

Devotion May 4, 2020

A Devoted Heart-It Is Not Easy to Be a Christian

Let us pray: Gracious God, our world and lives seem to be unraveling right before our eyes. May Your word today inspire us to clothe ourselves with the things needed to be more Christ-like as we move through this time of unraveling.

Colossians 3:12-14

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Last month I used Colossians 4 as a devotion about devoting ourselves to prayer. Today we are in the 7th week of staying home and I believe it is safe to say we all have a touch of cabin fever! On the few warm days people are out walking or working in their yards, however today it has been on the chilly side. Staying inside with children, spouses or alone for 7 weeks is not an easy thing to do, there will be times when children misbehave because they are bored, and spouses might misbehave because they are frustrated and worried about things. Loneliness for single people who are accustomed to a busy life now staying home is difficult. This is a trying time for all of us.

The times when I go on Facebook or watch the news, I am constantly amazed at the stories about people misbehaving, and they probably need to read Colossians 3:12-14.

Chapter 3 entitled "Rules for Holy Living". The first part of verse 12 begins with therefore and this tells us these verses are a continuation of what was previously said, as well as a conclusion. This letter from Paul who is in prison, is in response to the news of false teachers in Colosse who were saying that the Christian faith was incomplete. This could be a letter written for any time in history.

Paul tells the Colossians to rid themselves of anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from their lips and to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

When we are put into situations by no fault of our own, we get angry sometimes. We may resent having to stay home, wear a face mask, put gloves on, social distance, and wash our hands constantly. I fully understand. It puts a crimp in our daily lives, and our hands feel like sandpaper!

Whatever our situation may be, it is not uncommon to be angry that some people do not seem to be able to follow the rules or suggestions of social distancing, wearing a face mask, and staying home. When we are upset with them, we are judging them. I know, I can hear you thinking, but Pastor Linda, they are not following the rules and I am! They could make me (or someone) sick. It is not fair! No, it is not fair, but getting angry is not going to help the situation. Paul tells us to “bear with each other” in other words, there are going to be times when things make it difficult to get along, and we need to bear with it for the sake of the community. This goes both ways, the people who are not following the rules need to understand that their behavior effects the whole community.

The community of Colosse had a problem with false teaching, we have a problem with health risks. We as a community of faith, are to be reminded in the difficult times we are to have a devoted heart that is clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, AND Patience, bearing with one another, forgiving and love. It is not easy being a Christian in troubling times. What do you do to remind yourself how to clothe yourself in the things Paul writes about being God’s chosen people and dearly loved, he also said that we are to forgive as we have been forgiven through Jesus. We as Christians are to be Christ-like, even in the tough times, even with people who do not think or behave as we do. We are to have devoted hearts to being like Christ. Amen

Put on the clothes of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, remember to forgive and to love so we will in perfect unity with one another. May the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you, the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. Amen