

“BE YE THANKFUL”

Colossians 3:12-17

INTRODUCTION:

The apostle proceeds to exhort to mutual love and compassion: Put on therefore bowels of mercy, **v. 12**. We must **not only put off anger and wrath** (as **v. 8**), but **we must put on compassion and kindness; not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; not only not do hurt** to any, **but do what good we can** to all.

- I. The argument here used to enforce the exhortation is very affecting: Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved. Observe,
- A. Those who are holy are the elect of God; and those who are the elect of God, and holy, are the beloved of God – and ought to be of all men!
 - B. Those who are the elect of God, holy and beloved, are obligated to conduct themselves in everything as becomes them, and so as not to lose the credit of their holiness, nor the comfort of their being chosen and beloved. It becomes those who are holy towards God to be lowly and loving towards all men. Observe, What we must put on in particular.
 1. **Compassion towards the miserable:** Bowels of mercy, the tenderest mercies. Those who owe so much to mercy ought to be merciful to all who are proper objects of mercy. *“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. **Lk.6:36**”*
 2. **Kindness towards our friends,** and those who love us. A courteous disposition becomes the elect of God; for the design of the gospel is not only to soften the minds of men, but to sweeten them, and to promote friendship among men as well as reconciliation with God.
 3. **Humbleness of mind,** in submission to those above us, and condescension to those below us. There must not only be a humble demeanor, but a humble mind. *“Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,” **Mt. 11:29-**”*
 4. **Meekness towards those who have provoked us,** or been any way injurious to us. We must not be transported into any indecency by our resentment of indignities and neglects: but must prudently bridle our own anger, and patiently bear the anger of others.
 5. **Longsuffering towards those who continue to provoke us.** *“Charity suffereth long, as well as is kind,” - **1 Cor. 13:4.** Love is patient, love is kind {and} is not jealous; love does not brag {and} is not arrogant,*
 - a) Many can bear a short provocation, and then are weary of bearing when it grows long. But we must suffer long both the injuries of men and the rebukes of divine Providence.
 - b) If God is long-suffering to us, **under all our provocation of Him,** we should exercise long-suffering to others in like cases.
 6. Mutual forbearance, in consideration of the infirmities and deficiencies under which we all labor: **Forbearing one another.**
 - a) We all have something which others need to bear with us, and this is a good reason why we should bear with others in what is disagreeable to us.
 - b) We need the same good turn from others which we are bound to show them.
 7. A readiness to forgive injuries: **Forgiving one another,** if any man have a quarrel against any. While we are in this world, where there is so much corruption in our hearts, and so much occasion of difference and contention, quarrels will sometimes happen, even among the elect of God, who are holy and beloved.
 - a) Paul and Barnabas had a sharp contention, which parted them asunder one from the other. **Acts 15:39-** *“And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.”*
 - b) Paul and Peter. **Gal.2:14-** *“But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how {is it that} you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”*
 - c) But it is our duty to forgive one another in such cases; not to bear any grudge, but put up with the affront and pass it by.

- 1) And the reason is: *Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.* The consideration that we are forgiven for so many offences by Christ is a good reason why we should forgive others.
- 2) It is an argument of the divinity of Christ that He had power on earth to forgive sins; and it is a branch of His example, which we are obliged to follow, if we ourselves would be forgiven. *"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."* Mt.6:12

II. IN ORDER TO ALL THIS, WE ARE EXHORTED HERE TO FULFILL SEVERAL THINGS:--

- A. *TO CLOTHE OURSELVES WITH LOVE* (v. 14): *Beyond all these [over all things] things put on love. Let this be the upper garment, the robe, the livery, the mark of our dignity and distinction. Or, Let this be principal and chief, as the whole sum and abstract of the second table. Add to faith virtue, and to brotherly-kindness charity, -2 Pet. 1:5-7.*
1. He lays the **foundation in faith, and the top-stone in charity**, which is the bond of perfectness, the cement and center of all happy society.
 2. Christian unity consists of unanimity and affection! Speaking of **mutual** agreement and **mutual** love.
- B. In order to submit ourselves to the government of the peace of God (v. 15) it requires:
1. To let the peace of God rule in your hearts, that is, God's being at peace with you, and the comfortable sense of His acceptance and favor: or, a disposition to peace among yourselves, a peaceable spirit, that keeps the peace, and makes peace.
 2. This is called the peace of God, because it is of His working in all who are his. The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, Rom.14:17- *"Let this peace rule in your heart-- prevail and govern there, or as an umpire decide all matters of difference among you."*
 3. To which you are called in one body.
 - a) We are called to this peace, to peace with God as our privilege and peace with our brethren as our duty.
 - b) Being united in one body, we are called to be at peace one with another, as the members of the natural body; *"for we are the body of Christ, and members in particular."* 1 Cor.12:27
 - c) To preserve in us this peaceable disposition, we must be thankful.
 - 1) OUR THANKSGIVING TO GOD is such sweet and pleasant work that it will help to make us sweet and pleasant towards all men.
 - 2) *"Instead of envying one another upon account of any particular favours and excellence, be thankful for his mercies, which are common to all of you."*
- C. Ps 50:14-15- *"Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High; 15) Call upon me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor me."*
1. **THANKSGIVING IS THAT aspect of praise that gives thanks to God for what He does for us. Ideally, thanksgiving should spring from a grateful heart; but it is required of all believers, regardless of their initial attitude.** 1 Thes. 5:18>.
 - a) We should be grateful to God for all things <Eph. 5:20- *"always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;"* Col. 3:17- *"Whatever you do in word or deed, {do} all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father,"* but especially for His work of salvation and sanctification. [1 Thes.2:13- *"For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted {it} not {as} the word of men, but {for} what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."*]
 - b) We ought also to thank God in anticipation of His answering our prayers [Phil. 4:6- *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*], knowing that His answers will always be in accord with His perfect will for our lives. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)
- C. To let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, v. 16.
1. The gospel is the word of Christ, which has come to us.

- a) But that is not enough, it must dwell in us, (or keep house in us).
 - 1) The gospel is not like a servant in us [like being under another's control] **but as a master**, who has a right to prescribe to and direct all within the abode!
 - 2) We must take our instructions and directions in guiding our lives from the gospel, as from the master of the household.
 - b) It must dwell in us and always be ready and at hand to us in every thing.
 - c) We must be familiar with it, and know it for our good, **Job 5:27**- "*Behold this; we have investigated it, {and} so it is. Hear it, and know for yourself.*"
2. It must **dwell in us richly**: not only keep house in our hearts, but **keep a good house**.
- a) Many have the word of Christ dwelling in them, but it dwells in them only poorly, and without great desire! [Like someone taught as a child who has abandoned it, there is no longer a mighty force or influence upon them!]
 - b) Then the soul prospers when the word of God dwells in us richly, when we have abundance of it in us, and are full of the scriptures and of the grace of Christ.
 - c) And this in all wisdom. The proper office of wisdom is to apply what we know to ourselves, for our own direction. The word of Christ must dwell in us, not in all notion and speculation, to make us doctors, but in all wisdom, to make us good Christians, and enable us to conduct ourselves in every thing as becomes Wisdom's children.
3. **TO TEACH AND ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER**. This would contribute very much to our furtherance in all grace; for we sharpen ourselves by quickening others, and improve our knowledge by communicating it for their edification. We must admonish one another in psalms and hymns. Observe, Singing of psalms is a gospel ordinance: psalms kai hymns kai odais-- the Psalms of David, and spiritual hymns and odes, collected out of the scripture, and suited to special occasions, instead of their lewd and profane songs in their idolatrous worship. Religious poesy seems countenanced by these expressions and is capable of great edification. But, when we sing psalms, we make no melody unless we sing with grace in our hearts, unless we are suitably affected with what we sing and go along in it with true devotion and understanding. Singing of psalms is a teaching ordinance as well as a praising ordinance; and we are not only to quicken and encourage ourselves, but to teach and admonish one another, mutually excite our affections, and convey instructions.
4. All must be done in the name of Christ (**v. 17**): And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, according to his command and in compliance with his authority, by strength derived from him, with an eye to his glory, and depending upon his merit for the acceptance of what is good and the pardon of what is amiss, Giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Observe,
- a) "*Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.*" –**Eph.5:20**
 - b) The Lord Jesus must be the Mediator of our praises as well as of our prayers. We give thanks to God and the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c) Those who do all things in Christ's name will never **LACK UNDERSTANDING WHY** nor be remiss in our thanksgiving to God, even the Father.