

Place: Lurgan Baptist 24:2:2013

## COMPLETE IN HIM

Reading: Colossians 3:5-14

### 9. ALL DRESSED UP & SOMEWHERE TO GO

I wonder do you remember the story of Lazarus given to us in the gospel of John ? Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha, and the Bible says that Lazarus had died, he had already been buried, he was in the grave, and the word was sent to the Lord Jesus Christ. So after some delay the Lord Jesus came and He stood before the grave of Lazarus, and in a loud voice He said, “ *Lazarus, come forth.* ” ( Jn 11:43 ) Do you recall what happened ? The Bible says “ *And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes and his face was bound with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go.* ” ( Jn 11:44 ) That’s one of the great miracles of the Lord Jesus, the miracle of bringing Lazarus back from the dead. But can you imagine us visiting Bethany some time later ? “ *Mary, Martha where is Lazarus we want to talk to him.* ” “ *Well, if you want to talk to Lazarus you’ll have to go over to the graveyard.* ” **The graveyard ?”**

And you scratch your head just a little bit but you take their word for it and so you go on over there to the graveyard and you’re walking among the tombs and you’re calling out, “ *Lazarus. Lazarus. Where are you ?* ” And in a little while you hear a muffled voice and it says,

“ *I’m right in here.* ” And you go over to the grave and you look in for a moment and you say, “ *Lazarus, is that you ?* ” And from inside that grave you hear a voice, “ *Yes, it’s me.* ” And in a moment Lazarus comes a little bit closer to the entrance of the grave and you look at Lazarus and you see that he still has on those old grave clothes, those old smelly rags that reek of the smell of that old tomb where dead people are, and you look at him and you say, “ *Lazarus, what in the world are you doing here ?* ” And Lazarus says, “ **Well, you know, I’ve been in this grave for four days and I kind of got accustomed to it and I was just used to it, it just kind of became home to me, and so I just decided that I would just continue to live in the graveyard.** ” “ **Well, Lazarus what are you doing with those old clothes on ?** ” “ **Well, I’ve been wearing those clothes for several days and they kind of got where they fit me and I was kind of used to them, they smelled bad at first but now I’m kind of used to the odor of it, and so I’m so comfortable here in the graveyard and I am so accustomed to these grave clothes I just decided I’d continue to live here and I’d continue to wear these grave clothes.** ”

My .... would you not look at Lazarus and say, “ *Lazarus, that is totally inconsistent with what the Lord Jesus has done for you. Lazarus, Christ has raised you from the dead, you are a brand new man, you don’t have to live in a graveyard any more and you certainly don’t have to wear those old grave clothes.* ” Would you not agree with me that it would be so inconsistent for Lazarus to take a position like that ? Yet is this not the position

that is taken by many believers today ? They have been made new creatures in the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet they are still living in the graveyards of life, and when you look at there lifestyle and their daily behavior their lifestyle partakes more of the old life that it does of the new life. My .... is that you ? *Or are you all dressed up with somewhere to go ?* Many years ago a very wealthy man in a Southern California town was found wandering around the local country club wearing shabby clothes. He was promptly seized by security guards and charged with vagrancy, even though he owned the country club. *You see, he had failed to dress consistent with who he was.* Here in Colossians Paul uses this idea of dress to emphasize how we are to live as Christians, in light of what God has done for us in Christ. He links the idea of clothing to certain attitudes and behaviors, and he reminds us that certain things don't go together.

My ... if we're going to be successful in living the Christian life, then we need to know what to take off and what to put on. We need to learn how to clothe ourselves in those attitudes and behaviors that will make us successful. In other words, Christians must dress themselves spiritually in accordance with their new identity. Negatively, we must throw off the garment of the old lifestyle, positively we must put on the lifestyle of the new man. To do that we must first understand,

### **(1) THE CHRISTIAN LIFE POSITIONALLY**

Someone has said, “ *The New Testament way and method of sanctification is to get us to realize our position and*

*standing and to act accordingly.* ” Now the old man and the new man are two very important terms to understand.

#### **(a) *THE OLD MAN: That Has To Do with Our Past:***

Do you see ( 3:9 ) ? John Calvin says, “ *The old man is whatever we bring from our mother's womb and whatever we are by nature. It is called the old man because we are first born from Adam and afterwards are born again through Christ.* ” You might say the old person, is the person that you used to be before the Lord Jesus Christ saved you. Do you recall how Paul puts this ? ( Eph 4:22 ) Do you see what it says about that person that we used to be ? It says that it was corrupt according to deceitful lusts. There is nothing good in that old you, there is nothing that is acceptable to God in the old person. And you see, that's why you can't go to heaven by just doing better. My .... do you realize that ? That's why you can't be saved by just reforming and turning over a new leaf. The Bible says “ *the old man is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.* ” You see, there's only one thing, according to the Bible, that could be done with our old man. Do you recall how Paul puts it ? “ *Knowing this that our old man is ( was ) crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* ” ( Rom 6:6 )

Now you see the Bible says that when Jesus Christ died on the cross two thousand years ago our old man died with Him, our old man was crucified with Him. God says that old man won't do, God says there's nothing you can do to that old man, you can't renovate it, you can't

refurbish it, you can't reform it, and so God says, "*I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll just take that old man, the old you, and when the Lord Jesus dies on the cross I'll put that old man on that cross with Jesus Christ,*", and when Christ was crucified you and I, also were crucified. Do you know what substitution is ? Substitution means Christ died for us, Identification means I died with Christ. Now that's positionally, not literally but positionally. (a) But,

### **(b) THE NEW MAN: That Has To Do With Our Present:**

Look if you will at ( 3:10 ) Now the new man is what is formed in the believer because he is in Christ. You see, the new person, that person you become at salvation, is a brand new creation of God, it is something that God does. Paul says "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" ( 2 Cor 5:17 ) You see, the new creation walks differently from the world ( Eph 4:17 ) in divine love ( Eph 5:1 ) in the light of God's truth ( Eph 5:8 ) and in wisdom ( Eph 5:15 ) loving the Word of God and the Son of God, hating sin and pursuing righteousness. Now is that you ? I mean are you a brand new creation in Christ ? Has the Lord brought you from chaos to order, from darkness to light, from death to life ?

The story is told of the conversion of a sinful man whose wife and kids had been awfully beaten in his drunken brawls. Every one in the town knew of old drunken John unsavory character that he was. On his conversion, he knew that everything must be different. He thought of the

way that he had treated his family and he decided that he had to leave the hovel they were living in and find a decent home for his family. On going to the estate agents they made it plain to him that they were not going to entrust one of their respectable houses to an old reprobate like him. They knew old John. But his answer was, "*I think you're making a mistake. I fancy you're confusing me with someone else. Old John is dead, I'm new John.*" Now this is the believer's life positionally. Have you grasped this ? Do you realize what is involved in "*putting off the old man,*" and *putting on the new man* ?" Is Christ supreme in your life and does He mean everything to you ? (1)

### **(2) THE CHRISTIAN LIFE PRACTICALLY**

Now there are some believers who do not like the negative. "*Give us positive doctrines,*" they say. But do you see how Paul begins this section ? Look if you will at ( 3:5 ) The word "*mortify,*" means "*put to death.*" Now didn't Paul just say that that had already been done ? I mean look at ( 3:3 ) At the moment of salvation "*our old man was crucified with him,*" ( Rom 6:6 ) But that positional reality must be worked out in the believers practical living. You see, there can be no holiness or maturity in a life where sin runs unchecked. That's why Paul says "*Mortify,*" "*Put to death,*" and the word is very decisive in the language and it means that you can't quibble with these things and you can't pamper these things, you've got to deal with these kinds of things drastically and radically. It's the same kind of idea that the Lord Jesus had when He said "*and if thine hand offend*

*thee cut it off.*” ( Mk 9:43 ) Paul is literally saying “ *Kill it.*” This is not an option, it is a command. The great Puritan Richard Baxter wrote,

***“ Use sin as it will use you; spare it not, for it will not spare you; it is your murderer, and the murderer of your world; use it, therefore, as a murderer should be used. Kill it before it kills you; and though it bring you to the grave, it will not be able to keep you there.”***

So to “ *mortify*, ” is to put to death, to kill, to starve to death. Many years ago the practice was in England and still is in some Eastern countries to this day, that a thief had a hand cut off as a punishment for his crime. But the cutting off the hand did not solve the problem of the heart. Do you see the things that Paul catalogues that we need to put to death ? He talks firstly about,

### ***(a) SENSUAL SINS:***

Now remember in Paul’s day sexual immorality was not looked upon as immoral. Sexual sin was not looked upon as something that was to be set aside. It was generally accepted. The morality of the times taught that if you were married and wanted to have an affair on the side that was all right. Or if you were not married, and you wanted to have sexual experiences before marriage that was all right. My .... does that sound familiar to you ? Does that kind of ring a bell in what's going on in our day ? And so Paul takes this whole area of sexual immorality. He talks about,

### **1. Sins of Immorality:**

***Fornication:*** The word “ *fornication*, ” comes the word from which we derive our English word 'pornography.' It takes in the whole spectrum of immoral sexual relationships, such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and incest. It means sex before marriage or it means sex outside of marriage. My .... the Bible teaches that sex before marriage or sex outside of the marriage bond is immoral, it is forbidden by the Word of God. Paul says, “ *the body is not for fornication.* ” ( 1 Cor 6:19 ) My .... if you’re fooling around with somebody who is not your wife stop it right now. The Bible says put it to death, put it to death now. Then Paul talks about, ***uncleanness:*** Moral impurity in your thought life. This includes the area of the magazines that a person may see, pornography. It may have to do with the television or with the films that a person may see, visual pornography. I wonder do some of you men know what I am talking about ? What are you bringing up in your computer ? Listen, to me when I say marriages are being wrecked, lives are being ruined, families are being divided in this nation because of the sins of immorality.

### **2. Sins of Impurity:**

“ *Inordinate affection, evil concupiscence.* ” These words are better rendered “ *unnatural affection, and evil desire.* ” This speaks of moral indecency, filth and lust. It is the by product of a sex saturated society when soft porn escalates to hard porn, to rape, to murder.

### **3. Sins of Idolatry:**

*“ And covetousness which is idolatry,”* Covetousness is the desire to have more, it means to put anything between you and God and that's why the Bible says that it is idolatry. It is basically the enthroning of your own selfish desires where Jesus Christ ought to be. My .... do you see how important it is for you to stay close to the Saviour ? You see, the moment you dethrone Christ and enthrone self you're on a path that can lead to sin that you never dreamed you would commit. It all starts when you dethrone Christ and enthrone yourself. Paul says you better put it to death. If there is anything going on in your heart that's taking the place, the first place, that Jesus Christ has in your life today you'd better deal with it. (a)

### **(b) SOCIAL SINS:**

Dr. Campbell Morgan called these *“ the sins in good standing.”* Paul says *“ But now ye also put off all these,”* it's the picture a person discarding their dirty clothes at the end of the day, so Christians should discard the filthy tattered rags of their old life. Paul says *“ Put off all these,”*

Anger: this is the growing seething inner anger like steam in a kettle that is building up pressure. My .... do you have any anger in you ? We're living in a world filled with angry people aren't we ? There's a lot of anger in this old world. But the tragedy is sometimes God's people allow that old anger to begin to boil up inside of the. You see, its never a for a Christian to be angry except for one exception. The only time it is right to be angry is when you are angry at sin. ( Eph 4:26 )

Wrath: this refers to a sudden outburst of anger. You say, *“ Well, I just have to give people a piece of my mind.”* You had better save your mind, you need all you've got.

Malice: it means a vicious disposition. Just nobody can get along with you. I mean you're supposed to be saved and yet nobody can get along with you. They can't get along with you on the job, they can't get along with you at school, they can't get along with you at home, you've just got a rotten disposition. My .... we all have to watch that don't we ?

Blasphemy: I think here Paul is not talking so much about blasphemy against God as he's talking about slander of people. You know, one of the surest signs that you're not right with God is when you start talking about people, and criticizing people, and passing judgment on people. Besmirching, the good name of people.

Filthy Communication: that term refers to obscene and derogatory speech intended to hurt and wound someone. It could be translated *“ foul mouthed abuse.”* Such talk is expressly forbidden in Scripture. Do you recall Paul's words ? *“ Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting which are not convenient but rather giving of thanks.”* ( Eph 5:4 ) My .... there's nothing more unbecoming or that hurts the testimony of a child of God any more than the wrong kind of language. I wonder do you need to ask the Lord to sweeten your speech ?

Lying: ( 3:9 ) *“ Lie not one to another.”* And actually the language means stop your lying to each other. Oh, you

don't mean Christians would lie to each other would they ? Listen, lying characterizes Satan not God ( Jn 8:44 ) and when believers lie they are imitating Satan and not their heavenly Father. ( Titus 1:2 ) No wonder Paul says “ *Like a filthy garment put off all these.* ” Now do Christians in local churches commit sensual sins ? Yes. Do they commit social sins ? Yes. I am reminded of a pastor who preached a series of sermons on “ *the sins of the saints.* ” A member of his congregation challenged him one day and said it would be better if the pastor preached those messages to the lost. “ *After all,* ” said the church member, “ *sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the lives of other people.* ” “ *Yes,* ” replied the pastor, “ *its worse.* ” My .... how are you getting on practically in your Christian life ? Are you dealing with your sin ruthlessly ? Are you growing in holiness continually ? 1:2:

### (3) THE CHRISTIAN LIFE PROGRESSIVELY

Do you recall how the hymn writer put it ?

*More and more  
Still there's more to follow  
Have you on the Lord believed  
Still there's more to follow*

Is this not how Paul puts it in ( 3:10 ) ? The verb translated “ *renewed,* ” is a present participle “ *who is constantly being renewed.* ” In other words the crisis of salvation leads to the process of sanctification. The believer has once and for all put on the “ *new man,* ” and is being renewed. The better he gets to know Christ, the

more he becomes like Him. ( Phil 3:10 ) Indeed progress should be obvious in three areas.

#### (a) ***THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:***

Do you see the graces that Paul lists in ( 3:12 ) ?

**Bowels of mercies:** it means compassion. Tender-hearted instead of hard hearted. A teacher at an all women's class was opening her class in prayer. She prayed, “ *Lord give us tender hearts, give us warm hearts, give us loving hearts and Lord give us sweet hearts.* ” Just then all the women in the class said “ *Ah-men.* ”

**Kindness:** The word has behind it is wine which has matured and lost its harshness. Was there anyone more kind than the Lord Jesus ?

**Humility:** Humility is not thinking less of yourself, its not thinking of yourself at all.

**Meekness:** Now meekness is not weakness, rather it is power under control. In some countries they call the process of breaking a proud stallion “ *meeking a horse.* ” Once a stallion has been broken it has not lost any of its strength but its strength has been brought under control. Are you someone who resists defending yourself but are string to defend God and His Word ? Are you indifferent about promoting self but resolute to promote God and His Word ?

**Longsuffering:** this is the ability to stand up under pressure. The ability to stand calm, when everyone else is losing it. A young father was shopping in a grocery store with his little two year old boy in the trolley. The toddler was screaming until he was red in the face. Everyone in the store could hear him. The father would be calmly saying, “ *Calm down Donald, settle down Donald, be quiet Donald, you can do it.* ” A lady overheard him speaking and said to him, “ *Excuse me Sir, I want to commend you for the calm way you are talking to your son Donald.* ” The father answered “ *Oh no, his name is Henry, my name is Donald. Take it easy Donald, calm down Donald.* ” My .... are all these traits not something of the fruit of the Spirit ?

#### ***(b) THE FORGIVENESS OF THE SAINTS:***

“ *Forbearing one another,* ” it’s the ability to absorb someone else’s rage without retaliation. ( 1 Cor 4:12 ) The word “ *forgiveness,* ” is not acting as though nothing has happened; rather, it is restoring, and redeeming a relationship in light of what has happened. My .... when we think of how much the Lord has forgiven us is it a big thing for us to forgive others ? Do you have a forgiving spirit ? This is what the Lord requires since you are His elect, holy and beloved people. This is what the world expects for it looks for proof of the claim that we belong to Him. ( 1 Pet 2:15 ) Are you making progress in this respect ? Is this part of your new wardrobe ? Or are you still holding and harboring bitterness in your heart ?

#### ***(c) THE FRAGRANCE OF THE SAVIOUR:***

For when “ *Christ is all and in all,* ” we will have the fragrance of Christ in our lives and that fragrance is love. Do you see how Paul puts it in ( 3:14 ) ? Its as if when all the garments are on, we now need to secure them all in place with a belt and that belt is love. This is the very glue that produces unity in the church. Indeed the Lord Jesus said, “ *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.* ” ( Jn 13:35 ) Do you know what God’s objective is for your life ? “ *the image of him that created him.* ” ( 3:10 ) His goal is to conform you to the image of Christ. The story is told of a poor class lodging house where there lived a mixed company of needy and seedy folk, and where was also a poor, ignorant servant girl who was willing to sell her purity for money. Into that home one day there came a lodger who seemed to be different. Quickly he showed himself to have a very kind heart and way with him. He always had a kind word for the slave girl who was usually so ignored and downtrodden. She soon came to respect him greatly.

The other folk in the home also owed him much because of his many acts of kindness. He was always doing something for somebody, in his kind sympathetic way. At last the day came for him to move elsewhere. The little maid watched him as he walked with his luggage to the front door, and as he turned to her with a smile, and gentle pat on the shoulder, she said goodbye to him with these words, “ **Please are you Him ?** ” The moving story of course was fiction, but I wonder could anything like it be fact in our lives ? How much are you like Him ? Christ ? ( 2 Cor 3:18 )

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