all as much as possible.

b. Gentleness has a *strong state of mind*. It looks at situations and wants justice and right to be done. It is not a weak mind that ignores and neglects evil and wrong-doing, abuse and suffering.

=> If someone is suffering, gentleness steps in and does what it can to help.

=> If evil is being done, gentleness does what it can to stop and correct it.

=> If evil is running rampant and indulging itself, meekness actually strikes out in anger. However, note a crucial point: the anger is always at the right time and against the right thing.

c. Gentleness has *strong self-control*. The gentle person controls his spirit and mind. He controls the lusts of his flesh. He does not give way to ill-temper, retaliation, passion, indulgence or license. The gentle person dies to himself, to what his flesh, sinful nature would like to do, and he does the right thing — exactly what God wants done.

In summary, the gentle man walks in a humble, tender, but strong state of mind: he denies himself, giving utmost consideration to others. He shows a control and righteous anger against injustice and evil. A gentle man forgets and lives for others because of what Christ has done for him.

=> God is gentle.

Gal 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

=> Jesus Christ was gentle.

Mat 11:29 *“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.”*

=> Believers are to be gentle.

Gal 6:1 *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.*

Eph 4:1-3 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

2 Tim 2:25 *Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.*

Titus 3:2 *To slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.*

James 1:21 *Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

James 3:13 *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.*

1 Pet 3:4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

VI. *Colossians 03:12* **Patience**

The believer must put on the garment of *patience or long-suffering* (makrothumia): bearing and suffering a long time, perseverance, being constant, steadfast and enduring. Long-suffering never gives in; it is never broken no matter what attacks it.

- => Pressure and hard work may fall upon us, but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it all.
- => Disease or accident or old age may afflict us, but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it.
- => Discouragement and disappointment may attack us, but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it.
- => Men may do us wrong, abuse, slander and injure us; but the Spirit of God helps us to be patient under it all.

Two significant things need to be noted about patience or long-suffering.

1. Patience or long-suffering never strikes back. Common sense tells us that a person who is attacked by others could strike back and retaliate. But the Christian believer is given the power of patience - the power to suffer the situation or person for a long, long time.
 2. Patience or long-suffering is one of the great traits of God. As pointed out in this verse, it is a fruit of God's very own Spirit, a fruit that is to be in the life of the believer.
- => God and Christ are patient, long-suffering toward sinners.

Rom 2:4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

- => God saves believers so that they may be examples of patience.

1 Tim 1:16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

- => God withholds His judgment from the world because He is patient, waiting for more and more to be saved.

2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (cp. 1 Pet. 3:20)

Isa 48:9 For my own name's sake I delay my wrath: for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off.

William Barclay says that if God had been a man, He would have long ago wiped man off the face of the earth because of his terrible disobedience (*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p. 56). But God loves and cares for man; therefore, God is patient, long-suffering toward man. God is patient a long, long time with man, allowing more and more men to be saved.

Col 1:11 Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience and joyfully.

2 Tim 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.

VII. *Colossians 03:13 Forbearance*

The believer must put on the garment of *forbearing* or *forbearance*. Bearing with each other (*anechomenoi*) means to hold back; to put up with; to refrain; to bear with; to control.

Something is often forgotten: there are many things about everyone of us that people have to forbear. People have to put up with a great deal of things when dealing with us. Everyone of us is guilty of...

- Some weakness
- Some unattractive behaviour
- Some wrong behaviour
- Some mistreatment
- Some neglect
- Some failure
- Some bad habit
- Some irritating behaviour

There are some things about everyone of us that just turn some people off. None of us escapes the fact. In addition, everyone of us does things that irritate some people. Again, there is no escaping the fact. Any person can be looked at and have his flaws and weaknesses picked out.

But note: this is not what the Scripture says to do. The Scripture says that the believer is to put on the clothing of forbearance. The believer is to bear or forbear the flaws of others. He is to put up with and bear with the weaknesses of other believers.

Rom 15:1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Eph 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Eph 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Col 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

VIII. *Colossians 03:13 Forgiveness*

The believer must put on the garment of *forgiveness*; he must *forgive* (*charizomenoi*). The word means to be gracious to a person; to pardon him for some wrong done against us.

Note: a quarrel or some difference has taken place. A person has hurt us and brought pain to us. But no matter what they have done, we are to have a forgiving spirit clothing us. We are to be so clothed with the spirit of forgiveness that no difference or quarrel can shake us.

Note why: because Christ has forgiven us. No matter how much wrong a person has done against us, it cannot match the wrong we have done against Christ. Yet, Christ has forgiven us. Therefore, we are to forgive those who have done wrong against us - no matter how great the wrong is.

Mark 11:25 “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

Luke 6:35-36 “But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

Luke 17:4 “If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Col 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

IX. *Colossians 03:14 Love*

Above all, the believer is to put on the garment of *love* (*agapen*). Note that love is to be the main garment of the believer’s new life. It “binds all in perfect unity”; that is, love binds all the clothing or great qualities of the believer’s life together. If the believer has put on love — if he really loves people — then he is always clothed with...

- mercy
- patience
- kindness
- forbearance
- humility
- forgiveness
- gentleness

Rom 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom 5:10 For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Mark 12:29-31 *“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

1 Cor 13:13 *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. ■*

THE HEART OF THE NEW LIFE

COLOSSIANS 03:15–17

Introduction

When a new life enters the world, a new heart enters the world. There is no life apart from a heart. A new life necessitates a new heart. So it is with the believer: the believer receives a new heart when he receives a new life. *The heart of the new life* is the great subject of this passage.

- I. A heart ruled by Christ's peace (v. 15).
- II. A heart rich with the Word of Christ (v. 16).
- III. A heart that does all in the name of Christ (v. 17).

I. *Colossians 03:15 Peace of Christ*

First, the believer is to have a heart ruled by Christ's peace. He is to let the peace of Christ rule in all things and differences. The best Greek texts read the "peace of Christ" instead of the "peace of God." The word *peace* (eirene) means to be bound, joined, and weaved together. It means to be assured, confident and secure in the love and care of God. It means to know that God will take care of us no matter the problem or circumstance. It means to be absolutely assured that God will allow nothing to swamp or defeat us. God will...

- strengthen
- provide
- encourage
- deliver
- guide
- save
- sustain
- give real life both now and forever

But note the critical point: this peace is the peace of Christ, and He alone possesses it. Therefore, a person can experience true peace only as he comes to know Christ. Only Christ can bring real peace to the human heart, the kind of peace that brings deliverance and the assurance of deliverance to the human soul. Three significant things are pointed out about the peace of Christ.

1. The choice is up to the believer: the believer does not automatically experience the peace of Christ. He is supposed to, but he may not. This is a command, which means it demands obedience. The word *rule* (brabeueto) means to be or to act as an umpire. Peace is to be the umpire, the deciding factor in all circumstances and situations of life.
=> Mathew Henry words it well: "Let this peace rule in your heart — prevail and govern there...as an umpire [let it] decide all matters of difference among you" (*Mathew Henry's Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 764).
=> William Barclay pointedly says: "Let the peace of God...be the decider [umpire] of all things within your heart" (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians*, p. 190).

The point is this: the believer must make a choice — the decision is his whether he lets the peace of Christ rule or not. Scripture commands it, but the believer has to

be willing to let the umpire of peace rule. He has to be willing to lay aside all the differences and circumstances — to be willing to give up differences and let Christ handle them through the rule of His peace.

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.

Psa 119:165 Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.

Isa 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

Isa 48:18 If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

2. The reason why believers are to let the peace of Christ rule is clearly stated: we are members of *one body*. We are not called to be *in two bodies*, but in one. Any believer who stands *out there* in another body is not a genuine believer. There is only one body of Christ, only one body of believers, only one church. This means something significant: believers are to act as one. They are to live and behave as one body, as a body of people in union with each other. How? By letting the peace of Christ rule in their hearts. Peace is to be the deciding factor, the umpire in all relationships between believers. (See Col. 1:18.)

Thought 1. Why is this exhortation given? Because too often some person arises within the church who is...

- cantankerous and divisive
- critical and judgemental
- murmuring and grumbling
- gossiping and spreading rumours

Too often some person becomes a troublemaker, a person who stirs up trouble within the body of Christ, the church. The person accepts the umpire of difference instead of the umpire of peace. He lets differences rule within his heart instead of Christ and His peace.

This is the reason for the exhortation. The exhortation is needed. Some persons desperately need to hear the challenge and demand of God: *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.*

Job 22:21 “Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you.”

Psa 34:14 *Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*

Eph 2:14 *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.*

Col 3:15 *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

1 Pet 3:11 *He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.*

Rom 8:6 *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

3. Believers are to respond to the demand for peace with thankfulness. Believers should always thank Christ for His peace...
 - the peace He has brought to their own hearts personally
 - the peace He has brought to all men who trust Him
 - the peace He has brought within His body, the church
 - the glorious privilege which all men have to know His peace

Eph 5:20-21 *Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Phil 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Col 1:20 *And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

II. **Colossians 03:16** *The Word of Christ*

Second, the believer is to have a heart rich with the Word of Christ. He is to let the Word of Christ dwell in his heart. Throughout Scripture this is the only time “the Word of God” is referred to as “the Word of Christ.” The emphasis of Colossians is Christ; therefore, the Word of God becomes the *Word of Christ* in this great book. (See 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2; 1 Th. 1:8; 2:13; 4:15; 2 Th. 3:1.)

Three significant points are made about the Word of Christ.

1. The choice is up to the believer: the Word of Christ does not naturally dwell within the believer’s heart. The word *dwell* (enoikeito) means to be at home or to make a home; to abide or dwell within. The believer must make room within his heart for the Word of Christ. He must let the Word of Christ enter his heart and make a home within his heart. He must let the Word of Christ dwell and abide in his heart. The

believer must clean out all the old furnishings of his heart and let the Word of Christ settle down as the permanent resident within his heart.

Note the word *richly*. It is important, for the Word of Christ must be allowed to dwell *richly* within our hearts. The believer is not to be satisfied with just a meagre visit by the Word of Christ. He is to let the Word of Christ *dwell richly* within Him. The Word of Christ must be allowed to furnish the believer's heart with all the wealth of its commandments and promises, instructions and warnings.

Deu 6:6 *These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.*

Deu 11:18 *Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.*

Psa 119:11 *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

John 15:7 *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."*

2 Tim 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

2 Tim 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

1 Pet 2:2-3 *Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

2. The reason why believers are to let the Word of Christ dwell within them is clearly stated: believers are to teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. This is the believer's task, the very reason God has not yet taken us home to heaven: to teach and admonish one another. By teaching is meant the instruction of the Word and by admonition is meant the warning of Scripture. But how can we teach and admonish others if we do not...

- know the Word of Christ?
- let the Word of Christ dwell in us?

The answer is obvious: we can't. And note another fact: it is not enough to know the Word of Christ. We must be living the Word of Christ. Knowing the Word and not living it is hypocrisy. Our very lives must be the home, the dwelling place for the Word of Christ. When people look at us, they must immediately see that our lives are indwelt by the Word of Christ.

Something else should be pointed out as well. We can teach and admonish others in forbearance and not *in wisdom*. Worldly philosophy and teachings about reality and

truth, God and the universe are only the crude notions of men. The truth and wisdom of life are found in the *Word of Christ and in the Word of Christ alone*. (See Col. 2:8-10.)

1 Tim 4:11 *Command and teach these things.*

2 Tim 2:24 *And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.*

Deu 6:6-7 *These commandments that I give you today are to lie upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

Ezek 44:23 *They are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.*

3. There is a way to tell whether or not the Word of Christ dwells in us: Are we teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratitude in our hearts to the Lord? As we walk throughout the day are we...
- talking about Christ?
 - sharing the Word of Christ with each other?
 - teaching each other?
 - admonishing and encouraging and warning each other?
 - singing to ourselves and with others?

Thought 1. What a contrasting picture of how so many of us live! The believer is to live and move and have his being in Christ, and he is to let Christ live and move and have His being in him. For the believer, to live is Christ. We are to walk all day long talking about and sharing Christ, teaching and admonishing others in the Word of Christ, singing the psalms of Scripture, the hymns of the church, and the spiritual songs that arise out of a heart filled with the joy of the Lord and His Word.

Deu 6:6-7 *These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

Deu 11:19-20 *Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates.*

1 Cor 14:15 *So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.*

Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

Psa 95:1 *Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.*

III. *Colossians 03:17 Believer's Duty*

Third, the believer is to have a heart that does all in the name of Christ. Whatever he does in word or deed, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

1. The believer has a choice. He is the one who speaks and acts; no one speaks and acts for him. Whether or not he speaks and acts for Christ is his choice. The command is there: "do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus," but the choice as to what he talks about and does is his. He and he alone is responsible for his words and deeds.
2. The believer is to do all *in the name of the Lord Jesus*. What does this mean? It means that the believer knows something: the name of Christ is the only name that God accepts in His presence. Therefore, the only persons He accepts are those persons who come to Him in the name of Christ. There is no other name given among men whereby men may be saved. Therefore, the believer approaches God "in the name of Jesus Christ," that is, by surrendering his life to Christ and by living for Christ. This is the reason the believer does not dare speak or act outside the name of Christ. To do so would be evidence that he had not really approached God in Christ, that his profession was a false profession.

Again, what does it mean to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus? It means...

- to live, move and have our being in the name of Christ
- to *trust and depend* upon the name of Christ in all that we do
- to *claim* the name of Christ in all that we say and do
- to *represent* Christ in all that we say and do

Simply stated, we must do nothing that dishonours Christ. Whenever we speak, Christ peppers and fills our conversation; and whenever we act, Christ is honoured by our behaviour.

We must always remember something: Christ hears every word and sees every deed. We love Him with all our hearts; therefore, we seek never to hurt or cause pain for Him by what we say or do. We diligently seek to bring only honour to His name.

Luke 24:47 "And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

John 14:13 "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father."

John 20:31 "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Eph 5:20 Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. The believer's response is that of thanksgiving. God *the Father* has become the believer's Father by Christ and only by Christ. Therefore, the believer is constantly thanking God the Father. But note: even in thanksgiving, the believer still approaches God only by Christ. As important as thanking and praising God is, a person still has to approach God by Christ. God will accept no person apart from Christ, not even to offer thanksgiving and praise.

1 Cor 10:31-32 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God.

Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. ■