

“Walking by Faith: The Creed of a Congregation”

The Reflection Year Series

Scripture: Colossians 3: 12-17

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Subject Question: What six characteristics does Paul teach us concerning the essence of a congregation who represent Jesus Christ?

Compliment answer: God’s People are: Chosen, God’s People are: Compassionate, God’s People are: Forgiving, God’s People are: Loving, God’s People are: Peaceful and God’s People are: Biblical.

Big Idea: The six characteristics that Paul teaches concerning the essence of a congregation who represent Jesus Christ are: God’s People are: Chosen, God’s People are: Compassionate, God’s People are: Forgiving, God’s People are: Loving, God’s People are: Peaceful and God’s People are: Biblical.

Homiletical Idea: “Instruments in the band of God ”

Purpose: I want the congregation to do some self-reflection concerning our collective and individual attitudes and actions as God’s chosen and cherished people.

Introduction: Last week, we came together as a family of God to dedicate an instrument **of** the Lord to be an Instrument **for** the Lord. Today we continue in that dedication mode as we now consider ourselves... We did the right thing, the holy thing... in dedicating our *Clavinova* to and for the Lord. But we can also do the righteous thing and the most holy of things as we dedicate not just an instrument, but you and me, your life and mine, all that we are and all that we do, and all that we aspire to become, to be as well, instruments of the Lord

to be truly and true, instruments for the Lord. It's true! This keyboard can lead an individual into the presence of the Lord, in a very real way... But it's also a fact; it's God's people who lead an individual to very person of the Lord. And we are a peculiar lot... wouldn't you agree...? a mishmash of humanity whose only commonality is our collective relationship with Jesus Christ. But what kind of people are we... or should we be. Paul, in his epistle to the church in Colossae gives a good description of just who we are... and how we act... Lets just take a few minutes and break down these incredibly rich verses of scripture from Paul and see what they teach us.

(It's our Privilege at His Price)

Groundwork:

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

3:12-17 We must not only do no hurt to any, but do what good we can to all. Those who are the elect of God, holy and beloved, ought to be lowly and compassionate towards all. While in this world, where there is so much corruption in our hearts, quarrels will sometimes arise. But it is our duty to forgive one another, imitating the forgiveness through which we are saved. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts; it is of his working in all who are his. Thanksgiving to God, helps to make us agreeable to all men. The gospel is the word of Christ. Many have the word, but it dwells in them poorly; it has no power over them. The soul prospers, when we are full of the Scriptures and of the grace of Christ. But when we sing psalms, we must be affected with what we sing. Whatever we are employed about, let us do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in believing dependence on him. Those who do all in Christ's name will never want matter of thanksgiving to God, even the Father.

Matthew Poole's Commentary

Put on therefore: as he had mentioned some particular vices of the old man they were to put off, Colossians 3:8, he doth here infer, that they might be complete in Christ, there be particular virtues and graces of the new man they are to put on, or, being new creatures, continually to exercise themselves in. As the elect of God, holy and beloved; chosen of God before all time, and effectually called in time from the rest of mankind; see John 15:16 Romans 8:29,30 Eph 1:4,5 2 Thessalonians 2:13: saints not only by obligation, but renewed by the sanctifying Spirit, Colossians 1:2 1 Peter 1:2; beloved with a gratuitous and special love of complacency, John 14:21 Romans 1:7 1

Thessalonians 1:4.

Bowels of mercies; he would have us put on, i.e. exercise, (being sanctified by the Spirit), mercy, not simply, but according to the Hebrew phrase, *bowels of mercies*, i.e. tendernesses of compassions, resenting the miseries of our brethren, as sharing with them in their sufferings, from our very heart: see Luke 6:36 Romans 12:15 Galatians 6:2 Ephesians 4:32 1 Peter 3:8.

Kindness; courtesy and goodness, Galatians 5:22; endeavoring to succor one another in all offices of benignity, 2 Corinthians 6:6 1 Peter 5:14.

Humbleness of mind; a sincere (not an affected) lowliness of spirit: See Poole on "Ephesians 4:2", See Poole on "Philippians 2:3".

Meekness; gentleness and mildness, receiving one another with an open heart and pleasant countenance: see Galatians 5:13,23 6:1 1 Thessalonians 2:7.

Long-suffering; patience, bearing affronts and outrages, with other vexatious afflictions, without exasperation, abiding sedate after many wrongs offered, Colossians 1:11 Acts 5:41 2 Timothy 2:10 4:2 1 Peter 4:16.

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

Put on therefore,.... As the apostle had argued for the putting off of the members of the body, from their having put off the old man himself; so he now argues from their having put on the new man, to their putting on of his members; that is, to the exercise of the various graces of the Spirit, and the discharge of the several duties of religion; which though they would not be a robe of righteousness, or garments of salvation to them, yet would be very becoming conversation garments, such as would be adorning to themselves, to the doctrine of Christ, and their profession of it, without which they would be naked in their walk, and exposed to shame, , "to be clothed with the Holy Spirit", is a phrase used by the Cabalistic doctors (d); and is indeed a Scripture phrase, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon", clothed Zechariah, 2 Chronicles 24:20 and so Esther is said, by the Jewish writers (e), to be "clothed with the Holy Ghost" Here the metaphor is taken from the putting off of clothes; and what is here directed to, is like Joseph's coat, a coat of many colors. The arguments made use of lie in the characters under which the saints are addressed,

as the elect of God, holy and beloved; that is, "as becomes the elect of God", as the Arabic version renders it; as such who were chosen in Christ from eternity, according to the sovereign will and pleasure of God, and his free grace unto salvation and eternal life; which carries in it a strong argument to enforce the

performance of good works, since men are hereby chosen unto holiness, and good works are what God has foreordained that they should walk in, and especially to mercy, and acts of it; since hereby their salvation appears to be not of man's will and works, but of God, that shows mercy; and such who are the objects of this grace are vessels of mercy. The apostle calls all the members of this church by this name, though every individual of them might not be chosen of God; but because they were all under a visible profession of faith and holiness, and the greater part of them were truly believers, he in a judgment of charity gives them all this appellation, and upon the same foot, the next, "holy"; not by birth, for they were by nature unclean and filthy, conceived in sin, and shaped in iniquity; nor by baptism, which takes away neither original nor actual sin, but leaves men as it finds them, and who ought to be holy before they partake of that; but in Christ imputatively, as he was made of God unto them sanctification; and by him efficaciously, in virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, by which he sanctifies his people; and by his spirit inherently and internally, who is the author of the work of sanctification in the heart; and they were likewise so externally in a professional way, and therefore it highly became them to exercise and practice the following graces and duties, to which they were still more obliged, inasmuch as they were "beloved"; that is, of God, as appeared both from their election and sanctification. God had loved them, and therefore had chosen them in his Son, and had given his Son to die for them, that he might sanctify them; and because of his great love to them, had quickened them when dead in sin, and sanctified them by his spirit: wherefore, since God had so loved them,

they ought to show love again to him, and to one another, and put on bowels of mercies; a sympathizing spirit with saints in distress, weeping with them that weep, suffering with them that suffer, being touched, as their high priest is, with a feeling of their sorrows and weaknesses: it denotes inward pity and compassion to distressed objects, the most tender regard to persons in misery, and such compassion as is free from all hypocrisy and deceit, and therefore is expressed by "bowels"; and what is very large, and reaches to multitudes of objects, and is displayed and exerted various ways, and therefore signified by "mercies". Now such a spirit is a very beautiful one; the apostle begins with the innermost of these garments, adding to it

kindness, which is this inward, tender, unfeigned, and abundant mercy put into act and exercise; this is doing good to all men, especially to the household of

faith, distributing to the necessities of the saints, and a showing mercy with cheerfulness, and is very ornamental to a Christian professor: as is also

humbleness of mind; which lies in the saints entertaining mean thoughts of themselves, looking upon themselves as the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints; as inferior to others in knowledge, experience, gifts, and graces; in esteeming others better than themselves; in ascribing all they have, and are, to the grace of God; in doing works of mercy and righteousness without ostentation, and boasting of them, or depending on them; owning, that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants; and this is a beautiful dress for a believer to appear in: be ye clothed with humility; see 1 Peter 5:5. And of the like nature is

meekness; which shows itself in not envying the gifts and graces, the usefulness and happiness of others, but rejoicing therein; in quietly submitting to the will of God in all adverse dispensations of Providence, and patiently bearing what he is pleased to lay on them; and in enduring all the insults, reproaches, and indignities of men with calmness. This ornament of a meek and quiet, spirit is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Peter 3:4. And what follows is natural to it, and explanative of it,

longsuffering: whereby a person patiently bears the evil words and actions of others, and is not easily provoked to wrath by them, but puts up with injuries, and sits down contented with the ill-usage he meets with.

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

(17) **All in the name of the Lord Jesus.**—Comp. here the more general exhortation of 1Corinthians 10:31, “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” This is the first principle of all godly life. The main object of all life, speculative or practical, is declared to be, not our own happiness or perfection, not the good of our fellow-men, but the “glory of God”—the carrying out of His will, and so manifesting His moral attributes. We are taught that if we “seek this first, all the other things shall be added unto us.” But here we have the principle, not only of godly life, but of Christian life. It does all “in the name of Christ,” that is, as conformed to His image, and so being His representative; it looks up thankfully to God our Father, but it is through Him, “having our sonship by adoption” through His all-sufficient mediation. Its desire is, not only that God may be glorified, but that “He may be

glorified through Jesus Christ” (1Peter 4:11). Once more we trace here the special and emphatic purpose of the Epistle.

Colossians 3:18 to Colossians 4:1 deals with the three great relations of life— between wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters. In this section we have the closest parallelism with the Epistle to the Ephesians (Ephesians 5:22 to Ephesians 6:9). But the treatment of the first relation is far briefer, having nothing to correspond to the grand and characteristic comparison of marriage to the union between Christ and the Church. Even in the second there is somewhat greater brevity and simplicity. The third is dwelt upon with marked coincidence of language, and at least equal emphasis. We can hardly doubt that the presence of Onesimus, the runaway slave, suggested this peculiar emphasis on the right relation between the slave and his master.

[It will only be necessary to note the few points in which this section differs notably from the parallel passage.]

Barnes' Notes on the Bible

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed - Whatever ye say or do - whether relating to temporal affairs or to religion. The command here extends to all that we do.

Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus - Do it all because he requires and commands it, and with a desire to honor him. His authority should be the warrant; his glory the aim of all our actions and words. See the general sentiment here expressed, fully illustrated in the notes at 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Giving thanks to God and the Father by him - Through him; or in his name. All our actions are to be accompanied with thanksgiving; Notes, Philippians 4:6. We are to engage in every duty, not only in the name of Christ, but with thankfulness for strength and reason; for the privilege of acting so that we may honor him; and with a grateful remembrance of the mercy of God that gave us such a Saviour to be an example and guide. He is most likely to do his duty well who goes to it with a heart overflowing with gratitude to God for his mercies, and he who is likely to perform his duties with the most cheerful fidelity, is he who has the deepest sense of the divine goodness in providing a Saviour for his lost and ruined soul; see the notes at 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.

Colossians 3: 12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1. *As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved:* God has chosen His people to be His. He is the One who initiates a calling to His people to come and know him in all His grandeur in all His glory, in all His goodness and gentleness. He not only takes the initiative to us, but He, through the work of the Holy Spirit, convinces us that Jesus really is His Son who came to die on the cross, for not just the sins of the world, but for our iniquities. And because of Christ's work, God can look at His people and pronounce them Holy... not perfect, but Holy... not free from sin or free from making mistakes. But holy in the sense that some day when we are finally with Him, far from this sin filled world, this sin inclined flesh and a sin encouraging enemy, we will be free to finally be that holy child that He, himself called and convinced called so long ago. All of this is simply because what? We are worthy? Self-righteous? More good than our neighbor... no... simply because we are, and always have been-- His beloved... much to our surprise, it's true, the God of the universe loves his people for no other reason than He chooses to. And to know that and to experience that isn't just a great thing to build a life upon, it is life itself.
2. *clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience...* What makes and marks God's people, is the unique unclothing if you will of a natural life dictated by a self-centered, self-consumed, good but so human nature. But something unique happens with the Super natural touch of God on and in the life of a beloved—a touch that alters not only one's nature, but literally breathes new lives into one's heart and soul. Thus, over time, the person of God starts re-clothing themselves; putting on a new attitude, a fresh perspective, a holy outlook, and a great desire to please this One who has wondrously chosen and changed us... a new nature, a complete paradigm shift within... that reflects the new heart that God graciously transplants

within those He chooses to cherish and challenges to change. As Paul points out: Compassion **for** others, kindness **to** others, humility **before** others, and meekness **with** others that permits and sanctions Gods people to patiently and purposely live life **among** others.

3. *Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.* God's people, over time, learn that un-forgiveness, holding grudges, nursing bitter feelings, although seemingly justifiable in some cases, and always a reality in the carnal state... does more to punish and imprison the converted child of God than somehow punishes the perpetrator. The greatest gift from God to His people is the gift of being and extending forgiveness. The example for the child of God is Christ, who stated on the cross, Father... forgive them... Over time, as God works within the life and heart of His people, the man or woman of God seemingly comes to adopt the life mantra; For my sake, for others sake... and especially Christ's sake and sacrifice... I choose to live a life of exemplifying and My Saviors words and actions...
4. *Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.* Of all the characteristics that **every** person deeply longs and searches for, and rightfully expects from God's people, it is a heartfelt, genuine love, expressed not only among themselves but also to and for others. In the deepest recesses of every human heart lies a great hunger, an overwhelming longing to experience a true love, to be accepted and cherished, to be adored and honored. Love of course, is not something that can be conjured up, or developed, it simply exists and exudes. Thus, Love cannot be simply agreed upon, or deliberately exchanged or be lowered to a point of Quid pro quo... it can in reality, only be shared. The message the people of God have to every person who may come into these hallowed halls, is forever the message that "For God so loved, not just the world, but you, my love seeking friend that he gave His Son... for you..." His love awaits you. Our Love will sustain you; this is THE Love you have always desperately desired...
5. *And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.* For the people of God, this peace of Christ... comes slowly with an unfolding and increasing relinquishment of control of one's life into God's hands. God knows the beginning from the end. God's people don't have to understand everything; therefore they don't have to be upset with everything. The peace of Christ is not an absence of troubles

or trials. It is not a life free from concerns or worries. It also is not a delusion obtained by folks that are so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly good. No, God's people simply learn to view things with an eternal perspective... And thus can say with a growing certainty... My life and everything happening in this world are ultimately in the loving Hands of the Almighty God who called me and loves and who protects me, I choose and I allow to let the peace of Christ, my Christ, rule in my heart... And finally,

6. *And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* Lastly as you can see, we as God's people are people of God's Book. It is foundational for wisdom, gratefulness, joy, and perspective. In closing, Paul has pointed out that God's people are chosen, compassionate, forgiving, loving, peaceful and Biblical. This is the "who" we are rededicating ourselves to be and to becoming today. We want people to be drawn by Godly music, but we also want them to be glimpsing God through us, God-loving, Godlike, God known, yes, God's own people.