

And the Words Are.....!

I always find preparing a service interesting, thought provoking and a real learning experience.

In researching the message for today, I found 400+ done on this section of Paul's letter to Colossae. Each had a unique perspective and I didn't think I had another one to add. (Maybe I'm just lazy)

Most of what I'm reading this morning is taken from a thought provoking message, Who I Want to be in 2003, written by Pastor Don Schultz in 2002. He was challenging himself for 2003 but I have altered the year to 2016. "That's why our second lesson for this morning, from Colossians 3 fits perfectly with this time of the year. In a few days we will be bringing in the new year, and people will be making New Year's resolutions. What are yours going to be? This is the time of year when many people try to reinvent themselves. What kind of person do you want to be in 2016? Today we have a list of seven New Year's resolutions- seven things you can strive to be in the new year, as people of God.

In our text today, these resolutions are described as items of clothing.

God says to many Americans today, "The way you're treating other people is ridiculous. Here's how you can change. Here's how you can start over, Just like buying a new set of clothes..."

Look at verse 12: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." These are five attitudes you don't want to leave home without. Compassion is the first one. The opposite of this would be someone who is cold and heartless, someone who is concerned only with himself. Think of the character, Scrooge, a man who, for awhile, was too busy balancing his own cheque book to notice the needs of other people. A compassionate person is someone who not only balances his cheque book, but wants to help people around him. (at

church, in family, at work, neighbors, friends) What can I do to help you? “Clothe yourself in compassion.”

“...and kindness.” Kindness includes not only saying nice things, but doing nice things. Kindness is going above and beyond the call of duty to help someone out. I saw this the other day in a store. A small child pulled boxes of candy off the shelf and threw them on the floor. One burst open and there were M&Ms everywhere. The store clerk approached and said to the upset mother, “Don’t worry about this, I’ll clean it up. You just do your shopping. “Clothe yourself in kindness.”

“... and humility.” Humility means that you recognize your own weaknesses. You don’t think about how great you are. A few months ago I walked into a Holiday Inn. One of the young workers came up to talk to me when he realized I was a pastor, and then he proceeded to tell me about how he was in a Christian rock band, and how talented they were. He was very smart, he told me, and the Holiday Inn was lucky to have him as an employee. I smiled to myself as I listened to him talk. He seemed to be a nice enough guy, but he still needed to learn humility. He was really into himself, and didn’t realize how focused he was on his own greatness. “Clothe yourselves in humility.”

“...and gentleness.” Gentleness is the opposite of rage. Gentleness is the opposite of the man who’s ranting and raving at the customer service counter in the store. God wants us to treat the people around us gently.”Clothe yourself in gentleness.”

“...and patience.” The Greek word here contains the idea of being patient in unpleasant circumstances. When the gas station attendant has no clue. When it’s the bank teller’s first day on the job. When the mechanic tells you that you need a new air filter, even though you just put a new one in your car last week. You are patient with the people around you even in trying circumstances. “Clothe yourself in patience.”

These first five New Year’s resolutions are very important. I resolve that in 2016, I will be compassionate. I will be kind, I will be humble, I will be gentle, I will be patient. I will deal with people in a new way, a nicer way, a way that pleases God.

And then there's the sixth item of clothing. Verse 13: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you have with each other." A grievance is a legitimate reason to be upset with someone. What does it mean to forgive? The last part of verse 13 says, "Forgive, as the Lord forgave you." Jesus our Lord, could have many grievances against us. All the things Jesus wants us to do, and we don't do them. All the things that Jesus doesn't want us to do, and we do them. But Jesus forgives whatever grievance he has against us. He wipes all the sin out of your account and he holds no grudges.

And that's how Jesus wants you to forgive the people around you. Forgive completely.

And finally, verse 14: "And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." That's the seventh, and biggest item of clothing. After you have put on compassion, and kindness, humility, and gentleness, and patience and forgiveness- after you have put all these other things on, then over all these virtues put on love. What kind of "love" are we talking about here? When the Bible says, "Over these virtues put on love," It's talking about a special kind of love. The Greek word is "agape", one-way love. In other words, you love me , even if I don't love you back. It's a strange kind of love, the kind of love that God has shown to the world. Even though the world didn't love God, God loved the world, and sent his son on Christmas. This is the kind of love that God is talking about here- a one-way kind of love.

Where in the world are you going to get the strength to carry out these seven New Year's resolutions?

Here's the answer: Christ will change you. Spend time with Christ in 2016 , and he will change you.

I pray. O Lord Jesus, by this time next year, help me to be more compassionate, more kind, more humble, more gentle, more patient. By this time next year, help me to be a forgiver. Help me, more and more, to show that special one-way kind of love that you have shown to me. "

Schultz had set high goals for himself for 2003.

Will any of us choose some of these for 2016?

And the words are: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and LOVE.

On to verse 17: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

I find this particularly poignant as not only do I believe it's true but it goes back to something I did in YAH time several weeks ago.

I quoted a 13th century Christian mystic, Meister Eckhart, who said, "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is THANK YOU, it will be enough."

I talked about using that myself and at least one other member of the congregation has told me they find it helpful.

I hope that you may have found some of the ideas today useful.

And the words are: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and LOVE, and THANK YOU.

Prepared by Sharron Onciul Dec 27, 2015