

Be Focused
May 15, 2011
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Colossians 3:1-17

Opening: Our Superman Suit

Whenever Superman or Spiderman or any of the SUPERHEROES gets ready to fight crime they go into a phone booth or another room and what do they do? They put on their SUPERHERO SUIT. (Example: Lucius in the INCREDIBLES movie..."Woman, where is my super suit?')

When we become a Christian we're given a SUPER HERO SUIT in a sense.

Isaiah 61:10 (New International Version)

10 I delight greatly in the LORD;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

In today's scripture, Paul says we have "taken off" our "old self" and "put on the new self". We exchanged filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) for a suit of the righteousness of Christ.

And it not only gets us into Heaven for all eternity, it allows us to LIVE LIFE, here and now, in ways we could not otherwise live.

Group 1

Colossians 3:1-4

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

- How have we been raised with Christ?
 - Go back to Colossians 2:12 from last week.
 - (KJV) Romans 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
 - Later in verse 3 of this passage: You have died and are Hidden with Christ
- Verses 1 and 2 tell us to FOCUS on things ABOVE.
- What is the difference between set your hearts and set your minds? AND...

- Why do you think Paul used both hearts and minds?
 - Hearts = affections; Mind = will;
 - My thought: We need to keep our heart focused on loving Christ and MAKE UP OUR MINDS to obey Him and strive to BE LIKE HIM.
- What does "things above" mean?

John MacArthur:

As a compass points N (North), the believer's entire disposition should point itself toward the things of heaven. Heavenly thoughts can only come by understanding heavenly realities from Scripture.

Ray Stedman said this passage covers three things:

1. Who you are (RAISED WITH CHRIST)
2. What you were
3. Who you will be

Next... What we were:

Group 2 (The Sin Group...what we shouldn't do)

Colossians 3:5-11

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[a] 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

- What do we mean when we say something is part of our "earthly (human) nature"?
 - No one has to teach us SIN...it's HARD WIRED in thanks to Adam and Eve!
- Why do you think Paul added "impurity, lust, evil desires" instead of just "sexual immorality"? (Hint: Body; Mind; Mouth)
 - One might say: "I've never been sexually immoral." Are you sure?
 - Paul: SEXUAL IMMORALITY is the "umbrella" Let me be more specific
 - Impurity - unclean thoughts; Lust - uncontrolled sexual urges; Evil desires - fantasizing about how to carry out both of those.
 - He also throws in GREED which is IDOLATRY
 - Now to our TEMPER...
- What is the difference between "anger" and "rage"? (Think Crock Pot vs microwave)
 - Anger - Seething resentment towards another
 - Rage - A sudden, heated, outburst of temper that dies down quickly
- What is malice? Slander?

- Malice - You want to intentionally inflict harm on another. I sorrow when you succeed and I celebrate when you fall!
- Slander - Speaking critically of another with the intent to hurt. (Motive)
- He throws in "filthy language"...Obscene or abusive speech.
- What does verse 10 mean by "put on the new self"?
 - Our conduct should match our faith. Everything we do should display Christ in us the "hope of glory."
- Verse 11 talks about the fact that ALL BELIEVERS are EQUAL in God's eyes.
 - No racial barriers - Jew or Greek...One new race: SAVED BY GRACE!
 - No religious barriers - Circumcision or uncircumcised
 - No cultural or social barriers - Barbarians vs Scythians
 - No economic barriers - Slave or free...we would say poor or rich
 - Christ is all and IN all!

Group 3 (The Virtuous Group...what we should do)

Colossians 3:12-13

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

- Discuss the term "clothe yourselves"...how does that metaphor (word picture) do a good job of describing what Paul is saying? Think: How often? When dirty. When worn out.
 - We got our new clothes when we were saved
 - However, Paul used the word (above) RENEW...Ephesians: Put on the whole armor; Romans 12 RENEWING our minds...putting on clean clothes.
 - The world we live in is hard on our "new clothes" but God will make them SPOTLESS and WHITE again as we CONFESS and CONNECT.
- These can be hard qualities to display. This week what are some practical ways you can "clothe yourselves" with them?
- What does it mean to "bear with" someone?
- verse 13: The key to forgiving others is remembering_____.

Group 4

Colossians 3:15-17

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- Verse 15: Christians have differences of opinion. So, how can we still let the "peace of Christ" rule? (the word "rule" here speaks of athletics like a referee or umpire).
 - Two kinds of peace: INTERNAL PEACE and with others (verse 14: "unity").
 - Conflicts within ourselves over what course to take. Which action will bring PEACE in our hearts?

Warren Wiersbe writes:

The peace of God is the "Umpire" in our believing hearts and our churches. When we obey the will of God, we have His peace within, but when we step out of His will (even unintentionally), we lose His peace.

(A caution though...)

We must beware, however, of a false peace in the heart. Jonah deliberately disobeyed God, yet he was able to go to sleep in the hold of a ship in a storm! "I had peace about it!" is not sufficient evidence that we are in the will of God. We must pray, surrender to His will, and seek His guidance in the Scriptures. The peace of heart alone is not always the peace of God.

- Verse 16: What are ways to live out this verse each day?
- Verse 17: How can you use this verse to check yourself before you do something?

Ray Stedman writes:

...At first glance it is hard to tell who are the Christians in this world. They are ordinary looking men and women, boys and girls. But according to the Scriptures, and in actual experience, confirmed again and again in many of our lives, being a Christian means we have an extra dimension to life. There is a hidden resource, an invisible reality, which the world does not have and cannot see... this refers to what Paul has talked about earlier in this letter, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

(Get this!)

This extra dimension is not far removed in the reaches of space; it is right within the heart, an untouchable, invisible dimension within us. This is the glory of the Christian life and the secret of its power, joy and courage. If you have not discovered this yet as a Christian you have not yet begun to live as you can and should. This is what puts a smile on a Christian's face, even though he or she is in trouble.

What's The Takeaway?

- If we focus our HEARTS and MINDS on THINGS ABOVE (Christ) we'll want to LIVE the way he's told us to live.
- In fact, Paul gave us some EXAMPLES of what TO DO and NOT TO DO.
- But, it's HARD to LIVE THAT WAY.
- That's why God gave us a SPIRITUAL SUPER SUIT to not only CLOTHE US IN RIGHTEOUSNESS to get us into Heaven...but to LIVE right here!
- But each day we have to REFOCUS on THINGS above and put on our SUPER SUIT through TIME WITH HIM and HIS WORD.