
Changing Our Relationships (Putting On The Garments of Love)

Transformational Love

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Sermon: Transformational Love: Changing Our Relationships (Putting On The Garments of Love)

Lesson Text

Colossians 3:12–15 (KJV)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. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Introduction

So far, we've looked at Transformational Love from the perspective of how it Changes Our Heart, Changes Our Mind, and Changes Our Mouth. Let's now look at how it should Change Our Relationships.

One of the greatest evidence that Christ is transforming us is found in how we relate to people. Transformation cannot remain hidden in our hearts, confined to our thoughts, or limited to what happens on Sunday morning. Eventually, what Christ is doing inside of us must change how we interact with the people around us.

We can shout, pray, worship, serve, and know Scripture, but Jesus said that one of the distinguishing marks of His disciples would be their love for one another.

- John 13:35 says, “**By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**”

Relationships are often where our transformation is tested the most. It is easy to talk about love when nobody is getting on your nerves. It is easy to talk about forgiveness when nobody has hurt you. It is easy to talk about peace when nobody is disagreeing with you. But Christlike love is demonstrated when we have to love imperfect people in imperfect situations.

Transformational love does not simply change how we feel about God; it changes how we deal with people. Its character is revealed when we must deal with difficult people, disappointing people, hurting people, and even people who have hurt us.

Paul gives us a powerful picture of transformation in Colossians 3. He repeatedly uses the language of putting off and putting on. Earlier in the chapter, he tells believers to put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying. Then he tells us what we are supposed to put on in their place.

This means Christianity is not simply about stopping bad behavior; it is about putting on Christlike behavior.

We are not simply taking something off. We are putting something better on.

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Paul says: Put on compassion, put on kindness, put on forgiveness, put on love, and put on peace.

In other words, when Christ changes us, He changes what we wear into our relationships.

If we have truly put on Christ, the people around us should eventually experience the difference.

Series and Sermon: Transformational Love: Changing Our Relationships (Putting On The Garments of Love)

(Transforming How We See People, How We Treat People, How We Restore People, and How We Connect with People)

I. Put On Compassion (Changing How You See People)

Colossians 3:12 — “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies...”

Putting on Christ’s Garment of Love first takes us from Criticism to Compassion.

Before Christ changes how we deal with people, He often changes how we see people.

Compassion changes our relationships by changing the way we see people before we respond to them.

Paul begins by telling believers to put on “**bowels of mercies,**” which speaks of deep compassion and heartfelt concern for others.

Compassion begins with how we **see** people.

Sometimes we see only what people did without considering what they may be going through. We see the attitude but not the anxiety. We see the anger but not the hurt. We see the behavior but not the brokenness.

Jesus saw beyond the surface.

Matthew 9:36 says, “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them.”

The same people others might have dismissed, criticized, or ignored caused Jesus to be moved with compassion.

We must see beyond people's behavior

Compassion does not excuse wrong behavior, but it helps us understand that there is often something underneath that behavior.

Sometimes anger is covering hurt, arrogance is covering insecurity, withdrawal is covering disappointment, hostility is covering fear, and difficult behavior may be covering a difficult season.

Instead of immediately asking, “What's wrong with them?” compassion teaches us to ask, “What might they be going through?”

Jesus did not define people by their worst moments: He saw Peter beyond his denial, He saw Thomas beyond his doubt, He saw Zacchaeus beyond his reputation, He saw the woman at the well beyond her history. And He sees us beyond our failures.

When we put on compassion, we begin seeing people through the eyes of Christ.

II. Put On Kindness (Changing How You Treat People)

Colossians 3:12 — “Put on therefore... bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.”

Putting on Christ's Garment of Love next takes us from Harshness to Kindness.

Kindness is compassion in action—when Christ changes our hearts, it should change how we treat people.

Compassion changes what we see. Kindness changes what we do about what we see.

It is possible to feel sorry for somebody and never help them. It is possible to recognize somebody's pain and still treat them poorly.

But biblical kindness moves compassion from our hearts into our actions.

Ephesians 4:32 says, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted...”

Treat people according to your character.

One of the greatest signs of transformation is when we stop allowing other people's behavior to determine or dictate our behavior.

If they are rude, I do not have to become rude. If they are disrespectful, I do not have to become disrespectful. If they are angry, I do not have to become angry. If they are difficult, I do not have to become difficult.

Why? Because my response should reveal my character, not reflect theirs.

Jesus said in Luke 6:31, “**And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.**”

Treat people with grace. This means we sometimes give people something better than what their behavior deserves.

That does not mean accepting abuse, tolerating mistreatment, or refusing to establish healthy boundaries. Kindness is not weakness. Jesus was both gracious and truthful.

We can be kind and still say no. We can be loving and still establish boundaries. We can be compassionate and still hold people accountable. We can speak truth without becoming cruel.

Transformation means somebody else's attitude no longer has the power to determine mine.

III. Put On Forgiveness (Changing How You Restore People)

Colossians 3:13 — “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

Putting on Christ’s Garment of Love also takes us from Resentment to Restoration.

Forgiveness creates the possibility of restoration by refusing to allow yesterday's offense to control today's relationship.

Every meaningful relationship will eventually require forgiveness because every meaningful relationship involves imperfect people.

People will disappoint us. People will misunderstand us. People will make mistakes. And sometimes people will genuinely hurt us.

That is why Paul says we must be “forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.”

To forbear means we make room for the weaknesses, imperfections, and differences of other people. “Give people room to grow.”

Not every irritation requires confrontation. Not every disagreement requires an argument. Not every mistake requires punishment. Not every offense requires retaliation.

Sometimes transformed love simply says, “I’m going to give you some grace.”

We often want grace for ourselves while demanding perfection from everybody else.

But transformed relationships require enough grace to recognize that people are still growing—just like we are.

Forgive the way Christ forgave you! “Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

Our model for forgiveness is not what someone deserves. Our model is what Christ gave us.

Forgiveness does not mean the offense did not matter. Forgiveness does not automatically restore trust. Forgiveness does not remove accountability. And forgiveness does not always mean the relationship returns to what it was before.

But forgiveness removes bitterness from our hearts and creates the possibility for restoration!

Trust may have to be rebuilt. Behavior may have to change. Accountability may be necessary. And reconciliation may require participation from both people.

But forgiveness begins with you.

Sometimes the first relationship God needs to restore is not between you and the person who hurt you. It is between you and the pain they left behind.

Because Christ released us from our debt, we must refuse to spend our lives imprisoned by somebody else's.

IV. Put On Peace (Changing How You Respond To People)

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Colossians 3:14–15 — “And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...”

Putting on Christ’s Garment of Love:

- Takes us from Harshness to Kindness; it changes how we see people
- Takes us from Criticism to Compassion; it changes how we treat people
- Takes us from Resentment to Restoration; it changes how we restore people
- Takes us from Conflict to Connection; it changes how we respond to people

When the peace of Christ rules our hearts, it changes how we respond when relationships become difficult.

The word “rule” carries the idea of an umpire making a decision. That means when emotions are high, somebody has to make the call.

Will anger make the call? Will pride make the call? Will hurt make the call? Will revenge make the call? Or will peace rule and make the call? Let peace govern your response!

Before you send the text—let peace rule. Before you make the phone call—let peace rule. Before you respond to the post—let peace rule. Before you say what you cannot take back—let peace rule. Before you walk away from the relationship—let peace rule. Before you respond out of anger—let peace rule.

Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

We can’t control the behavior of other people, but we can control what happens next!

We can bring compassion, kindness, forgiveness, and peace.

Philippians 4:7 (KJV)⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

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Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Changing Our Relationships (Putting On The Garments of Love))

Lesson Text

- **Primary Text: Colossians 3:12–15**
- **Supporting Texts: John 13:34–35; Ephesians 4:31–32; Romans 12:17–18**

Sermon Outline

- **I. Put On Compassion (Changing How You See People)**
- **II. Put On Kindness (Changing How You Treat People)**
- **III. Put On Forgiveness (Changing How You Restore People)**
- **IV. Put On Peace (Changing How You Respond To People)**

Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)

I. Getting To Know “Me”

1. What is one thing you are trying to learn or improve?
2. Do you think your name fits your personality?

II. Into The Bible

1. Paul begins by calling believers “elect of God, holy and beloved” before telling them what to “put on.” Why do you think Paul reminds them of who they are before telling them how to treat others?
2. Verse 14 says, “above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” Why is love placed above all the other qualities, and what does “the bond of perfectness” tell us about the role of love?

III. Life Application

1. Using the principles and scriptures in this lesson, make a plan for how you will respond to someone who has treated you wrongly.
2. What is the difference between being sympathetic and being kind?