

(Anno Domini, abbreviated AD or A.D. expressly complies with Isaiah 61:2 & Luke 4:19, i.e. "To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." (Isaiah 61:2)



12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. (Col 3:12-17)

We are ask, in many places of Holy Scripture, to "put on" some intangible thing such as the Mind of Christ, the whole armor of God, or, as here given, to put on kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, etc. What does Paul mean by this term, "put on?" A soldier is not a soldier unless he "puts on" a uniform – otherwise, he is accounted an insurgent or partisan without the protection of the laws of land warfare. General George Patton believed that a soldier must dress and look like a soldier or he will become a sluggard. We always feel more suited to the purpose if our dress is appropriate to it. If we dress reverently when we enter the sanctuary of the church, we will be more disposed to act with reverence. If we dress as a street bum, then we will be inclined to act as we dress.

Paul is speaking here of the "ELECT" of God. What does this term (elect) mean? It means "*called and chosen.*" If we are called of God, we must make our election sure through the way in which the Holy Ghost inspires us to live a life that reflects salvation. Do we give mere lip service to God's Word, or do we study diligently to see if all these things be true. If we love the LOVE LETTER (Holy Bible) that God has given us, will we not first love its Author? Are we not saved by Grace through Faith so that none of our cunning works are anything worth? "*Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. 7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded ."* (Romans 11:5-7)

Here is an explanation given by H.A. Ironsides: "Election has been has been pictured in this way. Here is a vast host of people hurrying down the broad road with their minds fixed upon their sins, and one stands calling attention to yonder door, the entrance into the narrow way that leads to life eternal. On it is plainly depicted the text, **"Whosoever will, let him come."** Every man is invited; no one need hesitate. Some may say, "Well, I may not be of the elect, and so it would be useless for me to endeavor to come, for the door will not open for me." But God's invitation is absolutely sincere; it is addressed to every man, *"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely"* (Rev. 22: 17). If men refuse to come, if they pursue their own godless way down to the pit, whom can they blame but themselves for their eternal judgment? The messenger addressed himself to all, the call came to all, the door could be entered by all, but many refused to come and perished in their sins. Such men can never blame God for their eternal destruction. The door was open, the invitation was given, they refused, and He says to them sorrowfully, *"Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life."* ... [But some will say], "I am going inside: I will accept the invitation; I will enter that door," and he presses his way in and it shuts behind him. As he turns about he finds written on the inside of the door the words, *"Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world."* Charles Spurgeon gave a similar illustration of election years earlier.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." IF you are the elect of God, you will put on the virtues described in this verse. "Bowels of mercy include the heart, intestines, lungs, stomach, etc. These are the vital organs of the person that harbor the life of his being. We must, in the very depths of our being, wear (and possess):

1. Mercy, because God has granted the same to us;
2. Kindness, for God has demonstrated the extreme limits of the same to us;
3. Humbleness of mind, for Christ demonstrated the essence of humility in allowing Himself to be abased and abused for us;
4. Meekness, for Christ, too, was meek and lowly;
5. Longsuffering, for Christ suffered the greatest for the least of us.

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Simple enough, isn't it? Yes, very easily said, but the doing is the crux¹ of the matter. This is what Paul referred to as *"I die daily."* (1 Cor 15:31) How can that be? Paul means that he subordinates HIS wants to those others around him for their benefit. He is continually giving up self for others. That sound so simple, and it is; however, few are able to achieve that level of holiness. How are we to forgive one another? Are we to go about, willy-nilly, forgiving men who are reprobate sinners (rapists, murderers, men-stealers, perverts)? No, if we lived life in that manner, there would never be a moral force against sin. How did God forgive YOUR sins? That is the way we are to forgive others. God does not forgive the sins of those who do not confess and repent, and neither do we. God does not expect more of us than he demands of Himself. Of course, if we argue, and are wrong, we should ask forgiveness of our friend. But why do you suppose we should forgive someone for arguing points of blasphemy against God? God gave us brains capable of logic. Let us use them!

You may forget about the points raised in the first two verses if you are in

¹ *Crux* - the decisive or most important point at issue. The word *crux* (genitive *crucis*); third declension - A wooden frame on which criminals were crucified, especially a cross. Thus The Cross is our Central Point, our frame of reference.

compliance with the next, for it is the catalyst of obedience, kindness, mercy, humility, meekness, and long suffering. ***“And above all these things put on charity (LOVE), which is the bond of perfectness.”*** Love perfects all other weaknesses. It covers ALL sins. ***“Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.”*** (Prov 10:12) Love is a commandment of Christ – the ONLY new commandment that He gave: ***“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”*** (John 13:34-35) This is actually a re-codification of an ancient commandment. ***“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”*** (Deut 6:5) and ***“. . . thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.”*** (Lev 19:18)

I have heard antinomian theologians claim these two latter commandments negate the obedience required of the Moral Law (Ten Commandments) but it certainly does not. Christ cleared the matter up completely when He answered the lawyers who challenged Him: ***“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*** (Matt 22:37-40) Obedience to the Moral Law requires, first and foremost, obedience to the Law of Love!

Now, how much has Christ forgiven YOU? Fine, that is the extent to which you must forgive other offenders. But love is the force that enables us to obey God. If our love is immense, our sins will be few. We love God ONLY because He first loved us. We belong to God because He CHOSE us. So His love must find an echo in our own souls.

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” You are a Christian, right? Do you still, at times, slip and fall? Do you still tell lies – even subconsciously? Do you still get angry without cause? I am guessing that you do! Does God immediately bring down the hammer of retribution against you when you do these things? The peace of God rules in our hearts even though we fall short of his righteousness. He gives us that sweet peace to love and to forgive. We, too, are one body. How can the body hate its own hands, or feet, or lungs, etc? Without our lungs, we perish. We need all of the organs our Lord gave us at birth. All of the cells and tissue of the body represent the members of the Church of God each of which serve a vital purpose to the life of the Body. Christ is the Head of this One Body. The head controls all aspects of the operation of the body – both voluntary and autonomic. The Body (Church) cannot live without the Head, which is Christ. Without Christ, the church is nothing.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” I love this verse! It makes the statement I have been trying to make with a profusion of words in my hymn devotions! Christ cannot exist in a heart that has no joy. It is because, where Christ is, there is joy. But please observe the rest of this verse: ***“. . . teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”*** How simple and profound! Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are intended to remind us of how far we fall when we are not in the grace of God. They also teach us, and those who hear our singing, the strong and immutable doctrines of the Church. Do you need to be reminded of Grace? How about John Newton’s *Amazing Grace*? Are you lonely? How about the Good Samaritan of Port Hope, Joseph Scriven’s *“What a Friend we Have in*

Jesus?" Do you need light to lead you? How about John Henry Newman's "*Lead Kindly Light?*" Do you need assurance? How about Miss Fanny Crosby's "*Blessed Assurance?*" etc, etc. Hymns are portable Bibles we can carry in our hearts. They teach and convict. The blaring and inharmonious racket that passes for worship music today simply lead astray, or into the Hell from which they spring.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." It is vitally important for us to know that we have from our Lord a "Power of Attorney" to act in His Name; but that does not give license to act outside His will in His Name. If we have put on the Mind that was in Jesus Christ, all that we do, all that we think, and all that we pray for will be in accordance with His will. An ambassador to a foreign power does not have authority to negotiate treaties that are not consistent with the will of the appointing sovereign. But when our lives are ordered by the Mind of Christ, our lives will glorify Him. Our prayers, too, will be granted for we do not ask amiss (James 4:3), or with iniquity in our hearts (Psalms 66:18), but out of a will surrendered to Christ. He is pleased to grant all things that are truly asked in His Name.