

1857 - Col 3:1,12 PUTTING-ON the STYLE of CHRIST

PRELIMS. Some of us are old enough to remember a song, ‘Putting On The Style’! I can’t remember the words or even what it was about, but I liked the tune! This sermon is entitled ‘Putting on the Style - of Christ’! Paul **challenges** his readers *If then, you **have been raised with Christ...*** (that’s Paul’s phrase for conversion), then **Put to death....Put on...** [1,5,12]. Paul expected a particular **lifestyle** to follow from those who made a profession of faith in Jesus X!

If we have been so **radically changed**, then it is natural and almost automatic and instinctive, that we will **desire** and attempt to have a new lifestyle! We will live for God instead of living for ourselves (and that must bring changes) – the new goal is: *whatever you do, in word or deed, do **everything** in the name of the Lord Jesus [17]!*

Two things should engage our attention! (1) **Put to death**... all those earthly vices in your life. And (2) **Put ON then, as God’s chosen ones**... all those Xn virtues [12] A Xn lifestyle involves **both!**

Owen= ‘If you are not killing sin, then sin is killing you’! If we do not ‘put to death’ these sins then they will be the death of us! **Fact** is, regeneration/conversion does **not** mean we have no remaining aptitudes to sin! Regeneration does **not eliminate** the **propensity** to sin! We get a new **mind**, a new **heart**, we have a new Master and Lord, but we **still have a corrupt nature**. Listen *For I know that **nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but **not the ability** to carry it out.*** ¹⁹ *For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.* ²¹ *So...I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and **making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.*** ²⁴ *Wretched man that **I am!** Who will deliver me from this body of death?* [Rom 7:18-23]. *Why do **surgeons** sever off a limb with **gangrene!** Because it would eventually **kill us!**

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you [5] - This is **spiritual**, not physical work. Its a **responsibility** God places on Xns. Note, we have to do it! ...**you must put them all away** [8]. You do it with the **grace** that God has given you! **Let not sin therefore reign in your**

mortal bodies...Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness [Rom 6:12,13]

While you **cannot** serve God and Mammon – at the **same time** - it seems you **can** serve them at **different** times! Even Xns! Xns **can** do the **devil's** work for him! God **allows** the devil to use Xns for his own evil ends – **if** they are so ‘backslidden’ that they don’t even **know** - or **care** who they are serving! Eg, **Every** Church split – is the result of **Satan using Xns** for his own ends!

All these sins *sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness* [5] **are found** in believers! Right! True? So are “*anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk...lying to one another* [8,9]! It is the Xn’s duty/responsibility to **stop** these things! We have to **learn** how to control our spirit! *let our people learn to devote themselves to good works* [Tit 3:14] and no better good work than mortifying sin!

APP It’s **not** as difficult as we may think. It has all to do with the **mind**. If we have *put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator* [10] then we should manage! God is **not asking us** to do something impossible! He is asking us to do something which the grace He has given us **can** achieve and will **enable** us to do! The first matter is: Do we have the **conviction** that such things are **wrong** and they really do **grieve** Jesus. Second, Do we believe God’s **grace** is **powerful**?

Paul said a very solemn thing *those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires* [Gal 5:24]. A crucified man gets weaker and weaker – not stronger and stronger! Unless of course you are feeding that passion! **APP** Is your lust getting weaker or stronger? **Feeding a lust** will make it stronger - **starving** it will make it **weaker**!

Paul here **adds** something to **help** us **rely** on God more. He says, ‘You used to live like that – that was your lifestyle **before** you were ‘raised with Christ’ *you too once walked...you were living in them* [7]! But God changed you! God’s power delivered you – look: *God being rich in mercy...even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ* [Eph 2:4]. **APP** Paul does **not**

want Xns to **forget** what they once were. And who it was that saved them – God - by His grace! **Reminding** someone of their ‘bad’ past makes them **humble** - the grace that is needed!

Every person has his/her **own uniqueness** and **identity** – and therefore each believer, in coming to Christ, **creating** a new way of living **without** the **sin** that **characterized** them in the past – that new lifestyle will characterize their new image in the future!

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Xns then, are **putting-on** or **replacing** the old lifestyle with a new one – with Christ’s style! There **are** those who have not as many **obvious** vices as others, but they also have **nothing** of the fruits of the spirit either. Although they do not seem to be ‘big’ sinners, they do not have Xn graces! But Xnity is a **positive** thing. Its **not** what you managed to **stop** but what you are able to **do** by God’s **grace**!

Paul **encourages** his readers by reminding that *as God’s **chosen ones** they were made **holy and beloved** by God. **He** made them different, He set them apart for His special possession. Its not that God had no one better to choose, or they were the best of bad bunch, or they were all that was left! No. God **positively** and deliberately **chose** them when they were still in their sins! *God shows His love for us in that **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us [Rom 5:8].* When they were still vile and annoying Him! He **set** His love on them, not because they were beautiful (for they were **ugly morally**), but just because He decided to! There are 1,000s and 1,000s of people today, who would love to be loved – by anybody!*

Paul says *put on...* **two** categories: (1) **deliberate action** ‘put on’ the following **virtues**! A subtle **change** has occurred in today’s culture. ‘Character’ has been replaced by **personality** – people today, like personality, instead of character, they prefer **style** and **image**. They like what is stunning, attractive, popular, fascinating, The moral virtues which gave people ‘character’, has **now** been **replaced** with values which are grounded, **not** in **moral** worth, but in **image** and **fame**. A celebrity may be distinguished, not because of some achievement, but because of his image (looks good on TV!) **APP** So

Paul is **not** telling us to ‘put on’ what will create the right image for our age, but to ‘put on’ **virtues** which will give us **moral character!** Paul here gives us some:

Attitude to other people Instead of ‘working’ at getting people to **admire us**, we must **show** them *compassion, kindness* We need to **develop** and **work at** loving the unloveable. How else can we fulfil the command of Christ to *love our enemies?* The way we treat them! Do we honour those who cannot ‘pay us back’?

Attitude to ourselves! Instead of secretly admiring ourselves, we must be filled with *humility, meekness*. These two graces prevents us from **thinking too highly** of ourselves. Humility is **not** timidity, but it does see ourselves as the **objects** of God’s **grace** - so there is no room for boasting! Meekness is **submissive**, but it is **not** weakness! Nothing less than Divine power will make a proud man submissive! Moses was meek, but not weak! You won’t convince many Jews that Moses, the man who led Israel out of Egypt and controlled them for 40 years in the desert, was weak!

Attitude to suffering! Some people think that to suffer is to fail! It is something to be ashamed of! Not at all! Just look at Christ and Paul! When **irritated** we must be *patience, bearing with one another... forgiving one another* [12,13] Grace shines in **adversity!** **APP** How do you respond to **trouble**, when things go **against** you? Are you longsuffering? Are you easily **frustrated**? Can you ‘bear with irritations? How do you cope with disappointments? Do you get relief by turning to God and prayer or to **entertainment!** Do you have qualifications for forgiving people? Or do you use Paul’s rule: *forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you?*[13]

But there is something that is **even more important** than all of these virtues! *Above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony* [14]. You see, you **can** perform all of the above **without** love! All these things **can** be done **legalistically!** Out of **duty** instead of **love!** Without love, good deeds are nothing! *So **LET** us ‘put on the style of Christ’! **LET** love **dominate your life and my life - the love of Christ!**