

The Gospel Lived
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Colossians 3:1-17

We've all seen the laundry detergent commercials where the kids roll around in the mud until their clothes are dirty beyond recognition, but Tide or Gain miraculously gets those clothes spotless! These days they are pushing a product to make your clothes smell even better than new. Sometimes clothes are so filthy and destroyed they're beyond washing; they have to be thrown away or burned.

Ever wonder how the astronauts going to and from the space station do laundry? They don't. *"They wear their underwear, gym clothes and everything else until they can't take the filth and stink anymore, then junk them...them in the trash to burn up in the atmosphere aboard discarded cargo ships." P&G is working to help NASA come up with a way to do laundry in space instead of tossing so many garments.*"ⁱ For now, they throw away their filthy clothes.

Scripture tells us everyone is a sinner in need of a Savior (Rom.3:23.) Our accumulation of sinful behavior is like filthy, nasty, smelly clothes we're wearing. When someone trusts Christ as Savior and Lord, His Holy Spirit makes them a new creation by changing the heart from the inside out (regeneration/new birth.) Only God can do that. He makes us "not guilty" in God's sight (justification.) Only God can do that. As we said last week, God does the saving, but after we're saved there are things for US to DO BECAUSE He has saved us (sanctification.)

Here's the truth that should change us in this passage: We come to Jesus wearing the filthy rags of our sinful behavior. His Spirit living in our hearts will give us the power to "destroy" our filthy rags of sin and "put on" new behavior. That requires keeping our eyes on Heaven and seeking to be more like Jesus.

Colossians 3:1–17 (ESV) — 1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. **3** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

- "You have been raised with Christ" is the picture of the old sinful person dying and the new person being made "alive in Christ." (Rom. 6:6-8) Passive tense.
- "Seek" and "set your minds" shifts to the active tense. Because God saved you, now here are things you need to do, through His power living in you.
- Last week I put it this way: Nothing we DO can make Jesus love us more, but there is MUCH we CAN DO to make US love, trust, and obey HIM MORE!
- Paul said change your focus from the things of this world to things of Heaven.
- "Set your mind," means change your thoughts.

- Emerson wrote, “*Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.*”ⁱⁱ
- What we think about comes out in how we live. Jesus changes our hearts but we still have to change our thoughts and how we focus our mind.
- Ever see an actor in a “bio-pic” movie that imitates the speech and mannerisms of their famous subject so well it’s almost like watching the person they are portraying? We need to study Jesus as intensely.
- The problem is all our lives we’ve learned to study and mimic other sinners.
- **Romans 12:2 (ESV) — 2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- Paul said, if you’re saved you “died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.” The old folks used to pray for the preacher, “*Lord, hide him behind the cross.*” In other words, let them see Jesus and not the preacher.
- The more I focus on Jesus’ character, the more I can begin to look like Him.
- Question: How would you describe Jesus’ character? What is He like? [Good article on this - <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-was-Jesus-like.html>]
- Verse four, one day I’ll “share in His glory - Christ in you the hope of glory.”
- First step to sanctification: Set your mind on Jesus. Next, change things.
- Verses 9 &10 use the expressions “put off” and “put on” i.e. filthy clothes.
- In verse five Paul said don’t just take off your filthy rags of sin; burn ‘em!

5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **6** On account of these the wrath of God is coming. **7** In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. **8** But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. **11** Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

- Paul got specific about the kinds of “sinful rags” we must destroy. I don’t think I need to explain the sinful behavior he listed in verse five.
- Verse six: This behavior attracts God’s “wrath” so get so get rid of it.
- Verse seven: This behavior was the “old you” not who you are “in Christ.”
- The sins in verse five are “gross” immoral behavior to most people (although the lines have been blurred in our day.) Verses eight and nine describe sins we “wink at” as not being “so bad:” anger, rage, malice, slander, dirty language, lying. “*I’m not as bad as those ‘verse five’ people!*”
- Back to setting our mind on Jesus, would He have a rage problem? Would Jesus be malicious toward anyone? Would Jesus tell a dirty joke?
- When my standard of behavior is the humans around me I’m not so bad! Their “clothes” may be filthier than mine! When my standard of behavior is Jesus in scripture, the “clothes” of my behavior look and smell terrible!

- That's what we need to "put off" and destroy. What do we need to put ON?

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

- Wow! Those are some nice, new clothes! Wouldn't you want to hang out with someone like that? Wouldn't you want your kids to marry someone like that? Wouldn't you want your grandkids to grow up to be like that? Wouldn't you want to BE like that yourself?
- Verse 15: Getting rid of sinful behavior and putting on Christ-like behavior results in peace and thankfulness. We are dressed for "spiritual success!"
- Where do I "shop" for these new clothes of Christ-like behavior? How do I know what Christ-like behavior looks like so I can strive to be like Him?

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** 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.

- We set our mind on Jesus by letting scripture "dwell" in us richly. Poor means you have little, rich means a lot. Rich also means valuable. We need to study scripture a lot and access its value by doing what it says.
- Teaching, admonishing, singing, thanksgiving, sounds like a good church.
- Teaching and admonishing in "all wisdom" is biblical teaching. Don't settle for a church that doesn't focus on solid, biblical teaching.
- Verse seventeen is a "yard stick" to measure whether we have put on our "new clothes" of Christ-likeness or if we got the "old clothes" of sin out of the dumpster. "Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus."
- Let's try it. "*I lose my temper and cuss you out in the name of...*" Nope!
- "*I make allowance for your faults in the name of Jesus.*" That works!
- "*I'm kind, humble, and patient in His name.*" Those are "new clothes!"
- "*I forgive you because Jesus forgave me.*" That's what He would do!
- Any other thoughts on destroying our old ways and putting on the new?

So, What's the Takeaway?

- The old song, "I'm a Child of the King" begins with these words:
*Once I was clothed in the rags of my sin
Wretched and poor
Lost and lonely within
But with wondrous compassion
The King of all kings*

*In pity and love
Took me under his wings”
[Here’s the ending]
And I, who was wretched and poor, now can sing
Praise God, Praise God
I’m a child of the King”ⁱⁱⁱ*

- We’ve likely all heard the old saying, “*Jesus loves you as you are but He loves you too much to LEAVE you as you are.*”^{iv}
- Jesus doesn’t say, “*Clean up your filthy self and THEN I’ll save you.*” We come to Him “just as we are” but He won’t leave us in those filthy clothes.
- Salvation comes by trusting in what Jesus has done, NOT anything we do.
- IF we have been “raised” to new life “in Christ” there ARE some things we need to DO:
 - Set our minds on Christ and comparing our behavior to His.
 - Strip off and destroy the old sinful behavior from life “before Christ.
 - Put ON the new behavior of someone “hidden in Christ.”
- Is it hard to live this way? It’s impossible! It can only be done if we have the Holy Spirit of Christ living inside us because He has saved us.
- Will we be tempted to go to the dumpster looking for our “old clothes?”
- We just need to remind ourselves, “*Oh yeah, I gave those to Jesus and He burned ‘em. I have all new “clothes” that make me look more like Him.*”
- This week let’s keep our focus on Jesus and wear our “new clothes.”

ⁱ <https://apnews.com/article/laundry-wash-clothes-space-station-nasa-5a7f2795150f7dce81581cfb82cdd1f7>

ⁱⁱ <https://quotepark.com/quotes/911630-ralph-waldo-emerson-sow-a-thought-and-you-reap-an-action-sow-an-act-a/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=i%27m+a+child+of+the+king+lyrics&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

^{iv} <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/33080-god-loves-you-just-the-way-you-are-but-he>