

Love: The Wardrobe  
(Colossians 3:12-17)  
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Read Colossian 3:12-17 NRSV and Pray.

<sup>12</sup>As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. <sup>13</sup>Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup>Above all, clothe yourselves with 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 the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs 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.

### **Love, the Wardrobe**

During Advent, we watched, waited, sang with joy, prepared for the arrival of the Savior. We listened to the stories of Advent as the Great Big Book of Christmas was opened to us. We experienced the arrival of the Baby in the manger and we have received the Gift that Jesus Christ gave us: New Clothes.

The text today has important words for us just as we are in the process of preparing for the New Year. We've celebrated the New Year of the Church during Advent, awaited the arrival of the Savior, and now Christmas Day has come and gone. What do we do now? Do we act as though Christmas is over for another year. Do we go about putting away our Merry Christmases as quickly as we put away our decorations? Doesn't life march on after Christmas. Most of you will go back to work tomorrow. Some of you will go home today and pack up the Christmas decorations and put away the nativity sets, take the tree to the recycling center.

By next Sunday, the church will again look ordinary as we put away the Chrismon Tree, the poinsettias, the candles, and Advent wreath. We will probably return to the ordinary Green paraments of the time between Christmas and Lent.

But we do not have to rush it just yet. We have the luxury today of remaining in Christmastide. This is the First Sunday of Christmas. We can continue to celebrate the birth of our Savior as we move into the New Year. As the narrator of the film clip that we viewed earlier said, "The baby is still the Savior. And the Savior is the Gift that is held out."<sup>1</sup> Life does have away of creeping into our celebrations but we do not have to end our worship of the Savior.

But now that Christmas Day has come and gone, what is left for us? Were we not transformed by gift of God to us? The challenge is now upon receiving the gift of love from God through Jesus Christ is act as we are transformed. The writer of Colossians tells us as he wrote the Colossians many years ago that we are to "clothe [y]ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience."

In other words, we are to make LOVE our Wardrobe. We are to envelope ourselves in the luxurious fabric of God's Love so that everyone we encounter will be able to experience God through us. So, how do you like your New Clothes so far?

The writer uses the ordinary metaphor of clothing to help us to understand that our transformation is complete. In the writer's day, new converts wore new white robes symbolizing their new life in Christ.<sup>2</sup> That each day we wake up to our JESUS LOVE WARDROBE and pull out a garment of compassion, forgiveness, peace, humility, or patience. Each of these garments gives us opportunities to minister to others. By putting others first we are giving back to Jesus Christ. Our gift from God is love, and our gift to God is showing love to others.

The first third of the chapter is dedicated to ridding oneself of sin. The second third, which we are looking at today, gives us instruction for Holy living, as the beloved children of God. The last part of the chapter deals with specific household relationships.

As we look at verses 12-17, the writer gives two kinds of instructions. The first instruction is to put on the virtues of Christ as we would put on a coat or jacket. The second set of instructions is to study the words of Christ, to sing spiritual songs, and praise God – In other words – Take care of your Clothes!

The list of virtues sounds familiar; it is almost identical to listing of the Fruits of the Spirit found in Galatians. When we live our lives in the example of Christ, we are equipped with the gifts of charity, humility, peace, and mercy. Note: I said equipped. Not all of these are all of our natural traits. Our gift back to the Christ Child is that we share these gifts with others wherever we go.

“Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” (Verses 13-14)

Love binds everything together. Love brings a song to our lips, a song of praise for God. Love can take the most ordinary of things, people, and places and turn them into sacred. Love binds everything together. Love gives us the grace to bear one another and to forgive, living in peace with one another.

Ever notice that little tag in your clothes? Not the one that indicates the size! You know the tag that instructs us on the care and cleaning of our garment? You have to do certain things to insure a long life for your clothes, and the same for your Spiritual clothes.

Verses 15-17 are the “Care and Cleaning Tag for our New Clothes. “ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 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.”

Those are pretty simple instructions. Live in peace, give thanks. Study the Word, allowing the Word to soak in. Share your spiritual stories with others, sing praises to God. Wear your New Clothes and tell everybody who gave you this New Wardrobe of Love. Coco Chanel, famous clothing designer, once reportedly said, “Adornment is never anything except a reflection of the heart.”<sup>3</sup>

All dressed up and where do I go? What are the ways that we are going to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience? In Metropolitan Marietta, we certainly have opportunities for wearing our Christian wardrobes. We can take Christ with us into our schools, workplaces, and community.

Over the past year, we have found ways to wear Christ's love through our outreach into the community with Lighthouse Academy, day camps, youth activities, the Kenyan Fellowship, and our Great Day of Service. We have commissioned missionaries from our church to go to

Honduras, Cuba, Kenya, Appalachian Mountains, and the Mississippi Gulf coast. We are challenged each week to stock the Pastor's Pantry so we are ready when the community comes to us with their needs. Through the support of this church, schoolchildren from Marietta to Kenya have experienced God's love, grace, and mercy. Where will our New Clothes take us next year?<sup>4</sup>

We have the wardrobe of Love, now we have to get out of the house and show it off. That's what you do with your new clothes, right? You wear them so folks can see them. Our job is to go out in our community clothed in Love and share God's Love with others. In case you don't remember anything else today, remember that in order to have true Love as your wardrobe, which gives JOY, the order is JESUS, OTHERS, and YOU. J-O-Y!

#### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Film Clip shown prior to sermon. Christmas Really Happened.

[http://www.shiftworship.com/category/minimovie/item/christmas-really-happened/?utm\\_source=streamsend&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=7673901&utm\\_campaign=New%20Christmas%20Mini%20Movie](http://www.shiftworship.com/category/minimovie/item/christmas-really-happened/?utm_source=streamsend&utm_medium=email&utm_content=7673901&utm_campaign=New%20Christmas%20Mini%20Movie)

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Shearman, John. **United Church of Canada**. <http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-ch01-js.php>

The heart of Christian worship and ethics, wrote Paul (or Timothy or other student of Paul), is to create loving relationships - with God, with other people, and with God's creation. To make his point more vividly, Paul introduces a metaphor about putting on new clothes. In the early church newly baptized Christians were dressed in new, white robes as a symbol of the new life Christ had given them. Another metaphor of the indwelling Christ brings out the spiritual growth that comes from worshiping and witnessing within the Christian fellowship.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.quote garden.com/clothing.html>

<sup>4</sup> Allusion to series of books called The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Anne Brashares. Four high school friends share a pair of pants which miraculously fits all of them – with varying heights, and body shapes. As each girl gets her turn wearing the pants, she discovers insights about herself, and is inspired to make necessary changes.

Brashares, Anne. The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, Book 1. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2003.