

## Our White Hat Colossians 3:12-17

Tease: There used to be a standard in old western movies that the good guys wore a white hat and bad guys wore black hats. You could always tell in the movie who was a good guy and who was not, just by how they looked. In Colossians 3:12-17 the Apostle Paul tells us that the world should see us as different by what we put on. But he was not talking about hats, he was



talking about character. Join us Sunday May 21, 2017 as Pastor Rich explores Colossians 3:12-17 and what we are to “put on”. Sunday School 9am Worship 10am. If you cannot join us in person

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## Our White Hat Colossians 3:12-17

We pick up where we left off last week in the middle of chapter 3 of the book of Colossians. Last week we saw that our old self died when we were saved and we were then made eternally alive with Jesus. We were saved by God’s grace through the blood of Jesus. As a result of our old selves being dead and now alive in Jesus we are to be focused on Jesus and His Word. We should be focused on serving properly through obedience to God and not our own wants and desires. So let’s dig into our text this morning.

*Colossians 3:12–13 (ESV)*

*12Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,*

*13bearing 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.*

Notice that Paul ties it back to what he said in the previous paragraph. As God’s chosen ones we are holy and beloved. Holy should not be viewed as Pious but as separated to God. When you were saved, you were purchased off of the slave market and separated from the world to God. Remember what we see all through the Old Testament, the separation of clean and unclean, holy and unholy. Jesus’ blood has separated us from the world.

Because we have been separated from the world Paul commands us to take visible decisive action. That action is to put on a character that is different than the world and resembles God Himself. We are separate from the world and should act like we are separate from the world.

As followers of Jesus we need to be compassionate. I want to stop on this one for a bit and consider what this really means. A great many people believe that giving people stuff is being compassionate. It might be but it also might be bad for them. The old Chinese proverb “Give a Man a Fish, and You Feed Him for a Day. Teach a Man To Fish, and You Feed Him for a

Lifetime”, I think gets it right. Since Lyndon Johnson was President almost 60 years ago there has been billions or trillions of dollars spent on taking care of the impoverished. It was called a compassionate act. But it has done very little to ease poverty. It had exactly the opposite result. We paid people to not work and now a few generations later and were an entire segment of society that no longer wants to work and is content to receive “free money” from the government. We have pain women to have more babies despite not having a husband at home so they have 6 kids and 6 baby daddies. That my friends is not compassion. That is a form of slaver and abuse. We would have been much better off 60 years ago to provide a job and training to allow people to care for themselves and their families. With the investment made in the last 60 years in America’s great experiment we would have provided a much more robust economy and far fewer poor and hungry people while spending less money.

The conservative Christian today is characterized as not having compassion because they do not want to just give money to someone that needs help. We are told we do not love our fellow man and Jesus fed the hungry. But Jesus also said that if you are not willing to work you won’t be eating. Humans are designed with the need to work. Even Adam in the Garden had work to do. He was to care for the garden. Sin made that work harder but work is not the result of sin. When we give people stuff without

work on their part we destroy their own internal value to and drive to work and that is not compassion.

Paul goes and tells us that we are to be kind. This is the idea of gracious acts. Things we do for others out of love, never expecting anything back in return.

Humility is one of the most difficult characteristics to understand and possess. I should point out that humility was seen as a virtue in the Greco-Roman world. In that world, a humble person was often seen as weak and/or a coward. So, Paul is really telling the church in Colosse that they needed to be completely different than the world around them.

We should define humility as Paul does in:

*Philippians 2:3 (ESV)*

*3Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility **count others more significant than yourselves.***

That's the definition of humility placing others before yourself. Their needs and wants before your needs and wants.

Paul also says we are to be meek, not weak but meek and patient. Some translations use gentleness rather than meekness. That perhaps is a little easier in our world to understand. Gentleness is the idea of not reacting harshly to others. Patience is closely related. We need to be patient with others, especially

when they wrong us, or when they don't get going when the light turns green.

We are to bear with one another is the idea of putting up with each other. There are going to be things that others do that drive us nuts. Unless these things are immoral, illegal or contrary to God's declared direction, we need to just get over it. If your wife squeezes the tooth paste in the middle and not the end get over it. That kind of stuff. Don't make an issue of everything you do not like.

Paul also tells us we need to forgive one another. Don't hold a grudge but remembering that the Lord forgave you so we also should forgive. You want to be responsive to God for forgiving you, forgive those who wrong you. Notice that is not a voluntary thing, Paul says we must forgive.

*Colossians 3:14 (ESV)*

*14And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

In verse 12 Paul told us to put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Forgiving others because we were forgiven by God. Now here in verse 14 Paul above all else put on Love. This is agape Love. That is great concern and care for others. It is love that brings us together and gives us the ability to have perfect harmony. It is only when love is present that harmony can exist.

*Colossians 3:15 (ESV)*

*15And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.*

Through love, being bound together, we can then let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. When we are saved, we are made part of the body of Christ. As a member of the body of Christ we to allow Jesus to rule in our hearts. What I find very interesting about this verse is that it is not in the form of a command but more like a wish from the apostle Paul. The command is to forgive and to put on the godly characteristics. But here in verse 15 this is more a wish for those who have been forgiven by God and have adopted characteristics of Godly behavior. It is not commanded and it is not automatic. It is however what Paul wants for each of us.

Paul also says that it is in effect a way for us to be thankful to God for what He has done for us. Just knowing that God saved you and gave the opportunity for peace with God makes us thankful to Him.

*Colossians 3:16 (ESV)*

*16Let 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.*

In the previous verses, Paul tells us we need to put on the character of a follower of God, a character that reflects God's character. Here he tells us to "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly". I love this verse! We are to let the Word of God dwell in us. How does it get there? You got to open the book! You have to be involved in the book by reading it, studying it and meditating on it. I love to sit quietly just contemplating parts of scripture. We also should be involved in memorizing it, getting to know it so well we can remember it in time of need.

This verse tells me that the life of the follower of Jesus must be centered on God and His word. Allow the Word of God to marinate in your mind. Allow it to have an impact on you. Time in the Word of God brings an inner peace and an appreciation for who God is and all that He has done for us.

But not only are we to be in the Word but we are to also be teach one another and admonishing one another in all wisdom. That means you also have to share with each other your study of God's Word. One of my goals in the exercises on Wednesday night in our Bible Study of having you go through a portion of the text looking for the timeless truths and principles is so that you can see and appreciate what is contained in the Word of God, every part of it. I want each of you to grow in your ability to handle the text so that you can teach each other.

My job as pastor/teach here is to teach myself out of a job. Get you all to the point you do not need me to tell you what God

says in His word. There is nothing in ministry that I love more than to watch you all grasp scripture like you never did before. That warms my heart and thrills me like very little else does. I love to see the light bulb go on for you when you study His word.

As you dig into His word it causes you to reflect on God which in turn cheers your heart and causes you to worship Him, sometimes not even knowing you are praising Him.

*Colossians 3:17 (ESV)*

*17And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Paul closes this paragraph by telling us that whatever we do we should be doing it for the Lord. That is how we act and what we say, all of it should be aimed at serving the Lord, for His glory. Notice that Paul does not say everything done in ministry should be done as to the Lord, but all things, whatever we do. Your life is to be led serving the Lord and reflecting His character.

Not only are our words and action bring honor and glory to the Lord we also should reflect thankfulness for what He has done for us. In our society today there is a growing thought that we are owed something and God is just giving us what we are owed. You do not want what you are owed because what you are owed is God justice, not His mercy. Remember there is a death warrant issued for you and it is only because of God

mercy and grace that it was nailed to the cross. We all should be dead, not eternally alive. God does not owe you eternal life and He does not owe you health and wealth. You owe Him your entire life, what you say and what you do.

## Conclusion

Because we have been saved by the blood of Jesus on the cross, we are to put on a character that emulates God. We are to be busy in God's word, becoming able to teach each other in help each other in living a life of service to God. Thanking God for all that He has done for us. Our entire life should be predicated on serving Him, following Him and thanking Him. That is the Christian life. That is what being a Christian is all about.

Next week, Lord Willing, we move into some more practical workings of a life lived for God. We will see some direction for husbands and wives, Children, Fathers, Slaves, masters etc. Paul gives us some practical direction on how we are to live.

So, read ahead, you know where will be studying next week and see how many things you can find in the text before we get there together. I would encourage you to do that every week. That is one of the advantages of doing book studies, you always know where we will be the next week. Compare your insights to mine next week. Perhaps you will see something in the text that I missed.

Let's Pray!