

SMALL TALK

1. What's the nicest outfit you have ever worn?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Philippians 2:1-18.** Describe Christ's daring rescue operation (2:5-11)?
3. How important is unity in Christ? (Philippians 2:1-2)
4. How is Christ the best example of humility and unselfishness for us? (Philippians 2:6-8)
5. **READ Colossians 3:5-17.** What are Paul's examples of "clothing" to "take off"? And "clothing" to "put on"?

GETTING PERSONAL

6. What filthy rags do you need to remove?
7. Which of Christ's clothing (character qualities) do you need to put on?

PRACTICE!

8. What else struck you from your personal "Training in the Word" through Colossians this week?

December 19, 2021

**Filled, Complete, Whole
(Week 7) Because of my Christmas Clothes**

I see many “Christmassy” outfits this morning...

Here is the big idea for today:

The first Christmas was when the eternal Son of God, the King of Heaven, removed his regal robes of radiance to clothe himself in humility as the Son of Man in order to come and set us free. He did this to make it possible for us to remove our filthy rags and put on His garments of glory!

But before we get into Colossians 3,

I want to tell you a true story. But fair warning. This does not sound like any Christmas story I was ever told as a child!

In September of 1940, Witold Pilecki, a Polish army captain, did the unthinkable—he snuck into Auschwitz. That's right, into Auschwitz. Pilecki knew that something was terribly wrong with the concentration camp and as a committed (Roman Catholic) Christian and a Polish patriot he couldn't sit by and watch. He wanted to get information on the horrors of Auschwitz, but he knew he could only do that from the inside.

So his superiors approved a daring plan. They provided a false identity card with a Jewish name, and then Pilecki allowed the Germans to arrest him during a routine Warsaw street roundup. Pilecki was sent to Auschwitz and assigned inmate number 4859. Pilecki, a husband and father of two, later said, "I bade farewell to everything I had known on this earth." He became just like any other prisoner—despised, beaten, and threatened with death. From inside the camp he wrote, "The game I was now playing at Auschwitz was dangerous In fact, I had gone far beyond what people in the real world would consider dangerous."

But beginning in 1941, prisoner number 4859 started working on his dangerous mission. He organized the inmates into resistance units, boosting morale and documenting the war crimes. Pilecki used couriers to smuggle out detailed reports on the atrocities. By 1942, he had also helped organize a secret radio station using scrap parts. The information he supplied from inside the camp provided Western allies with key intelligence information about Auschwitz.

In the spring of 1943, Pilecki joined the camp bakery where he was able to overpower a guard and escape. Once free, he finished his report, estimating that around 2 million souls had been killed at Auschwitz. When the reports reached London, officials thought he was exaggerating. Of course today we know he was right.

...In his report Pilecki said, "There is always a difference between saying you will do something and actually doing it."

Rob Eshman, "The man who snuck into Auschwitz," JewishJournal.com (12-5-12) [based on the book "The Auschwitz Volunteer, by Witold Pilecky)

Jesus left the place of glory and safety, and entered our death camp voluntarily! Why? To set us free!!! That's the reason for his coming for Christmas.

Now let's read Colossians 3, and this theme about "Clothes".

Colossians 3:9–10 (NIV) Do not lie to each other, since you have **taken off your old** self with its practices ¹⁰ and have **put on the new** self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Colossians 3:12 (NIV) Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves** with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:14 (NIV) And over all these virtues **put on** love, which binds them all together in perfect unity

How did Jesus make this possible?

Colossians 2:20 (NIV) Since you died with Christ ... [and]

Colossians 3:1 (NIV) Since, then, you have been raised with Christ...

That's how he made it possible. And since these are true...

I. **Take OFF your FILTHY RAGS**

In Paul's writings there are often "sin lists" and "virtue lists" for instructional purposes. We find such lists in Colossians 3. Paul's lists are not comprehensive lists, but examples for our instruction.

- **sexual immorality (3:5) *porneia***, the word from pornographic stems. It means any kind of sexual relations that falls outside of the boundaries God set for sex. What are the boundaries? Marriage between a man and a woman. Sex outside of this boundary is called sexual immorality. **This was as radical teaching in Colossae, as it is a radical teaching in Cottonwood.** The question is simply this: Do we trust God's teaching on the design and morality of sex or not? The next three in the list are like this one.
- **impurity (3:5) , lust (3:5) and evil desires (3:5)** Daily living in our culture, whatever media you turn to is a deluge of sensuality and lust. What the average person is exposed to in a week in our culture now is more than what our Grandparents were exposed to in a lifetime! Don't fool yourself into thinking all this is ok in your entertainment choices because you are so used to it. This is only because your moral sensitivities are now calloused and numb. This kind of thing destroys family relationships. Our culture is dangerous: **evil desires (3:5) are** fueled constantly at every turn of the channel, or click of the mouse, or scrolling of the screen.
- **greed, which is idolatry (3:5)** This is as radical teaching then in the pagan culture of Colossae as it is radical in our day. The quest to be wealthy is idolized in our culture. It is everybody's dream. Wealthy for what purpose? Self-indulgence? This is greed and idolatry. Yet, in our culture, the greedy person is

viewed as a successful person, a person we honor. Don't accept sin because the world around you accepts it.

These are “filthy rags”, “filthy with the stench of death”. These are stinky grave clothes.

Paul pauses now in his list to shake us awake out of our stupor:

Colossians 3:6-7 (NIV) ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

THIS IS SERIOUS BUSINESS! Don't be fooled. Change! Change now! Go change your clothes now! This is the life you USED to live. Paul continues his list:

- **anger (3:8)** We are an angry culture today. Perhaps more than ever.
- **rage (3:8)** We have witnessed rage and lawlessness on our screens. Anger leads to anger, and rage to more rage. There is no excuse for this if you are a follower of Jesus. We are to return good for evil. We must put on the good if we hope to keep this off!
- **malice (3:8)**
- **slander (3:8)**
- **filthy language (3:8)**
- **lying (3:9)**

II. Put on Christ's Character

¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Jesus made it possible for us to put on these character qualities, which are his character qualities. He is the perfect and exact image of God. His characteristics are God's characteristics, perfectly. When you know Jesus, you know God. What did he look like? This is what we are to look like as those created in God's image.

- compassion (3:12)
- kindness (3:12)

- humility (3:12)
- gentleness (3:12)
- patience (3:12)
- we bear with one another (3:13) [put on forbearance]
- we forgive one another (3:13) [put on grace, mercy, and forgiveness]
- Love (3:14) (NIV, binds these virtues together, ESV....binds everything together)
- Peace (3:15)
- thankfulness (3:15)

Kindness alone is beautiful. It makes everyone more attractive. Isn't it time we look more like Jesus!

These are not good ideas to agree with. We already do.

...In his report Pilecki said, "There is always a difference between saying you will do something and actually doing it."

We need to repent, and take off the filthy rags, and ask God to help us put on Christ's Character **and do what is right!**

Start now with prayer!

**"God, forgive me for _____ (which "filthy rag?")
I want to take that off, and put on _____ (which
"characteristic of Christ")."**

Now, ask for help, then determine to do something kind and loving today. What will that be? Ask for help.