

Sunday 30 August 2020

Good Morning All,

I trust you are all well to day, I cant believe it is only four months to Christmas. What wonderful news that from next Sunday the 6 September we will be back in the Church again. I think we have all missed being in church and seeing each other.

What do you clothe yourself with?

Psalm 149

Romans 8:14

What does it mean to clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ? I love how the Bible uses simple ideas to convey really profound and powerful spiritual truths. We all know what it means to clothe ourselves.

We give thought to what we will wear, don't we. It is probably fair to say that some people put more thought into how they dress than others. My room mate at varsity had no colour sense and would wear the first thing he would see in his cupboard. So he would have a green shirt with blue pants and purple socks on. His girl friend asked me to make sure that Jan does not wear all his pretty clothes on one day. Some of us have a better dress sense than others. Men generally take less time in deciding what to wear than do Ladies.

Scripture says, "Clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ". This is a call to daily embrace my identity in Christ.

To be a Christ follower is to understand that my worth and value flow from my belovedness from God. It flows from the fact that as Genesis says, "humans are dignified by where they come from."

Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created Him." This is why we say that all people have inherent dignity and value, because they are made by God in His image. This truth should help us realise the value of the individual person. It definitely points us toward our identity which is fully realised for a Christian in belonging to God through faith in Jesus Christ. In order for this to happen I must daily "put on" or "clothe myself." Consciously remind myself whose I am and then make my daily choices in life based on who I belong to. And who is He? The Lord Jesus Christ. The word "Lord" denotes authority. It refers to he to whom a person belongs, about which he has power. Master, Lord, refers to the possessor, the owner or the one who has control of the person.

Firstly, clothing ourselves in Jesus Christ means that we purposefully and intentionally and daily choose to live for Jesus. We commit to following Christ our

master and to make our choices based on the fact that we are His, the children of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. In Corinthians 13 it says, “ You are not your own; you were bought at a price.” We must remember and behave as though we are not our own. This is hard but this is what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Secondly, spiritually speaking we are going to be clothed with something. We might be clothed with pride or with an attitude that keeps people from getting too close, or with a determination to do our own thing without any consideration to others or to God. Romans 13 gives a few things that people choose to be clothed with that do us no good and that offend God like adultery, stealing, coveting, sexual immorality, dissension, jealousy, gossiping etc.

We will either be clothed with light or darkness. We can be clothed with God or things of the world. Let us choose Jesus over all things. Anything other than God that we choose to clothe ourselves with, is an idol or some deception. When we clothe ourselves in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are wrapped in truth. If we dress ourselves in grace our actions will be grace filled. If we are dressed in kindness, the well being of others will be important to us.

In Romans 8:5 it says, “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what the nature desires. But those who live in accordance with the spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.” You often find in Scripture that there is a 'do' and a “don't do” and both are important. The 'do' is to be clothed in Christ, the “don't do” has to do with our worldliness.

Galatians 5:17 says “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”

If we live, as God wants us to live, daily clothing ourselves in Christ, we cannot at the same time be part of the world. We cannot be trying to gratify the desires of our sinful nature. If we do that we are a walking contradiction. Living constantly in tension with ourselves. There is no peace in that and no joy in that kind of life. The other problem with this is that what our sinful nature wants will lead us down a very dark path.

James 1:14-15 says, “Each one tempted when by his own desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

What God wants for you is life. What God wants for you is joy. It is to realise our value and our purpose, and to have a living hope that pushes us forward into a new way of living and a new way of loving.

When we clothe ourselves in Jesus we will be enfolded in love, because God is love.

And this takes us back to Romans 13:8 which says “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt of love for one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law.”

Jesus say in Matthew 22:37-40 “Love the Lord you God with all your heart and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest command. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.”

The debt we can never repay is the reason we love. We love because he first loved us. The gift of love is so huge, it cannot be repaid. Think of the love God has given you personally. The embrace you feel as you draw near to Him.

The forgiveness and relief to a guilty conscience that He has given you through Christ's death on the cross is His great love. Then we get a sense of how great is His love, and why as long as we live on this earth, we will never be able to repay that love of God or to others.

Think of the love God has given us personally. The embrace you feel as he draws you near to him. How He loves all the billions of people on this planet.

May you and I remember even better, to daily clothe ourselves with Jesus Christ. That is how to love one another. That is how to reach the world we live in that is starving for meaning and purpose for something real.

Let us pray.

God you love us and you sent Jesus to die for us so that we can live our lives in love, in unbroken fellowship with you. May we all choose to live for you daily, to embrace and to be embraced by Your love, and not to conceal but live out love among those around us. May we be clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus' holy name we pray.

Amen