

READ

Colossians 3:12-17

CONSIDER

SCBC sisters and brothers, I am so looking forward to being with you again in worship. I want to thank the English Ministry pastors for the invitation to participate in this summer sermon series working through Paul's letter to the Colossians.

When I was a child in the 1950's getting ready for Sunday morning was a big deal. The first thing my mother wanted me to give attention was my shoes. Did they need to be shined? That was usually a job for Saturday night; on Sunday morning I was expected to dress in my best clothes. Things are different sixty-plus years on. And for the most part things are better. Except Paul might tell us even today Christians ought to pay attention to what we wear—not a matter of T-shirts versus suits and ties but rather the clothing of Christian character that we are to put on each day.

In the Epistle to Diognetus, a second century Christian document, the writer tries to explain something of the attitudes and attributes of Christians. Here is that description:

*"For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of humanity by country, language, or custom. For nowhere do they live in cities of their own, nor do they speak some unusual dialect, nor do they practice an eccentric way of life. This teaching of theirs has not been discovered by the thought and reflection of ingenious people, nor do they promote any human doctrine, as some do. But while they live in both Greek and barbarian cities, as each one's lot was cast, and follow the local customs in dress and food and other aspects of life, at the same time they demonstrate the remarkable and admittedly unusual character of their own citizenship. They live in their own countries, but only as nonresidents; they participate in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is foreign. They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. **They live on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.**"*

What we put on as Christians shows that our loyalty is to the Kingdom of God. Christian clothing is not a matter of fashion; it's a matter of faith. I hope to see you on Sunday and that God's Word will strengthen and encourage your faith.

Pastor Bill Norman

PRAY

Heavenly Father, the one who has loved us and chosen us and who is making us holy through the gift of faith in Jesus our Saviour, by the power of the Holy Spirit help us to put on the character of Jesus and be the compassionate, kind, humble, meek, patient, forgiving and loving people that our church and our world needs so much. Do this for our sake and the sake of your kingdom. In Jesus's name. Amen.

DIVING DEEPER

Have you been baptized by immersion? Do you remember that experience? What was and is the spiritual importance to you of your baptism?

Paul uses the image of putting on clothing to speak about the attributes of Christian character. What care do you take in choosing your clothing for each day? How could you demonstrate the same level of intention in putting on those lovely character "fashion" items Paul mentions?

Here's part of that description of Christians from the Epistle to Diognetus: *They live in their own countries, but only as nonresidents; they participate in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is foreign. They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. **They live on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.***

What would that sort of living look like today?