

Session 4: Persistent Pursuit of Godliness

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Preacher: Guest: Terry Wragg

- [0:00] Alright guys, I will share my thanks for all the great food that was provided for us. I hope you had enough sugar in you to counterbalance all the meat that we had.
- It was wonderful. I'll try to do my best to keep our eyes open and get us out of here with something for us to chew on as we go back home and prepare our own hearts even for tomorrow and the Lord's Day.
- So let's go back to our text in Colossians chapter 3, dressing in the clothes of godliness as we've talked about it. This is now the third time we've been here, the first two parts.
- Obviously we learn the kinds of attitudes and the actions that we are to lay aside, no longer wear in our Christian lives. We've been thinking through those as really pieces of clothing, if you will, just picturesque, kind of metaphorically as Paul talks about it here.
- Those things that belong to our old life, the way we used to be, how we were in our Christian lives before, the life we lived before Christ, our life before coming to know Him as our Savior.
- [1:11] And these are all of those acts and attitudes that reflect really worldly thinking, the things of the world around us, how the world operates, how it thinks. And we certainly learned that we have to put those off, lay them aside.
- First of all, that garment of physical pleasure, throw that off, the desire to serve and satisfy myself, to have that self-idolatry going on and working on in our hearts, that sensual desire over and above the desire of others, as we talked about, which is really idolatry at its core.
- So that's the first garment that we said we need to get rid of, and the garment of physical pleasure. And then, of course, we talked about this garment of prideful power, this ability or desire to control others through tearing them down, through tearing them apart, through being angry at them, being wrathful at them, slandering them.
- And really still self-worship, still the reality of worshiping myself, this idolatry of me. But it's a self-worship that's not simply focused on me, but a self-worship that's intent on bringing others down.
- And certainly that's the desire to have power, power over other people, power over my circumstances, what others do. In order that I can gain that, the person is manifesting all of those characteristics that Paul lists there for us in verse 8.
- [2:40] And then the third piece that we talked about in our old life is that garment of personal persuasion. The desire to be seen in ways that really aren't true about us.
- Showing others the real you is what we want to do, and yet there's this desire in our sinful flesh to kind of paint a picture about ourselves that isn't real. It's not true.
- We want others to see us in the light that we're putting in there. So we're putting a facade to others so they see it differently. And it came in the form, as Paul says, in lying.
- Stop lying to one another. Don't do that anymore. That's not who you are. That's your old self. There's no difference now. We're to be habitual truth speakers. We're exhorted to not be lying to one another.

Well, with all of that in our minds and hearts, I want to come to our time now, beginning in verse 12, and the things that we are to be putting on, right? We know what we are to put off.

[3:41] We know what we are to get rid of. So what is it we're to be putting on? That which we should be wearing. The things that we are to actually have as our clothing, our Christian clothing in both attitude and action.

And I want to really just warn us as we kind of jump into this, that these are not easy for us to evaluate ourselves with. Each one of these begins to really meddle in areas of our lives that we're not so easily ready to exercise.

I remember when I was in seminary, Dr. Rick Holland, who was one of my profs during the time, used to say, when you're preaching, sometimes you've got to stand on the people's air hose, you know, and have them gasping for air a little bit.

And that's what these texts do. They're challenging us in those ways. Each one of these garments that we are to throw away focused on self, our own self, they had to do with my desires, what I wanted, the things that were for me.

But these other articles, these are spiritual clothing that have everything to do with others. The Christian life is an others-focused reality. It's not a me-focused.

[5:00] It's not about me, it's about others. It's about what I can do with others, what I can help with others, how I can serve others. And so these are focused on attitudes and actions that have to be an outworking.

So I'm wearing these clothes, and it's an outworking which has others in mind. And so that we can have something to just hang our thoughts on.

I want to list them here under five garments, but I want to warn you just at the beginning, we're not going to cover all these. Jeff's going to have to do this in your men's group or something like that. There's far too much here that we can cover in just this one time.

But I'll list them for us, these five garments, and we'll just talk about the first one because I think it really touches on some critical areas for us. And then the other ones you guys can talk about in this text.

You can pull up Jeff's old messages on this very text from 10 years ago and talk about it. But here they are. Number one is the garment of practical empathy.

[6:05] Practical empathy, and we'll see that in verses 12 and 13. The garment of practical empathy. Then it's the garment of personal love.

Personal love, which is verse 14. And then third, the garment of peaceful arbitration.

Peaceful arbitration, verse 15. Four, the garment of proactive knowledge. Proactive knowledge.

That's verse 16. And then verse 17, the garment of potential service. So you have these five thoughts.

I've just kind of made an outline there through what these verses teach, you know, giving us that idea that this is what we are to put on. Practical empathy, personal love, peaceful arbitration, proactive knowledge, and potential service.

[7:10] So let me just read them, and I'll read from verse 12 through 17 just so we have the whole context in our minds. But like I said, we'll talk just with the first one in our last session this afternoon.

So Paul says, And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

And beyond all of these things, love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you are called in one body, and be thankful.

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

And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God, the Father. Now we've already learned what it is we are to continually be putting off in our Christian lives, and now, here we are in verse 12, and Paul begins to go to the other side in what we are to be putting on.

[8:41] And we know what God has done for us in Christ. We know that we are new creatures in Christ. We know that the old man is dead.

And now we're learning what God expects of us in response to that. Right? Our new righteous identity in Jesus Christ has to have a corresponding reality of righteous behavior.

That's what the Christian life is. God saved us, therefore we live like Christ. That's the way it is. Our outward behavior is the outward revealing of true transformation on the inside.

How do I know you're a Christian? By how you live. It's not by how you speak. Yes, that's part of the outworking of the internal, but you can say a whole lot of things.

But your life is a reflection, and a continual, habitual reflection of that. Always working, always striving. So anyone who claims Christ and doesn't exhibit those behaviors in some way in their lives has to be in doubt as to whether they know Christ.

[9:46] Right? Because no one becomes a Christian on their own. Right? None of us volunteered to be in the family of God. We didn't do that. We didn't volunteer.

Right? We were chosen, as Paul says here, as so, as those who have been chosen of God. Those who have been made holy by God.

Those who are continually enveloped in God's special love, and we are the beloved. This is the reality. This is the basis on which we do this.

We're God's children. He made us different, separated us. We're holy. We're in Christ. Therefore, we are beloved, as he says in chapter 1 of Ephesians 4.

We are adopted as sons into the kingdom of God. That's what Paul is reminding these believers of. First and foremost, this is who you are.

[10:48] This is what it's about. This is why I read in our first session from Ephesians chapter 3, and the amazement that Paul had in his own mind, that he being in his own mind the chief of sinners, that God would use him at all.

He's shocked at that. Here am I, the chief of sinners, and I'm in the family of God. I have this privilege to go and tell others about Christ. This is blowing me away. Well, that's how we ought to think.

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, he says, this is how you ought to live. We might not often think of ourselves in those kinds of ways.

Chosen by God, holy, beloved. You might not identify yourselves like that, but that's who we are. This is what we are in Christ. And so, it's these qualities that each of us who know Christ, we understand that.

It's these qualities that we are able to put on as virtues that are listed here in this verse. These character qualities of those who are the children of God, even though, even though we understand we didn't deserve it.

[11:57] Even though we understand we didn't do anything to gain the divine pleasure of God. He made us holy. He set us apart for His use.

We're not our own. And so, He continually pours out His love upon us. So, this then is who we are. It is what we are and it is why we are.

We are chosen of God. We are holy. That's what we are. And why? Because we're beloved. Right? He loved us. Why are you saved?

Because God loved you. That's the only reason. It's not because you're a lovable person. It's not because I'm a lovable guy. It's not because God saw something in me that was attractive.

No. He just decided to love. And so, that forms the foundation of why we put on these heavenly clothes. That forms our foundation and understanding of who we are.

[13:02] And so, Paul says, first of all, put on what I have labeled for us this garment of practical empathy. Practical empathy. Verses 12 and 13. Now, as we look at this, I want us to focus our attention first on verse 13.

because it has two phrases in that verse, bearing with one or another and forgiving each other. We'll get back to verse 12 before we end, but I want to begin in verse 13 because those two phrases are the outcome of the attitudes that we are to have in verse 12.

Okay? So, just as a footnote as we start, put on is the idea of sinking into it.

Sinking into it. Right? It's a command that indicates that this is something we must do. Something that must engulf us. We need to sink into it.

It cannot be done by others for us. We have to put it on. We have to sink into this. And what does he say? First, we have to bear with one another.

[14:19] We have to bear with one another. Now, if you're like me, you take a look at that piece of clothing hanging in the spiritual closet and you go, I want to get rid of that piece.

I want to throw that one out. I don't like it. I don't like the color of it. I don't like the shape of it. I don't like what it says to me because it's telling me to bear with other people. Lord, I don't even like some people.

Right? I don't even like them. I mean, listen guys, let's be just raw and honest. Just look around the room. Right? Look at some of these guys and you go, yeah, I don't know if I like that guy.

And you know what? He's looking back at you going, you know, I don't know if I like that guy. Right? That's what happens. We have this in us. I mean, bearing with one another is no small accomplishment.

It's not a small thing in our individual families with people we know, let alone with people we don't know. Or people we just know outside of our own bloodline.

[15:26] It's hard to bear with one another in a church. I don't care what size that church is. Right? We look at our neighbors, we look at our people near us, it's hard to bear with that person.

And the word here is endure. Endure. or really hold out, notice, in spite of persecution.

That's the idea. Bearing with one another is holding out in spite of injury. I'm going to stay in it with you in spite of the injury. I'm going to hold out in spite of the complaints you make about me.

And I'm not going to retaliate in the same way. It's hard to do that, particularly when you're being attacked or when someone just rubs you the wrong way.

You know, we like to say, well, they're just not my personality type. That's a bunch of nonsense. That's a bunch of nonsense. No, they are. Yeah, they are. Why? Because they're Christians. There is only one personality.

[16:30] Whose personality? Christ. So they are your personality type. You just don't like them. Right? An old saying years ago said this, to live above the saints we love, oh, that will be glory.

But to live below with the saints we know, well, that's a whole other story. Right? That's the reality of it. Oh, it's going to be glory when we're in heaven because everybody's going to love each other as we ought.

But live down here like that? Give me a break. Right? Bearing with one another and all our own inherent ugliness and all our inherent irritations is part of the garment of practical empathy.

Why? Because we will never endure the difficulties of others until we're empathetic for others. You're never going to endure each other's idiosyncrasies, challenges, rubbings, sharpness, any of those things if you're not empathetic with them.

And notice what he says. We're not only to be bearing with one another, but there's a sister character that seems to be a whole lot easier, doesn't it? We are to be forgiving one another.

[17 : 45] Of course, I'm being facetious. It's not easy at all. Right? Okay, I can bear with you, but to forgive you? That's a whole other deal.

Come on, Paul. Why'd you have to bring that up? Why'd you have to talk about that in the church? Okay, I can bear with them, but I'll do that from a distance.

Right? I don't like the guy. I'll just never go near him. No, you gotta forgive him. Forgive him. Forgive each other. Come on. It's enough for me to have to bear with others, but forgive them?

All right, Jeff stands up here and says to the people here in this church, we gotta be forgiving people, and everybody says, come on, Pastor. Really? If anyone had a right not to forgive, it was Christ, right?

If anyone was a true victim, Christ was. Right? He was totally innocent of any wrong. He never lied. Never treated his family in an unloving way.

[18 : 48] Never spoke a harsh or unkind word. Never broke the law of God. Never had thoughts that were ungodly. When he was tempted by evil, he never gave into it.

Always resisted. Always did what was right. In fact, 1 Peter 2.22 says, He committed no sin nor was any deceit found in his mouth. Hebrews 4.15 He was tempted in every way yet without sin.

So no one was more unworthy of death than Jesus Christ. And even at his trumped up trial by the Jews, Pilate said, I find no guilt in this man.

So if anyone needed to be set free, it was Christ. And yet, he was condemned to die, violently killed, and what ought to really amaze us about all that is through it all, he did not resist, did not, did not fight in any kind of way and in the end said those words, Father, what?

Forgive them. Forgiveness is what filled his heart. It wasn't retaliation, it wasn't revenge, it wasn't bitterness, it wasn't anger, it wasn't malice, it wasn't slander, it wasn't wrath, it wasn't I'll get you attitude, no, it was simply forgiveness.

[20 : 26] Father, forgive them. That's an interesting word, forgiveness, because it doesn't mean that somebody has to come to me before I forgive them.

It means, put it away. Don't hold it against them. Don't bring it up. And some of us might say, well, you know, it's one thing for Christ to be so forgiving, right?

He's God, God in the flesh. He knew it was God's plan for him to die. He had a mission to fulfill. He knew it was going to involve his death, his mission.

He understood all of that from the beginning. Surely, surely God doesn't expect me to suffer wrongs like that, and so easily like that. Well, go over to 1 Peter again.

1 Peter 2. 1 Peter 2.

[21 : 40] 1 Peter 2. Notice what it says in the beginning in verse 13. Submit yourself for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether a king or to one authority, as one authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

So there's the principle of submission to even those who might be evil and wicked for the Lord's sake. Why? Because such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

Act as free men. Do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond slaves of God. So honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

And then, of course, he goes into servants. You servants be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only those who are good and gentle, but also those who are unreasonable.

Why? Because this finds favor. It's for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up unto the sorrows of suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if when you sin and you're harshly treated you endure that with patience?

[22 : 52] But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. Why? Why? Why is that the practice? Because, verse 21, you've been called for this purpose.

Since Christ also suffered for you leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps. He committed no sin nor was any deceit found in his mouth and while being reviled he didn't revile in return.

While suffering he uttered no threats. But notice how he accomplished all that. Notice how it was carried through. He did that by keeping and trusting himself to the one who judges righteously.

Does that shock you? Here is Christ going to the cross facing the most heinous of death accomplishing all of that according to the will of God by the power of God entrusting himself to God.

and he bore our sins on his body or in his body on the cross that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

[24 : 07] You see this is why it can be accomplished. This is why you and I can forgive. The principle of forgiveness was a feature of Christ's life and message from the very beginning.

He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Well that seeking and that saving of that which was lost wouldn't happen if he wasn't forgiving. So how can I be motivated to forgive even when the cost upon me is so significant?

How can I forgive someone who has treated me so heinously? We'll go for a moment to Luke chapter 7.

Luke chapter 7 because this is an illustration of how we can get to the place where it really doesn't matter what happens to us.

We will forgive. Luke chapter 7 and verse 36. One of the Pharisees was requesting Jesus to dine with him.

[25 : 23] And he entered the house of a Pharisee and he reclined with him at the table. And behold there was a woman in the city who was a sinner. And when she learned that Jesus was there reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house she brought an alabaster vial of perfume and standing behind him at his feet weeping she began to wet his feet with her tears and kept weeping or wiping them with the hair of her head and kissing his feet and anointing them with perfume.

Now when the Pharisee who invited him saw this he said to himself well if this man were a prophet then he would know who this is what sort of person this woman is who's touching him.

She's a sinner. Jesus answers and says to him Simon I have something to say to you. And he said okay say it teacher.

Well a certain money lender had two debtors one owed 500 denarii the other 50. And when they were unable to repay he graciously forgave them both.

Which of them therefore will love him more? And Simon answered and said well I suppose the one who he forgave more. And he said to him you've judged correctly.

[26 : 42] And turning to the woman he said to Simon the Pharisee do you see this woman? I entered your house and you gave me no water for my feet but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

You gave me no kiss but she since the time I came in has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil but she anointed my feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you her sins which are many have been forgiven.

Why? Because she loved much. But he who is forgiven little loves little. Now what's the point? What's the point Jesus is making?

Well he's certainly not saying that she was more of a sinner than Simon or that Simon was less of a sinner than her. He was saying listen Simon the problem with you is your perspective about your sin.

You don't think it takes much for you to be right with God. You don't think it takes much of God's forgiveness to actually make you right. You think it's little and so in reference to me and your relationship with God you don't want me and so you saw nothing in me and so you think you know it doesn't take much for you to be righteous.

[28 : 04] And yet here's this other person whom you compare to yourself who is just like you yet with different sins and she knows her sin and she knows that she needs my forgiveness. And she comes and loves me and lives in honor of me and she's forgiven.

It's proof in her heart. But you? You love so little you didn't even think you needed to be forgiven a little bit. You see let me ask us a question.

How much have you been forgiven? How much have you been forgiven by God? What did it take for God to forgive you?

You see did it take a little bit of forgiveness? forgiveness? Did it take just a small amount by God on your behalf to bring you into his kingdom? Was it only just a few small things that needed to be straightened out in your life and God sanded those sharp edges off that you're now acceptable to God?

Is that what it was? Just a little sin? Small amount that God forgives in your life each and every day? You see here's the point if that's how we see ourself then you'll have a very hard time forgiving others who sin against you.

[29 : 41] If you think that it's little that God forgave you you'll have a hard time forgiving others so there's another diagnostic test for us. If I have a hard time forgiving somebody else who sins against me in ways that in comparison to how I've sinned against Christ that I have a hard time forgiving that then that tells me that I think it didn't take much for God to forgive me.

But if you see yourself as God sees you if you see yourself like that street prostitute here in Luke chapter 7 who saw herself as the one who needed cleansing that saw herself that was great before God that her sin was huge it was that large debt then you'll love others like that.

You'll love others and it'll be easy for you to give the small sins against you. Right? Forgiveness doesn't come naturally.

Right? Because we're constantly being ruled by our own feelings. Well I just don't feel like doing it. Our feelings love to stay bitter. Our feelings love to hold on to that prideful place where we want to justify ourselves.

Forgiveness doesn't grow in that kind of soil. Forgiveness is squelched by resentment. When resentment's allowed to linger forgiveness won't come.

[31 : 22] And the reason we so often refuse to forgive is simply because we love to hate. I know we don't think of it like that but that's the reality of it. Right? Because if we love Christ if we love much we'll forgive much.

But the reality is we just love to hate. We really don't believe that it took all that much forgiveness on God's part to save me. And so when somebody does something against me I go I can't I don't know.

I just can't forgive. Don't feel like it. They haven't come to me. They haven't done what I think they ought to do. They haven't paid their pound of flesh. I haven't gotten that out of them.

I haven't seen them grovel enough. But notice back in Colossians chapter three. Notice what he says.

He says we're to be bearing with one another and forgiving each other. Whoever has a complaint against anyone. How? Just as the Lord forgave you.

[32 : 26] Just as the Lord forgave you so also should you. Forgiveness. Forgive whoever and whatever the complaint. How many of us were shocked when Erica Kirk stood up in front of people and said I forgive the guy who shot my husband.

Are you shocked at that? Pretty shocking isn't it? How many of us thought though well those are just words. Do you know if they were just words?

You don't know. She said it. Now what are we all expecting? Live it. Live it. If you're going to say it.

Live it. I'm hoping it's true of her heart. I thought wow that's a huge thing to say. I hope it's true. I pray it's true.

Because that's the heart. Right? That's the heart of Christ. She's not saying hey listen he doesn't have to have consequences for the reality of his actions according to the law. But she's saying I'm not going to hold it against him.

[33 : 38] I'm not going to hold it against him and be bitter in my heart. See this is the problem with most interpersonal problems in our world. It's an unwillingness to forgive.

I just don't want to forgive you. It's not an inability to forgive. Some people say I just can't forgive them. They claim to know Christ.

They claim to have a relationship with God. Claim to be a Christian and yet they say I can't I just can't find it in myself to forgive. Well that's not an inability to forgive. That's an unwillingness to forgive.

That's someone who's saying I don't think it took much for God to forgive me. I was pretty close to righteousness. It didn't really take God. You know in fact Christ could have just cut his finger and shed a little blood and that would have paid enough.

No. That's just retaining the venomous poison of hatred. Bitterness. Even though forgiveness is commanded possible through Christ.

[34 : 46] If we do that the church is going to be hindered and even destroyed in the process. Why? Because forgiveness is part of the garment of practical empathy. We need to let it sink down on us.

We need to sink down in it like a comfortable blanket that we sit in on a cold winter's night. let it wrap around us and be part of our very being.

And it's possible but it's possible only when we put on what is there in verse 12. Notice what it says. So as those who have been chosen of God holy and beloved put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

number one, a heartfelt compassion. Put on heart of compassion. It's one of my favorite words in the original language because it's so guttural.

The word is *splachna*. That's the original Greek word. *Splachna*, I love that word. You know what it means? It means your guts, your bowels. It's the very inside of you.

[35 : 59] It's the part of you that feels things, your internal organs. To the New Testament writers, it was the word to describe the place where our emotions were. This is the centrifuge of your emotions. This heartfelt compassion. You look at someone, and you know that in their sinfulness, even against you, they have a relational problem with God, and you are crushed by that. It's not the sin they've done to you. It's that your heartfelt compassion desires to reach out to them in such a way to help them in their relationship with the Lord, not you. Because if they're treating you sinfully, you know there's a problem in their relationship with the Lord. It's this internal thing, this empathetic mercy toward others.

That has to be undergirding my bearing with and my forgiving each other. You see some now of why I said it's these attitudes and character qualities that fuel that.

It's these things in verse 12 that fuel our bearing with and our forgiving of each other. Because forgiving one another is because of the mercy there will be with no forgiveness if I don't share mercy. They're going to face some struggles and difficulties, and how can I care about them and say I love them as a brother or sister in Christ, or even someone in the world who doesn't know Christ.

Without tender mercy, we'll never endure each other. So these are the inner lining, if you will, of the jacket of put on that we do.

These are the inner linings of it. That outworking of bearing with one another and forgiving each other, that's an outworking, but the heart of compassion is part of this inner lining that we have.

[37 : 57] This tender, heartfelt compassion. And then notice he says, secondly, kindness. Kindness. I remember when my kids were small in our home and they'd interact with one another in a sibling rivalry of some kind.

My wife would always ask them, now how are you supposed to treat your brother or sister? And inevitably they would say, kindly. Kindly. Kindly. And we say, okay, yeah, we understand it, but what's that look like in practice?

What does kindness look like in practice? Well, kindness is closely related to compassion. Right? Because of heartfelt compassion and because of what that sees and feels, it's the outworking to kindly respond to them.

Right? Notice, go to Mark 1 for a moment. Mark chapter 1.

Jesus is, of course, His ministry has started. In verse 29, He goes to the synagogue, comes out of the synagogue, goes to Andrew's house.

[39 : 12] Simon's mother-in-law is there. She's lying with the fever. Immediately He speaks, spoke to Him about it. He comes to her, raises her up. She begins to minister to them. And when evening had come, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were sick, those who were demon-possessed.

The whole city was gathered at the door. He's healing those of various diseases, casting out demons. He's not permitting demons to speak because He knew who He was. And early in the morning, while it's still dark, He rises and goes to a lonely place.

He's praying. Simon and his companions are looking for Him. They find Him and said, Everyone's looking for you. And He says, Let's go to other towns. I have to preach the gospel. Goes to other towns.

And He gets to Galilee. And He's preaching and casting. In verse 39, casting out demons. And a leper came to Him, searching, or beseeching Him, and falling on His knees before Him, saying, If you're willing, can you make me clean?

And what's it say in verse 41? And moved with compassion. Moved with compassion, He stretches out His hands, and He touches Him and says to Him, I'm willing.

[40 : 18] Be cleansed. This is heartfelt compassion linked with kindness. I'm willing. Be cleansed. Jesus is both tender and He's relieving.

He's relieving the trouble this guy is in. The Pharisees would never have touched this man. They would never have gotten near this man. They were afraid of being defiled by this man.

His sin would affect them. But Christ, totally different. Christ demonstrates His compassion by touching the man, healing the man. Heartfelt.

Heartfelt compassion. According to Romans 2.4, it says, It is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance. It's the heartfelt compassion of God.

The outworking of that in His heart of kindness. Without kindness, there will be no enduring of one another. No forgiveness. We will not bear with one another.

[41 : 20] We will not forgive each other. Why? Because the exercise of both is founded in the exercise of compassion and kindness.

Somebody who doesn't want to forgive is somebody I can be rest assured to say about their character. They're not kind and they're not compassionate. The third inner lining is humility.

Seems to only get easier, doesn't it? Humility has always had a negative connotation in the world. Oh, anybody who's humble, they're weak. They're a weak person.

Someone unwilling, afraid to stand up for themselves. They're humble people. And yet, it's one of the greatest words to describe Christ. Philippians 2.8, He humbled Himself by becoming a man.

He's not talking about cringing or cowering or even thinking poorly about Himself. No. What Christ showed and what He taught, all of it through His entire earthly ministry, was the necessity for the absence of self-exaltation.

[42 : 32] That's what humility is. The Bible says, get rid of any arrogant pride and see yourselves rightly before God and in comparison to God.

That's how you're humbled. Who am I before a holy God? That will keep you in the right place. Compare yourself to a holy God. Don't compare yourself to everybody else. So heartfelt compassion says, I'm thinking of others first.

Kindness says, I'm thinking of others first. Humility says, I'm thinking of myself last. Right? Which is others first. All of these are others focused.

The humble person makes no claim on their own rights. That's what it says in Philippians 2. Right? Christ did not regard what?

Equality with God, something to be grasped, something to be held on to. He made no claim to His right before God the Father about His own status, but instead He relinquished Himself.

[43 : 44] We'll never forgive. We'll never put up with others if we're not practicing humility. So Paul says, as those who have been chosen by God holy and beloved, you need to put on that heart.

Put on that heart of compassion for others. Put on that kindness for others. Let it flow out of an understanding of who you are before a holy God.

Let that humble you. And fourth, he says, in gentleness. In gentleness. Some of your translations might say meekness.

Meekness. It's like humility in that gentleness is a willingness to suffer injury instead of inflicting injury.

Gentleness is a willingness to take on and absorb whatever it is somebody's inflicting upon me. In other words, it's really a recognition that as I survey my surroundings, as I look at the people around me, the church that I'm in, those that God has placed upon my sphere of influence and interaction.

[44 : 49] I personally know that I'm a sinner amongst other sinners. I know that. And because of that, I'm willing to suffer the pains of other sins against me. In other words, I'm no better than anybody else.

This is really what Paul was saying in the renewal reality in verses 10 and 11. We're all the same. There's no one any better than anybody else.

The Greeks and Jews, there's no better thing in that racial dynamic. There's no better thing in the circumcised or uncircumcised dynamic. So you Jews are no better than the Gentiles by way of your religious desires.

There's no cultural difference that should cause anything between us. There's no barbarian or Scythian. There's no slave and free men. That's social difference. So what? So you have an economical life that's different than my economic life.

It doesn't really matter. As I survey the life around me, I, just like everybody else, so gentleness then is that understanding that you have the fleshly power to respond in ways that you should not respond, but you have it under control.

[46 : 01] You could retaliate when someone sins against you, but you don't. You could do it, but you say, I'm not gonna. I'm not gonna do it. So Paul says, this is where, how we get to the place where we bear with one another and forgive each other.

We have a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and then, of course, the easiest one of all. Patience. Right?

Inside of the garment of empathy is this quality of patience. I love what some translations use because I think it's a better word, long-suffering. Long-suffering.

I like that word. Because it really does. It encapsulates the meaning of patience, doesn't it? Patience is the ability to suffer long in the face of sin.

to just say, it's okay. I can forgive you. Paul said to the Thessalonian believers, 1 Thessalonians 5.14, we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.

[47 : 19] Be patient. Have that willingness to suffer long. Oh, how we would end so many a conflict in our homes, so many a conflict in the church if we would just exercise long-suffering.

Ah, that would just dissipate. It would go away. We would just love each other, forgive each other, be like Christ. You know what?

All of these character qualities were worn perfectly by our Savior. All of them. Perfectly. And when we wear the garment of putting on Christ-likeness, when we're doing that, we're dressing in godliness.

That's what this whole time's been about for us, guys. It's really been about putting on Christ. Enveloping yourself in Christ. Seek Christ, be with Christ, long for Christ, desire Christ, in your brothers' lives.

Pursue it in your own heart. Dress in that godliness. Put on that garment of practical empathy and do it just as the Lord has done it for you.

[48:37] Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that wonderful? We come in here thinking we don't know what we can do. How do we do this? And here's God lays out for us clearly.

Here's how you do it. Here's how you do it. You get in the gym. You start working out. You start getting rid of those things that entangle you and start getting rid of all those things that cause you to be stirred up, cause you to be entangled and tripped up.

You get rid of all of that and you have your mind focused on these things. And you look at others this way and you begin to live like that. You begin to live like your Savior. You do that you'll be like Christ.

People look here and go there's some godly men in that church. There's some godly men. They're not looking at your giving records. They're not looking at how many times you attend church.

They're looking at your life. And they're saying there's a godly church. That's why Paul says after that in verse 14 and beyond all these things love.

[49:37] Why? Because love's the glue that holds all that together. Right? It's the outworking of love. All of this is enveloped in this reality of love. You love one another and that unifies. So even though we're all different even though we come from different places even though we all have different gifts through that love there's this unity.

So there's unity in our diversity. See I stole it again. When all that happens the peace of Christ rules in your heart.

And you can be thankful even when you're attacked. Even when you're challenged. Even when it's difficult. You can be thankful.

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you. Let all that wisdom teaching and admonishing go into one another's lives. You are worshipping together. You're in each other's lives with thankfulness in your hearts and whatever you do you do it all in the name of Lord Jesus Christ.

And you give thanks to Him through God who makes it all happen. Everybody's eclipsed. Everybody's eclipsed by Jesus Christ. Nobody's above anybody else.

[50:52] We're all serving Christ because we put on that garment. That's wonderful. It's been great for us to just study this together and to think about these things.

Challenge our heart. Great for us to look at this stuff and then begin to think okay how do I put that into practice in my own personal life and the ones I'm engaged with and the ones I deal with and my wife at home my kids at home the guys I interact with even in this room.

How do I put that into practice? I can be more like Christ. We do that God will be honored through it all. And the church will be a strong place.

A strong place. People will desire to come to want to be someone some will say we're out of here. Why? Because you guys are just too serious. Too serious about truth.

What else do we have? This is all we have. Where are we going to go? Like the words of Peter. Where are we going to go? Lord you have the words of life. So this is where we stay. Well guys let me just say thank you for having me.

[52:03] Thank you for our time together. Thank you for the privilege it's been just to serve you and to be in the word together. I already feel like there's a bond between us and I'll be praying for you even as I travel back.

I would ask that you can covet your prayers as I travel back. My wife and I travel back. Hopefully we're flying back. We'd like to. We have some other things that we need to get to so Lord willing on Monday when we do we won't have any major hiccups.

So pray for that. Let's bow in a word of prayer. We'll close our time. Father we do thank you for how you have loved us. You have been so sweet to even bring us together.

Your care for our souls is so rich. so enriching that we could have these exhortations in our mind and our heart to be like your son Jesus Christ our savior.

Thank you for the spirit's power in us to be able to do what you have asked of us. Lord I pray that it would be a solidifying reality in this church that these men as they knit their hearts together as they serve you individually that that would build a strong bond of unity in this place.

[53 : 22] That as they are faithfully shepherded by the men who lead them that those men would show them an example of what this looks like even in their own lives as they live it out.

And that they would be encouraged by what they see what they hear and how each one here is embracing these truths in their own heart. Lord strengthen this place for your glory.

Strengthen each one of us as we interact with your providential plan and circumstances that you give us in life. Help us to be a godly influence. May we indeed pursue godliness as the number one pursuit of our life that we might be like you.

And we'll thank you in all of glory and to eternity because you have loved us first. For it is in Christ's name that we pray. Amen. Amen.