

“Covered with Christ”
Galatians 3:26 – 4:7
(Preached at Trinity, February 10, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul has been setting forth a carefully crafted response to the error of the Judaizers who were teaching that works of the Law must be added to faith in order for a person to be saved. In Paul’s response he defends justification by faith alone as well as putting forth the relationship of the Law to the Gospel?
2. Never does Paul suggest that the Law has no purpose in the Gospel.
 - A. In **Verse 21** Paul declares that the Law is not contrary to the promises of God as if there was some flaw in the Law. But fallen man cannot keep the Law. It condemns us.
 - B. Why then the Law?
Because it makes sin all the more sinful. It serves as a spotless light that shows us the dirtiness of our heart. It makes our desperate condition all the more desperate.
 - C. The Law condemned us and shut us up under the wrath of God until Christ came.
3. Beginning with **Verse 23** Paul directs our full attention to the matter of faith. “Faith” here refers to the fullness of God’s promise fulfilled in Christ; the promise received and trusted and rested upon.
 - A. It implies the powerful work of the Holy Spirit enabling us to embrace Christ by faith. This was impossible under the Law.
Galatians 3:2 NAU - "did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"
 - B. Obviously it doesn’t mean that there was no faith before Christ because Paul has already used the faith of Abraham as an example:
Galatians 3:6-7 NAU - "Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. ⁷ Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."
4. In **Verses 23-25** Paul states the great contrast setting up the familiar “then/now” construction:
Galatians 3:23 NAU - "But before faith came"
Galatians 3:25 NAU - "But now that faith has come"
The coming of the Gospel has changed everything.
5. In the final verses of **Chapter 3** and continuing into **Chapter 4** Paul describes some of the blessings of the Gospel.
He began with the blessing of sonship which we focused on last week.
Galatians 3:26 NAU - "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."
Galatians 4:6 NAU - "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
The redeemed have been made partakers of a relationship with God through adoption.

6. As Paul continues to share the blessings that have come through faith he turns to the infinite blessing of being covered with Christ
This section is warmly Christ centered. The Gospel is Christ centered. For the Christian our life is Christ centered.
- I. Those who are of faith are covered with Christ
- A. The Baptism here refers to water baptism. But our baptism is rich in symbolism. Paul is referring to what baptism represents.
1. As a church ordinance Baptism represents the union of the Christian church – the visible gathering of the saints—this is the essence of **Verse 28 Ephesians 4:4-6 NAU** - "*There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*"
 2. We shouldn't dismiss the connection between the "faith" in **Verse 26** and the word "baptized" in **Verse 27**. Paul has been arguing for justification by faith alone. Baptism is only for those who have been justified.
 3. Most important, and Paul's point here, baptism points to our immersion into Christ. Water Baptism symbolizes our union with Christ
We are buried with Him and raised with Him.
We are cleansed through His perfect righteousness
 4. Paul is not saying that baptism is replacing circumcision in the New Covenant. It would seem strange for Paul to be saying here, "The Judaizers are trying to enslave you to circumcision. What you really need is baptism."
The Gospel is not Christ plus circumcision or Baptism or Church membership or anything else.
 5. Baptism is a visible representation of our union with Christ
Paul describes it as being "baptized" into Christ
βαπτίζω – it means to "immerse" – we are completely covered with Christ.
- B. Paul describes it as wearing Christ as a covering
Galatians 3:27 NAU - "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."
1. The word describes "putting on" a garment
ESV - "have put on Christ."
Acts 12:21 NAU - "On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and *began* delivering an address to them."
 2. Paul used the same expression in **Romans 13**
Romans 13:14 – "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ"
 3. We are to put on Christ, wear Him as a garment. We are to be united with Him, one with Him
- II. There are several implications of this covering
- A. It means we have been united with Christ. We have become one with Him.

1. Our union with Christ is basic to Christianity. Before Christ we were one with Adam. We shared in his sin and condemnation. But now we are one with Christ. We share in His perfect righteousness.
Romans 5:12 NAU - "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned--"
Romans 5:17 NAU - "For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."
Romans 5:19 NAU - "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."
 2. We have been made partakers of Christ. We share in all that He has accomplished. His life is now our life.
- B. To be clothed with Christ is to be a partaker of His death
Romans 6:10 – “For in that he died, he died unto sin once”
1. How did Christ die to sin? Certainly not His own sin—He had no sin
 - a. When Christ came into the world He entered into a new realm. He put Himself into a relationship with the Law – He was made under the Law—He was subject to the Law
 - b. When He died He ended that relationship.
 2. Those who are in Christ participate in this death. Our subjection to sin has ended. Our life under the realm of sin has ended.
 - a. This doesn't mean the law has ended. It remains God's standard of righteousness
 - b. Our relationship to the Law as pedagogue has ended. The Law can no longer condemn us
- C. To be clothed with Christ is to be a partaker of His righteousness
1. God has covered our sin with the righteousness of Christ.
 - a. This is the nature of justification
 - b. When Adam sinned he tried to cover himself to hide his guilt and shame.
Genesis 3:7 NAU - "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings."
 c. God had mercy upon Adam and gave him a covering
Genesis 3:21 NAU - "The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them."
 Only God can provide a proper covering.
 2. How will you cover your sin? Will your own righteousness serve as a covering?
 - a. Do you hope your own efforts will suffice?
Isaiah 64:6 NAS - "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."

- b. Do you hope God will overlook your polluted garment of sin?
 Jesus told a parable of one who had such a foolish hope.
^{NAS} **Matt 22:11** – “But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes, ¹² and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And he was speechless. ¹³ "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”
- c. Christ can be our only covering
 We must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ
Isaiah 61:10 NAU - "I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness"
3. This has a very practical aspect as well. Not only have we been covered with the righteousness of Christ positionally so that our sins can no longer condemn us, it is demonstrated practically in our lives. We will see this in **Chapters 5-6**
- a. Sin has been robbed of its power over us. We are no longer servants to sin.
Romans 6:18 NAU - "and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."
- b. We have been raised with Christ to a new life.
Romans 6:4-5 NAU - "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection"
- c. We are covered with Him.
 When people look upon us they should see the righteousness of Christ. We should bear the likeness of Christ
Romans 13:14 NAU - "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts."
Colossians 3:9-10 NAU - "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, ¹⁰ and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him--"
- d. This is the life Paul described in **Chapter 2**
Galatians 2:20 NAU - "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

4. To be clothed with Christ is to be clothed in righteousness – such righteousness can be found only in Christ.
Galatians 3:27 – “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”
Revelation 19:7-8 – “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”⁸ And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

Luther: “To be appareled with Christ, according to the gospel, is not to be appareled with the law, nor with works, but with an incomparable gift; that is to say, with the remission of sins, righteousness, peace, consolation, joy of spirit, salvation, life, and Christ Himself.”

Conclusion:

1. Have you been clothed with Christ? He must be our only covering if we are to be found spotless on the Day of Judgment.
2. Jesus died that we might have this garment of perfect purity
NAS **Ephesians 5:25** – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; ²⁶ that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.”
3. This purity can only take place by trusting in the righteousness of Christ alone.