

Colossians
“A Worthy Walk”
III. Main Teaching: 1:15-4:6

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:12-17 Peace of Christ

3:13-17
“Grace Clothes”

I. Intro.

II. 13 No hunting or fishing allowed

III. 14-17 What the church looks like

I. Intro.

In the 3rd chapter of Colossians Paul reveals to his readers that every believer has two garments: The first I call “*grave clothes*” which Paul admonishes his readers to “*put off*”. The 2nd I call “*grace clothes*” which Paul says that we Christians need to “*put on*”. This two-step process is what causes believers to look different in the world. These two outfits came in play in our own area during Lewis and Clark's famous expedition in 1804. Half-starved and frozen, the men staggered out of Bitterroot Mountains into a camp of the Nez Perce Indians. Lewis and Clark were the first white men ever to reach them and in the absence of more prominent leaders, who were out on a war party, chief Twisted Hair had to decide what to do with these strangers. The tribe's oral tradition, proposed killing them and confiscating their goods which would have made the Nez Perce the region's most powerful tribe. That would have been their fate if not for an elderly woman named “*Returned from Faraway Country*”. As a young girl, she had been captured by an enemy tribe, who sold her to another tribe farther to the east. Eventually she had been befriended and treated kindly by white people in Canada before escaping and making her way back

to her own people. For years she had told them stories about the fair-skinned people who lived toward the rising sun. She was aged and dying by the time Lewis and Clark arrived. When she heard about the plans to kill them she spoke up and said, “*These are the people who helped me. Do them no hurt.*” Thus someone else’s “*grace clothes*” years before saved the life of Lewis and Clark right here in the Bitterroot.

III. Vs. 13 No Hunting or fishing allowed

Last week we took a look at six of the seven traits of “grace clothes” that we Christians are to put on. We noted that:

- The **threads** of the fabric are made up of “tender mercies” an attitude of a heart of sympathy and empathy towards our fellow man
- The **stitching** on the fabric or what holds it together is the action of “kindness”
- The **construction** of the garment of grace is humility that enables us to think of ourselves properly
- The **inner lining** of the garment of grace is meekness where we have strength under control
- The **durability** of our grace clothes is patience that holds its self, back from being upset when others are pushing our buttons
- The **style** of the garment is forbearance that upholds others instead of just restraining myself

That takes us to seventh and final aspect of our grace garments, forgiveness.

7. *Forgiving one another:* Take all the other aspects of our grace garment into consideration then the seventh quality has to be **how others view the garment or its**

appearance. Forgiveness is a promise made in response to repentance to completely put out the offenders offense from our mind. As such the phrase, *“I’ll forgive but I won’t forget”* is biblically speaking untrue! Even if true forgiveness and reconciliation cannot be made because there is no recognition of wrong, the offended party still *can* and *must* give it to the Lord God and make the promise of forgiveness unto God. I think Paul put this last quality at the end for a reason as Paul isn’t asking us not to feel he is asking rather that you deal with what you feel! If you have something that is eating at you then you need to go and deal with it and if you can’t talk it out you at very least need to forgive them for their wrong. The Lord doesn’t ask us to repress our feelings or injustices, we are to go to that person and say what’s bugging us but having done that we need to forget it and move on. Far too often we just stew on it instead not allowing our self not to dwell there. As it deals with forgiving those that have wronged us and we have shared our heart with the person who has hurt us we then to put up a sign on our hearts with regards to that person and the incident that reads ***“NO HUNTING OUR FISHING ALLOWED”***. And this means that we don’t allow anyone else to fish or hunt on this property as well. And the reason for this is once we have forgiven we treat the incident as never happened! This subject comes up quite often in the body of Christ just as it did during Jesus time. In Matthew 18:21-22 Peter came to Jesus thinking that he was setting the bar pretty high for his fellow disciples when he asked the Lord, *“how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”* And Jesus responded back *“I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”* So I offer this **rabbit trail on what biblical forgiveness means:**

- a. It means that we are not to bring up to the person whom we have forgiven the thing we forgave. We are to treat him as though it did not happen. We are not to keep a “historical record” to rehash the incident in light of new allegations. Folk’s aren’t you glad that the Lord keeps no record of our wrongs to through back at us each time we blow it?
- b. It means that we don’t tell anybody else about the matter that has been forgiven. We are not to share “*for a matter of prayer of course*” as it has been erased from memory and we are not to allow ourselves to go back to that which has been forgotten. Again aren’t you glad that the Lord doesn’t share you failures with others and instead is always before the throne of grace prayer for you. Jesus is on our side and once we have forgiven someone we are on their side.
- c. It means you don’t dig that which has been buried in Christ. If you start to dig it back up you will need to remind yourself that it was buried for a reason....it is dead!

IV. Vs. 14-17 What the Church looks like

Vs. 14 All these wonderful qualities must be wrapped with the bow of LOVE. Love is the summary of all seven qualities listed and it perfectly fulfills what God has for us in our earthly relationships. It is love that will bind these 7 qualities together and the reason why we don’t see these qualities more frequently in our lives is that they are not bind in love so we just become unraveled. Love, Paul says, is the bond of perfection it reveals to us that we are a new creation in Christ and have put off our former life and Put on Jesus. The basis for this was found in verse 12 where Paul reminded the Colossian believers that they were the chosen of God, holy and beloved....! We aren’t trying to be something we

aren't we are reminding ourselves of what He has made us to be. We chose Him and He chose us to be Holy so our holiness is His work! And all of this is because we are dear to His heart, that's what the word beloved means in verse 12.

Vs. 15-17 These three verses move beyond the 7 qualities of the individual Christian to three characteristics of what the church ought to look like in the world.

1. Vs. 15 **Peace**: The word rule here is used in the context like that of a baseball umpire. The peace of God is the "*umpire of our life*" and it this peace of God in accordance to His Word that cries out "*fair*" or "*foul*"! Peace is to rule our lives unruffled by all the action around us. The Churches primary witness in the world is peace in the midst of chaos and anarchy. When the world is kicking up dust in our faces and yelling horrible things at us we are to remain calm because we know that the Lord is in control. This is the primary reason why we can not only be at peace but also be thankful. Life is a gift and the body of Christ is our family and we can be thankful for each and every one.
2. Vs. 16 **Praise**: It is interesting to note that praise is the direct result of believers allowing the Word of God to dwell in us richly in all wisdom, teaching. A teaching church will be a worshipping celebrating fellowship. This book gives us enumerable reasons to worship as it gives us insight into life as God intends it to be. It dispels fears, casts aside anxiety which alone is reason to sing His praises. Most people are familiar with Hawaiian music but the history of their music is that prior to the Christian missionaries coming to the Island their music was primarily just chanting and the first songs the people sang were hymns taught by missionaries. Christian truth has been the greatest inspiration of music the world

over as Praise is the natural conclusion to truth! We sing to bless others and bless the Lord as well as ourselves in singing His praise.

3. Vs. 17 ***Practice***: The third and final witness the church has in the world is practice as our activity whether word or deed is always aimed at pleasing Jesus. Our whole life is to be in the sphere of our relationship with the Lord and an act of worship. Billy Graham's wife Ruth had a sign over her kitchen that read, "*Divine services held here three times a day!*" Washing dishes can be an act of worship; so can everything else you do if what you do you do as unto Him. Christian the right motivation will always make hard work light and praise flow from your heart. There are many things you could never get me to do for money that I would do for love, there is no such things as labor when what you do you do in service to the Lord.

We will need to be reminded of this next week when Paul will take us through the various areas that this will be applied in our lives.