

# Putting on Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] Uniforms have a purpose, don't they?

If you are a Downton Abbey fan, you know what uniforms play, what role they played in the 19th century Victorian manor household, where each person had a particular dress code that related to their station and their role in life.

And though we might rejoice in the democratic overthrow of such social constructs, so that we can come to church wearing a suit coat or blue jeans and not worry about it, yet we still, even today, recognize the role that a uniform might play.

We see someone walking down the street in dark blue with a gold shield on their chest. And when we see that person in uniform, we expect certain things from them, don't we?

We know who they are. That's a policeman. And we expect that they are going to uphold the law, be helpful, be a serve, what is it, to serve and protect the community.

[ 1 : 32 ] This is the role that they've been called to. And even more so as we, or, you know, in other contexts, we see a similar thing. If we see someone in military uniform, or we walk into the hospital and we see a long white coat, we have expectations and we have these roles that we expect, that we, as we see a uniform, we think, oh, now I know who this person is and I know what to expect from them.

What kind of uniform ought a Christian to wear? Well, clearly, look around, at least today, it's not a certain kind of clothing, is it?

Praise God for that. Right? We have freedom to wear the clothes that we enjoy wearing. But as we think about Christians in this world, there have been times when Christians would be known.

They would put on not physical clothing, but certain characteristics that would be known. There's sort of the old saw, right? Christians are people who don't drink or chew or go with girls that do.

Right? Some of you are way too old or way too young to recognize that. But in the 1950s, that was kind of a thing. So, it would seem like the Christian clothing, so to speak, would be very simple.

[ 3 : 02 ] Right? To be like Jesus. But isn't it true that that's a fraught concept today?

To figure out what it is that Christians ought to wear in our public persona, in our private life. And it's hard. And it's hard.

It's fraught today because we live in a time and place where it's challenging to know what does that look like. Certainly, if you asked 10 people on the street in New Haven what the public perception of a Christian is, they would talk about politics.

They would talk about hypocrisy. They would talk about intolerance. And they would talk about rigid moralism. This is what our culture today expects.

When you say Christian. And though we may protest that, in fact, it ought to be something different, we struggle, even privately, with what is it that we are supposed to put on.

[ 4 : 14 ] We don't want to look like those things. But we know our own hearts. We fear hypocrisy in our own lives.

We run from wanting to be known as Christians at times because we know that our past sins and our present failures continue to haunt us.

And we wonder, how can we wear anything publicly? I think often, in light of this, we take off our clothing altogether, so to speak.

We put off our Christianity and don't wear it at all. We live a highly privatized faith where we don't talk to people about it and we don't really seek to live it out.

Or sometimes we think, well, I don't know. I don't know what these people think, but I'm going to try to please them.

[ 5 : 18 ] And so we end up coming up with a different kind of clothing that will be more acceptable in our culture today, but that may be veers from what the Bible actually says.

Why am I talking about all this? Well, because as we continue in our series in the book of Colossians, we're talking about clothing today. That's actually the language that the Apostle Paul uses as he's instructing the Colossians in chapter 3 about how they are to live out their life in Christ. If you want to turn with me in your Bibles, in the Pew Bibles, it's page 984, I believe. We're going to look at chapter 3, verses 9 through 17. And we're going to be asking ourselves the question, what are the clothes of a Christian?

What is it that God has called his people to put on? And how might we do that? So let's first read the passage and ask for God's help.

Colossians 3. I'm going to be focusing my message this morning on 12 through 17, but I'm going to back up a little bit and start in verse 5 just so you get the context and the flow of the chapter.

[ 6 : 39 ] Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming.

In these, you too once walked when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here there is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave-free, but Christ is all and in all. Put on, then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other.

As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

[ 8 : 02 ] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which, indeed, you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for this word. Lord, thank you for the encouragement and the exhortation it is for us to live as those who bear the name of Christ.

Lord, we confess how we need correction and instruction. Lord, how we need encouragement. How we need to remember what it is that you have called us to in Christ.

Lord, I ask for your help this morning, that, Lord, as we look at this word, that you would use me and that your word would be clear and that by your spirit you would apply it to our hearts and to our lives for your glory.

[ 9 : 15 ] And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. What are the clothes of a Christian?

We're going to look at three parts this morning. First, we're going to look at the foundation. Second, we're going to look at the form. And third, we're going to look at the focus of what it is that God has called us to put on in Christ.

So first, let's look at the foundation. The foundation of what it is that God has called us to, what we are to live in, is the new reality that Christ brings to our life.

We read back, look in your Bibles with me, in verse 10. Right? Verse 9 says that you've put off your old self with its practices. All those things that were listed before says you had an old self that you have put off because of Christ.

If you remember back in chapter 2, Paul reminded us that we have died with Christ to this old life. To this life that was controlled by sin and rebellion against God.

[ 10 : 31 ] Verse 10 then says, And we have put on a new self which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. The starting point for what we are to put on is the fact that Christ has made us new.

We are being restored to what we were meant to be as women and men made in the image of God. That sin has marred that and ruined it for us.

But in Christ now, in the redemption that he is bringing into our lives, he has fundamentally changed us so that we are now made new. What used to be true of us is no longer fundamentally our

essence.

You are different. Therefore, be so. How do we see some of these things played out? Look with me in verse 12 again. As Paul begins this instruction to live in particular ethical ways, to have a certain kind of character, he starts by calling them God's chosen ones, holy and beloved.

And if you listen carefully to the passage we read earlier from Deuteronomy 7, we are reminded that this is a special language that was used by the Jewish people in the Old Testament to describe these are God's special people.

[11:58] These are the ones that he has set his love on. These are the ones that he has made his own. These words remind us that he has chosen them, that it was God's initiative towards them, and that therefore they ought to be not proud, but humble, recognizing that God did so for no good reason, that was in themselves, but only by his good pleasure that he chose them.

Now, it also reminds us that God's dispossession towards them is that they are beloved in him. God has not simply coerced a bunch of people to serve in his army, but he has sacrificially laid down his life to make them his own family.

And so he sets his love on them. As a husband sets his love on a prospective wife, saying, that didn't come out right. As a man sets his love on a prospective wife, says, I have chosen you to be mine.

This is what God has done for his people. And it represents their role and their purpose. This word holy, which we usually hear in ethical, moral terms, is actually a term that means set apart.

When you're not in the military, it doesn't matter how you act in relationship to the military standards and expectations. But when you are brought in, you are set apart, and there is now an expectation for you to act in a certain way that is in accord with the new role and the new identity that you have.

[13:37] And God has now set you apart to be his. You are now in my family. Live like it. Yes, it is ethical.

It is moral. But fundamentally, it's reflective of the character of the Father God who has made you his own. So the foundation is not only having a new self, not only being given a new identity and a new relationship with God, but verse 13 reminds us that the foundation is based in the very act of our salvation, that in Christ, God has forgiven us our sin.

The sin of rebellion against God that has been lived out in so many different ways, listed in the earlier chapter. Go back and listen to Pastor Greg's sermon from last week to think about all the things that we are to put off because they are not of God.

Paul reminds us that these things were shackles that bound us. They were a cancer in our spiritual soul. They bear a weight of guilt that crush us.

And Christ came to set us free, to set us free to pursue life and holiness. Godliness. And godliness. To set us free to finally be able to do what is right and to rejoice in it.

[15:08] He pulls from what Paul reminded us in chapter 2, verses 11 through 16. That though we in our sin stood before a holy God, guilty of law-breaking and of rebellion.

Christ came and by bearing our sins, he took that guilty verdict and he nailed it to the cross. You guys know that great hymn.

It's nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. It is no longer ours and we are free from its penalty and from its power. Christ has forgiven us of our sin.

And finally, in verse 15, we see that we have been called into the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ, as we'll see, has both vertical and horizontal elements.

But here, the peace that we've been called into, first and foremost, is peace with God. Because our sin has been taken away, because we've been made new, because we've been brought into the family, we now have a relationship with God that is not characterized by fighting and struggle and strife, but by love and peace, by submission.

[16:32] So we see that the foundation of this new life in Christ is a new identity and a new standing in Christ. And this is what it means to be a Christian.

And the fundamental framework, and it's not just here in Colossians, it's throughout the New Testament, is that we are to live in a certain way, not to be accepted by God, but because God has made us new in Christ.

And the ethical exhortations for us to live in a certain way are to be who God has already made us to be in Christ. You are dead in your sins and trespasses.

He has made you alive in Christ. So put off the old that's dead and put on what is new. So that's the foundation.

The new life has a uniform that comes with this identity and this standing. What does it look like? What is this new way? Well, friends, there's a rich, rich painting here of what it looks like to put on Christ.

[ 17 : 45 ] Verses 12 through 16 show us what it means, what the form of this life is to look like. And it has two parts of it. There's a character to put on and there are patterns to be controlled by.

But one of the things that you will notice most clearly, and this is parallel to what we've seen back in the earlier verses in verse 5 and 7, that sin certainly is something that we do.

But these actions that we do, these things that come out of our mouth, they ultimately spring from our hearts. And that when Christians are commanded to do things or to put on things that are the uniform of the Christian, we are meant to put on things first and foremost in our heart that is then expressed in how we live and how we relate to others.

This is in direct opposition to what we saw back at the end of chapter 2 where Paul condemns empty, self-made religion with its rules.

Do this, don't that. Don't do this, don't that. Don't do that. It's not this externalism. But in fact, this internal transformation of our hearts.

[ 19 : 05 ] What does it look like? Well, let's walk through these quickly if we can. We could be here for a long time unpacking these wonderful words and the richness of them. But I'm going to try to give you a portrait, a painting of it.

What are we to put on in Christ? Look with me in verse 12. We're to put on compassionate hearts.

The word heart there is actually talking about our, it's easier, more literal translation is our bowels.

The very center of our being, the very core of who we are is meant to be one of compassion.

Compassion is one who seeks to understand rather than simply to judge.

Compassion seeks to come alongside rather than to exclude or inflict. It is this compassion that Paul appeals to in Romans 12.1 where he says, therefore, as you have received the mercies of God, offer yourself up as living sacrifices to him.

And those mercies of God recount all that he's talked about in Romans 1 through 11 about the work of Christ in saving us from our sin.

[ 20 : 23 ] God has been compassionate to us, not treating us as our sins deserve. The second thing that Paul says is kindness.

We are to put on kindness. Kindness is a generosity and a consideration towards others. In the Greek version of the Old Testament, it is what is translated in Psalm 34.8 that we are to taste and see that the Lord is good.

It's the same word here, that the Lord is kind. That the basic approach towards someone is to want to do them good and to have a way of considering who they are.

The third thing we see in this list is humility. Interestingly enough, humility in the ancient world was almost always a negative term.

It talked about mean and base servile types of activities. It often was derided as a negative. And yet in the scriptures, God takes this idea and he redeems it and he fills it with something good.

[ 21 : 43 ] Maybe you sit here today and you think of humility as someone who's always getting walked over. Someone who never stands up for themselves. Humility might be thinking poorly of yourself.

Like I'm no good, I'm no good, I'm no good. And that that's what humility is meant to look like. But biblical humility is actually not thinking more highly or more lowly of ourselves than we ought.

It is actually to think rightly of ourselves. To see ourselves as God sees us. To recognize it as human beings created by an infinite creator God.

We are not the center of the universe. We are not the most important thing. We are not the greatest human being that ever blessed the earth or our family or our discipline or our school or our workplace or wherever else you want.

That we are not the greatest thing there. And yet, it does not mean that we are nothing, but we are something in God.

[ 22 : 49 ] And because of God. This is humility. humility. And God loves this. Isaiah 57, 15 reminds us that God is high above the heavens and yet he dwells with those who are lowly in heart.

So not only compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, but also meekness and gentleness. Gentleness has to do with a bit of how we carry out what we do.

To do it with a softness that does not do, cause undue harm. With a consideration for one another that is sensitive rather than insensitive to the needs, fears, concerns, or vulnerabilities of those around us.

That's what we see is meekness here in this translation. Finally, the last one is patience.

Now we all know we need more patience. All you have to do is get in your car and drive in Connecticut. And we know we need more patience. And if we have to go to DMV, Lord help us, we know we need patience.

[ 24 : 16 ] But the patience here is actually even greater than that. Because the patience here is a long suffering in the face of sin. It is withholding condemnation and judgment in hopes of a better outcome.

When after the Israelites had sinned against God by creating an idol and worshipping it at the base of Mount Sinai, when Moses demanded that God reveal himself to him again, that he would see his face, God said, the Lord, the Lord, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness.

This is the patience of God. That he sees our weakness and our frailty. He also sees our proud and arrogant rebellion and our willful disobedience.

And he is patient with us, not wishing that any would perish, but that all would come to salvation.

This is why he withholds his judgment on this world.

Because he is working to redeem more souls. This is the patience of God. God. And this leads us, of course, into what we see in verse 13.

[ 25 : 36 ] Bearing with one another. We are not like the football coach that says, here's the standard.

If you can't meet it, you're off the team. Period. End of discussion. But we are called to bear with one another and bear up one another towards godliness in this.

And this is not a Pollyanna view. If you see what he goes on, he says, look, bearing with one another, if one has a complaint against another, he's saying, of course, we're going to have conflicts. We're a bunch of fallen people living in community together.

Of course, we're going to have complaints against one another. It's not a question of if we will have conflict. It will be a question of how we respond to it.

what is it that comes out of our hearts when we feel like we've been wronged by someone else?

What will come out of our hearts when we disagree with the decisions that have been made or when we feel slighted?

[ 26 : 41 ] How are we going to respond to the person who says something that we find offensive or difficult to hear? to bear with one another is to not be overly reactive to those things and to not fall into black and white thinking about how we view someone else but to continue to look for the good even as we resolve conflict, even as we have to speak the truth in love, even as we have to admonish one another sometimes, we do it in a way that is forbearing.

And of course this leads us to the next thing as well. Bearing with one another and forgiving one another. Forgiving is one of the most remarkable things that Christians understand because in Christ we have been forgiven of our sin.

Forgiveness means that we do not take the role of judge, jury, and executioner in someone else's life. We do not stand in the role of taking vengeance and inflicting punishment on someone else for their sin against us.

We can live in a world where we misunderstand forgiveness a lot. Let me clarify a few things. If I go to you because I've said an unkind word to you and I say I'm sorry I said that will you forgive me?

And you say yeah it doesn't matter. You have not forgiven me. Maybe you've born with me. Maybe you've overlooked my sin. But if I've done something but if I've actually sinned against you forgiveness means that I look you in the eye and I say yeah that was wrong and it hurt.

[ 28 : 47 ] You deserve judgment for it but because of Christ I am not going to do that. I will not take it out on you. That's what forgiveness means.

It doesn't mean ignoring wrong. It doesn't mean absolving someone of any consequences for their sin. It doesn't mean that we don't stand up and protect one another when wrongs are being done but it does mean that we do not stand in judgment and bring condemnation to others and the only reason why we can let go of that is because of what God has done in Christ.

to forgive one another is to say yes you did sin against me but I am not going to hold that against you and in hopeful trust that God is at work and that he can rebuild this relationship and restore trust I'm going to engage with you.

Why? because that's what God does with us. Think about this my friends. How offensive has your sin been to God?

Has he brought final judgment against you? Has he brought the rightful punishment that you deserve for your rebellion against him? For your disregarding him?

[ 30 : 30 ] For you're not treating him as the God of the universe who deserves our worship and our praise and our adoration and everything that we have because everything we have has come from him in the first place?

Has God treated you like that? In fact he hasn't. He's done the very opposite. He sent his very own son to take the very punishment that you deserve upon himself in love so so that you might be forgiven of your sin.

This is why Jesus tells us that we are to forgive 70 times 7 for one another. And why even when we go to one another to confront sin we must go first taking the log in our own eye.

A recognition of our own sinfulness and our own desert of punishment. judgment and the way that God has so graciously and mercifully dealt with us so that we can deal with others.

This is the meaning of the parable of the unforgiving servant who is forgiven a great debt and then turns around and refuses to forgive the small debt of one who owed him.

[ 31 : 48 ] love. And friends of course this is the greatest expression of love that we have.

This is the final thing that Paul tells us to put on in verse 15 or in verse 14. Above all these put on love seeking one another's good as God defines it is what love is.

It is not a warm feeling. It is not a romantic episode. It is seeking the good of others above your own.

And seeking that good not as you define it nor as they define it but as God defines it. This is Jesus love for us.

Laying down his life for sinners. A physician coming for the sick. A lover coming to reclaim a wayward spouse. A shepherd finding a lost sheep.

[ 32 : 56 ] A friend to walk with us. Jesus confronting the rich young ruler in his misunderstanding. Jesus bringing hope to the woman caught in what feels like terminal uncleanness.

Jesus bringing hope and clarification to Samaritan woman who has wandered far from God. Jesus speaking to Peter after the resurrection.

After Peter's betrayal of him and restoring him gently. This is love not that we love God but that he loved us and sent his son as Greg read earlier.

Friends what would it look like if the church was characterized by these things? What would it look like if Christians were known to be people like this in the world?

what a beautiful thing it would be if this were the uniform that we actually wore. And we know that the world will not always be impressed by that.

[ 34 : 11 ] But still we know it would be a beautiful thing. So not only are we to put on these character qualities but we're also to put on controlling patterns.

verse 15 and 16. Verse 15 talks about the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ is this standing before God that we have but Paul says it is to rule in our hearts and he applies it in our community to which indeed you were called in one body.

Pastor Greg covered a good bit of this last week in his sermon. That as Paul is giving these exhortations they're not merely individual but they're also and maybe even primarily corporate exhortations.

That we're to do this not as individual people but as a community of people that we're to express these characteristics to one another. together. That we would gather together as people who humanly would have nothing in common and who would have conflict with one another and not just to come together and to tolerate one another or to have a cold frigid distance but to actually have an embrace to embrace one another in the peace of Christ.

To look at someone with whom humanly I don't know anything except for the image of God and the redeemed image of Christ in that person and to look at them and to say we are together in one body.

[ 35 : 51 ] Do you guys know the movie Remember the Titans? I know it's old. If you haven't seen it you young people go see it. It's a great movie. It's about an integration of a football team. Black and white football team.

And it's particularly focusing on two of the characters lead football players on each team one white one black and how they develop a friendship even though they have no prior opportunity to do this. Now they do this over football right but near the end spoiler alert I'm just going to tell you near the end the white defensive captain is in a car accident and he goes in the hospital and his friend his friend Julius comes in to visit Jerry and Julius is black and he walks into the hospital and walks into the room and the nurse says oh no you're not allowed in there only Ken's allowed to go in there. And they developed such a friendship and such a recognition of the humanity in each other that Jerry looks out and says to the nurse Alice aren't you blind don't you see the family resemblance that's my brother.

Friends that's what the church is meant to be. We look at each other and we say you are my brother and my sister and I embrace you as such.

[ 37 : 27 ] This is what it looks like when the peace of Christ rules in our community. Not only is the peace of Christ to rule in us but the word of Christ is to dwell in us richly.

Paul says that if there is to be a controlling rule an authority greater than ourselves that binds us together it is the word of Christ.

Christ. And that certainly meant in Paul's time the declaration of what God had done for us in Christ. I think today we see that it means this as that declaration has been recorded and codified and preserved in God's word in the Bible.

It is to dwell in us richly. It is to be the center of our feasts and our conversations. It is to be the thing that we meditate upon and what fills our mind.

It is to be the thing that comes up regularly in our conversations with one another. Paul says we are to let it dwell richly in us teaching and admonishing one another.

[ 38 : 44 ] That is reminding one another, informing one another of the content of God's word, sharing with one another what it is that we are learning about God from God's word and then encouraging one another to continue to know God more in the midst of it.

And though we live in a fairly academic community and many of us think about deep theology and that's wonderful, it's great, but recognize that he says teaching and admonishing one another and how else do we do it?

By singing. What a wonderful thing. This is not ours in the library, but this is singing the songs and the psalms and the hymns. And don't get hung up on those words.

They're not technical words. It's meant to be a collective word to say all the words, all the ways that we can sing the truth about who God is. It's why we sing.

Have you ever thought how weird it is that Christians sing? But we do. We sing because it reminds us. It's a gift from God in a different way for us to learn and to speak God's word to one another about who God is, about how we are to live, about how we respond to him.

[ 39 : 58 ] So God's word dwells in us richly in our community. It dwells in us individually as we read and memorize and meditate, as we follow reading plans.

It dwells in us richly as we pursue this in small groups, together, whether it be formal weekly or bi-weekly groups, or whether it be the informal meetings over coffee and meals and in our homes, where we get to talk about the richness.

And not only that, but we get to sing. We get to sing. I don't know, in my family, we started, a couple years ago, we started singing grace as we ate meals. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Our God, our Father, once again, thank you for our blessings. Thank you for our blessings. Amen.

We sing these songs together, and they root themselves in our heart, and they shape us.

And this is what's to rule. Because, remember, it is God's word that tells us who God is, and what it means for us to be in Christ. Christ. So, friends, if this is true, then how do we put it on?

[ 41 : 18 ] How is it that we put on these character qualities and these patterns in our lives? Well, we're to do everything, whether in word or deed, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Remember, then, what uniforms are meant to do. They give us an identity, we know who we are, and they give us a role or responsibility, who we represent. And that's what the name tells us.

To do something in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is to say, I'm with him, or he's with me, but however you phrase it, I'm with him. I'm identified with his family.

I represent him, and that's to whom I belong. How do we do this?

How do we put it on? Well, friends, we have to wrap this up by looking at the whole chapter, right? Because putting this on doesn't mean to try harder to be a little more patient this week.

[ 42 : 26 ] To put this on doesn't mean to try harder to be a little more gentle with one another. It's not that we shouldn't try to do that, but that's not going to get us there. It's not going to get us there at all by far.

No, we first have to go back to the foundation that we now have in Christ and to remember that foundation. And then we go all the way back to chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, and the sermon that Pastor Nick preached two weeks ago.

This really should have been one really long three-hour sermon that all wraps it up together. We didn't do that to you. But how do we do this? If then you've been raised with Christ, you now have this new foundation, how do we live?

We fix our minds. We set our eyes on things above where Christ is seated. Great English Puritan Thomas Chalmers wrote this book that you all need to read, *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*.

How is it that we are transformed and changed? Not by trying harder to do better, but by loving something more than the thing we loved before that led to the patterns that we lived in.

[ 43 : 38 ] We love our sin because in the short term it gives us something that we want, but in the end it's death. And what Christ gives us is something greater for us to set our affections on.

And as we see him, he will root out our love of sin and he will bring instead his life to us as we meditate on who he is.

So let us close briefly by meditating and thinking about Christ for a minute. That we might arouse our affections for him, that we would be blown away again at what a savior we have.

Think of Christ in his humility who left all the privilege and power of heaven and humbled himself and took on the form of a man and made himself a servant and suffered and died for us.

Think about Christ in his gentleness as he walked this earth the way that he dealt with the broken, the outcast, the grieving.

[ 44 : 48 ] How he was only rough with those who were arrogant and proud. Think about his patience with us.

That he continues to allow a fallen world to exist so that he might redeem fallen people like you and me. Think about Christ and his forbearance.

He does not blow up at us at the end of the day when we fail again to put our dishes in the sink. He does not blow up at us again when we allow the car to run out of gas again and have to be rescued. His forbearance does not give in to frustration. And his forgiveness, he does not treat us as our sins deserve.

He does not say continue in our sin, but he says in your sin I will bear the weight and I will set you free from it. He does not use our past sins against us as a weapon.

[ 46 : 13 ] But he says as far as the east is from the west, so far I have removed your sins from you because Christ has borne it away. And his love for us, how he loves us, how he delights in us, how he sings over us, how he speaks truth to us, how he doesn't allow us to get away with sloppy, careless, selfish living, but how he confronts us to save us from those things.

And how in his confrontation, he lovingly woos us and walks with us and enables us. Do you know the power of being loved by someone who really believes that you can be something better than what you were?

Christ is the greatest one who knows what he has called you to be, what he's redeemed you to be for all who are in Christ. And friends, when we sit and behold Christ, when we look at these things, we can treat one another with the character and the patterns that we see in this passage.

I can be different towards one another, but towards others because I look at Christ, because I remember how he has dealt with me in my sin, and because I remember that if he's dealt with me in my sin like that, that's how he's dealing with John in his sin like that.

And if God is being gracious to John, who am I to be condemning and hate-filled, to be frustrated and despairing, rather than being compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, bearing with and forgiving one another out of love, that my brother might know the life in Christ that God has given him.

[ 48 : 29 ] Friends, can we put this on? Can we put on these clothes and be known for who we are in Christ? Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this word.

Lord, we do pray, Lord, that you would help us to obey this command to put on Christ in all of his manifestations, in all of his character and patterns.

Lord, help us. We pray for we so easily look to other things, cling to other things, want to try to do this in other ways, Lord, help us to put on Christ for your glory.

For your name's sake, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.