

May 3, 2020

## Our Default Position

*"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above...for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ...put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...rid yourselves of all such things as these; anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language...since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator...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..."*

Colossians 3:1-17

When Gloria and I were discussing what our gathering here might look like for today, she suggested that we meet up in the auditorium where we could spread out and practice 'social distancing'. I wasn't really very excited to do that and I'm still not. But I really didn't tell Gloria why I am opposed to going upstairs unless it is absolutely necessary.

Primarily the reason I don't want to meet up in the auditorium is because of the way we behave when we are in that area of the building. When we meet here in the fellowship area we act much more like family. We laugh, and joke, and excitedly share news and behave like family.

But when we go upstairs we suddenly change. We whisper and we are very reverent and serious. We change the way we behave from a family gathering for a meal to a family gathering for a funeral depending on where we are in the building. Sometime I am going to have to record us upstairs so that you can see what I am talking about. It really does happen. So, I am really hoping we can continue to meet like this, like family.

I have become convinced that a lot of us struggle with this same kind of thing in our daily walk with Jesus. There are times when we are our true selves and there are times when we are trying hard to be something we really are not. I liken it to putting on a suit. I know that I act a whole lot differently when I am wearing a suit than when I am wearing jeans and a sweatshirt. And, frankly, I would much rather wear the jeans than the suit.

The Apostle Paul uses similar language to describe who we are as believers. He tells us that we need to *"...put on the new self..."* and *"...clothe (ourselves) with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience..."* Now I don't think the Apostle is suggesting that we need to change the way we act in accordance with the way we dress. Instead I am convinced that Paul is telling us that we need to be changed from the inside out so that compassion and kindness and humility and gentleness and patience are our default position. These virtues should become a reflection of the real us; of our 'blue jeans self'.

In a crisis our 'blue jeans self' tends to come out. I think that has been true for most of us. In a normal world we behave differently than we do in a world turned upside down. It is, I think, the way we act and talk and behave in a world turned upside down that best reflects who we really are.

When Paul describes us, as he does in nearly every letter he writes, as changed beings *"...being renewed in knowledge in the image of our Creator..."* He is not suggesting that we need to put on a mask of Christian behavior when we are one place and be our 'real' selves in another place. I am convinced that the Apostle is talking about a very real transformation in each of us so that we are always full of compassion and kindness and humility and gentleness and patience. These

are not then, things that we do, but these are the very real attributes of who we are all of the time.

So, who are you? Who am I? What is our default position? How do we live and act in the auditoriums of life and how do we live and act in the fellowship halls of life? Are we transformed? Are we changed? Is our 'Christianity' something we put on like an uncomfortable suit or is our 'Christianity' our 'blue jeans self' that is always present.?

