

**Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (18):  
"Put on..."**

Last Lord's Day we had entered the second half of Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, which begins with Colossians 3:5. Everything before and up to this verse is chiefly *doctrinal* in content. The Holy Spirit through the apostle was instructing us what we are to believe about our God and our relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. But from verse 5 on until the closing section of the Epistle, God is instructing us how to live as Christians as we are informed by what we have learned regarding Him and us. Everything before us now in our study tends toward what is *practical* rather than doctrinal.

The outline that we find helpful is as follows:

- I. Salutation (1:1-2)
- II. The person and work of Christ (1:3-2:7)
- III. False teaching and its antidote (2:8-3:4)
  1. Christ is all--and all you need (2:8-15) a
  2. Therefore, guard your freedom (2:16-19)
  3. You died with Christ, therefore... (2:20-23)
  4. You rose with Christ, therefore... (3:1-4)
- IV. The Christian Life in Christ (3:5-4:6)
  1. "Put off" (3:5-11)
  2. "Put on" (3:12-17)
  3. "Be subject" (3:18-4:1)
  4. "Watch and Pray" (4:2-6)

Last week we considered what it is that we are to "put off" as Christians (3:5-11). Today we will cover what it is that we are to "put on" as Christians, which is contained in **Colossians 3:12-17**.

**2. "Put on" (3:12-17)**

Let us read these verses.

<sup>12</sup>Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>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.

In this paragraph before us there are a number of *character traits* that should be exemplified by us as Christians, a number of *attitudes* that should be manifest by us as Christians, and there are a number of *actions* that should be performed by us as Christians. Depending on how these many words and phrases are organized, we could say there are at least 11 directives or commands for us in these six verses. The following structure reflects the commands with their supporting or clarifying statements.

- <sup>12</sup>Put on then,  
as God's chosen ones,  
holy  
and beloved,  
(1) compassionate hearts,  
(2) kindness,  
(3) humility,  
(4) meekness,  
(5) and patience,  
(6) <sup>13</sup>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.  
(7) <sup>14</sup>And above all these put on love,  
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.  
(8) <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,  
to which indeed you were called in one body.  
(9) And be thankful.  
(10) <sup>16</sup>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.  
(11) <sup>17</sup>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.

Let us first look at **verse 12**, which reads, ***“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, (1) compassionate hearts, (2) kindness, (3) humility, (4) meekness, and patience,...”*** I take minor issue with the manner in which the translators of the English Standard Translation (ESV) have rendered the first few words: ***“Put on then.”*** They soften the connection of all of these commands with what goes before. For example, we read the opening words of 3:5, ***“Put to death therefore...”*** All of the commands in verse 5 are the result of, or flow from, what went before in verses 1 through 4--because of what Paul wrote in verses 1 through 4, we should therefore do everything that he commands us in verses 5 through 11. But Paul uses the same Greek word (οὖν) in verse 12 that he used in verse 5. But whereas the ESV translated it “therefore” in verse 5, they translate the same Greek word as “then” in verse 12. In doing so they obscure the connection, or the reason for doing these commands. But they should be seen as vitally connected—the reason that we do the commands in verses 12 through 17 is because of what God has done for us in our union with our Savior in His resurrection. And so for context, we can read again verses 1 through 4.

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup>For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

We then can read directly with verse 12, ***“Put on then (or, therefore), as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, (1) compassionate hearts, (2) kindness, (3) humility, (4) meekness, and patience,...”***

Now Paul describes Christians with three very rich terms. We are (a) “God’s chosen ones”; we are (b) “holy”; and we are (c) “beloved.”

a. We are ***God’s chosen ones***. The NKJV reads, “the elect of God.” Our election speaks of God having chosen us in eternity past that we would be the recipients of His grace in salvation. All who are saved from sin throughout human history, are saved because God had individually chosen them in eternity

that He would save them from their sin unto eternal life through His Son. God's election of us was not because He foresaw some good in us or that He knew beforehand of their own "free will" choose Him. Election is the act of God whereby He chooses a people out of fallen humanity to be the recipients of His saving grace.

Here is the biblical doctrine of election stated: *God has chosen certain persons from fallen humanity to be recipients of His salvation, having chosen them before creation in Christ, not based on any foreseen condition or response of them, but solely due to His own good pleasure according to the purpose of His will.* For clarification we might mention several points with respect to this doctrine for

(1) Election follows the understanding of man's total depravity, or total inability to come to God. Left on his own, even after having been instructed, admonished, persuaded, and pleaded with, man would still choose to reject God's rule over him, for he is spiritually dead, both incapable and unwilling to do the things God has commanded him. Man's salvation must originate from outside of himself. It originates in God's election.

(2) There is no indication in the Scriptures of a reason that God chose the ones He chose, passing over the others, other than it was good in His sight and it was in accord with His purpose to glorify Himself in His grace.

(3) Election is unto salvation. Although certainly God's election of some means His passing over others, hence, a doctrine of reprobation, nevertheless, election is always presented positively unto salvation. Persons are not elected to damnation; persons are elected to salvation. *The First Baptist Confession* states the matter well:

We affirm, that as Jesus Christ never intended to give remission of sins and eternal life unto any but His sheep (John 10:15; 17:2; Eph. 5:25,26,27; Rev. 5:9); so these sheep only have their sins washed away in the blood of Christ: The vessels of wrath, as they are none of Christ's sheep, nor ever believe in Him, so they have not the blood of Christ sprinkled upon them, neither are partakers of Him: And therefore have all their sins remaining upon them, and are not saved by Christ from any of them under any consideration whatsoever; but must lie under the intolerable burden of them eternally. The truth of this appears unto us by the light of these Scriptures compared together, Hebrews 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2; Hebrews 3:14; Matthew 7:23; Ephesians 5:6; 2 Timothy 1:9; John 8:24. (First London Confession of Faith with an appendix by Benjamin Cox, 1646.)

(4) To be precise in our speaking of these matters, we should distinguish between the doctrines of election and predestination. Predestination speaks of God's design for the ones He elected. He has predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29), to become His adopted sons (Eph. 1:5), and to be to the praise of His glory (Eph. 1:11).

Now the apostle Paul was declaring in Colossians 3:12 that this great privilege and blessing of being numbered among the elect brings responsibility to us. *"Put on then (or, therefore), as God's chosen ones..."*

Secondly, we read that...

b. We are "**holy.**" *"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy..."*

Most of the time when we speak of being holy, we are speaking of being morally pure and living righteously. But the word actually conveys the idea of being "separated from" or "set apart." We are to be separated from the fallen world in our attitudes and actions; we are to be holy. That is *practical* holiness. But the Scriptures also speak of believers being *positionally* holy before God. Everything that belongs to God is *set apart* by Him for Him. We read in the Old Testament that the tabernacle, the articles of furniture in the tabernacle, the utensils used in the tabernacle, the priests themselves who ministered in the tabernacle, were all sanctified for that purpose. They were set apart for God and His

worship. In the same way God sanctifies every Christian. Each and every believer is one who has been singled out by God from the human race. All who belong to Jesus Christ have been sanctified. We have been separated, set apart, sanctified in the mind of God from all others. We who are in Christ stand in a covenant relationship with God having been chosen and set apart from the world as a unique people. In the mind and purpose of God we are separate (sanctified) from the fallen world and He has glorious and vastly different designs between them and us whom He has not sanctified. We might describe this as *positional* sanctification. We are sanctified in this sense in that we have been singled out and set apart because God has designs for us that are different from all others.

This positional sanctification was a work of grace on our behalf. Our *positional sanctification occurred once for all time* for each of us at the time of salvation, or, perhaps more specifically when Christ Jesus purchased His people on His cross. We were purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ and set apart as the unique people of God. **Hebrews 10:14** reads, “*For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*” This was a work of grace that was accomplished on our behalf apart from us, apart from our work or effort. This was a work of grace that Christ performed on behalf of each of His own. Because God regards us as holy, this brings both privilege and responsibility to us. “*Put on then (or, therefore), as God’s holy ones...*”

Thirdly, Paul described true believers that...

c. We are “*beloved*” of God. Christians are the beloved ones of God. Not all people are beloved of God. Oh yes, God is loving toward all people, in that He does loving things for them and to them. But it is because His very nature is love, not because He loves them as His own. However there is a distinction between His people from all others. He loves His own people with an everlasting love. They are His beloved. God loves His people who are in Jesus Christ with an everlasting covenant love, even the same love that God the Father has for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ (Cf. John 17:26).

We might look at Paul’s words in Romans 9 in which we read of God’s covenantal love for His people.

<sup>22</sup>What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup>and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, <sup>24</sup>even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup>As He says also in Hosea: “I will call them My people, *who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved.*” <sup>26</sup>And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not My people,’ there they shall be called sons of the living God.” (Rom. 9:22-26)

In verses 23 and 24 the apostle wrote of God’s elect as “vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory.” He then described those vessels of mercy as ones that He called, but then he includes these words, “*not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?*” Here Paul begins to relate God’s decree to make vessels of mercy out of more than just those from the Jewish people. He cited Old Testament Scripture to show that it was indeed God’s plan and purpose. The first quotation is from **Hosea 2:23**, which is found in **Romans 9:25**, which reads, “*As indeed He says in Hosea, ‘Those who were not My people I will call “my people,” and her who was not beloved I will call “beloved.”’*” It is clear from Paul’s usage of this verse in this context, “Those who were not My people” is a reference to Gentiles who became believers in Jesus Christ. Paul declared, therefore, that God has designated believing Gentiles as “My people”, in other words, God’s covenantal people. Formerly they had not been “beloved” of God. But the time came that even Gentiles would be “beloved” of God. God loves His people with a love that all others outside of Jesus Christ will never know.

And so, in verse 12, before Paul set forth the commands of God for His people, declared of them, “Christians, you are *God’s chosen ones (elect), God’s holy ones, and God’s beloved ones; therefore, put on “compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,...*”

Let us now consider these commandments by which we are to order our lives.

**(1) Put on compassionate hearts.**

Paul gives the command, “Put on.” He did not express this in a present tense form of the verb, that might be translated, “Be continually putting on” compassionate hearts—just as you put on your clothing every morning so you should clothe yourself with a compassionate heart every morning. Rather, he is saying that we should put these graces on and wear them continually. We should dress ourselves with these qualities as we live in the world in which our Lord has placed us. We should always be characterized by these traits.

“**Put on** compassionate hearts.” In verse 8 Paul had written, “But now you yourselves are to **put off** all these: anger, wrath, malice.” But we are not only to put off of us that which is wrong or negative, we are in its place put on that which is right or positive.

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.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord tells us through the hand of Paul that we Christians should be clothed or characterized as ones with compassionate hearts. This speaks of the deep feeling of concern and desire for the well-being of others. This is not to be only toward those that have this same kind of regard for us, but this should be our general regard for all others, regardless of how they regard us or treat us. We are to have a general benevolence for all people everywhere, desiring their wellbeing before God.

Did not our Lord teach this very thing in his parable of the Good Samaritan? He told of the Samaritan, who was despised of the Jews, nevertheless, when he saw the man who had “fell among thieves, who had stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead”, the Lord said that this Samaritan had compassion when he saw him (Luke 10:33). This word, “compassion”, is the same word that we have here in Colossians 3:12. We are to put on, that is, we are to be characterized as having hearts of compassion for others.

**(2) Put on kindness.**

One might say that this second quality flows from the first. We should not only have compassionate hearts toward people, but it ought to move us to show “kindness” to them. This, too, characterized the Good Samaritan. Our Lord said of him, that he

set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup>On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ (Luke 10:34-35)

John wrote, “But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:17). Similarly, if a man says he has “put on” a “compassionate heart”, but is devoid of “kindness”, his claim is a sham.

**(3) Put on humility,**

One might say that this quality is joined with two that preceded it. To condescend to one in need, commonly requires an act of humility, or humbling oneself in order to help another.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 6 (Fleming H. Revell), p. 763.

Humbleness of mind, in submission to those above us, and condescension to those below us. There must not only be a humbleness of demeanor, but of a mind.<sup>2</sup>

Our Lord Jesus taught us, “Learn of Me for I am meek and lowly of heart” (Matthew 11:29). If he was so, should we not also put on this quality of humility?

**(4) Put on meekness,**

Meekness is when a person denies himself of what he perceives to be his right to expect or demand from another or others. A meek man is one who does not insist on what he thinks that he deserves, but he is resolved to be content with what the Lord has given him or not given him. Actuality, as fallen creatures made in the image of God, we do not possess rights. We forfeited any good that we deserved when we rebelled against our Creator. We have many responsibilities before God and toward people about us, but our rights have been forfeited by us through our sin. Oh yes, we may desire and enjoy liberty and we should value freedom and seek for it and fight for it when necessary, but we should see liberty as an opportunity to fulfil our responsibilities and to enjoy that life that God gives graciously to a people.

We read in James, “Receive with meekness the engrafted Word” (James 1:21). Meekness in this context is a submissive frame of heart to the Word--a willingness to hear the counsels and reproofs of the Word. Proud men, and guilty men, cannot endure to hear of their faults. May we lay aside our pride and stubbornness, receive the Word in meekness.

**(5) Put on patience,...**

Patience is a sense of quiet serenity while waiting either for an end to difficulty or the anticipation of a delayed blessing. A patient man does not feel compelled to insist on having his way. To be patient is to endure difficult circumstances without anxiety or anger. Patience is seen when one is steadfast and unshaken through prolonged difficulty.

This quality would be in contrast to that of impatience. An impatient man is a troubled man. He is angered easily. He is discontent. He will always be complaining. Contentment will be elusive to him, for he will not be happy with what he has and he will not be happy with what he does not have. He will not be easily pleased or satisfied except with perhaps quick sensual pleasure or due to an external stimulant which is short-lived.

Consider the comparison and contrast between the patient man, who is trusting the Lord, and the one who knows only impatience. Here is **Psalm 37:1-11**.

Do not fret because of evildoers,  
Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.  
<sup>2</sup>For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,  
And wither as the green herb.

<sup>3</sup>Trust in the LORD, and do good;  
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.  
<sup>4</sup>Delight yourself also in the LORD,  
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

<sup>5</sup>Commit your way to the LORD,  
Trust also in Him,  
And He shall bring it to pass.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 764.

<sup>6</sup>He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,  
And your justice as the noonday.

<sup>7</sup>Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;  
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,  
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

<sup>8</sup>Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;  
Do not fret—it only causes harm.

<sup>9</sup>For evildoers shall be cut off;  
But those who wait on the LORD,  
They shall inherit the earth.

<sup>10</sup>For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;  
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,  
But it shall be no more.

<sup>11</sup>But the meek shall inherit the earth,  
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

May our Lord help us all to be patient Christians, waiting upon the Lord to do His good will in His good time.

Let us now look at **verse 13**, which is a continuation of the sentence that began in verse 12:

**(6) <sup>13</sup>*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.***

It might appear that, rather than this being one quality that characterizes us, these phrases should be divided up and considered as individual matters, each being a separate command of God. But actually this should be seen as a single word of instruction. We may know this by recognizing that the words “bearing with one another” and “forgiving each other” are linked together.<sup>3</sup> We are to be ones who forbear with one another and are quick to forgive one another. The NKJV renders this better than the ESV, in my opinion: *“bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”*

There is a conditional clause in this sentence: *“if one has a complaint against another.”* You may recall last week that we said that conditional clauses in the Greek language are very precise in their meaning. Depending on the words used and the tense of the verb used, various degrees of certainty are conveyed. A clause that begins in English with the word “if”, depending on which Greek word is used, conveys the likely certainty or uncertainty of the proposition, or whether the statement is likely to be true or not true. Knowing this is helpful in understanding precisely what the apostle was saying. Verse 13 is saying in effect,

*“bearing with one another and forgiving each other, if one has a complaint against another, **which will be commonly be the case**, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

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<sup>3</sup> Both Greek words “forbearing” and “forgiving” are the same verbal forms. They are both present tense, middle voice, nominative case, and masculine participles. Also, in the Greek text they are together linked with the conjunction translated “and” (ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων καὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς), or in English, “bearing with one another and forgiving one another”, just as the New King James Version (NKJV) correctly translates and orders these words. It is unfortunate that the ESV divided these two words from one another by inserting between them the clause that should have followed them both, “if one has a complaint against another.”

Now all of these commands should be understood to be in the context of life for the Christians in their community of Colossae but perhaps primarily in their church. Paul is telling them that they would have to act and react with people with whom they have complaint. This, of course, was true not only with them, but is true to our experience also. We are flawed, fallen people. Yes we are redeemed, and hopefully we are governed by the nature that our Lord has given to us. But the fact is that each of us has issues with others and we will commonly have issues with one another. *“If one has a complaint against another”, and you will commonly have complaints regarding the people around you, but they will have with you also.* You will not live up to my unrealistic expectations. And I will fail to rise to yours. We will all have cause of complaint against one another. This is the condition of fallen men and women in a fallen world, and it is true among the redeemed of the Lord also. But we are commanded to act and react in a different manner than the world in which we live. You are to forbear that one with whom you have a complaint. You are to forgive of that one who has not risen to your expectations.

The standard and example that we are to follow is the way that our Lord has dealt and continues to deal with us in our sin. *“As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”* This is the same instruction that the apostle gave to the church at Ephesus.

<sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

<sup>32</sup>And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, *“forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”* (Eph. 4:31f)

This forbearing and forgiving spirit and activity must be among us or it will not go well for us. The Lord has said, *“So you also must forgive.”* And we have every reason to do so. God has commanded us to do so. He has demonstrated for us that He deals with us in this manner. Would it not be most reasonable that we seek the grace needful from our God so that we may live in this manner?

And it is not as though there is an alternative for us as Christians. This act of forgiving others must characterize us if we hope to receive the fullness of our salvation at the coming of the Lord Jesus. He taught His disciples,

*“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”* (Matt. 6:14f)

Extending forgiveness to others is not an option for us. It is a command of God. We must do so. And the Lord will give us grace to do so as we pray and trust Him to do so. But sometimes it takes great grace, for great offence is sometimes done to us. But nothing that anyone has ever done to anyone of us can rise to the level of what each of us has done to our God. And yet, He has so freely forgiven us, extending His mercy to us that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is what forgiveness is, it is an act or manifestation of mercy toward another.

Let us consider *the nature of mercy*. What is mercy? The quality of mercy can be described in several ways. First, to show mercy is to refrain from harming or punishing someone with whom it is in your power to do harm or punish. It is, therefore, a manifestation of kindness in excess of what may be expected or considered due to one on the basis of fairness or justice. Second, mercy may be seen to be an exhibition of kindness, patience, or compassion extended to the undeserving. Third, to bestow mercy is the sparing of the guilty from impending punishment or bringing to an end the suffering the guilty are presently experiencing. Fourth, the persons that are the objects of mercy are not deserving of it. Mercy must be an act of grace on the part of the greater to the lesser, the lesser having no claims or basis of demand or expectation for mercy to be extended to him.

When we consider the mercy of God as is taught and illustrated in His holy Word, we can see that a twofold distinction should be made with respect to the objects of God’s mercy. *First*, there is God’s *general mercy* that is generally bestowed upon *all of His creatures*, not only to people, whether they are believers or not, but also to the animals that He has created. We read that God’s *“tender mercies are over all His works”* (Psa. 145:9). God is a merciful God toward all that He has made. Our Lord Jesus taught



this of God's mercy when He described the dealings of His Father: *"He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust"* (Matt. 5:45). But **second**, there is the **special mercy** of God that uniquely belongs to His covenant people. God deals in mercy generally with all, but is merciful uniquely and specially to the heirs of salvation. They were chosen by God to be recipients of His mercy.

It is the sole prerogative of God to choose who will be recipients of His mercy. This is what God declared to Moses when Moses requested to see the Lord's goodness. God said,

I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and ***will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.*** (Exo. 33:19)

We see that God's mercy is the manifestation of His sovereign good pleasure. God has the right to extend or withhold His mercy. No one has a claim upon His mercy; God is free to bestow or withhold. The objects of His mercy forfeited any privilege or expectation for themselves of God's favor. But He chose in Himself to have mercy on those He purposed to save.

Now we must extend mercy to others, for God has promised if we do so, He will extend mercy to us. Our Lord Jesus taught His disciples, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7). But if we refuse to extend mercy to others, we will forfeit His mercy; He will not grant us mercy in that day. As James wrote, "So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:12f).

***(7) And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (3:14)***

Love is the grace that beautifies all of these actions that we take in our relations with people about us. It provides us with motivation. It renders our actions as attractive to observers. Love that motivates us and shapes our attitudes and actions commends before others but most importantly before our God. Love is central and essential, without which nothing we do can be acceptable to God.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

We will stop at this point today and resume next time, Lord willing.

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But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet. 5:10f)

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