

“⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰ And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: ¹¹ Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all. ¹² Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye. ¹⁴ And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” (Col 3:9-14)

I. Review.

- A. If you are a Christian, then there is conflict in you. Being a Christian does not mean that your struggle with sin is over; rather, your war with sin could not begin until you became a Christian.
- B. There may be the kind of struggle the pagans described, as conflict between the body and the mind, for the unsaved can know that kind of struggle. The desires of the body very often lead the ungodly into fleshly sins that cause them embarrassment and anguish. There is no desire for virtue, only the desire for the reputation of virtue, and the rewards that virtue brings.
- C. But these things changed when you became a Christian. If you are a child of God, there is something in you that desires your heavenly father--the Holy Spirit has put something of heaven in you. That something is the restored image of God, the "Spirit of Adoption" which recognizes God as its father, and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. A new principle of life has been implanted within you. This new seed, new life, new nature,--call it what you will--is from God. And God is Holy. As his child, you are made a partaker of his holiness. That in you is holy and perfect--a new tree has sprung up in your life.
- D. This means that the struggle with sin has just begun, because the old nature that you inherited from Adam is not eradicated or up-rooted. It continues to be at enmity with God. It continues to strive against the truth. This conflict is described in Galatians 5:14-26. Note several things:
 1. The fruit is peculiar to its own nature. This is what Jesus said. "A good tree...." The old tree--the natural man, the flesh--can only bring forth one kind of fruit, and it will always be evil.
 2. But those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh: this is the key. There is only one way to overcome the works of the flesh, and that is by faith: faith in Jesus Christ. "Have crucified..." You have accepted God's verdict concerning your flesh, and the conflict has begun. Faith is the first manifestation of the new nature. But having begun to live in the Spirit, we are called also to walk in the Spirit .
 3. Ephesians 3:14-19. This is the key to walking in the Spirit: Strengthened by might in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; knowing the love of Christ, rooted and grounded in love. This is the new tree taking root in your life; this is the walk of the Christian.
 4. So if you are a Christian there is a war in your soul; there is conflict; there is no doubt as to the end result of this conflict, for you have been predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. But there may be a great deal of struggle and anguish along the road to that predestined end.
 5. The Lord knows his sheep. We do not know. We do not know what is going on in the hearts of people. I do not know what conflict rages in your soul. But the Lord knows, and He also knows whether or not there is His work in

your soul. But that is what I am trying to connect with this morning; for the preaching of the word does two things:

- a) It calls forth life out of deadness: regeneration. It brings life where there was no life. The preaching of the Gospel is to them that perish foolishness, but to us which are saved it is the power of God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.
- b) It connects with the new life that has been called forth. The Lord's sheep hear his voice. They follow him. I pray that both things will be done this morning: that there will be life where there was no life; and that where there is life, there may be life more abundant.

II. Let us look at the Text:

- A. Paul has spoken of the necessity of putting off the old man. It is interesting what Paul says: he does not say only to put off the deeds of the old man, but the old man himself. Everything that belongs to Adam is contrary to Christ. Pride of race, pride of face, pride of strength, pride of intellect, pride of virtue, pride of education, pride of ---- you will in the blank. Paul said he had more to glory in than any man. But he counted it all dung to win Christ. The first victory that the cross brings is victory of the lie that you can do anything to save yourself. Lies characterize the old man. He and his deeds are to be put off. Do not lie to each other, to yourself, or to God. He doesn't lie to you; and you are not to lie to Him or to one another.
- B. vs. 10,11: All then that is left is Christ. What is this we are doing: removing the image of Adam; being renewed in the image of Christ. Christ is all. Nothing else matters. What is the pride, the illusion that you and I cling to, but that there is something in ourselves that needs to be preserved? We hold to it with all our strength. Christ is all. There is nothing else. If he died for us, then we are all dead. We must no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who loved us and died for us. If you are a Christian there is something in you that responds to what I say, when I speak of Christ. But because you are also a sinner, there is something that rebels, and tries to cling more firmly to the illusion and dream.
- C. It is not enough to put off the old man: you can commit suicide and do this. You can hate yourself; you can afflict the flesh; you can lose yourself in drunkenness or in drugs. You can humiliate yourself and your body with ten thousand mortifications: This will not save your soul, or sanctify the soul. You continue in Christ the same way you came to him: "AS YOU HAVE RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, SO WALK YE IN HIM: COL. 2:6
- D. We are to put on the new man, which is Christ. You can only do this if you have been risen with Christ. You cannot put on Christ if you are not in Christ. You cannot live as a Christian until you have been born as a Christian; but having this life in you from Christ, you are called to put off the old and put on the new.
- E. This is proof of your election. "As the elect of God." As those "risen with Christ." Description of the elect: "Holy and Beloved." This must be, for God is love and God is holy: He is separate from sin; and cannot look at sin: the Cross teaches this also.
 1. Treatment of others
 - a) mercy at a deep level: bowels of mercy. An inner yearning. Not just outward behavior.
 - b) kindness: desire for other's good
 2. View of himself: Humility Humility: take the lowest station; No rights to assert. To really become a servant, as Christ did. He took the form of a servant: he really became a servant.
 3. How you react to the way others treat you.

- a) meekness: toward men; not God is the message here. Quiet submission
 - b) longsuffering: Response in the face of provocation. Resolute refusal to retaliate: to get even. "I'll show you."
4. Forbearing: All the quarrels that sprung up from among them come from one root: pride, and the contentiousness from pride. The great desire to be right, which comes from the competitiveness of the flesh; not from the new man.
 5. Forgiving: This is the exercise of grace: extending forgiveness to those who do not deserve it. The idea of the deserving of forgiveness, and earning it stems from Pelagianism and is rooted in the old man, and historically goes back to the horrid doctrine of penance in the old Roman Church. You had somehow to prove your worthiness. Certain confession of crimes against the church is necessary for restoration to the fellowship of the church, but this must not be extended beyond reason

Literally: "forgiving yourselves" but not as individuals; as the body of Christ. I forgive you; you forgive me; the body forgives itself; because it is connected to Christ; and Christ freely forgives our sins. You cannot hold a grudge and honestly confess "I believe in the forgiveness of sins!"

- F. The bond of perfectness. This is what makes everything else work. Without love, they are simply moral virtues, and are dead works.
 1. Above all these things: before all things: this is the better way of I Cor. 13. All things flow to us from the love of God; All good things flow from us to our fellow Christian from love. Without love, we do not image God. The flesh can be puffed up with a false sense of its "rightness" its pride of holiness; its self-righteousness. Without love, all these things profit nothing.
 2. Love does not take the place of perfectness, as if some emotion could satisfy for holiness--Love does not make me righteous; but love is the way I can attain the good life on this earth--this is the way to live at peace with the people of God and the people of the world. Our life will be in order, when we have learned to love one another, as Christ loved us.
 - a) We do not teach justification by faith, because we believe that obedience to God's law is imperfect and not righteousness, or that faith is a higher righteousness than obeying the law. NO NO NO NO. God cannot deny himself, and if he says that we can live by obeying his law, then that is exactly what he means.
 - b) BUT: we have not kept the law; and no flesh will, because we are cursed in Adam. You and I are born under the curse and guilty before God, and already condemned even before we drew breath, or had a conscious thought. Therefore that way is shut off to us. But we can attain perfect righteousness another way: by coming to Jesus Christ, and receiving perfect righteousness from Him. This is the only way you and I can be saved.
 - c) But it is by faith, not by love. Love is not a higher way than faith. Love is the way of faith. We are saved by a faith that works by love. Or faith that is working love. "bond" as the ligaments hold the body together; so love is that which hold the parts of the church together.
 3. The perfection that you boast in, and hope to attain by your return to Jewish ordinances, or to human commandments, ceremonies, and regulations can come only one way: by faith that works by love.

4. The example and root of this love is Jesus Christ himself. He didn't stay in heaven and say,
--"When they get the regulations I gave Moses down, then I will come and dwell with them. I will remain aloof from them, for I wouldn't want to be thought of as condoning their behavior."
--"When they have learned to keep the law, then I will come and be with them. I cannot be thought of as putting up with transgressions of the law."
--"When they have shown themselves worthy, then I will be with them. They must show that they are sorry for what they have done, or I won't have anything to do with them, ever. They must be taught a good lesson."
5. Do not defend your bad behavior by the example of Christ, unless you are as good as He was; as Wise as He was; as righteous as He was. He did not compromise any of these things by coming to the earth and living among us and doing good to all men, and neither will you. Don't pretend otherwise.

Amen and Amen May God bless you.