

“Being Changed to Live Like Jesus”

What it Means to Put On Christ

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Steve Freeburne / July 25, 2004

I. Putting on (clothing ourselves with) Jesus Christ requires that we practice a supernatural worldview.

More and more believers are tasting the same despair the world lives in because they have chosen to “walk... as other Gentiles walk, in the emptiness of their mind... The bottom line truth is that life is not supposed to work without God at the center. Those who try to do so – even Christians – can maintain only an artificial facade of hope and satisfaction. The grim reality is that the emptiness of life without God at the center pushes itself to the consciousness once again when the music stops, the drugs wear off, the eroticism fails, the fashions grow old, the relationships disappoint, the accomplishments fade, and the thrills subside... Such is the picture of man without God at the center. *Created for His Glory*, Jim Berg page 7

Galatians 3:27 NIV: for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. **Ephesians 4:24 NIV:** ... put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. **Colossians 3:9-10 NLT:** ... you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand new nature this is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.

When we think or say the name of Jesus Christ, we must see to it that our minds are flooded with some wondering sense of God’s infinitude, of His majesty, of His indescribable exaltation of His holiness, of His righteousness, of His flaming purity and stainless perfection. This is the Lord God Almighty who the heaven of heavens cannot contain, to whom the earth is less than the small dust on a balance. *Biblical and Theological Studies*, B. Warfield, pg 513

The believer’s worldview is supernatural because:

- It is centered on God rather than our circumstances.
Philippians 3:8: I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ.
- It requires that we demonstrate faith in things not seen.
II Corinthians 4:18 NIV: So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
- As finite beings we must reflect the glory of an infinite God.
II Corinthians 3:18 NIV: And we who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s

glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

II. Clothing ourselves with Jesus Christ requires that we lead others in the process of being changed to be like Christ.

Matthew 5:13-16 NIV: You are the salt of the earth. ... You are the light of the world, A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

God intends for us to use what he has produced in our lives to influence others. The words of Matthew are a call to spiritual leadership.

Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead. We sometimes call this spiritual influence, ministry, discipleship, shepherding, spiritual parenting or mentoring. Whatever name we use, the purpose is the same – challenging others to change and grow into Christ-likeness. The principle [of salt and light] – of making a difference in the lives of others – is that you have to be different to make a difference. You cannot change anything by adding more of the same. *Changed into His Image*, pg 210-211

The Christian is essentially different from everybody else. They are as different as salt is from the meat it preserves or from the darkness which the light exposes. The more saintly the person the more obvious this difference is. They need not say a word; just by being what they are makes people feel ashamed of what they are doing.... Christian people, you and I are living in the midst of men and women who are in a state of gross darkness. They will never have any light anywhere in this world except from you and from me and the gospel we believe and teach. They are watching us. Do they see something different about us?

Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, Martin Lloyd-Jones, pages 149-179.

Spiritual leadership involves communication with words and through action.

Deuteronomy 6:5; 7; 12 NIV: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ... be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

J. Oswald Sanders in his book *Spiritual Leadership* contrasts natural leadership and spiritual leadership as follows:

<u>Natural</u>	<u>Natural</u>	<u>Spiritual</u>	<u>Spiritual</u>
Self-confident	Knows men	Confident in God	Knows God also
Autonomous	Ambitious	Seeks God's will	Humble
Creates methods	Enjoys command	Uses God's example	Loves to obey
Seeks recognition	Independent	Serves others	Depends on God

III. Clothing ourselves with Jesus Christ means that we labor together with God but wait upon him for the harvest.

I Corinthians 3:6-9 NLT: My job was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God, not we, who made it grow. The ones who do the planting or watering aren't important, but God is important because he is the one who makes the seed grow. The one who plants and the one who waters work as a team with the same purpose. Yet they will be rewarded individually, according to their own hard work. We work together as partners who belong to God. You are God's field, God's building – not ours.

Consider the following three approaches to life and ministry.

The lazy farmer, one who lacks sense:

Proverbs 24:30-32,34 NLT: I walked by the field of a lazy person, the vineyard of one lacking sense. I saw that it was overgrown with thorns. It was covered with weeds, and its walls were broken down. ... A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest – and poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.

The intense servant, one who is controlling and legalistic:

Proverbs 19:21 NIV: Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails. **Proverbs 21:30-31 NIV:** There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord. The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord.

We dare not teach on the one hand simply a passive approach to "let go and let God," nor can we expect to merely impose a rigid system of discipline upon others and expect biblical change to take place in their lives. If we can understand the role of God and the role of man in the activities and responsibilities of the plant grower (farmer) in I Corinthians three then we can understand the role of God and the role of man in the activities and responsibilities of a people grower (disciple maker). *Changed into His Image*, Jim Berg, page 272

The trusting servant, one who is diligent and strong in faith:

Philippians 2:12-13 NIV: ... my dear friends – as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your

salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

We work out what the Lord works in. The grace of God is not a reason for idleness, but for diligence. As both will and work are given us of God, let us will with firm resolution and work with dauntless perseverance; for so shall we fulfill the good pleasure of the Lord, **Charles Spurgeon's Devotional Bible**, page 714

IV. Basking in the light of Christ-likeness.

Psalms 21:13 NIV: Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength

"Be exalted, O Lord", is the language of victorious spiritual experience. It is a little key to unlock the door to great treasures of grace. It is central in the life of God in the soul. Let the seeking man reach a place where life and lips join to say continually "Be exalted, O Lord" and a thousand minor problems will be solved at once. His Christian life ceases to be the complicated thing it had been before and becomes the very essence of simplicity. ... [When] we take to ourselves the place that is His, the whole course of our lives is out of joint. Nothing will or can restore order till our hearts make the great decision: God shall be exalted above [all]. *Pursuit of God*, A.W. Tozer, pages 95-96

In the light of Christ-likeness the Word of God illuminates our:

Attitudes Romans 15:5-6 NLT: May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ Jesus toward the other. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Purify flesh and blood by any education process you may select, elevate mental faculties to the highest degree of intellectual power, yet none of these can reveal Christ.. Only where the Spirit has touched the eye with eye-salve, quickened the heart with diving life and educated the soul to a heavenly taste, only there is He understood, *Morning & Evening*, C.H. Spurgeon

Emotions I Peter 1:8 NIV: Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. **Philippians 4:7 NIV:** ... the peace of God will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Matthew 11:28-30 NIV:** Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

The truly illuminated believer can hardly contain himself as he sings because the words have reminded him of the truths he has previously seen from the Word when the Holy Spirit showed him the glory of God. ... He has never recovered from the experience of seeing God in His Word, and he hopes he never will. **Changed into His Image**, Jim Berg, page 150

Wills I Corinthians 9:16 NIV: when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! **I Corinthians 1:21-22NIV:** Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

When God's Spirit illumines the mind with truth, the believer is shown the urgency and the responsibility of the truth. He cries, "This is compelling; I must do it!" He is energized and motivated. He immediately wishes to become a witness of these things. He has something to testify about – he has seen God! **Changed into His Image**, Jim Berg, page 152

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