

TEXT: Colossians 3:12-14

THEME: WHAT TO WEAR?

**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 one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.**

Dear Christian Friends:

What to wear? What to wear? I have nothing to wear! You don't hear too many guys making that complaint. They just go over to the pile in the corner, pick up a shirt, give it the sniff test, and if it isn't too bad, put it on and they're good to go. On the other hand, ladies seem to make this observation every time they open their closet. In fact, the closet may be so full, the doors won't even shut, and the dresser drawers may be overflowing, and still we hear, "What to wear? What to wear? I have nothing to wear!"

In our text for today, the Apostle Paul is talking about clothes—not shirts, pants, dresses, and shoes, but spiritual clothes. He is telling us that as Christians, "**as God's chosen people,**" we need some new clothes. In fact, we need a whole new spiritual wardrobe. Our old clothes are ragged, full of holes, and filthy, permanently stained and torn by our sins. So, Paul tells us to put on new clothes as people who are "**holy and dearly loved**" by God. He tells you, "**clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.**" These are five attitudes you don't want to leave home without.

COMPASSION is the first one. A compassionate person is someone who wants to help people around him. What's going on with the people at church? What's going on with my family? What's going on with the people at work? My neighbors? My friends? Is everything okay? What can I do to help you? "**Clothe yourselves with compassion.**"

KINDNESS is next on Paul's list. Kindness is not only saying nice things but doing nice things. Kindness is going above and beyond the call of duty. The other day at the store, a little preschool aged girl was hot and tired and began pulling all the packages of candy off the shelf as her mother struggled with a crying infant. One of the packages burst open and there were M&Ms everywhere. A store clerk came hurrying down the aisle and said to the woman, "Don't worry about this, ma'am. I'll clean it up. Just do your shopping." "**Clothe yourselves with...kindness.**"

HUMILITY comes next. Humility means that you recognize your own weaknesses. You don't think about how great you are. Some time ago a young man stopped at church and wanted to talk with me. He told me he was in a Christian rock band and how talented they were. Eventually he was going into the armed forces and then earn 3 doctorate degrees because he was so very smart. He seemed like a nice enough guy, but he still needed to learn humility. He was really into himself! Do you know who is described in the Bible as the most humble man on the face of the earth? Moses (Numbers 12:3). I'm sure Moses

recognized his weaknesses very quickly as he tried to lead 2 million people through the desert. **“Clothe yourselves with...humility.”**

GENTLENESS also made Paul’s spiritual wardrobe. I remember being at a member’s home and being handed a vase to admire that was worth several thousand dollars. I very gently placed it back on the table. That’s how God wants us to treat the people around us. **“Clothe yourselves with...gentleness.”**

PATIENCE is the last of the first items of spiritual clothing. The Greek word here has the idea of being patient in unpleasant circumstances. When it’s the store clerk’s first day on the job, when you’ve waited over an hour in the doctor’s office, when the mechanic tells you that you need a new air filter even though you just put in a new one last week, be patient with those people. **“Clothe yourselves with...patience.”**

Clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience so that you can deal with people in a new way, a nicer way, a way that pleases God and witnesses your faith in Jesus Christ.

St. Paul spends a little more time on the sixth item of clothing in our spiritual wardrobe. **“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”** If someone promises to pick you up at 2:00 and they forget, leaving you waiting in the heat and humidity, you have a grievance. If someone promises to help you clean up the kitchen, but instead falls asleep on the couch, you have a grievance. I’m sure we all could come up with a list of legitimate reasons to be upset with certain people. But as a Christian, I want to be a forgiver. I want to forgive whatever grievances I have with other people.

But what does it mean to **“forgive as the Lord forgave you”**? Jesus has many grievances against us—all the things he tells us not to do, but we do them anyway; all the things he tells us to do, but we don’t do them. Yet Jesus forgives all the grievances he has against us. One of the most common pictures of forgiveness in the Bible is of a loan officer. He sees the debt you have piled up—your credit card bills, your car loans, your mortgage, your other bills. Then that loan officer tells you that as of right now, all these bills are wiped off your account. You owe nothing on your credit cards, no more car payment, no more house payment, you are totally debt-free! That’s how Jesus forgives us. He has wiped all sin out of your account. He has forgiven and forgotten your debt of sin. That’s how we Christians are to forgive when we wear the spiritual clothing of forgiveness.

Finally, Paul tells us to put on the biggest item of clothing. **“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”** This is agape love—a one-way kind of love. Love someone, even though he is unlovable, even though she may not say thank you, even though they don’t appreciate what you do. Love them.

The only way to get this wardrobe is with Christ. Spend time with him through his word and he will change you. He will clothe you with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love. Then you will be fashionably dressed, wherever you go. Amen.

## SERMON NOTES FOR PENTECOST 9, JULY 21 & 22, 2013

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THEME: WHAT TO WEAR?

Why do we need new spiritual clothes?

St. Paul lists seven new items of spiritual clothing we are to put on as God's chosen people. What are they?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Who is our example for the above item of clothing?

- \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

How do we get our new spiritual wardrobe? \_\_\_\_\_

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