

Series: "POSTCARDS from PRISON"

Text: Colossians 3:12-14

Title: "GRACE-Clothes"

Introduction: GOOD MORNING, BMZ! Glad you're WITH US as we CONTINUE our SERIES "**POSTCARDS from PRISON**"! Through this SERIES, we are going to use some LETTERS written by PAUL from PRISON in ROME to DISCOVER HOW to FOLLOW JESUS BETTER and make HUGE DIFFERENCE in OUR LIVES and the LIVES of THOSE we LOVE ... OK, we will THROW IN the CHANGING of the WORLD TOO!

Here's the PLAN ... THREE THINGS: #1 = Learn from the PAST and PAUL. #2 = GREAT things HAPPENED in PAUL'S DAY, so we need to APPLY what we LEARN FROM PAUL, TODAY. #3 = PRAY and PREPARE for REVIVAL and AWAKENING for the FUTURE. These do NOT JUST HAPPEN. We PLAY a PART. I'll try to unpack these as we go.

We are going to START with STUDYING Paul's LETTER to the COLOSSIANS. It was a LETTER WRITTEN to a CHURCH in the CITY of COLOSSAE that PAUL had NEVER BEEN to that was DEALING with SOME MAJOR PROBLEMS.

I'll come BACK to the PROBLEM but let me START with the CITY of COLOSSE ... a city in Asia Minor about 100 miles east/southwest of EPHESUS, where Paul spent 3 YEARS starting a CHURCH (MAP?). BUT PAUL NEVER went to COLOSSE ... MORE LATER. COLOSSE was one of THREE CITIES very close together. COLOSSE, HIEROPOLIS, and LAODICEA were within 10 MILES of each other.

They were COMMERCIAL CITIES, part of an east-west trade route that brought merchandise, people, ideas, worldviews, and philosophies from all around the world. And even though Colosse was probably on the downturn from its hay-day; it was still an important enough church for Paul to take time to write to them and offer some personal care.

Colossae had a large Jewish population and a constant stream of ideas and philosophies from other regions. Here is why Paul makes time to write to the Church in Colossae ... The many spiritual people from inside the city and outside the city were attempting to INFLUENCE CHRISTIANS to believe something more than the core of their FAITH.

There were people who thought Christianity was pretty good, but they felt if they added some other ideas and philosophies and guidelines to Christianity, it would be even better! So, the Jewish populations tried to drag the Christians back to The Law of Moses and say what they could and couldn't eat and how they needed to conduct themselves with ritual cleaning, etc. so they had a better chance at being right with God!

Then there were the people from other regions saying the Christians were kind of narrow-minded and if they expanded their minds and added some brilliant concepts to what they already believed ... how much better Christianity would be!

Paul believed Jesus was "Absolute". I believe Jesus is "Absolute" ... **Supremacy / Primacy / Preeminence / Superiority of CHRIST!** But there was a problem in Colossae...

LAST WEEK, we got into Colossians THREE being REMINDED by PAUL that we are ALIVE in CHRIST. And, BECAUSE JESUS makes it POSSIBLE for us to be ALIVE and we BELIEVE in HIM, we talked about HOW our BELIEFS OUGHT to DRIVE our BEHAVIORS. THREE things: SEEK the HEAVENLY, KILL the EARTHLY and BECOME like CHRIST! PAUL WROTE about STRIPPING OFF your OLD NATURE and PUTTING ON the NEW!

PAUL CONTINUES with the THEME of LIVING a HOLY LIFE. He INSISTED his READERS TAKE OFF the GRAVECLOTHES of SIN and the WORLDLY and PUT ON the “GRACECLOTHES” of HOLINESS and a NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.

We are going to SPLIT this SECTION into TWO SUNDAYS ... this SECTION is about our MOTIVES. WHY should I NOT ACT LIKE EVERYONE ELSE? WHY should I STRIVE for a LIFE that is DIFFERENT from OTHERS? WHY should I STRIVE to be CHRIST-LIKE?

PAUL EXPLAINED there were FOUR MOTIVES to ENCOURAGE US to WALK in the NEWSNESS of LIFE in CHRIST. TODAY we will talk about ONE. Next week: The OTHER THREE. The FIRST MOTIVE is about GOD’S AMAZING GRACE...

WHAT GOD’S GRACE HAS DONE FOR THE COLOSSIANS AND US:

IN your NOTES ... Think about “GRACE”. GRACE is GOD’S FAVOR to UNDESERVING SINNERS. A FREE GIFT to PEOPLE who do NOT DESERVE a GIFT!

PAUL reminds the Colossians of what GOD’S GRACE had DONE for THEM ...

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14 = ¹² *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.* ¹³ *Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.* ¹⁴ *Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.*¹

That’s a LOT. **THREE (3) SENTENCES.** LOADED! IF WE ... the ONES in our BUILDINGS and ONLINE would WRESTLE with THESE THREE SENTENCES and WORK to LIVE them OUT, the WHOLE WORLD would CHANGE! **Do not underestimate...**

The FIRST 11 WORDS ... HALF a SENTENCE is SO IMPORTANT for US to UNDERSTAND. 11 WORDS ... let’s start with FOUR: **“Since God chose you...”**

CHOSEN by God

YOU are CHOSEN by GOD! In the OLD Testament, the ISRAELITES / HEBREWS were God’s CHOSEN PEOPLE. Under the NEW COVENANT of God’s GRACE through JESUS, we are ALL CHOSEN by GOD for SALVATION. It is up to US to ACCEPT!

This MIRACLE of being CHOSEN by GOD does NOT DEPEND on anything I AM or HAVE DONE. Think 1st Round Pick with 1st Round Pick MONEY and you’ve NEVER PLAYED the GAME...

When PAUL writes to the EPHESIANS from PRISON in ROME, he writes ...
EPHESIANS 1:4 = ⁴ *Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.*² Think about it ... IF GOD saved SINNERS BASED ON WHO they WERE or WHAT they had DONE ... NOT ONE is GETTING SAVED! We are ALL going to HELL in a HANDBASKET!

INSTEAD, SALVATION is DONE through GOD’S GRACE, and ALL the GLORY goes to GOD! It’s ALL about HIM!

WAIT! Did you KNOW we were CHOSEN for a PURPOSE? We are CHOSEN to be on GOD’S “Great Commission” TEAM. We are CHOSEN and SAVED to SHARE the SAME GOOD NEWS of GRACE through JESUS with a LOST WORLD.

First 11 WORDS of Verse 12 ... next FIVE: **“To be the Holy People...”**

SET APART by God

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Col 3:12-14). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Eph 1:4). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

To be “HOLY” is to be “SET APART”! Because we TRUST CHRIST for our SALVATION and our LIVES, we are SET APART from the WORLD. We are HIS. We NO LONGER BELONG to OURSELVES, but we BELONG to HIM.

Just as a BRIDE and GROOM on their WEDDING DAY are SET APART for EACH OTHER EXCLUSIVELY, so SALVATION SETS US APART exclusively for JESUS. Imagine how HORRIBLE we would THINK IT IF at the END of the WEDDING, the GROOM suddenly took OFF with the MAID of HONOR and LEFT the BRIDE ALONE.

It is JUST as HORRIBLE when a PERSON who is SET APART for JESUS (“A Holy People”), RUNS OFF and LIVES for the WORLD and HUMAN DESIRES.

PAUL reminds us in his 1st LETTER to the Corinthians that WE are SET APART ... ^{1st} CORINTHIANS 6:19-20 = ¹⁹ *Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, ²⁰ for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.* ³ We must HONOR GOD with our WHOLE LIVES!

First 11. Last TWO (2): **“Since God chose you to be the Holy people HE LOVES ...”**
LOVED by God

God LOVED the world (people) so much, He GAVE His only SON so WHOEVER BELIEVED in HIM would NOT DIE and SPEND ETERNITY in HELL but have ETERNAL LIFE in GOD'S HEAVEN. LOVE is the most POWERFUL MOTIVATOR in the WORLD. As a BELIEVER REALIZES GOD'S LOVE for them and what it MEANS for THEM and for MANY ... as a BELIEVER LEARNS to RESPOND WELL to GOD'S LOVE ... WITH LOVE in RETURN, the BELIEVER GROWS in their DESIRE to OBEY GOD! That LOVE MOTIVATES them to LOVE BACK and LIVE a LIFE SET APART for CHRIST!

Think about it LIKE THIS: When an UNBELIEVER SINS, he is a CREATURE breaking the LAWS of the HOLY CREATOR and JUDGE. When a BELIEVER SINS, he is a CHILD of GOD BREAKING the LOVING HEART of his HEAVENLY FATHER.

I don't KNOW about YOU, but I CAN be UNLOVEABLE. And GOD ALMIGHTY LOVES ME ... even me!

In VERSES 13 and 14, PAUL talks about GOD'S FORGIVENESS... By God's Grace!
FORGIVEN by God

By GOD'S GRACE (underserved FAVOR), we are FORGIVEN. As PART of God's AMAZING GRACE, God's FORGIVENESS is AMAZING too! God's FORGIVENESS is NOT CONDITIONAL, nor does it COME with FINE PRINT. There are NO CATCHES.

When GOD FORGIVES, it is INSTANT / COMPLETE / REPEATABLE!

MANY might THINK we somehow DESERVE God's FORGIVENESS, but NO. God is HOLY, and WE are NOT. The ONLY way HOLY GOD is ABLE to FORGIVE us GUILTY SINNERS is by the SACRIFICE of JESUS on the CROSS. God FORGIVES US for “CHRIST'S SAKE”, NOT for OUR SAKE!

Paul reminds the EPHESIANS the SAME ... It is THROUGH CHRIST we are FORGIVEN ... EPHESIANS 4:32 = ³² *Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.* ⁴ We are CHOSEN by GOD, SET APART for GOD, LOVED by GOD and FORGIVEN by GOD. And we DID NOTHING to DESERVE ANY OF IT! These are SOLELY by GOD'S GRACE! Now, BECAUSE of these GRACE-MADE BLESSINGS, the CHRISTIAN has some

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (1 Co 6:19–20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Eph 4:32). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE GOD! We are ASKED by GOD to PUT ON our GRACE CLOTHES. GOD has some things HE EXPECTS of US. I'm AMAZED how many people CALL themselves CHRISTIANS, and CLAIM JESUS has SAVED them, and HE is LORD, but then have an ATTITUDE when it COMES to JESUS asking THEM to take some RESPONSIBILITIES as HIS FOLLOWERS. ***“Like, how DARE you ask ME to CHANGE my WAYS. How DARE you ask ME to ACT / BE DIFFERENT from OTHER PEOPLE and WEAR DIFFERENT CLOTHES!”***

Paul names EIGHT (8) GRACES we need to DRESS UP IN.

EIGHT GRACES to PUT ON:

Remember John 13:34? LOVE ONE ANOTHER ...? Here's HOW! Paul says (These are CHRIST-LIKE QUALITIES!) we MUST, by the POWER of the Holy Spirit, PUT ON:

1. **Tenderhearted MERCY** = NOT what THEY DESERVE (forgiveness)!

As BELIEVERS, from the DEPTHS of our HEARTS we need to DISPLAY TENDER FEELINGS of COMPASSION toward ONE ANOTHER. The OTHER PERSON comes FIRST. This is NOT something we TURN ON and OFF when the CIRCUMSTANCE is RIGHT. NO. It is a CONSTANT ATTITUDE of the HEART. It makes us EASY to LIVE WITH. Christ-Like!

2. **KINDNESS** = Remember the FRUITS of the SPIRIT from Galatians 5?

We have been SAVED for ETERNITY BECAUSE of GOD'S KINDNESS towards US, through His SON, JESUS. WE, therefore, OUGHT to SHOW KINDNESS towards OTHERS ... EVEN when they DO NOT DESERVE IT! God does it for US! In Ephesians 4, we find GOD COMMANDS us to BE KIND to ONE ANOTHER. (Love One Another...)

3. **HUMILITY** =

The PAGAN WORLD of Paul's Day did NOT ADMIRE HUMILITY. They ADMIRERD PRIDE and DOMINATION. SOUND FAMILIAR? BUT ... CHRIST-LIKENESS. NO ONE more HUMBLE than JESUS. HUMILITY is NOT THINKING LOWLY of SELF. It is having a RIGHT ESTIMATE of ONESELF within the WILL of GOD. A PERSON of HUMILITY THINKS of OTHERS before SELF!

4. **GENTLENESS** = Also known as "MEEKNESS".

GENTLENESS is NOT WEAKNESS, but it has been DEFINED as ***“POWER UNDER CONTROL”***. A HORSE can be GENTLE ... POWERFUL, but UNDER CONTROL. By the POWER of God's SPIRIT, we have some SELF-CONTROL. The GENTLE PERSON does NOT FLY OFF the HANDLE (Rage), because HE HAS it UNDER CONTROL.

5. **PATIENCE** = Literally means "LONG-TEMPERED"

The SHORT-TEMPERED person SPEAKS and ACTS from IMPULSE and LACKS SELF-CONTROL! *“I'm MAD and I have a RIGHT to SHOW YOU!”* When a person is LONG-SUFFERING, they can PUT UP with PEOPLE and CIRCUMSTANCES that IRRITATE / INCITE them W/OUT RETALIATING (Christ-Like LOVE!). It's OK to GET ANGRY, just NOT QUICKLY at the WRONG THINGS or for the WRONG REASONS.

6. **ALLOWANCE** = v.13 = ***“Make ALLOWANCE for each other's FAULTS...”***

This means to HOLD BACK. God HOLDS BACK toward SINNERS ... God HOLDS BACK His JUDGEMENT on US. We are to DO the SAME for OTHERS. How does CHRIST LOVE US? ***“LOVE ONE ANOTHER...”*** Gentleness, Patience, and Allowance go TOGETHER.

7. **FORGIVENESS** =

This is the RESULT of the PREVIOUS SIX. I MUST FORGIVE the ONES who HURT ME. If I DON'T, SATANIC FEELINGS BUILD in MY HEART that LEAD to SINS we talked about LAST WEEK ... SLANDER / MALICE / ANGER / RAGE. It's CHRIST-LIKE to

FORGIVE. Like the VERY MOMENT someone HURTS YOU, we SHOULD FORGIVE them in our HEART ... or it will BUILD UP EVIL. “I can NOT DO THAT!” I get it. It DOESN’T COME NATURAL. But WHEN ALLOW the HOLY SPIRIT of LOVE to FILL our HEARTS, we BECOME like CHRIST. “Love ONE ANOTHER.” How? “Like I have LOVED YOU!”

8. **LOVE =** V. 14 = “Above all, clothe yourselves with LOVE...”

This is the MOST IMPORTANT. It HOLDS the OTHERS TOGETHER. Honestly, the OTHERS are NOT POSSIBLE W/OUT the HOLY SPIRIT. God is LOVE. His SPIRIT is THE SPIRIT of LOVE. “LOVE” is the FIRST of the FRUITS of the SPIRIT (Gal. 5) and ALL the OTHERS FOLLOW. Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control. When LOVE RULES our LIVES (*A New Commandment...*), there is a BEAUTY and HARMONY that REVEALS SPIRITUAL MATURITY... Christlikeness!

These are POWERFUL! IF WE ... the ONES in our BUILDINGS and ONLINE would WRESTLE with THESE THREE SENTENCES and WORK to LIVE them OUT, the WHOLE WORLD would CHANGE! **Do not underestimate...**

Let’s Pray!

Next Steps: *Memorize Colossians 3:13*
Read Colossians ... again!
Start Praying for Revival and Awakening
Invite someone to worship with you this summer!

Hosting (Closing)

It’s been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you’ve been with us! NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**) Drop card in the offering basket.

IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today ... We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you. It’s this book “**UNSHAKABLE**” and it’s at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS ... **HIT “SEND”** your COMPLETED Connection Card

+++++

Reminder: STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP. We RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it’s BIBLICAL ... it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!

STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... **1st CORINTHIANS 6:20 = ²⁰ for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. ⁵**

NOT JUST LIP SERVICE ... FULL WEIGHT! FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the 1st place! That’s why WE/I do Automated Giving! ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!

God’s plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!

As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.

MONEY is a HEART ISSUE. And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?!

Next Week: **We’ll CONTINUE to GET DRESSED...**

“God **whispers** to us in our pleasures, **speaks** in our conscience, but **shouts** in our pains: it is His **megaphone** to rouse a deaf world.” — C.S. Lewis “*Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy).*” Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegram for outlines and ideas for this worship series.

