

It's my intention for the next several weeks to take a short break from our exposition of Job, and consider a more topical study on the theme of Putting on Christ. This phrase comes from Romans 13:14, and so this morning I want to merely introduce this text, coming to its particulars in the weeks that follow.

But first, let me suggest Romans 13:14 is one of the great summary verses of the Bible. There are some verses that summarize a large part of the Bible. For example, John 3:16 summarizes God's redemption; Romans 8:28 summarizes God's providence; and Romans 13:14 summarizes God's gracious sanctification.

- I. Its Setting
- II. Its Meaning
- III. Its Applications

- I. Its Setting

1. Here I want to rather briefly remind you of the context of our verse—let me start with its broader and then more immediate setting.
2. (1) Its broader setting—most of us are aware the book of Romans has two broad parts—chapters 1-11 are largely doctrinal and chapters 12-16 are largely practical.
3. This division is seen in 12:1—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."
4. In light of all that's he's said in the previous 11 chapters, the only reasonable response is that of sacrificial service.
5. Thus, it's very important to remember, that Romans 13:14 presupposes all that's said in the previous chapters.
6. We have to be careful not to preach individual texts, without some effort to keep them in their broader context.
7. (2) Its immediate setting—here I am especially thinking of vv8-13 where provides general and specific instruction.
8. (a) General instruction—within vv8-10 Paul exhorts his readers to love another and so fulfill the law.
9. He doesn't merely tell them to love one another, but he also informs them how true and Christian love looks.
10. V8—"for he who loves another has fulfilled the law" v10—"therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."
11. (b) Specific instruction—here I am thinking of vv11-13—"And do this (love one another according to the law), knowing the time."
12. Knowing that—"our salvation is nearer than when we first believed"—that is, Christ who brings salvation.
13. V12—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand"—that is, you are no longer in darkness but now in light.
14. Darkness and light are figurative ways to describe their former and present lives—they were in darkness but now light.
15. V12—"Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light"—because we are no longer in darkness, let us no longer live as if we were, and because we are in light, let us live as sons of light.

16. V13—"Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy."
17. Thus, the imagery of walking in v13, is teaching the same truth as the imagery of casting off and putting on in v12.
18. Now, v14 is a continuation of v13—"Let us walk properly, as in the day"—now, if you notice, he says nothing more about walking properly as in the day.
19. He then says—"not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ."
20. Thus, we have three closely related commands: v12 cast off and put on, v13 walk properly not wickedly, v14 put on Christ and make no provision of the flesh.
21. In other words—putting on Christ (v14) is closely related to putting on the armor of light (v12) and walking properly, as in the day (v13).
22. Furthermore—making no provision for the flesh (v14) is closely related to casting off the works of darkness (v12) and walking in wickedness (v13).
23. Thus, v14 is both a summary statement as well as a clarification of the previous verses—it summarizes and clarifies what's come before.

II. Its Meaning

1. If you notice, our text has two basic parts—"put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh."
2. (1) Put on the Lord Jesus Christ—to "put on" is to "cloth"—we are to put on Christ or cloth ourselves with Him.
3. Now, before I attempt to suggest what this phrase means, let me remind you of the broad nature of this text.
4. Whatever it means to put on Christ or cloth ourselves with Christ, it's a broad and multifaceted activity.
5. In fact, I want to suggest, that putting on Christ is shorthand for the entirety of the Christian life—it's a summary of sanctification.
6. To put it very plainly, to put on Christ is to make use of Christ by faith, in all that He is and has for us.
7. 1Cor.1:30—"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."
8. Because we are in Christ by faith, He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.
9. We are to put Christ on in all of these capacities—as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.
10. But there's one additional text that uses similar language, that sheds light on the meaning Romans 13:14.
11. Gal.3:26-27—"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
12. Notice, sinners are made sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus"—faith and faith alone unites us to Christ.
13. But then notice, those who have been united to Christ by faith, should be publicly aligned to Christ by baptism.
14. Thus, water baptism is the outward expression of an inward reality—it's the public sign of inward grace.
15. But the last thing I want you to notice is, Paul equates two things in v27—"as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

16. In other words, to be in Christ and to put on Christ are similar if not identical concepts—they are synonymous.
17. Every person who's in Christ by faith has put on Christ by faith—to put on Christ is to be in union with Christ.
18. Now, remember, Paul describes this as something that's happened—he describes it as a past fact for all.
19. There's one final thing I must say about Gal.3:27—we have all put on Christ (past tense) in two ways.
20. We have put Him on in our justification, as we've put on His perfect righteousness in God's heavenly courtroom.
21. But we've also put Him on in our regeneration (sanctification), as we've been renewed in the image of Christ.
22. Every Christian has put on the righteousness of Christ (justification), and the character of Christ (regeneration).
23. Thus, what's happened to us once in our conversion, needs to happen to us daily in our sanctification.
24. Now, obviously, I need to clarify that statement—but at present I merely want you to keep in mind the principle.
25. Thus, when Paul exhorts saints to put on Christ, he fundamentally means three things—Christians put on Christ by way of reckoning, obtaining, and imitating.
26. (a) Reckoning—to reckon is to calculate or consider—it refers to a conscious recognition of what we are in Christ.
27. Rom.6:11—"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."
28. Paul isn't telling them to become dead to sin and alive to God, but they are to reckon themselves as dead to sin and alive to God.
29. They are to consider, contemplate, and reflect on, all that this entails as an irreversible and unchanging fact.
30. And so too, to put on Christ, is to reckon ourselves righteous, forgiven, accepted, and delivered, in Christ.
31. Thus, putting on Christ in this sense is very similar to baptism: How many times should we be baptized?
32. Only once! And yet, we must improve upon our baptism daily; we must remind ourselves of what was symbolized in our baptism.
33. And, what was symbolized in our baptism! That we have put on Christ (in our justification and sanctification).
34. (b) Obtaining—by this I mean, to put on Christ is to avail yourself of all the resources you have in Him.
35. We put Him on as protection from our enemies; as strength for our weakness; as guidance for our journey.
36. MLJ—"Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ means we must deliberately partake of Him. We put on the Lord Jesus Christ when we rely on Him. like the soldier putting on his armor. We put on Christ when we look to Him for strength and power. We put on Christ when we hide ourselves in Him as our refuge."
37. (c) Imitating—by this I mean, to put on Christ is to put on His character—to walk the way He walked.
38. When Paul exhorts us to Put on the Lord Jesus Christ" he means, to put on the character of our Savior.

39. Col.3:12—"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering" v14—"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."
40. Here graces, virtues, or character traits, are described as garments that Christians are to daily put on.
41. And so too, we are to daily put on Christ by way of imitation—we are to adorn our souls with His likeness.
42. Now, what I want to do at this point is—provide three testimonies that largely underscore what I've said.
43. Philip Melancthon—"To put on Christ signifies not merely imitation, as if he said to put on the ornament of Christ and imitate His virtues. It means more, namely, to apprehend Christ by faith and to believe that because of Him the Father is favorable toward us."
44. Calvin—"To put on Christ is to put on His virtues and graces, to put on or be endued with His spirit, to imitate His conduct and to copy His example. This is in addition to the putting Him on as our righteousness, and not as a substitute for it. Both are necessary: for Christ is our sanctification, the author, worker, and example of it, as well as our righteousness."
45. John Gill—"To put on Christ is not only to exercise faith on Him as the Lord our righteousness, and to make a profession of His name, but to imitate Him in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; to walk as He walked, and as we have Him for an example, in love, meekness, patience, humility, and holiness."
46. Now, I want to say one last thing about the first command—notice Paul says we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.
47. The NT Scriptures often refer to Him as the Lord, the Lord Jesus, Jesus Christ, or oftentimes merely Christ.
48. Thus, Scripture never puts these three together without reason—we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.
49. The title Lord refers to His deity, whereas the name Jesus refers to humanity, and to the fact He's our Savior.
50. The title Christ refers to His office as the Anointed One—the Mediator—the Prophet, Priest, and King.
51. It's as if, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is laid at our feet, and we the people of God, are to put Him on.
52. All that He is and has as Lord Jesus Christ, is to robe our needy souls—a righteousness to justify us, grace to sanctify and protect us, motivation to encourage us, and a perfect example to guide and direct us.
53. (2) Make no provision for the flesh—"and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts"—I want to explain this statement by examining its three primary parts.
54. (a) The flesh—many of you know, Scripture uses the word flesh in two ways: human nature and fallen human nature.
55. 1Pet.4:1—"Christ suffered for us in the flesh"—that is, He suffered for us in human flesh or human nature.
56. But that's not how Paul uses it in Rom.13:14; here it refers to that remaining principle of evil within us.
57. First, the flesh remains in every Christian—though it does not reign in Christians, it nevertheless remains.
58. Rom.8:8-9—"So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh"—though Christians are not in the flesh, the flesh remains in them.
59. To be "in the flesh" is to be "all flesh," whereas to have the flesh "in us," means we are partially flesh.

60. Second, the flesh remains evil in every Christian. Rom.7:18—"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells"—there's is nothing good in our flesh.
61. There remains in every Christian a principle of fallen depravity, that is only and always evil and corrupt.
62. (b) Make no provision—the Greek word rendered provision literally means "to give forethought" or "prior consideration."
63. For example, if our pantry was empty, my wife would make a grocery list of the things needed to fill it.
64. She would then go to the store to purchase the food, bring it home, and restock the pantry; she would make provision.
65. This is why most translations have simply rendered the word provision—"do not make provision for the flesh."
66. That is, do not fill your soul with things your flesh likes; or, put another way, we must starve the flesh.
67. (c) To fulfill its lusts—the word "lusts" means "desires"—it here refers to the sinful desires of the flesh.
68. Gal.5:16—"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh"—the sinful cravings of the flesh.
69. Gal.5:17—"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."
70. Here we learn the flesh lusts against the Holy Spirit—this means, they have competing or opposite desires.
71. The Spirit desires our holiness, whereas the flesh desires sin—these two are "contrary to one another."
72. Thus, we are not to fulfill or satisfy the desires of the flesh, by refusing to make provision for the flesh.

III. Its Applications

1. In the time that's remaining, I simply want to suggest three broad applications from this brief exposition.
2. (1) Sanctification involves work—that is, putting of Christ and making no provision are Christian duties.
3. At times I fear the obvious gets overlooked—thus, I want to remind you Romans 13:14 is a command.
4. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ"—it's not a suggestion or an option—you and I are commanded to put on Christ.
5. Furthermore, we are also and equally commanded to make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its desires.
6. Sanctification (which refers to the process of being made holy or conformed into the image of Christ), is both a privilege and duty.
7. As a privilege it is something God has promised to do in us, and as a duty it is something we must do.
8. Lev.20:7-8—"Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy. I am the LORD who sanctifies you"—you must sanctify yourselves and yet, only God can sanctify us.
9. Thus, I want to very briefly remind you of two common errors with regards to our work in sanctification.
10. (a) Activism—by this I refer to the mindset that works, works, works, but with little if any understanding.

11. (b) Passivism—by this I refer to the mindset that merely waits on God, without putting forth any effort at all.
12. Michael Riccardi—"We are not able to wave our hands and make the land sprout fruit and vegetables. That is God's work. And yet nobody would suggest that a responsible farmer should simply sit back and wait for his land to magically yield crops as a result of divine permission. No, God has ordained to bring forth the produce of the earth by *means* of the farmer's labors. In the same way, we cannot change our own hearts to make ourselves more holy; sanctification is a supernatural, sovereign work of the Spirit of God. But God has ordained that the Spirit accomplish this glorious work through *means*."
13. (2) Sanctification implies provision—that is, whatever God commands His people, He also provides for His people.
14. God is not like Pharaoh, who if you remember, commanded the Hebrews to make bricks without straw.
15. No, when God commands us to do something, with the command He provides the grace to fulfill that command.
16. And this is implied in the order of these two commands—"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."
17. The only way we make no provision for the flesh is by putting on Christ—we need Him to become Christians and live as Christians (Christians need Christ too).
18. The Christian life begins with putting on Christ, continues with putting on Christ, and ends with putting on Christ.
19. (3) Sanctification includes opposition—we are not only to put on Christ, but we are also to starve the flesh.
20. All sanctification takes place against great opposition—the flesh opposes every effort of ours to live holy.
21. Yes, there's the world—it too opposes us; and then there's Satan—he too opposes us; but the flesh is our great enemy, for all the other two can do is encourage us to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.
22. The flesh is always with us—when we sleep, work, attend worship services, the flesh is always present.
23. Thus, in closing, I want to answer the question, why? Why does God leave the flesh in His beloved people?
24. Have you ever thought of that? Obviously, God could have removed the flesh in our conversion and perfected every believer.
25. (a) To keep us humble—nothing keeps us little in our own eyes like the ongoing presence of the flesh.
26. There are two things that humble us: our past and our flesh—"O wretched man that I am (not was)" "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief (not was)."
27. (b) To keep us watchful—because this world is a dangerous place, the flesh reminds us to be alert and vigilant.
28. Because our flesh never sleeps nor can we—we must sleep with one eye open—we must remain watchful.
29. (c) To keep us hopeful—the presence of the flesh keeps us from becoming overly comfortable in this world.
30. Our remaining corruption reminds us this is not our ultimate and final home; it breeds anticipation in us.
31. There's coming a time when the flesh shall be no more; when we won't have to starve and oppose the flesh.
32. But that times isn't now—now it's time to fight—now it's time for war—but a time of peace and rest is coming.