

## SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – 19<sup>th</sup> after Trinity

### Colossians 3:12-17 – Put On Christ

#### INTRODUCTION:

*A man was visiting a club, on his way in the cloakroom attendant said to him: 'Please leave your hat here sir'. 'But I don't have a hat' the man replied. 'Then I'm sorry sir', the attendant responded, 'but you cannot come in. I have strict orders that no one is to enter the club unless they leave their hat in the cloakroom'*

Two weeks ago Tony Woode spoke to us on the first part of Colossians 3 (v1-11), which begin with these words:

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. (v1)*

In this opening section Paul gives us two lists of bad fruit, or evil clothing, which originate from our earthly nature

- *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. (v5)*
- *Rid yourselves of anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. And do not lie to each other (v8)*

Paul then encourages us to 'take off this old self', our old clothes, and put on the new self, our new clothes – which is what we will focus on today.

In 2004 the BBC run the successful series 'What You Wear Can Change Your Life', hosted by Trinny & Susannah. In 2020 they are returning to the theme with a new series 'You Are What You Wear' hosted by Ryan Clark-Neal. Both series use the simple idea that the clothes we wear reflect who we are.

#### 1. What You Wear Can Change Your Life:

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves** with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with each other and forgive one another (Colossian 3v12-13)*

This list is the clothes which Paul states should characterise God's chosen people. A people who are holy and dearly loved by God:

- We should be compassionate, just as Jesus was compassionate.
- We are to be kind, humble, gentle and patient like Jesus.

*Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart (Matthew 11:28-29)*

- We should forgive others as the Lord forgave us.
- And we should love others as the Lord loves us.

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another (John 13:34)*

These characteristics are the clothes of the transformed Christian life that Paul longs to see. Elsewhere, in Galatians 5v22-23, Paul makes a similar point using the idea of the ‘Fruit of the Spirit’ to characterise the outward appearance of the Christian’s life. Compare them and you will see that the lists are quite similar!

## **2. You Are What You Wear:**

Back to our image of clothes. Think about the two lists; the one from 2 weeks ago, and this week’s list. Which is most typical of your life? Which set of clothes so you usually wear?

- The clothes of the old evil self: *sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language and lies ...*
- The clothes of the new holy self: *compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness*

I suspect you opted for the second list, after all we are wearing our ‘Sunday best’ today aren’t we. But what about tomorrow, Tuesday, Wednesday etc ... What clothes will we wear then? When people look at us who/what will they see?

## **3. Living In Christ:**

The power, or ability, to live the Christian life comes from outside of us rather than from within. It comes from our union with Christ.

- His death to sin was our death to sin.
- His rising to life was our rising to life.

We are not what we were before, we are being made into something completely new. Therefore we are to clothe ourselves with Christ – to put on the clothes of Christ like living.

It takes courage to be different, to wear clothes that for most people look strange and unfashionable. In our society most people choose to conform with the norm. But as Christians we are called to be different:

- To be red if everyone else is blue.
- To be square if everyone else is round.
- To be holy if everyone else is evil.
- To be an obvious Christian if everyone else is not.

Colossians 3, tells us that we are what we wear – so what are you wearing?

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves** with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and love.*

### **Questions For Reflection:**

Do you agree with the idea that the clothes we wear, the image people see of us, reflects who we are inside?

Read Colossians 3:1-14 again:

- What does this passage tell us about God? Jesus? People?
- What does this passage tell us about our Christian life?
- What warnings are contained within these verses?
- What encouragements are contained within these verses?

As suggested compare the list of 'clothes' in Colossians 3:12 with the list of 'fruit' in Galatians 5:22-23.

- What are the similarities, and what are the differences?

What is God saying to you through this passage? And ...

What are you going to do about it during the next week?

### **Prayer:**

Father God, in Christ you have redeemed us and received us into your holy family. May we learn to clothe ourselves daily in the image of Christ; with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and love.

That the world might know that we belong to you. Amen.