



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Colossians 3: 5-11

Lesson 11 of 15

2018

"Dress For Success"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth. Good morning. We are continuing our studies in the book of Colossians, and we're in chapter three. I began that chapter last week, and this week we are looking at verses 5 through 11, Colossians 3.

⁵Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. ⁶For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, ¹⁰and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—
¹¹ *a renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. Colossians 3: 5-11

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Lord, what a blessing it is to be again here on this Lord's Day, this Sunday morning, with Your people doing this; reading the Scriptures. What a great text of Scripture this is that reminds us of our duties in the Christian life, that we are to live up

to the change that's taken place. We are new creatures, and therefore, we are to live like it. And Paul goes into some detail into how that's to be done and why that's to be done. But I pray, Lord, that as we consider this, You would bless us with an understanding of who we are, how we are to live, and with the encouragement to know that we can do this—we can live in a way that's pleasing to You. It's not pleasing to the world; it goes contrary to the spirit of the age in which we live, and yet it's pleasing to You. And the things we do, which are in obedience to You, are not only healthy for us in this life, and a blessing to us and to others in this life, but they have eternal reward. So, may we live for that, live for the future as has been read, 'set our minds on the things above', and 'be transformed'.

As we consider the message in this lesson, it is ultimately Your work for we are powerless in and of ourselves. But we are like branches in a vine; we can do nothing in ourselves, but we are not in that condition. We have been placed in Your Son, and He is in us. We have the Spirit of God. We are new creatures who live, as I've often said, a supernatural life; so, may we act upon that by Your grace and mercy. May we learn the lessons of this passage we've just read, and may we live a life that's pleasing to You.

And live a life that's joyful in the present. We have every reason to be a joyful people; You bless us every day; You bless us every moment. Every breath of life we take is a gift from You. You bless us so abundantly, so consistently that we take it for granted so often and fail to even rejoice in the moment You've given us, because every moment of life is a gift from You; it's not to be taken for granted.

And so, help us to understand that and rejoice in who You are, what You're doing for us right now—You are giving us life at this very moment. And the whole Godhead is at work for us. The Son is at the right hand praying for us. The Spirit is within our hearts praying for us. You have assured our eternal destiny, and You are with us in the present. So, we have much to rejoice about. Thank You, Father.

Now, some are suffering; some are grieving; some are recovering from procedures, surgeries, other kinds of procedures. We pray for them. We pray for their health. We pray for their encouragement. These events occur in which we're deprived

of something: maybe it's our health; maybe it's our wealth; maybe it's friends; and, for a time, joy – that can be taken away from us; we can go through periods of depression for various reasons. But You're in control, Father, and I pray that even in the midst of those times, for those who are going through difficulties right now, You would encourage them. Because even in those times You're blessing us; they're for our good, and we can't understand it. I can't explain why a tragedy occurs, but by faith we know You're in control and all things are working to our good.

We thank You for this time together; we pray You'd bless it. Prepare our hearts for studying and worshiping together we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Not long after I graduated from seminary, in the mid-'70s, I had a short-lived career in the clothing industry as a salesman in a local men's store. I was told to read a book that had just been published titled *Dress for Success*. It's an interesting book. The author was not in the clothing business, but by running tests and using statistics, he came up with the right suits and shirts and ties for a businessman to dress for success. Well, fashions change. I'm not sure you'd want to be caught in one of his power ties today.

But Paul has a formula for the Christian to 'dress for success' spiritually that will never go out of style. It is: Take off the unfashionable suit of the old life—put off the old, filthy rags of your former life and put on the fresh, clean clothes of the new life; the Christian life, and wear righteousness. That's the lesson of Colossians 3, verses 5 through 11.

We are in the 'application' part of the book. The first two chapters are all about doctrine, and doctrine is always practical. All doctrine has duty and Paul now gives the duty that follows from the doctrine that he has been teaching the Colossians. That's clear from the first word in verse five "Therefore." He's drawing the implications of all that he has been saying. He writes, "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry." The *King James Version* has, "Mortify, therefore, your members..." which is

truer to the original text which is, 'Put to death the members of your earthly body...'. What Paul is saying here is. 'Be killing sin!' Don't allow it to control the members of your body. Don't let passion move your feet to bad places or your eyes to look at improper things. And the reason Paul is giving this instruction is due to what he has just stated in the previous verses and in the first two chapters which is, 'we are new people'. Believers are not the people that they used to be. We died with Christ. We have been raised with Him. This was summed up in verse three, "...you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." That's what Christ did as our substitute when He took our place in judgment. When He bore all of our sins and was punished for them in our place, He obtained all this for us. And further, Paul says in verse four that He is coming back. And when He does, you also will be revealed with Him in glory. So, be prepared for that. Be prepared for His return. Be living for it and, in doing so, living for the future and living for what is eternal – not living for what is passing away in this world, but for what is forever and to come. We do that by turning away from our old life, refusing to engage in the conduct that was so common before our conversion. Really, more strongly, mortifying our members, killing bad behavior.

The acts of behavior listed here were common among the Gentiles, and because they were so common, they were still temptations for these young believers in Colossae. The list is mainly one of sexual sins. Immorality wasn't a big deal to the Greeks and Romans of that time; it was really accepted behavior. I got a sense of that, many years ago when my wife and I were in the city of Athens, and we were walking down the street, and there was this very nice store. And so, my wife wanted to go in.

We went in, and she began to look around at all the beautiful things in this store. I wasn't that interested, so I sat down. There was a table next to the chair with a coffee table-type book sitting on it, so I picked it up. It was a book about Grecian urns—Greek vases. In ancient Greece, this was one of the main art forms, and they would decorate their vases with a variety of scenes; scenes of daily life, scenes of great battles, or others. I began looking through this book and immediately realized that this is ancient pornography. These were vases with scenes of gross immorality. I closed the book and I

thought, 'What is a book like this doing in such a posh store?' Then I thought, 'What this tells you is this is what decorated the homes of the ancient Greeks and they had no shame.'

Well, that is the world these Colossians were saved out of. They had to radically reorient their thinking, their values, and behavior. What was acceptable in the old life was completely unacceptable now. Their life was hidden with Christ and God. They couldn't bring that sinful behavior and those sinful ideas and attitudes into their new relationship with the sinless Son of God and with the Triune God.

So, Paul said, 'Consider yourselves dead to all of that' (vs5). And he adds to the list 'greed'. It's like the others; it's like impurity; it's like passion, because it, too, is desire, only it's fixed on material things rather than people. It's not just a desire to possess more than a person has, but to have more than a person ought to have. It's a desire to possess what others have with a fervent desire—that's like lust.

Some of you will remember Ivan Boesky, a stock trader in the 1980's, who made a fortune with corporate takeovers until he was convicted of insider trading. He famously said, "Greed is all right. I think greed is healthy. You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself." People would like to think so, but according to the apostle, Christians are dead to it. Greed is idolatry, he says, because it is a life-driving desire, and a person worships the things that he covets. He thinks that his hope and happiness and security are in 'things'. And so, he sets his affections on the things of Earth rather than the things above. He worships 'gain' as his God. That is so common.

Calvin put it very well in the *Institutes* when he stated, 'The human heart is an idol factory'. It produces idols and the fuel for producing the idols is greed. There's no place for that in our hearts. We need to kill it, which means kill self-centeredness. Sex and greed, these are the things that characterized the world of Paul's day; they characterize ours as well. Fifty years ago, I think I was in college when I read a little book in which the author described the age in which we are living as 'Neo-Pagan', —a new paganism. I think that is an apt description.

Well, it's become even more so over the decades since then with virtue being that of 'tolerance'. This is the great virtue of our day and is applied to all kinds of sins; we are to be tolerant of. In fact, we have even turned some vices into virtues. In fact, that observation has been made so often that it loses effect, I think. And really, the reality is it's no different today than it's ever been – maybe a little more intense.

But we've always been in an age like this. —Every generation has. Isaiah speaks of that in Isaiah chapter 5 and verse 20, where he says, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil." That's human nature. But it's so common, we are in danger today of being so desensitized to the world that we don't see things as they really are—desensitized to immorality and materialism that was such a challenge to those Colossians as well.

Well, we are living really in the same kind of world with the same kind of challenges that they faced. We have to see that what is around us is not normal, but it is wrong. However, this is difficult because 'the spirit of this age', (and the spirit of each generation), is powerful, constant, relentless, subtle and always there; —And it threatens to press us into its mold.

This is also Paul's warning to the Romans, in Romans chapter 12 and verse 2 where he says, "and do not be conformed to this world..." Now, that reads very well, doesn't it? 'Do not be conformed to this world', 'Mortify, therefore, your members', 'Be killing sin', 'Put off passion'. But passion is strong and not so easily 'put off' or 'killed'. So while this reads well, is it really possible to do these commands? Is it?

There's an old story about King Canute – you've probably heard it – that may have some application to us. He set up his throne on the seashore, and he commanded the incoming tide to halt and not wet his feet and robe. When his feet got wet, he turned to his nobles and he declared how empty the power of kings really is. There are forces at work in the world that are far greater than a king's commands. That illustrates the weakness of the most determined person to overcome the forces at work within his or her heart, the passions that drive him or her. Trying to stop sin in oneself is like commanding the tides to halt. Preaching cannot restrain immorality or curb our

covetousness. Not even the Law of Moses can do that. In fact, that law against covetousness, Paul says, 'is what killed him'. (Rom 7:11). The power of sin is as strong as the currents of the sea; we can't stop it.

Paul, of course, knew that – knew it better than anyone. He's giving instruction on morality in our passage but giving it to people who do have power to overcome sin, Who can, in effect, command the tides. That is what he's teaching. We are new creatures. We are not the old creatures that we were; we are new creatures with new abilities. The penalty of sin has been removed through the cross, and the power of sin has been broken by the cross. That's a reality.

In chapter two, (vs9), Paul wrote that, In Christ "...all the fullness of Deity dwells..." He is fully God. He is very God of very God; He is God the Son, not God the Father, but equal with the Father in essence and in glory and in power. He's the second person of the Trinity. In Him 'all the fullness of Deity dwells'— and we are joined to Him. We are joined to Him in His life and His power. His life and His power are in us. And we're told that at the cross He disarmed the rulers and authorities. He defeated our angelic enemies. That's our position and our power in Christ.

And Paul's counsel here for 'mortifying' or 'killing' sin, is to understand who you are in Christ and that you have died to the old life, to the world and its attitudes, goals, and aspirations. We are dead to the old life and we are dead to the old world. So, when we have the desires of that 'old' life, we are to see them as what they are and put them to death. Kill self-centeredness. Consider yourself dead to all of that.

This is not simplistic but is really simple. And you find these instructions all through Paul's writings. You find it, for example, in Romans 6 and verse 11, (I notice this is one of the memory verses that has been placed in the bulletin this week, Romans 6, verse 11), Paul says, "...consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.". So... **Consider yourselves to be dead to sin.** Now Paul is not saying, 'Think this way. I know it is not not true, but just imagine that this is the case.' —No! Rather he is saying, 'Think this way. Consider it to be so because it is true.' The way we think about ourselves affects the way that we act.

But it's not 'the power of positive thinking' that Paul is engaging in here—that 'thinking makes it so'. No, what he is saying is, 'It is true, Believers are dead to sin and have power over it.' So, we're not like Canute, commanding the tide to halt. We can turn back powerful forces in us. We can kill sin. We have really died to it. We are new creatures with new abilities. We live a supernatural life.

Here's how Paul puts it elsewhere in Romans 8 and verse 13b, "...If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Now, that's what we are to be doing— "...putting to death the deeds of the body...". But doing it as we can only do it and that is "...by the Spirit...". The Holy Spirit is mentioned in this book of Colossians maybe one time, in chapter one and verse eight,(and there's some debate as to whether Paul is referring to the Holy Spirit there; I take it as referring to the Spirit). Other than that, there's no mention of the Holy Spirit in this book. But take the book of Romans and turn to chapter eight—this chapter is all about the Holy Spirit—but here the subject is different.

The subject of Colossians is Jesus Christ, His person and work, and the sufficiency of Christ. He's the subject; the Holy Spirit is not. But we can assume correctly, (by putting our doctrine together), that the Holy Spirit is in all of this. His person and work is assumed to be in all of this. We have His power in this life through Christ. Christ lives in us through the Spirit, and we walk successfully in this life by walking in obedience to Him, walking by the Spirit.

So, we can deal decisively with immorality, passion, and greed. And the seriousness of doing that, the necessity of doing that, is stated in verses 6 and 7, where Paul says that God judges those who practice such things. "⁶For it is because of these things...", (these sins that he has mentioned in verse five), "...that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them." In other words, The Colossians were once 'sons of disobedience', but no longer are. They have been saved from God's wrath and from a life that makes a person liable to the awesome wrath of God. It, therefore, makes no sense to go back to such a life—to go back to such a foolish, destructive, harmful life.

But it especially makes no sense to practice such pagan vices since they are no longer pagans. They are to realize they are no longer heathens; they are no longer unbelievers; they are no longer unregenerate men and women. They are new people with a new nature. They are in Christ, and Christ is in them. They have His life through the Holy Spirit, and they have the power, therefore, to live obediently, to live differently. Therefore, they were to consider those facts to be true. They were to look on themselves as dead to the old life—dead to their former desires and practices—and see themselves as they are, alive to God in Christ; and therefore, live it. The old life is no longer an option. The old life connection to the old world is dead. The believer in Christ is dead to it, and it's dead to the believer. There's no going back.

When Cortez brought the Spaniards to Mexico for conquest and gold, he burned the ships on the beach at Vera Cruz so that none of his men would be able to desert him. That would be a poor comparison between a brigand and a saint, but here's the point: When you know there's no going back, you go forward. This is what Paul is saying here; the ship has been burned and there is no going back. The old life is finished and there is no bridge between the two worlds. That is what the cross did.

And that is what Paul told the Galatians: Through the cross, (because of what Christ did for him and what happened to Him on the cross), when Christ died, he died. He said, "...the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal 6:14b). 'The world is dead to me; I am dead to the world. Saul of Tarsus is dead. Paul the apostle is alive. I can no longer live like Saul.' This is true of every one of us who have joined ourselves to Christ. We have died with Him. Our unbelieving, unregenerate person is gone. And our life, our new self, is hidden with Christ in God: So, live that new life!—this is the logic of the apostle.

Now, we do that first by ridding ourselves of the vestiges of the old life like we would an old suit of clothes—and we need to, because the desires and the habits of that old life are still with us. That's Paul's instructions in verses eight and nine, "But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another..." Paul is writing here to believers. He is not

describing the world and he is not describing the unbeliever. Rather this is true of Christians, for the 'saints' are not always so 'saintly'. It's the problem of Romans chapter 7 and verse 19a, "...the good that I want, I do not do..." This is also the struggle of the Galatians in chapter 5 and verse 17, 'For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; they are in opposition so that you may not do the things that you please.' — '...so that you may not do the bad things that you please...', the Spirit is there fighting against that. But so you may not do the good things either, because the flesh is against it, too, and it's very strong. We are in this conflict. With our Spirit (the Holy Spirit) against the flesh as in Galatians five, there is a great conflict going on. This is true of all of these things that Paul is saying here. —All of these sins that he names here in these two lists. This is the conflict we have with these things.

I spoke earlier of 'passion'. This word is almost always used in the New Testament of illicit, sexual passion. But the sins here in this second list (vs 8), are passions also. They are sins of the heart and tongue. Evil comes out of the heart, and the tongue is one of the heart's most destructive tools. What is in the heart is "*anger*" and "*wrath*," and those two words may seem to be similar, synonyms, but they are with a difference. Anger, (the word is *orgē*), is a settled feeling of hatred and a continuing condition. It simmers, as it were, in the heart. Wrath, (*thumos*), on the other hand, is not simmering; it's a sudden outburst of anger. And so, a person broods over something that has happened, a wrong that has been suffered, until he or she loses their temper and says unkind things, malicious things, harmful things. The tongue becomes a weapon for that—a weapon for harm and division by speaking slander and attacking a person's character. "...the tongue is a fire..." James said, (3:6). It is so small – seemingly so small and insignificant and yet it's like a spark. —And a spark can set a forest aflame. That is what the tongue does—it sets the world aflame. And it can do that in the Church of all places. Again remember, Paul here is speaking to the Colossians; he's speaking to people who are born again; he's speaking to Christians. And this is what we do. —It's shameful.

We are in Christ, but how unlike Christ all of this is, of whom the prophet said, 'A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not quench...'. (Is 42:3).

He was gentle and never angry – at least never angry in a sinful way. He never meant harm. He never did or uttered a word of harm against another person. He always spoke truth and spoke it in the right way for the right reasons. He is our standard and we fall short of it.

One way we are brought into conformity is by correction,, and Paul was correcting these Christians of Colossae, (as he is right now correcting us here in Dallas), to be like Him – that is be like Christ – and not to yield to our passion. But this is what we struggle with for when a sinner is saved is when the battle is really joined. It's not so much when a man or woman is in unbelief, for the world does not struggle with its sins and unrighteousness. Rather this is a battle that takes place when one is born again and becomes a new creature in Christ and has a completely different alignment to the things and the spirit of the age. That's when the battle is joined. And it is a battle of the Titans. The flesh is a powerful force.

Now remember, we are a new creation, and Paul reminds the Colossians and us of that fact in verses nine and ten: 'Don't sin' "...since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, and have put on the new self...". The person we were in Adam – rebellious, in unbelief, at war with God – that person is dead. We put him off. We are now in Christ. Through faith, we put Him on. We are now dressed in Christ, and that affects our behavior.

There is a short story that sort of illustrates this. It's titled "*Clothes Make the Man.*" It's about three thieves in Paris who plan to rob a house. Two would do the job, and the third, who was not a very bright person, would stand watch in a policeman's uniform. And all he had to do was stand there in this policeman's uniform. No one would suspect anything with a policeman standing in front of the house. So, they dressed him up, stood him out front while the two were inside robbing.

Well, while they were doing that, the third began to act like a policeman. He saluted a passing officer. He helped an old lady across the street. He even kept the peace on the street. So, he became so identified with his uniform that when his partners

in crime came out, he blew a whistle calling the cops and yelled, "I arrest you in the name of the law."

Well, this is written as fiction and to be humorous, but there is a sense in which it is true. Clothes don't make the man, but they can certainly influence the way he or she thinks and acts. And for the Christian, when we realize that we have "...put off the old self and put on the new..." (vs9), that we are dressed in Christ; that we are dressed in His righteousness; this has is influence on us—a proper influence. We are righteous sinners; it is true. The Reformers coined that expression, and it's a good one. We are righteous sinners. We are forgiven; we are justified; we are declared right by the Judge of all the Earth, and He treats us that way. We are His sons, His daughters, His children – but still sinners. And yet we're born again.

Believers in Jesus Christ are 'in Him' and a 'new creation', —new men and women. It's as though we're not only wearing a policeman's uniform, we are policeman who are maybe better. More of a biblical analogy: We are not only wearing princely garments; we are princes and princesses. We are royalty. We really are. We are sons of God, daughters of God, children of God, heirs of the kingdom to come. We still have the filthy rags of our old life on. But they don't go with the regal robes that we now wear. They don't fit our white robes of righteous and the new life that we now have. 'So get rid of the rags', Paul is saying, 'put them all aside. Start blowing the whistle on that old stuff and start doing the new. Live according to who you now are.'

It is a struggle though. I don't mean to make it sound easy, and certainly the apostle Paul wasn't being glib about any of these things. It is a struggle; it is a life-long struggle that we will be in—to the last day of our life in this world.

But it's a reality. We are new creatures. Paul adds three things to his statement in verse ten that believers have put on in the new self. Three things that are very encouraging. The *first* is that 'the new self is being renewed'. The life and power of Christ that is in us, (because He is in us), is active in changing us. It is a power that is transforming us and is changing us according to a pattern. This is the *second* thing that's encouraging: This change is according to the image of the One who created us. We are

being made like Christ in His image. This is continually going on within us. It's what Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 16, (a verse that the older I get, the more I love it), "We don't lose heart," he says, "though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." It's not easy getting old. But what's glorious about it is what Paul is saying, 'While you're getting old on the outside, on the inside you're getting vigorous.' So, we have ability to obey.

And *thirdly*, we have "knowledge" —what Paul calls, "**true** knowledge." Not the fake knowledge that the false teachers were peddling there in Colossae; the myths, the mysticism, and the magic that they were proposing. No—'in Christ' we have **truth**. So we, "...¹⁰ have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him..." And that 'knowledge' is food for the soul. It is used of God to reconstruct us—to remake the image of God within us. And this 'renewal' is a work of the Holy Spirit which He does through the Word of God. If you are not experiencing the kind of change that Paul speaks of here, maybe it's because you're not studying the Bible as you ought.

If Paul were here, he would say, 'I don't feel like I'm experiencing the kind of change that I ought to be experiencing.' None of us will do that for that is the struggle. But here is the fact and what we need to get into our mind and believe: Scripture is sufficient for our sanctification and we need to apply ourselves to it. And to the degree that we do, we will experience change.

Now in verse 11, Paul says that it is not only the old life and its sinful habits and attitudes that have been done away with in the new creation, but also the barriers that divide people. "A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all." All the things that separate people are included here: race, religion, language, and culture. The Jews looked down on the Greeks because they were irreligious and immoral; they were unclean; they were 'the dogs', they said. And the Greeks, on the other hand, had no more respect for the Jews or anyone. They censored everyone outside their language and culture. Anyone who didn't speak Greek was a

barbarian. And the worst of the barbarians were the Scythians, the tribes from around the Black Sea. Paul mentions them here as really the epitome of a barbarian. Many of them were slaves of the Romans. Josephus said, "They were little better than wild beasts." They were often figures of amusement in Greek comedies—the Scythians.

But the gospel breaks down all of these barriers; the religious, cultural, and social barriers that make all of these people separate from one another. It breaks those down and brings them into one people. —And that's what the Church is. The Church is the new humanity. God's grace does what the world can only aspire to, think about, and try to accomplish with the United Nations. It doesn't happen. It happens only in Christ, and in Christ all of these are brought together and are all equal, each with the same privileges and status.

There's no distinction Paul says between "slave and freeman". Now, that was a revolutionary idea. Aristotle, one of the great minds of the ancient world, called the slave a 'living tool': Not a human, not a person, not a real person; but 'a tool'. And that was the 'enlightened' view on the slave. Christ changes that. He gives dignity to the Scythian and value to the slave. He elevates all people. We are all equal in Christ, His new creation. And we are to know that, reckon that to be true, and live it in our relationships with one another.

Sometimes Christians are given opportunities to prove it and act on that. That happened in the arena in Carthage in the early third century, when the Roman aristocrat Perpetua stood hand in hand with her slave Felicitas. They both faced death together as equals in Christ, and it made a deep impression on the spectators. That's what grace does. That's what sovereign grace does. It's what Christ does. He joins us together in one new humanity. It's what we are to do when we realize that we have 'put off the old man and put on the new'. It affects the way we conduct ourselves and the way we treat one another.

And then, when we understand this, who we are in Christ, we begin taking off the filthy rags of that old life and putting on the holy conduct of one who is in Christ, joined to Him, joined to the Father, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and we have conduct that

is open, fair, and loving to all. And God help us all by His grace, by the power of the Holy Spirit to do that – to do that daily because this is a daily exercise, a daily effort; it never stops. We are daily, moment by moment, to be putting to death the deeds of the body and live to His glory daily.

Do you want to be a success? Do you want to achieve much in this world? Then don't live for this world. 'Set your mind on the things above, not the things that are on earth'. Dress for success by putting on righteousness. Live for Christ.

Let me end with the rest of the story of King Canute. It has a lesson for us. He didn't really think that he could halt the tides by a command. He wasn't a fool; he was actually very wise. He was making a point to his court. After being dashed by the waves, he said to his nobles, "Know how empty the power of kings is. There is none worthy of the name but He whom heaven, earth, and sea obey." And then he hung his gold crown on a cross and never wore it again. All honor goes to Christ. All glory goes to Him; so, we should live for Him.

'Someday', Paul tells us, 'He is coming back.' That is our hope—and it's true. And when He does "...every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth...". 'Someday you will bow your knee to Jesus Christ and confess Him to be Lord to God's glory' (Phil 2:10&11). Do not wait until it is forced upon you; do it now—willingly, gladly. He receives all who do. He will receive you at the moment you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. And not only that, He'll make you a child of God. He will dress you in righteousness and enable you to live a clean life—the best life. Trust in Him while you can. May God help you to do that if you have not. And all of us, may God help us to be 'putting off' the rags of the old life and wearing the righteousness of Christ. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank You for Your goodness to us and for this passage which, as I have said, is not simplistic, but it is simple. We need to understand who we are, believe it to be so, and act upon it. But we confess we can't do that in our own strength; we can do nothing in our own strength. But we are in Your Son, just like a branch is in a vine,

and because we are, we do bear fruit. And as we act in faith, we are able to do these things because His life is in us, and the Spirit of God is empowering us. Help us to understand that, and to act in faith upon the things that we've read, and live lives that bring honor and glory to You and are healthy for us. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

End of Audio