

perfect unity. Imagine having more items than you could carry in two hands; I found myself in that situation about a week ago. Finally, I improvised by taking off my jacket and carrying the items in my jacket to the cashier. As my jacket was a blessing to the things I was carrying, so love UNITES and ENLIVENS our **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness!**

- a. Love is based on US, not others – We don't love because people deserve it; instead, ***we love because God first loved us*** – and we have received that love in Jesus Christ!
- b. Love is action – “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.” (1 John 3:18 ESV)

Conclusion / Application: It's normal for us to desire to fit-in with others, BUT GOD WANTS US TO STAND OUT – *like a city set on a hill*. He wants us to be SALT and LIGHT until He takes us home to heaven!

Let's apply this sermon:

- Remember – In Christ we are *chosen, holy, and dearly loved!*
- Each day – ***from the inside out*** – let us show *compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience!*
- Having been fully forgiven, *let us fully forgive others!*
- Being greatly loved, *let us greatly love others!*

And all God's people said: *Amen!*

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“Having Received the Christ of Christmas → We Are Different!”

Based on Colossians 3:12-14



1st Sunday after Christmas – 2009
Sunday, December 27 → 10:00

Introduction: **Happy Holidays** – *that includes your continuing celebration of the birth of Christ AND your upcoming celebration of the New Year!*

Dear friends in Christ, doesn't the reception of something HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT make a HUGE DIFFERENCE in a person's life? Here are some examples:

- From poverty → to inheriting a million dollars! (*Try to imagine the quick, significant, and outward changes that would take place!*)
- From having a terminal illness → to receiving a miraculous cure! (*Try to imagine the celebration, the thankfulness, and the appreciation – of each new day!*)

A similar, yet MUCH GREATER DIFFERENCE should be evident in the lives of all who have received *the Christ of Christmas as their Savior!* We now turn to Colossians 3:12 →

1. **Let's Realize Who and What We are in Christ:**
¹² **Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved...**

- a. Who – God's chosen people! God "chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight." (Eph. 1:1 NIV)
- b. What – holy and dearly loved! God "has now reconciled you in [Jesus] fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach..." (Col. 1:1 NAS)

Now, **having received the Christ of Christmas**, God our Father – through Paul – tells us *how to be different*:

2. **Let's Put on the Clothing of God's Holy Children:**
...clothe yourselves with [literally, "put on bowels of" – thus from the *inside*, let these show on the *outside*] **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.**

- a. Compassion – that means we are no longer self-centered; instead, *we feel bad about the troubles of others AND desire to help them.*
- b. Kindness – that means we try to imagine how others feel; *then take action for their benefit* – not ours.
- c. Humility – the opposite of pride and arrogance; *those who are humble AND IN CHRISIT know they are poor miserable sinners in great need of Jesus the Christ.*
- d. Gentleness – again, the idea involves others and their needs – *along with being polite.* God wants us to be alert to ✦hold open a door, ✦help a neighbor, and ✦share with people in need.

- e. Patience – or as the older Bible translations say: longsuffering. To be patient IN A GODLY MANNER is to wait ✦with contentment, ✦with peace, ✦with trust, and ✦with self-control – *knowing God will provide when the time is right.*

3. **Let's Show our Union with Christ through Forgiveness:**
¹³ **Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

- a. How has the Lord forgiven us?
 - i. Undeservedly – we deserve punishment, *but we have been given peace.* God's mercy has caused our punishment to land on Jesus; *for by His wounds we are healed!* (1 Peter 2:24)
 - ii. Fully – "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18 NAS)
 - iii. Immediately – Jesus said to the criminal on the cross: "I tell you the truth, TODAY you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43 NIV)

- b. How should we bear with each other? Like the Bible says: "**Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**" Therefore, with other people, *whether they deserve it or not*, let us show our union with Christ by forgiving ✦undeservedly, ✦fully, and ✦immediately!

4. **Let's Love in All Circumstances:** ¹⁴ **And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in**