

April 28, 2019

Put On Christ
Galatians 3:23-29

3:23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.

3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

3:25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,

3:26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

1. White Robe

The next Sunday of Easter is called the "Sunday of White Robe." In ancient times it was a custom for baptism to take place at Easter, and those who were baptized were given a "White Robe" from the church and wrapped themselves. Even after being baptized, the baptized person wore this "White Robe" for a week from Easter and brought it back to the church on the next Sunday, so this day is called the "Sunday of White Robe."

The "White Robe" represents righteousness and holiness. In the book of Revelation the worship of Heaven is drawn and it is written: "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages,

standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.” (Revelation 7:9) And for those who wore this “White Robe,” the book of Revelation says, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:14) It is strange expression that “whitened with blood.” If a garment gets bloody, it becomes red and dirty. However, the blood of Jesus Christ, the lamb of God, on the Cross, cleanses people’s sins and whitens their garments. Those who wore “White Robes” were those who believed that the cross of Jesus Christ was “for their sins” and received the redemption of the blood, in other words, they were “redeemed” people. This “White Robe” is the “righteousness” and “holiness” given through the redemption of Jesus Christ.

Many of us live insisting that “I am correct” or “I’m better than that person” in everything. But no one is really right or clean. In front of the holy God, even our righteousness and purity are only like a dirty rag. Isaiah 64:6 says, “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”

The Holy God is at the same time the God of grace, and he is not only pointing out to us that our garments are dirty with sins, but also preparing the new and beautiful garments for us. Isaiah 61:10 says, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.” In the days when the status system was in place, the

common people were not allowed to wear something as luxurious as royals and nobles. However, there was only one exception: at the time of the wedding, the groom was allowed to wear the dress of the prince and the bride was allowed to wear the dress of the princess. “He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels” means that God loves those who are redeemed by Jesus Christ as his own children, as princes and as princesses of heavenly King. The “White Robe” worn by those who are redeemed show the privilege of being the children of God and also the love of God who has given that privilege.

Even today, most people who are baptized wearing white baptism gowns. The “White Robe” of baptism expresses that by the blood of God’s Lamb Jesus Christ, sin has been forgiven and cleansed, and that the person has been made a child of God.

2. Old Self and New Self

So, is the forgiveness of sins by Jesus Christ, and is purification from sin only one time? No, we need to be forgiven and cleaned daily. And in that way we can grow up as the children of God. Baptism represents the birth of the child of God. Growth should continue after birth. Those who are born as the children of God should become more like children of God in our real life. In ancient times, even after being baptized, the baptized person continued to wear baptismal white robe. This teaches that baptism is not a goal, but rather a starting point for the life of faith. The baptismal “White Robe” should not be thrown away after being baptized. We shouldn’t return to the original “old

clothes.” We should wear the “White Robe” daily from the day of baptism to the day when we will wear the “White Robes” again in heaven.

In Ephesians 4:22-24, it is said that believers by baptism took off the “old self” and wore the “new self.” It is written as follows. “To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” Man was created in the image of God. It not only means that humans have intelligence that other animals do not have, but it also means that the nature of God’s righteousness, holiness, and love are shared with God. However, because he sinned, he lost the image of God. But God has recreated the believers of Jesus Christ and restored the true form of God. That is “the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” in the letter to Ephesians.

When we sank in the water of baptism, our “old self” sank in the water and died, and when we were out of the water, a “new self” was born. However, this change is not all finished and completed at the time of baptism. Rather, the process of removing old self and wearing new self starts from baptism and is continued and deepened throughout life.

Certainly the old self is dead, but if the new self inside is not growing and mature yet, we will walk as if the old self is still alive. Physics includes the “law of inertia.” When a force is applied to an object, the object obeys that force, as long as nothing prevents it. For example, if you roll the ball, it will roll forever. In fact, due to friction

and air resistance, the ball will eventually stop, but in theory the ball will continue to roll forever. Even believers who took off the “old self” and put on the “new self” may continue to work on the way of thinking and living that have lived up to now, and may follow the spiritual “inertia law.” The power of this world to force believers to throw out new self and to wear old self again works harder than you think.

So, in Rome 13:12-14, it is also recommended that the believers who took off the old self and put on the new self again take off the old self and wear the new self. It is written as follows. “The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

Those who believe in Jesus Christ are covered in the clothes of Christ’s “righteousness” and “holiness,” and God sees not the sins of the person but the “righteousness” and “holiness” of the Christ, and accept the person. The “White Robe” is the “garments of salvation.” So, is the “White Robe” merely covering the sins of man from the eyes of God? It’s not. It works on the inner side of the person who wears it, and changes the inner side of the person into something appropriate for the outer side.

3. Put On Christ

By the way, Romans 13:14 says, “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.” and

Galatians 3:27 says, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” The “White Robe” that God gave us is, in fact, Jesus Christ Himself. “Put on Christ.” What does this mean?

In the fable of Aesop there is a story of a donkey wearing a lion’s fur. A donkey wore on the skin of a lion and walked around, threatening other animals. The fox came in, and the donkey made a voice to threaten the fox. But the donkey couldn’t make a lion’s voice. It was just a donkey’s voice. Then, the fox said to the donkey, “If you don’t speak out, I might think that you’re a lion and I might have run away.” It is a story of the lesson that a real thing is to come out when a person begins to talk even the person pretend more than himself. Does “putting on Christ” mean, like this donkey, to treat things even if you intend to become Christ? The answer is “Yes” and “No.” Both are different, but similar.

In English, we say “We believe in God.” By faith, we become God’s and enter in God. Also, as Galatians 3:27 says, “You were baptized into Christ.” We are taken into Christ by baptism. Therefore, it may be said that “putting on Christ” means that a believer intrudes completely into Christ’s body, just as clothes wrap the person. Of course, when we say “the body of Christ,” it does not refer to the body of Jesus who became a man, but to the glorious body of the resurrected Christ. The believer became a part of Christ’s body, lived in Christ, and lived for Christ. The donkey who wore the skin of a lion was a donkey and could not become a lion, but the Christian who wore Christ was transformed into a person like Christ, which is the true image of God. And we will hide himself in Christ and live for the purpose of glorifying Christ.

Paul said. “It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.” (Philippians 1:20) The word “be honored” used here has the meaning of “be increased.” The people of this world are desperate to “increase” themselves. They try to draw people’s attention and show themselves. But believers are not. We seek that “Christ will be honored in my body.” “Not me, but Christ.” That is “to put on Christ.”

Different occupations have their own uniforms. Wearing a uniform increases your sense of responsibility for your work. The pastor also has a shirt with a collar and sometimes I wear it when I go to the hospital. People know that I am a pastor at first glance, I can get priority in emergency room. When several people are in the same room, people who have not be visited by me asked me, “Pastor, pray for me.” I also pray with all my heart so as not to disappoint the expectations of those who trust in the clergy shirt. Everybody wears a uniform with a company name or wears a name tag naturally has a sense of working for the company. They use their heart not to lose the reputation of their companies due to their failure. Likewise, by “putting on Christ,” we work for Christ and try to live for Christ. Christians try to show the glory of “Christ” who is called in his name, not himself.

Christ has become a “White Robe” to hide the sins of the guilty from the eyes of God. God sees us through Christ. If so, then, it’s our turn to show Christ for people in order that they will see Christ through us. In a job with uniforms, you change into your uniform every morning and go out. Christian uniform is “Christ.” “Take off the

old self and put on Christ.” This is what you have to do every day. “Take off” represents repentance, and “put on” represents faith. Take off what should be thrown off and wear what should be worn. Every day, we are constantly renewed. Let’s ask God for such life of repentance and faith from the heart. Let’s seek to glorify Christ by our life of repentance and faith.

(Prayer)

God the Father of Jesus Christ. You have united those who believe in Christ, and with the cross of Christ you put our old self to death, and you make our new self to live with the resurrection of Christ. Our everyday life is to express this salvation work of Christ. Please make us to wear Christ, to start a day, and to live for glorify Christ. We pray this in the name of Lord Jesus, who has become our robe of the salvation. Amen.