Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Putting on the New Man, Part 2
Scripture: Colossians 3:12-17
Code: 2148

Colossians Chapter 3, Verse 9 to 17. We're looking at the subject of "Putting on the New Man." Now this is such a practical area of Scripture. We're really not doing very fancy things with it. We're just going through it and taking each thing for its own merits and discussing it a little bit. We're not really attempting to sermonize it that much but simply to explain to you these very vital and basic principles of Christian living. The whole idea of the third chapter is that as a believer you have been given eternal life. That eternal life in this particular passage is called "resurrection life" or '(risen life." It says in 3:1 "You have been risen with Christ." It talks about the fact in Verse 3 that your life is hid with Christ in God. Verse 4, "Christ is our life." We have this eternal life, this risen, resurrected life. That kind of life demands a certain pattern of behavior and the pattern of behavior is given in Verse 5 through Verse 17 in general. Because we have risen life, because we have resurrection life, certain things should characterize us. Certain things are set aside. Certain things are taken up in our lives. Old garments are thrown away and new garments are taken on. That's the thrust of Verses 5 to 17. It's in a motif of putting clothes on. You're a new man. You throw away your old clothes and you put on new clothes identifying with that new man.

Chrississtum, who was the great early church father, said that the animals which went out of Noah's Ark went out the same way they went in. The crow came in a crow and went out a crow**.** The fox came in a fox and went out a fox. Chrississtum said the porcupine went in a porcupine and came out still armed with its living arrows. No change. But those whoenter into Jesus Christ, who is the arc of salvation, go in one thing and come out something else, totally transformed. Chrississtum said this and I quote, "Like unto a spiteful fox that swindler entered the church who built his house on the ruin of his competitors, and behold he goes out more harmless than a lamb, willing to sacrifice his own interests for the sake of others. 'Like a crow that sinner entered the church. Now behold, he goes out cooing like a dove**.** That impatient, quarrelsome man who made everyone smart who touched him like a porcupine, came in bristling, and behold he goes away like a loving spaniel, gentle to touch." That's something about transformation, isn't it?

Conversion to Christ is a transformation. Conversion to Christ is a regeneration. It is a new life. We've been studying the basic truth of the Christian life, that dramatic inner miracle of new life. The transformation that we call Christian conversion. The dramatic innermiracle demands an equally dramatic outer change in lifestyle. We enter the arc of Christ in one form. We're transformed to another, and our behavior is to conform. Another way to illustrate this that I thought was very beautiful that I was reading this weekend is from an old book that had some information by Doctor A. J.

Gordon, who may be known to you as the one who founded Gordon College and Seminary. It's now known as Gordon Conwell. In fact, one of the sons of our president attends that evangelical seminary in the east. This is what A. J. Gordon said, and I love this. He said: "I have seen in the autumn when the trees have shed their leaves that two or three leaves have stuck fast on the branches and have clung to them through all the storms of winter. But when the spring has come and the sap has begun to ascend, the leaves have disappeared, pushed off by the rising tide of new life." Great statement. And so it is in the Christian, that the dead leaves of the old life which hang on through all the winter storms of resolution and self-reprimation are only pushed off by the rising tide of eternal life.

In First Peter, Chapter 2 and Verses 9 and 10, Peter puts it another way. "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and holy nation of people of His own." That's your identity. "That you should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." "You used to be a no people, but you are now the people of God." He says at the end of Verse 9, "There should be a corresponding lifestyle change." God sees us as a new creation in Christ. The righteousness of Christ is applied to us, and now we must let the righteousness of Christ, we must let that new life fill us and push Of the dead old leaves of the former lifestyle that all of the resolutions and all of the self effort and all of the self-reprimation could never get rid of. We have to put on the new clothes, the garments that clothe the new man. We've got to wear them.

Now what are they? Well, that's what we've been learning. We've been learning, in fact, that the firstthing that the new man has to do in Verses 5 to 9 is take off the old clothes, to junk the old garments. We called it spiritual suicide, some things to kill in your life. Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desire, covetousness (which amounts to idolatry because you are seeking your own things instead of God) and so forth. You areto get ridof this stuff. You're to get rid of anger and wrath and malice and blasphemy and dirty talk and lies. So the first thing the new man does is junk some of the old stuff. The second thing, beginning in Verse 9 in the middle, is to start putting on the new things. He really gets into that in Verse 12. So what we're seeing here is that we're working out in our practice in a day to day living process the new patterns, the new lifestyle that connect up with the new man.

I want to compare a passage for a minute, Ephesians 4:17 if I may. We eluded to it last time but didn't really fully compare it. I want to show you something most interesting here. This is a little different figure. It's not the idea here of the clothes, but he uses a little different analogy. He says, "This I say therefore and testify in the Lord," in other words, since you are a new creation and since you are part of one body since you've been marvelously regenerated, "You are- not to walk as the gentiles or as the pagans. You are not to walk in the vanity of your mind." The Greek text leaves out that other gentiles statement and just says, "Don't walk in the vanity of your mind, having your understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God to the ignorance that is in them, being blind in their heart past feeling, giving themselves over to evil things, work, uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ." In other words, that stuff has got to go. You have learned another thing.

"If so be that you have been heard in and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus that you put off concerning the former manner of life, the old man which is corrupt according to its deceitful lust and be renewed in the spirit of your mind." And you put on the new man. Now here he doesn't see it so much as clothes. He just says, "Since you are a new man, don't put on the old man any more."

You know, this is interesting. Years ago I did some study in some of the penology of the early Roman empire and I found out that there was acustom in some cases in some places that, when you murdered somebody the punishment was to strap the dead body of the victim to you. That was your punishment. Now it wouldn't take too long for that to have an affect on you. (Laughter) A very dramatic affect. It would decay you and rot you and kill you, and that was one way in which murderers were punished. Now Paul may have had that in his mind. Certainly it would be one way to illustrate it. He is saying, "If you are a new man, what is the sense in carrying around strapped to you the old dead body?" All it's going to do is corrupt you. "How much better to clothe yourself on the outside in lifestyle with the new man that you are in reality." That's essentially the same thing.

Now you can go back to Colossians 3. 1 just wanted to compare that passage. There he sees the clothes as the new man in a practical sense. Here he describes it in terms of the garments. It's the same thought. Some people get hung up on just exactly what the difference is. One is one analogy and the other is another. One maybe is an illustration related to the way they would treat a criminal. This one is just an illustration of putting on clothes. So when you come down to Verse 12 he says, "Put on therefore." That means to adopt a lifestyle consistent with your new life. Leave your old habits. Shed your dead leaves. Take that dead body off your back. All it's going to do is corrupt you.Throw away your stinking rotten garments from your former life.

Now as we look at Verses 5 to 17, we told you that there would be several areas of truth. We have already discussed three of them. Let me remind you. Point number one we saw as we looked at Verses 9 and following. Point number one - we saw the position of the new man. Secondly as we looked at Verse 10 we saw the progress of the new man. He is renewed in knowledge. Thirdly and last time, we saw the partnership of the new man in Verse 11. He has an amazing new identity with all other believers, whatever they are - Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, sinthian, bond or free, Christ is all and in all."

So we have seen the position of the new man. That's in Verse 9b and 10a where it just says he is a new man.- The progress of the new man, he's being renewed in knowledge, and the partnership of the new man, he's one with everybody else. Now fourthly tonight in our study, we come to the performance of the new man. We're getting away from what god has done for the new man and we're getting into what God expects the new man to do in response. Righteous behavior to match righteous position. Verse 12. Let's start right there. Here is the performance of the new man. "Put on therefore, as the elective God, holy and beloved, tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Forbearing one another or enduring one another and forgiving one another if any man ever quarrel

against any even as Christ forgave you so also do ye."

Now stop there. Now he says, "This is the performance that is requested of the new man. This is to be the outward manifestation of the inward transformation. This is the lifestyle we are after. We are after a lifestyle that is characterized by tender mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forbearance and forgiveness. That's the kind of lifestyle God wants the believer to live. Now notice how he kind of sets you up there. "Put on therefore as the elect of God." That's a great statement. The elect of God, sovereignly selected by God.

Ephesians, Chapter 2 says that God has ordained us to good works. It simply says we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. We are saved to good works. We are saved to a life of positive emphasis that issues in consistency with our new nature. We are saved to issue a new lifestyle, a new pattern of living. You're not a Christian simply by your own choice. You're not a Christian simply by your own decision. You're a Christian because you're the elect of God chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, according to Ephesians Chapter 1. According to two passages in the Book of Revelation, your name was written in the Lamb's book of life before-you were ever born. In fact, before anybody was ever born and in fact, before Creation was consummated. When God put down the foundation of the Earth, He had before that writtenour names in His book. Underlying then our response to God's grace is God's plan and God's initiative. And we willingly respond to that call.

So we are the chosen of God. This isn't a grab bag, ad lib, comme see, comme ca, Johnny-come-lately enterprise. Everybody who is in the body of Christ, everybody who has had this marvelous transformation, has been chosen by God before the world began to issue in a life of behavior that is consistent with that new identity. I don't know what that does to you but it lays on me the heavy thought that if I do not live such a life am in violation, not just of my own whim but in violation of the eternal plan of God set in motion before the world began. It's very critical for me to understand this truth. Now notice further. He says, "You are the elect of God," and then he makes a second statement, "Holy." That means separate, set apart. When God elected you He elected to draw you out of the mainstream of humankind. He elected to bring you to himself He elected to separate you that you might be different. That's why First Corinthians 1:2 says, "You are called agias. You are called holy ones. You are called separate ones. You are called saints. You are unique. You are different than the world, and if you don't act different then you have violated the very thing for which God has called you from before the foundation of the world. I mean, just get a thought on that. You're living in violation of the entire intention of God from before the world began.

So you're the elect of God and you're holy and then this kind of adds that dimension that's got to be there: you are beloved. And it isn't With God just a little plan that He has written out, "I'll take him and him and her and him and her and her." No. He loves you. There is something very intimate here. There's something very personal here. We're not just supposed to fill out the plan for the Almighty

God, but there's a love relationship here that is to prompt us and to drive us. We are the objects of divine affection. Now I don't understand that. I don't know why God is so madly in love with me and not with somebody else. But I'm not going to fight it. I'm want to accept it by His grace.

Then I read in my Bible that God so loved whom? The whole world. The only reason that I am different is because I have responded to His grace. But that too is in His providence. That too is in His sovereignty. Now I want you to remember something that I think is important. Those three terms - the elect of God, holy, and beloved -are three terms used in the Old Testament to describe Israel. There are three terms used in the Old Testament to describe Israel. Do you know what this is saying then? An incredible change is taking place in the economy of God. What once was true of one nation) is now true of all men who come to Christ. Israel is set aside in terms of its national uniqueness for this period of time. Temporarily, Romans 11 says. For ultimately the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. But those of us who are gentiles, who have come to Christ, we are the elect of God. We are the holy. We are the beloved. Therefore, on the basis of that put on a lifestyle that is consistent with such a calling. What kind of a lifestyle? Well, let's look at these principles. Incidentally, the words "put on" and "duno" means to put your clothes on or it mans to envelope in. It's the idea of just covering you up. Cover your life with these things. This is your external lifestyle. They are very specific.

Number one - tender mercies. Literally in the Greek, and we get back to our discussion of a few months ago, it means "bowels of compassion." Do you remember our discussion about bowels? Yes, I know you remember. "Splanc na" in the Greek literally means "the bowels." In the Hebrew thinking it had to do with the organs around the middle part of your stomach area. The Hebrew mind always gave a very concrete, substantial reality to anything that was a sort of a Greek philosophical concept. For example, where the Hebrew might say "And I reasoned in my mind" the Jew would say **"**AndI thought in my heart." Why? Because the Jew always related everything to an emotional response that was physical. We still do that a little bit. The Jew understood the bowels to be the seat of compassion, the seat of sympathy; because when trouble was going on he had a stomach ache. Because when he had a lot of anxiety it got to, his gut and he began to have problems there. Maybe he had an ulcer. They use the terms to refer to the womb and the stomach and the intestines and the kidney and the spleen and the liverand all the abdominal organs. The Hebrew always expressed an attitude or an emotion in physiological symptoms, and never in abstractions like the Greek. So when you see here "the bowels or mercy or compassion," he is simply talking about a compassionate person but he's doing it in a Hebrewism, even though it's written in the Greek language. Emotions are never expressed as abstract in Scripture. They are always expressed in the lowest level of feeling, the physical feeling. Do you remember the Second Corinthians illustration? It says, "And his inward affection or his bowels, his deep feelings is more abundant toward you." There again they are talking about somebody's feelings from the standpoint of their physiological feelings. You remember that we said in the case of "Song of Solomon" when the lover heard his lover coming; he got a feeling in his stomach. We understand that.

In Philippians 1:8 "For God is my witness. How greatly I long after you in the bowels of Christ." That sounds so funny to us, because we come out of the western language orientation and we think it's strange. But when you think about it, when you have that longing and when you hurt for somebody's presence you feel it, don't you? You feel it physically. Psychologically it gets translated into your physiology. That's the way it's used again and again. Bowels respond to pain in the Bible. They respond to a sex stimulus. They respond to disaster, to fear, to need. By physical feeling they respond. So here in Colossians he is saying, "You need to have a deep, gut-level feeling of compassion." Literally, "ouk promos." The idea of the word is simply sympathy, or mercy. It has the idea of sympathy or compassion.

Now in the ancient days, this was needed. You know what happened, for example, to sick people in those times? Do you know what happened to maimed people? Do you know what happened to people who got run over by an ox cart or people who lost a limb or people who got sick? They went out by the wall and just put their bodies there until they were dead. Everybody just walked around them. They would just die by the city wall and be hauled off. There was absolutely no provision for the aged. The treatment of the retarded and the simple-minded was totally unfeeling. Here came Jesus Christ to a world that didn't know sympathy at all, to a Greek world where old people just went over by a wall until they were dead. Maimed people did the same thing. Little retarded children and idiots were set out to die. Jesus said, "I want you to have a gut-feeling of sympathy and compassion." You see, that's a brand new ball game in that world. He was telling them something that was something new. The idea then, is a deep feeling that hurts over the concern for others and their needs. It's the very opposite of indifference. It's an aching kind of concern. I just struggle with that in my life because I have so much and I'm so far removed from any of that. It's something I really have to struggle with.

Jesus had that. Jesus stood on a hillside and was so moved with compassion for people that He wept, didn't He? Jesus was so concerned about the poor that He fed them. He was so concerned about the sick that He healed them. Jesus loved those kinds of people. He had deep, painful feelings about the multitudes, about the poor, about the blind and crippled the deaf and sick, the orphaned and widows. He even told the church to take care of the orphans and widows. You people take care of your parents when they get old. This is a whole new thing. Sympathy is a gut feeling. A deep down pain. When you see somebody who is hurting. Christians ought to be the greatest philanthropists, the greatest helpers of the poor and the blind and the sick and the world.

The second thing to put on here is kindness. They kind of overlap, don't they? He says, "You know, if you're a Christian and you've got the new life and you're living the new life, one thing that ought to characterize you is kindness." Somebody said this: "Kindness is the virtue of a man whose neighbor's good is as dear to him as his own." That's a kind person. Jesus Used to say, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy." Jesus had about Him a kind of sweet goodness, and He offered that to men. Even in Titus 3 where the Apostle Paul is telling Titus, "Don't let anybody teach

any false doctrine and make sure you take care of the church," and so forth, he says, "We ourselves also were once foolish, disobedient, deceiving, serving various lusts, pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another, but after the kindness and love of God our Savior toward men appears," bang! Transformation. Paul says that what changed his life was the kindness of Jesus Christ. Would you say the kindness of Jesus Christ could be described as the virtue of one whose neighbor's good was as dear to him as his own? Yes. Goodness and kindness. I think about the Good Samaritan, don't you? Bound up the wounds of that man who was an enemy and took him to the inn and spent all his money that the man might have a nice bed, cared for him.

The third thing is humility or humbleness of mind. I don't know if you ever have read about this, but did you know that among the Greeks there is no word in classical Greek for humility? There is none. Do you know why? They didn't believe in it. There was no such thing. There was no word for humility. We have a whole lot of different ones that appear in the Bible that we use to kind of get out the idea, but humility was something that a Greek despised. Pride was what he was after. Then here came Christianity and said, "Put on humility." Here came Jesus and said, "Be humble." This is the antidote to self-love, and self-love poisons all relationships. It always does. It always does! When you love yourself and you are self-seeking and you desire things for yourself, whatever they are, whether they are at your job or in your family or in your church, wherever you are self-seeking you will poison relationships with other people. Then it becomes difficult to talk about your Christianity.

Now this is the real thing here. This is real humility. You know, again this is characteristic of Jesus. Jesus had that tender mercy. Jesus had that kindness and Jesus also had this humility. You say, "Now wait a minute." Yes! Matthew 29, He said, "I am meek and lowly at heart." Didn't He? He condescended to be humble. Then that takes us to the next word. Again it is almost a synonym, because as I say, we kind of have to invent words here. Meekness. Now when we think of somebody who is meek like the proverbial Casper Milk toast who goes around saying, "Yes" to his wife and drinking milk and staying in his room when his wife tells him to and coming out when it's time to eat. This kind of person is a mealy-mouth little character who wouldn't say "Peep" if he wasn't instructed to. It's sort of a spinelessness and we use "meek" in that way. Do you know what "meek" really means here? The rendering of the word means this: a willingness to suffer injury rather than inflict it. "If somebody is going to get hurt in this deal, let it be me. If somebody has to suffer here, let it be me." You can see the essence of humility in that, can't you? "If somebody has to lose, let it be me." Boy, there is a gentleness implied in that concept of meekness. You know, in Galatians 6:1 it says, and this is such a vital passage, especially in reference to what I said earlier about this young man, it says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness considering yourself lest you also be tempted." Before you get too haughty, remember that you could be suffering from the same problem. You could be tempted in the same. You'd better consider yourself and make sure you've built your walls up.

In Second Timothy 2:25 Paul says to Timothy, "Foolish and unlearned questions avoid. Don't wrangle with people about stupid things. Avoid those things knowing that they breed strife. You just make enemies. And the servant of the Lord must not fight but be gentle to all men apt to teach, patient in meekness, instructing those who oppose it." Meekness. That sweet gentleness. This is the man, this is the woman, who knows he or she is a sinner among sinners. Gentleness. Then there is long suffering. That's a beautiful thought, too. Long suffering is patience. "Macro themia" in the Greek. It's a common word in the New Testament. It just means, "Here's somebody who never loses his patience with anybody." That would be a nice thought, wouldn't it?

Barclay says 'their foolishness and their teachability never drive it to cynicism or despair. Their insults and their ill treatment never driveit to bitterness or wrath." In other words, no matter how hard you are trying to be loving, no matter how hard you're trying to get your point across, they flack back at you and they shoot back at you and they interrupt you and they don't accept it and they don't listen, you never get angry. Did you know God is patient? If you don't know it, you ought to think about it. Look at your life and how you treated it, and mine. It's the opposite of resentment. It's the opposite of revenge. It's the long suffering man who never, ever, ever gets angry at all about other people. You say, "What about you? You got mad." Yeah, I got mad at a system. I have every right to get mad at Satan. I have every right to get mad at a false teacher. I have every right to do that. But I need to be patient with the person whom you are instructing, unless that person is an apostate. Then you have every right to get angry. Jesus did that, if you'll check Him out with the Pharisees. He was a long suffering man. This was characteristic of Jesus Christ is First Timothy 1:16 - "Nevertheless, for this cause I obtain mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering." You know, Paul says "If you don't think that Jesus is patient, let me give my testimony. I ran around killing Christians and He loved me. He was patient with me." You see, this is the beautiful thing.

Now you ask yourself about these things. These are simple thoughts. Have you put on your new clothes? Is your life characterized by a very tender sense of compassion to people in need? Is mine? Is your life characterized by humility? A deep sense of true humility? Is your life characterized by meekness that says, "I'd rather suffer than have you suffer." Is your life characterized by kindness, so that somebody else's good is just as important to you as yours? Is your life characterized by patience? Well, I think it ought to be, don't you? After all, you are a new creature. You ought to get the clothes of the new man on. Then he adds a couple of other things in Verse 13. He says, "Forbearing one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a quarrel against anyone else, even as Christ forgave you so also do ye."

It's almost as if Verse 12 tells you how to be under people and Verse 13 tells you how to act when you're on top of them. The first thing he says is, "Forbear one another." What does that mean? Endure.

Now it doesn't mean, "Boy, do I ever endure him!" That isn't the kind of thing we're talking about. It means "to bear with" or "to hold out" whether it's persecution or injury or threats or difference or insults or complaints or lies or defamation of your character or whatever it is, literally the Greek means "to hold yourself back from one another." When you're tempted to break loose and fly at each other. It's a beautiful characteristic to be able to endure, to be able to back away with a sense of enduring under any kind of hardship, under any kind of persecution, under any kind of difficulty to say, "Hey. The Lord has a reason. The Lord has a purpose. It's up to me to manifest the godly quality of endurance in this situation."

Then it even goes a step further. He says beyond just enduring it, forgive them. Forgive them. It's like Jesus who endured the Cross, despising the shame (Hebrews 12) but at the same time said, "Father, forgive them." It's a step further. You say, "Boy, but how many times?" Matthew 18:22 - Forgive how many times? Seventy times seven. Four hundred and ninety times. And you're just starting. Now there's a beautiful thought here. This is a reflexive pronoun here tucked into the Greek which would make it read, "forgiving each other" or literally "forgiving yourselves." It's talking about the church and the church should literally be a corporate, forgiving fellowship, isn't that a great thought? It's the reflexive verb here and pronoun. Do as a body among yourselves what Christ has done for you all. Do you see? As Christ has forgiven you all, so also you forgive yourselves. Let the church be a patient group. Let it be a forbearing group that holds out against persecution and let it be a corporate, forgiving fellowship, not only forgiving yourselves within it but forgiving anybody on the outside. Because Christ forgave you.

Over and over again Ephesians4:32 talks about this. Over and overagain Christ is the model of forgiveness. Right? It's obvious. It's the greatest act of forgiveness in history. Christ has forgiven us totally and Christ has forgiven us completely. Christ has forgiven us with no strings attached. Christ's forgiveness is genuine. Christ's forgiveness has nothing to do with whether we deserved it or not and that's the essence of true forgiveness for anybody. Christ's forgiveness is freely forgiven. I love it.

You know what He's really saying here is, when you find the person who persecutes you or the person who rubs you the wrong way or the person who hassles you, whether he is a believer or not, when you find the person just throw the mantle of humility and love over that sinner and hold on. In patience God will vindicate you. Now those are the qualities that mark the new man. They are simple but they're beautiful qualities. Now if you want to see a pattern of this, just study Jesus and you'll see his tender sympathy. You'll see his lowliness and his meekness, and you'll see his long suffering, his forbearance, and you'll certainly see his beautiful, unending, eternal forgiveness. So you see, the performance of the new man is to put on really, the likeness of whom? Christ. He becomes a pattern.

So now we see the position, the progress, the partnership and the performance of the new man. Maybe we have time to go a step further. The perfection of the new man is in Verse 14. It says this: "And above all these," - once you've got these garments on He wants you to throw a robe over the

whole thing - "And above all these things put on love which is the girdle of perfectness or maturity." Now, you know those people well, enough to know that they woretunics and they had a sash thatthey cinched it all together with, or it would be just flowing around. So they just pulled it all together. Do you know how many times the Bible says, "Gird up your loins and do this and gird up your loins and go there and Peter, when you were young you gird your own self," so that was normal thing. You threw a bunch of material over their heads with three holes in it and cinched it up and off they went. So He's saying, "Now look. Once you get all these clothes on, the thing that holds the whole thing together is love." The figure of clothing is here. Here is a sash or a belt and the belt is love. It is love that holds it all together. It is love that is the bond of peace. It is love that girds the believer. It is love that is the greatest thing. It is love that ties it all together.

You will never experience compassion for people unless you love them. You will never experience kindness toward people unless you love them. You will never knowthe meaning of humility and meekness unless you love them. You'll never know what it is to be willing to suffer long and to endure and to forgive unless you love. You know, it's almost as if He is saying, "Here is another way to say all that stuff I just said; just love everybody." It's the same thing. You get the feeling that this is the same thing. If I really love you, I'm going to have compassion for you, kindness toward you, humility toward you, patience toward you, forbearing toward you and forgiveness toward you, right? So the thing that holds it all together and the thing that makes it all mature is love. That's the same thing Paul said in Romans 13 when he said, "Love fulfills the whole law." It says, "Thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt..." but the point is, all those "don'ts" that make up the law can be fulfilled in this one thing: love." That's why we say it's so important. You see, without love, what you have here is a whole lot of legalistic, moral attitudes. You're getting up and saying, "I am going to be humble." Off you go in your humility and somebody says, "Oh my. You're so wonderful. I appreciate you so much." Then you're stuck. Because since you don't have true humility you've got to figure out a way in your pride to act humble, and not let them know it's an act. That isn't easy. I've done it. It's very hard.

You see, what we said this morning was that love is a fruit of the Spirit. You walk in the Spirit. He produces love and you've got it made. If you're trying to generate all these attributes on your own like, "I am determined to be meek," it won't work. You can't generate it. It's got to come from the Holy Spirit. And notice he says that love is the thing which ties it together. Love perfects it. Love puts it all together, binds it up.

Now the Bible is not that complicated, is it? You're always coming back to Point A again, aren't you? Back to Point A. Love is the Spirit of self-sacrifice that only the Spirit of God can produce in your life and only when you walk in Him. Well, that's what ties it together.

That brings me to the sixth thought - the priorities of the new man. Verse 15 to 17. Now this new man is reallygetting it together. In addition to these clothes and this belt, now Paul comes along and says, "Now I want to give you a few general things that I want you to understand." Now he's got sort of a

robe that he's going to throw over you. This kind of covers it all up here. This is kind of on top of everything else. Here are three real biggies that you've got to have going. Three fantastic priorities of the new man. One - let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. Two - let the wordof Christ dwell in you richly. Three - let the name of Christ be the issue in everything you do.

Now that's practical, isn't it? Let the peace of Christ rule inyour heart. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Let the name of the Lord Jesus guide you in everything. Well, let's look at Verse 15 and see the first of these. The peace of Christ. In the manuscripts it is not God, but "peace of Christ." Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. The word "rule" is umpire. Let the peace of Christ be the umpire. You got a problem? You've got to make a decision? You're caught in the midst of something? Let the peace of Christ make that decision.

You say, "Well that's good, John. What is the peace of Christ?" Well, the Greek word for "peace" means "an agreement or a pact or a treaty or a bond" whereas the Hebrew concept of "peace" mans "an attitude of peace or rest or security." I think you have both aspects in the peace of Christ. When you came to Jesus Christ, you made an agreement with Christ. Right? You signed a truce. Prior to this Lord, you and I were at war. Right? You were on one side and I was on the other side and we were going at it. But I would like to come to your side. I would like the war to be over. It's as if in His own blood on the Cross, Jesus wrote a treaty. He wrote a covenant. He wrote a bond and agreement with John MacArthur and said, "From now on, John MacArthur and I are at peace." That's a great truth. That's the peace of Christ. I am at peace with Christ. That's what Paul means in Ephesians 6 when he talks about the preparation of the gospel of peace. He's not talking about an inner attitude. He's talking about the fact that the gospel is a man making peace with God, a man who was at war. So what he's saying here is, "Look. Whatever you're doing in life, let the thing that helps you make your decisions, let the decision-making consideration be that you're on Christ's side."

So a problem comes into your lifeand you say, "Should I or shouldn't I? Well, I've got to remember whose side I'm on. Christ and me are together at peace. I'd better do what He would want." You see? Let my newly established relationship with Jesus Christ, my oneness with Him, my unity with Him, my peace with Him, be the determining factor in all that I do in my life.

But there is a second aspect, and there's that inner rest and that inner calm. That fits in, too. If I'm going to make a decision, the umpire in that decision is going to be, "Will it give peace to my soul? Will it give rest to my soul? Will it give me a sense of confident security that God is in this?" You see? That's how I govern my behavior. So the peace of Christ is both a state and an experience. It's both a fact and a feeling. Any time I have a decision to make I need somebody to rule. I need somebody to be the umpire and say "go" or "stop" or "You're in bounds" or "You're out of bounds" or "this is fair" or "this is foul" and I just say two things: Number one - is it consistent with the fact that Jesus and I are on the same side? Second - will it leave me with a deep and abiding rest in my heart?

That's how I choose what I want to do. You know, I'll tell you just practically - the number one reason that I don't like to sin is because I know how it offends Jesus Christ. Have you thought about that? That's true, isn't it? For every Christian; the number one deterrent in sin for a Christian who has got any maturity at all is that I know how it will offend the Christ with whom I am at peace. The number two reason is that I don't like the way I feel after I've done it. So those two considerations come together to rule my heart. So I say, "I don't want to do that," because that's not consistent with Christ and I on the same team. We're at peace. Secondly, I won't feel too good if I do that. I just don't care to have a lot of guilt, frankly. So he says, "You just let the peace ofChrist be the umpire, to which also you are called into one body." He's simply saying here that this is true of every Christian. We all have this same high calling in one body, and the peace of Christ should rule in all of our lives. The idea of that second phrase is, and it's implied, is that if the peace of Christ rules my life and the peace of Christ is ruling your life and Christ is calling all the shots in all of our lives and umpiring all of us, a fantastic unity is going to happen, right? That's what he's saying. It will be in which we are all called into one body.

Then he throws this beauty in: and be thankful.Do you know what I've found out? Do you know how to keep your heart peaceful? Be thankful. Just keep thanking the Lord for everything. It's just amazing how peaceful you will be. Be thankful. Lord, you're the umpire. You call them. Fine, Lord. It's good if that's what you want. Thank you. No hassle. Alright, Lord. You can do it but I don't like it. I'm not going to do it. No. Lord, thanks. This is right. I want it that way. Thank you for leading me. You see? The peace of Christ rules. Secondly, the word of Christ dwells in you richly. It's a fantastic concept. He says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Now this has got so much in it that I can't even begin to get it all out of here.

The word "dwell" means "to be at home." Let the word of Christ be at home in you. Home is comfortable, right? Home is where you like to be. Holiday Inns are fine, but home is better. I saw one the other day as I was driving down Santa Monica Boulevard. It was a big motel called "Holiday Out." I thought that was pretty clever. (Laughter) I know you didn't think it was so hot, but anyway... (Laughter) Holiday Inns are fine and hotels are fine. They do what they can, but home is home and let the word of God and the word of Christ not be any stranger to you, but let it be home. In other words, let it be settling there and living there. Do you see? So when they say, "You know that John MacArthur? You know who lives in John MacArthur's head? The word of Christ does." Let it be said that that's where the wordof Christ is. To have this kind of peace and thankfulness and this kind of love and these virtues in Verses 12 and 13 is going to demand that the word of Christ dwell in you, and the word is best translated "abundantly." I mean, you are jammed full of it. If they cut you anywhere you will bleed Bible verses. (Laughter) Spiritual truths. Let the word really fill you up.

You can't be content with spiritual snacks. You've got to feed on it. You know, the Bible says the word must be mixed with faith, doesn't it? It must be mixed with faith. It only becomes yours when you

believe it, and when you appropriate it. The things I've learned the best are the things I've put into operation. They have become patterns of life. So the word of Christ is to dwell in me abundantly. How is it going to do that? Well, first of all I've got to read it, then I've got to study it, then I've got to live it. I'll give you a quick little outline. Are you ready for this? Get your pencil. There are four things you have to do with the word: Heed it (Matthew 13:9), handle it (Second Timothy 2:15), hide it (Psalm 119:11), and hold it forth (Philippians 2:16). When you're all done you'll have it richly. You're going to have to get into the wealth of it. Paul says, "I have not failed to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.Spend your life studying the word and fix it with faith." You know, it's a beautiful thought here, because 3:16 of Colossians is a direct parallel to Ephesians 5:18, and in Ephesians 5:18 it says, "And be not drunk with wine where it is in excess, but be filled with the Spirit." Then you have the same response: teaching, admonishing, singing, making a melody in your heart to the Lord; it's all the same response. It even goes down into Verse 18 - Wives submit and husbands and children and fathers and servants and masters, you have exactly the same response in Ephesians to being filled with the Spirit that you have here in being dominated by the word. Do you know what the conclusion is? There's a very simple conclusion. Do you know what it means to be filled With the Spirit? What does it mean? Let the word of Christ dominate you. You see, the word of Christ in your heart and in your mind is the handle by which the Holy Spirit turns your will. It's the same thing.

People say, "Oh, to be filled with the Spirit. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?" It means you go spiritually bananas and you have all kinds of things. To be filled with the Spirit means, bang. You are dominated by the word. The word is just a part of you. It saturates you. Now this kind of commitment he can't resist throwing in, He says, "Now, if you'll just let the peace of Christ rule, and if you'll just let the word of Christ dwell, do you know what the result is going to be?" Fantastic. In all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, do you know what's going to be the response? You're going to go out and with all wisdom you're going to teach (that's positive) and you're going to admonish (that's negative). Positive is saying, "Do this and do this." Admonishing is saying, "Don't do this. Don't do that. It's not right." And as the word of Christ dwells in you richly, then you can go out andteach people. You can go out and you can admonish them. It means to warn them that if they continue in that behavior, God will chasten them. So you have the positive teaching and the negative warning. That's going to come as a result of the dwelling of the word of Christ richly in your heart. I'm here tonight and I'm teaching you. It all flows because the word of Christ dwells in you abundantly. It's got to happen in your life.

So we find that the first response to a richly filled life is information. Information! Man, you know something and you can go out there with that word of Christ dwelling in you and the Spirit of God in control, and you can teach somebody and you can warn somebody. But it doesn't stop there. You're not just a walking biblical encyclopedia. The second thing isn't information. It's emotion. Do you know what happens after that? All of a sudden you wind up in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to whom? To the Lord. Did you hear what Paul said earlier tonight? When you're singing, to whom are you singing? To the Lord. It isn't the tune that He's concerned

about. It's what's coming out of your heart. But look at that. First of all, when the word of Christ dwells in you, you're going to be able to teach people to minister to people and secondly, you're going to be a happy person going around singing it. You know, I like to be happy, and I think that Christians ought to be the happiest people in the world. In fact, we're the only ones who have anything to sing about. He says in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Some day we're going to do a study in all that. We're going to a whole study in music and what the Bible teaches about it. But simply stated, a Psalm basically referred to the Old Testament, Salter. The Book of Psalms. They used to sing the Psalms like we still do today.

Secondly, hymns were basically expressions of praise to God.You might not have known this, but it is assumed that Colossians 1:15 to 20 was actually translated into an early church hymn. They actually sang apparently Colossians 1:15 to 20. I'll tell you another one. Historians tell us that Philippians 2:6 to 11 was a hymn, and there are others in the New Testament that were hymns in the early church. The reason we know that is that we find certain archaeological evidence. So hymns were expressions of praise to God. Songs- were the Old Testament Psalms.

Now you say, "Well what are the spiritual songs?" Spiritual songs emphasized spiritual testimony. They are the testimony songs. For example, in Revelation 5:9 you have one of them, and they sang a new song. "Thou art worthy to take the scroll and open its seal, for thou was slain and has redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and made us unto our God a kingdom of priests and we shall reign on the Earth." You see, it's a testimony. "Look what you've done for us, Lord! This is the expression of our testimony." So here's what happens. First of all, to let the word of Christ dwell in you richly results in information and secondly it results in emotion. That's what we do when we come together like tonight. We sing for awhile and then we teach for awhile.

Another thought that kind of hits me is that it says in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, "singing with grace." That doesn't mean with Grace Church. (Laughter) It's the spirit of letting the beauty of God's inward grace come on the outside in your singing. Singing as an outward expression of God's inward grace, I think, is the best way to define this. Calvin says, however, that he thinks it means singing acceptably or in a gracious way. He goes a step further and says that all Christians music should be acceptable, should be gracious, and therefore you have some control on the style and the kind of music that is allowed to be used to express the things of God. Now that's a good thought and I think that's true, that certainly when we're singing songs to God they ought to be a gracious expression of a gracious God. He may have a good point there. The reason I lean toward the other thing is because the definite article is there and in the Greek it says "the grace." It seems to me that the grace has reference to God's actual grace which He has disposed upon us.

But look what else it says. Singing with the grace in your heart, in other words you're taking that grace that's in your heart and putting it into expression. You say, "Well when it says singing with your

hearts, does it mean you're not supposed to sing with your voice?" No. What good would it do to just sit around and sing from your heart? God wants to hear your voice. But it means that the heart should agree with the mouth, right? That's the point. Then he says lastly, "singing to the Lord." You know, the edification that comes in music is secondary. People always say, "Well we're here to minister to you in song." No. It always bothers me when they say that. It's alright, and I don't mind getting ministered to, but that's not really the purpose of music. The purpose of music is to minister to the Lord and we just kind of tune in. We're just kind of bystanders. We're singing to the Lord, it says here. Well, it's pretty clear what he's saying. He's saying there are some basic things that are part of the life of the new man. They are kind of priority things over everything else. The peace of Christ, the word of Christ, and lastly Verse 17. This is beautiful. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of Christ." Or, the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

One more thought, he says. When you sum it all up you can say it this way. Here's how to live the new life: put off.... and put on...., or just love, or let your lifebe guided by the peace of Christ and guided by the word of Christ, or if you want me to say it in one sentence, just whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus and you've got it. It's almost like He's ascending from a broad base of things and He just keeps narrowing and narrowing and the peak of it is all in Verse 17. You want it simplified? Just do this: everything you do, do in the name of Jesus Christ. That means consistent with who he is, doesn't it? Consistent with what He would want.

Well, do you know what that says to me? Whatever you do, do all consistent with the person of Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God. Do you know what that means? We're right back to the same thing. When you put on the new man, who are you putting on? Christ. I close with this. Just a verse that I want you to grab. We can't go away without it. Romans 13:14. Listen to it. Here it is, the sum up of everything. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Isn't that great? Put Him on. That's one way to say the whole thing. He can sayput on, put off, or just get love together and put it on, or be ruled by the peace of Christ and the word of Christ, or better yet do everything you do in the name of Christ, or better yet just put on Christ.

Doctor Guy King who is a great expositor of the word in England was speaking at a children's meeting and was walking along the beach on the south coast of England. He says this: "As I was approaching the beach, a little boy was going along to it. He caught sight of me and he said, 'Mommy! Here comes the Jesus man.'" Doctor King said, "What right had I to be called the Jesus man? What degree of resemblance is there about us?" Jerome K. Jerome wrote a story called "The Passing of the Third Floor back." It's kind of interesting. This is the tale. It was the story of a poor class lodging house in England where there lived a heterogeneous company of seedy, needy people. There, there was a poor ignorant servant girl. This poor ignorant servant girl sold her body and her virtue for any worthless trinket available to the people in the house and otherwise. Into this place one day came a stranger who at once seemed very different, and who was assigned to live in the third floor back. He was kind. He was gentle. And he was patient. He was also loving. He always spoke so sweetly to this

little servant girl and treated her never with rudeness as everyone else did. She soon began to worship him, and the other folks began to owe him much and began to love him verydeeply because of his continued kindness to them and his continuing sympathy and always wanting to do something for them. Time passed and at last the day came when he had to move away. The little maid watched as he walked with his very small piece of luggage to the door, and as he turned to her with the loving smile and a gentle pat on her shoulder she said, "Please sir. Are you Him?" That's a fair question for a Christian, isn't it?

Let us pray. Our desire, Lord, is to be Him. It's to be Christ in the world. It's to put on the Lord Jesus, so that when they see us they see Him. May our love and gentleness, and kindness and patience, and forgiveness and goodness, may the peace of Christ which rules our hearts, the word of Christ which dwells in us richly, may our great desire above all things to do whatever we do in word or deed in the name of the Lord Jesus, make us like Him so that people will walk up to us and say, "Please, sir. Please ma'am. Are you Him?"

While your heads are bowed as we close tonight, I felt that this was an important time so I wanted to give you al1 the word that was there. My great prayer in my heart tonight is for me and for you, that that would be a true reality in your life, that you would be Christ in this world. This world needs to see Jesus Christ, doesn't it? It needs to see Him in us. Sometime in our lives we come to the place where we are at least willing to take step one and say, 'I want to be Christ in this world. I want to put Him on. I want His virtue to be my virtue, His life to be my life, His lifestyle to be my lifestyle. Since He elected me and since He made me holy and since I am His beloved, it seems rather consistent to be what He wants me to be and to put on the clothes of the new man and so live to glorify His name." If that's the prayer of your heart, why don't you just express it to God right now? There may be some folks here tonight who have never come to Jesus Christ the Savior. They can't be like Him became they don't even know Him. Maybe you're saying in your heart, 'I wish I knew Jesus Christ. I wish He was in my life and the sin was forgiven and I was a new creature. I wish I was made all new again.' You can be tonight be simply asking Him that. Lord Jesus, thank you for dying and rising for me. Thank you for coming into this world, God in human flesh, to bear my sin. Thank you for the promise that you will make me a new creature.

I want you to do that right now. You can pray that and you'll do it. That's His promise. Father, thank you for our fellowship tonight. Draw those to the prayer roomwho need you and who need to spend time in prayer with you. Dismiss us with your love and grace to live so that the world sees in us Jesus Christ in whose blessed name we pray. Amen.

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