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Sermon Notes

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- As the sun makes its 24 circuit around the world today, celebrating the Lord's Day and a weekly reminder of Christ's glorious resurrection from the dead, there are astonishing gatherings of peoples in every region
- These gatherings fly in the face of all logic... they bridge centuries of hatred and strife... they transcend all efforts at a political solution or diplomacy
- They are simple gatherings of Christians, transformed by the gospel, able to forgive each other, love each other, worship Christ with each other
- In the Balkans, in Bosnia there are small evangelical house churches in which Serbs, Croats—former Muslims and orthodox—who would have been at each other's throats were it not for the grace of the gospel, simply worshiping together today by the power of the Spirit
- In the Czech Republic and in Romania, former security guards under the Iron Curtain communist regimes are worshiping together with Christians they used to hunt down and torture... a similar thing has happened in China
- In Rwanda, Hutus and Tutsi have been able to display supernatural forgiveness through the gospel of Christ, and they worship together today
- In Palestine, former Lebanese Muslims and formerly unbelieving Jews have been transformed by the gospel and assemble in small house churches to worship Christ by the power of the Spirit
- And in America, former racists, both black and white, have been healed of their racism and now openly embrace each other by the power of Christ's cross... they stand side by side and sing worship to Christ

Living in Harmony with the People of God

Colossians 3:9-14

I. A Tragically Divided World

A. Fragmentation Leads to Endless Strife

We live in a fragmented world... a world in which divisions between peoples drives conflict even to the level of violence and warfare

The fact that we live in a fragmented world is made clear by the increasingly small nature of the world... communication technology (like the internet and wireless and personal satellite TV); and travel technology (like jet airplanes and the interstate highway system); these have thrown different people together so their differences are highlighted and tensions spark

B. Causes Listed in Colossians 3

Our text alludes to basic categories of these divisions:

Colossians 3:11 ...Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free

Racial divisions: Greek or Jew

National divisions: barbarian, Scythian

Religious divisions: circumcised or uncircumcised

Socio-Economic divisions: slave or free

As long as these divisions have existed, there has been strife and conflict, even to the point of warfare

Racial: *Greek or Jew* America is a nation with a long history of racial conflict; obviously the greatest of these conflicts was the Civil War prompted by slavery; but the ending of the Civil War did not bring about an end to racial conflict; and modern technology actually heightens and makes more raw the tensions

But it's not just in the U.S.: racial hatred and conflict has been the cause of bloodshed all over the world; it enflamed South Africa even after the fall of Apartheid; there are acute racial tensions in India; in Malaysia, tensions have been steadily increasing over special privileges granted to the majority Malays over the minority Chinese and Indians

Racism and racial tensions seethe all over the world, not just in America... but they ARE here

National: *barbarian, Scythian*... nationalism is not new, but it has increased in importance over the last few centuries; some of the most intense displays of nationalism in history occurred right before WWII, especially in Germany; the National Socialist (NAZI) party capitalized on intense nationalism and patriotism to enflame a whole nation to wars of conquest... singing “Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles”, “Germany above all”... Nazis sought to enslave and liquidate other peoples simply because of national pride and racism; but similar movements were enflaming Italy and Japan as well

Religious: *circumcised or uncircumcised*; some of the bitterest divides in the world are over religion; the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a mixture of racism and nationalism; but at its heart it is a division over religion: Judaism vs. Islam; so also the intense religious conflicts between Muslims and Hindus during the time of the partition in 1948 and the wars between Pakistan and India; as also during the Crusades and the Protestant-Catholic wars in Europe after the Reformation, Christian history has been sullied with these kinds of conflicts as well

Economic: *slave or free*; socio-economic divisions plague the human race as well; the division between classes of people, rich and poor, nobility and peasantry, upper crust and middling sort, etc. Issues of poverty and class have also caused great upheaval and conflict throughout history

Divisions caused by all these factors have put up walls between people all over the world and all down through the corridors of time

C. Yearning for Peace and Unity

Yet in our hearts is a yearning for peace, a yearning for unity, an end to all divisions and hostility

And only the gospel of Jesus Christ can bring it about

This passage speaks of a supernatural unity in the Body of Christ that will set the gospel off in majestic glory for a world desperate for unity and for an end to strife and conflict

Context:

Colossian heresy the occasion of the letter...But the occasion really just an opportunity to proclaim the glory of Christ and the fruit of the gospel

The Glory of Christ:

***Colossians 1:15-17 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.***

The Glory of the Gospel:

True unity only comes about when we end our warfare with God:

Colossians 1:19-22 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. ²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death

The Colossian heresy... a false religious concoction of human philosophy, Jewish legalism, mysticism, and asceticism

These things could NOT produce true godliness... but the Gospel can

Colossians 3:1-17: Steps for a happy, healthy, fruitful Christian life...

- 1) Heavenly mindset
- 2) Battling indwelling sin
- 3) Walking together in the “New Self” in a “New Community”
- 4) Saturating Your Heart with Christ
 - The Peace of Christ Ruling Our Hearts
 - The Word of Christ Richly Dwelling in Our Hearts
 - The Name of Christ Motivating Our Hearts
 - Thanks to Christ Constantly Given by Our Hearts

II. The Old Self and the New

A. Moral Commands Based on New Status

Colossians 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ

Colossians 3:3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature

1. New Testament's consistent approach to moral commands
2. “This is who you are! Now act accordingly!!”

3. New status:

Based on Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, all human beings are either “in Adam” or “in Christ”...there is no third option and no middle ground

Puritan Thomas Goodwin: “There are but two men that are seen standing before God: Adam and Jesus Christ; and these two men have all other men hanging from their belts.”

The old man (in Adam) could not be converted, it has a mind hostile to God, it loves sin, and is condemned to death

- a. United with Christ in His death and in His resurrection
- b. Old self dead, new self alive

Romans 6:5-7 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- ⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

- c. Born again

John 3:3 "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

- d. New creation

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

This is a decisive act in history... in space and time! God kills your Old Self... the man or woman you were in Adam; your position before God, your identity, your spiritual Social Security Number... who you are in the heavenly record... that old person is DEAD forever

Now you are a NEW PERSON in Christ... with a whole new identity, a new nature, a new position

“New creation” is a staggering truth... the new person you are in Christ will survive the rest of your life on earth; it will survive intact all of your temptations and trials and everything the world, the flesh and the devil can do to you... it will survive all the twists and turns of life, all of its shocks and successes; it will survive your final trip to the hospital, the two weeks you spend in the ICU gasping for breath; it will survive your physical death;

your new self will survive judgment day; it will survive the painful process of giving an account for everything done in the body, whether good or bad; it will survive the trial of your works (both gold, silver, costly stones AND the wood, hay, stubble)... it will outlive your physical body, it will outlive everything physical in the universe; it will outlive the

Rocky Mountains, the Grand Canyon, the Pacific Ocean, the starry constellations in the present night sky

It CANNOT BE REMOVED, IT CANNOT BE SHAKEN... this NEW SELF IS ETERNAL by the power of God

Psalm 125:1 Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.

Hebrews 12: God will SHAKE THE EARTH... but the Kingdom of God CANNOT BE SHAKEN

Hebrews 1:10-12 "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. ¹² You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

God will remove the physical universe in all its awesome immensity... the lofty mountains, the churning oceans, the starry host, the vast rain forests, the winding rivers... all of it is temporary!! He will shake it and remove it in a sense, so completely purifying it of evil that it will become a NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH... a NEW CREATION

But you are ALREADY a NEW CREATION!!!

Therefore, since this is what you are, live accordingly

4. Negative and positive

a. Colossians 3:5-9 covers a series of negative patterns

b. Sins of perverted love

Sexual immorality...Impurity...Lust...Evil desires...Greed which is idolatry

c. Sins of broken relationships

Anger... Rage... Malice... Slander... Filthy language... Lying

d. These sins (as all sins) are completely unsuitable for the new community Christ is crafting by the gospel

e. They pour acid on the girders supporting the structure of the church

5. Positively: a beautiful array of Christlike virtues:

Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and love

A stunningly beautiful unity, that puts the power of the gospel on display for all to see

Thus sanctification in detail is negative and positive: PUT OFF and PUT ON

B. Old Self Crucified, Therefore Discarded

Colossians 3:9-10 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

You have taken off your old self = decisive action in the past... at the moment of faith

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

1. Old Self: the person you were in Adam
2. "Its practices" = deeds, habit patterns, actions... put off in principle, rejected as intrinsic to that old lifestyle
3. BUT those deeds, those habits, those practices are still programmed into the physical body
4. The old carcass of life... disgusting and repulsive as a dead body... yet we still put on that old, dead body of practices, of habits: lust and lying, anger and ambition, selfishness and sloth

C. New Self Constantly Renewed and Put On

1. Decisive act: "You have put on the new self..."... once for all, then endlessly repeated
2. "Put on" is done in the mind and heart spiritually
 - a. It's a matter of perspective... self-talk... "I am a Christian; I am to be like Christ in everything I do"
 - b. It's a matter of prayer... "Please, Lord Jesus, by your Spirit, clothe me with all that you are; live through me, speak through me, control my actions, my thoughts, my words"
 - c. It's a matter of learning.... studying to be able more and more to answer the question "What would Jesus do? How would Jesus think? What would Jesus choose? What would Jesus feel?"

Colossians 3:10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

- d. Renewed in knowledge = Biblical knowledge... saturating your mind

- i) “renewed”... God sending fresh effusions of His power by the Spirit
- ii) Constantly remaking us, refreshing us, giving us energy to pursue Him

2 Corinthians 4:16-17 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

e. “In the image of its Creator”

Ephesians 4:24 the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

- i) Harkens back to the original Creation of the human race

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

- ii) Now even more, we are re-created into God’s image

An imitation of God... His thoughts, His attributes, His character, His passions, His will, His power, His purposes... these are the things that dominate the mind and life of the Christian

This is our future too:

1 John 3:2 ... when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

- 3. This is the essence of sanctification: PUT OFF... PUT ON

III. Heaven on Display: Perfect Unity Amid Astonishing Diversity

A. Sin’s Fragmenting Effect: The Human Race Divided

1. A human race in Adam has lived out patterns of wicked selfishness... self-worship
 - a. Racism is self-worship: rejecting some other group of people because their skin color or eye shape is different; The history of racism in this country, in the Christian church is one of the most despicable chapters in the annals of Christianity
 - b. Nationalism is also self-worship... racism organized along national lines; inherent superiority of OUR culture, OUR language, OUR history, OUR way of doing things

- c. Economic elitism, rich/poor is also a form of self-worship
- d. Wars of conquest: motivated by the conquerors self-worship and greed, resulting in multi-generational bitterness and hatred... a cycle of violence and revenge from one group to the other and back again

2. Thus the human race is likened to iron and clay which cannot adhere together

“Feet of clay”... Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a massive statue which represented the entire flow of human history... one world-conquering empire after another... but the whole thing is unstable because of the “feet of clay”... they feet and toes were partly iron, partly baked clay

A picture of mixture and of instability:

Daniel 2:43 And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

3. Paul mentions some of these groups:

Colossians 3:11 Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free

- a. Astounding, the work of the gospel in changing human beings and human relationships!!
- b. Greeks and Jews, the uncircumcised and circumcised, were naturally enemies... the Jews hated the Gentiles, would not eat with them, would not enter their homes, shook the dust off their clothes after returning to Israel; Gentiles felt the same way about the Jews with their strange customs and arrogant practices... but in Christ all that has changed forever:

Ephesians 2:13-15 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace

- c. Barbarian = Greek word mimicking their funny sounding languages... sense of the inferiority of non-Greek people... haughty arrogance by the cultured, philosophically wise Greeks... all of that REMOVED FOREVER in Christ
- d. Scythian: above all barbarians, hated and feared by the Greeks; a nomadic, warlike people dwelling in the Caspian Sea region, constantly invaded the Fertile Crescent from the Seventh Century B.C.

Herodotus: “They ruled Asia for twenty-eight years and the land was wasted by reason of their violence and their arrogance... They drank the blood of the first enemy killed in battle, and made napkins of the scalps, and drinking bowls of the skulls of the slain; they had the most filthy habits and never washed with water.”

Josephus: “The Scythians delight in murdering people and are little better than wild beasts.”

A fellowship uniting Greek, Jew, and Scythian would have been unthinkable... until Christ came and broke down those barriers and united such people in the gospel

- e. Slave and free: According to Aristotle, the slave was little more than a living tool... but in Christ, both slave and freedman became brothers forever

Perpetua and Felicitas: A.D. 202, Perpetua, a young woman from a noble family, and Felicitas, a slave girl, faced martyrdom for their joint faith in Christ. As they faced the wild beasts, they held hands... slave and freedwoman, dying together as one in Christ

This new community can only have been brought about by the leveling of the gospel... the great humbling that comes by being saved by God’s sovereign election by free grace totally contrary to what we deserve

B. “Here” is Heaven: Perfect Unity is Our Future

1. Greek uses word “where” or “here” implying we’ve come to a new place
2. This place is the unity of the Christian church
3. This place is the unity we will experience in heaven

C. Astonishing Diversity Still There... But No Longer Divisions

Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

1. I do not believe we will lose our distinctiveness in heaven
2. I believe the racial distinctives that characterized us on earth will still be there in heaven
3. But in heaven, there will be an absolutely perfect unity amid that marvelous diversity
4. Every single person there will be worshipping the Lamb and thanking Him for salvation

D. Christ's Prayer for Unity: A Display Essential to the Gospel Advance

1. Unity based on the Trinity

John 10:30 I and the Father are one."

John 17:11 Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-- the name you gave me-- so that they may be one as we are one.

John 17:20-21 My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us

2. Unity that will be PERFECTLY REVEALED in heaven

John 17:23 "complete unity"

ESV "perfectly one"

1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

No divisions in heaven:

- Racism will be GONE: though we may well retain racial diversity, yet hatred and suspicion based on race will be destroyed forever
- Nationalism will be GONE: one new nation, called "The New Heaven and Earth" or "The New Jerusalem"... our citizenship will be there
- Religious division will be GONE: all Satanic counterfeits will be squashed forever, leaving one true religion... worshiping Father, Son, and Spirit
- Economic divisions will be GONE: everyone will be infinitely wealthy, heirs of the New Earth, with no covetousness for a neighbor's allotted inheritance

PERFECT UNITY IN HEAVEN

3. Unity that is PROGRESSIVELY REVEALED on earth

John 17:22-23 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

4. Essential to gospel success

"to let the world know that you sent me..."

IV. Dressed for the Occasion

Roman society: status identified by clothing

The boundaries between the different classes were strict and legally enforced: members of different classes even dressed differently. Only the emperor was allowed to wear a purple toga, while senators could wear a white toga with the *latus clavus*, a broad purple stripe along the edge. Equestrian togas had a narrow purple stripe (*clavus augustus*).

Less true in America today, but still dress identifies wealth and authority

A man wearing a Giorgio Armani suit off the rack might pay as much as \$5000 for it

How much more a man wearing a bespoke (personally tailored) suit from Saville Row in Mayfair, England... you could spend as much as \$30,000 for such a perfectly fitted suit

For the ladies, none of you is likely ever to wear a dress worth as much as the one a singer named Samantha Mumba wore on July 28, 2004 at the premiere of the movie *Spider Man II*—the world's most expensive dress; it contained 3000 diamonds in the shape of a spider's web, and it was worth close to \$9 million

All over the world, the way we dress shows the status of the person

Here, Paul calls on Christians to dress according to their status as children of God

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

A. Our Status: Chosen, Dearly Loved

1. God's Election

a. "chosen" = election... a doctrine repeatedly emphasized again and again in the New Testament

b. Ephesians 1 reveals that this election occurred before the creation of the world

Ephesians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

c. Romans 9 reveals that this election was simply by the grace of God, totally apart from any achievement or character on our part

Romans 9:15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

d. This has the suitable humbling power that can unite Greek and Jew, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free

2. Holy = set apart from the world; also purified from all evil
 3. Dearly loved = cherished by God
- Written on the palms of His hand
 - Beloved with an everlasting love

B. Command: Be Dressed for the Occasion

1. “Clothe yourself” cover yourself with Christ-like virtues
2. Be dressed for the occasion

Christ told a parable of a man at a wedding without wedding clothes... he was thrown out, because he was not dressed for the occasion!!

3. Just like at a wedding, you put on the appropriate clothing; or if you were invited to a State Dinner, you would buy a tuxedo or an evening gown

Imagine: Invited to the Inaugural Ball as the special guest of the President; you are to spend the night in the White House the night before; he knows you do not have the suitable clothing, so on the bed there are laid out the most exquisite clothing you’ve ever seen... perfectly measured to fit you, highest quality fabric, perfect tailoring, costly accessories... everything from head to toe provided... the most beautiful outfit you have ever worn

BUT Suppose you choose to put your own old clothes on... they may be grubby from having lived in a dumpster or your best polyester suit bought at Wal-Mart... either way, they are shockingly inadequate for the occasion; when you show up that night, at the Inaugural Ball, the Secret Service refuses to let you enter, no matter what you say “I am a friend of the President; he personally invited me, gave me a room at the White House...” The Secret Service refuses to let you enter, no matter what you say: “You can’t go in dressed like that!” Your friend, the President, when he hears about it later, will have no sympathy for you... “Why didn’t you put on the clothes I provided for you?” he will ask. End of discussion.

4. God has laid out these magnificent clothes for us to wear... but we must put them on every day... even every moment of every day:

Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience

- a. Compassion: deep level of concern for brothers and sisters, for their joys and pains
- b. Kindness: acts and attitude that sees to the needs of others, with a cheerful demeanor

- c. Humility: considering others better, genuinely better than yourself, and their needs as truly more important than your
- d. Gentleness: like a soothing spring breeze that barely lifts the leaves of a flowering tree... a gentle answer that turns away wrath, a quiet demeanor that uses gentle words, a gentle touch, a gentle disposition
- e. Patience: longsuffering... willing to bear with anything to maintain peace

All of them patterned after Christ in His perfect dealings with us

This is how we are to treat each other

C. Forgiveness Essential

Vs. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

1. We still stumble in many ways
2. Therefore these twin graces are essential
3. "Bear with each other"
 - a. Amoral complaints... roommate on the men's retreat snores too loudly... BEAR WITH IT
 - b. Woman leading your ladies bible study laughs annoyingly... BEAR WITH IT
 - c. Someone has a physical problem resulting in a bad odor, and there's nothing they can do about it... BEAR WITH IT
4. "Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another"
 - a. These are moral transgressions... sins against you
 - b. Someone is rude, or unkind or selfish or thoughtless or worse
 - c. FORGIVE
5. How? "As the Lord Christ has forgiven you..."

Parable of the 10,000 talents... Christ's blood has forever removed our right to hold grudges against each other

Peacemaker: Ken Sande

Four key elements of genuine forgiveness and reconciliation:

- 1) Good thought
- 2) Hurt you not
- 3) Gossip never
- 4) Friends forever

D. Love Binds it All Together

1. Love actually sums up everything
2. Paul says it acts like the binding belt that holds the whole thing together
3. Love is a disposition of the soul that says “I am delighted to sacrifice myself for your happiness; I find my pleasure in your well-being”
4. Without genuine love for others, the virtues listed in the previous verses (compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience) are actually sheer hypocrisy, or tooth-grinding legalism... a big act
5. And we must do it CHEERFULLY... God loves a CHEERFUL giver

Now, this life is IMPOSSIBLE apart from the direct work of the Holy Spirit in our lives

Christ must be the constant center of this life by the power of the Spirit... we must be saturated in Christ... in the peace of Christ, the word of Christ and the name of Christ

V. Summary and Application

Summary:

In a fragmented, squabbling, warring world, the church alone has the power to display unity and usher perfect unity in through the gospel of Jesus Christ

We were at one time alienated from God, but now we are reconciled to Him

Because of that, we have a new nature and a solid foundation for unity with other Christians, who also have a new nature

This unity cuts across all the old lines of division: race, nationalism, religion, and economics

In heaven, these divisions will disappear forever, and we will be perfectly ONE...SO...

- 1) Reject these divisions NOW... understand that, in Christ, you are already one with Christian people from every race, every nation, every religious background, and every economic level
- 2) Stop seeing Christian people are lesser than you who are different from you

- 3) Labor for a full display of unity here on earth
- 4) I WANT A SUPRISING UNITY ON DISPLAY HERE
 - a. Some have said Sunday is the most segregated day of the week... whites tend to worship with whites, black people with their own race, Chinese, Hispanics, etc.
 - b. I yearn to see FBC openly reflect the diversity and unity we will have in heaven
 - c. I yearn to see more internationals here... more fruit from our growing international ministry
 - d. I yearn to see our inner-city ministry flourish and for a large number of black men, women, and children feel welcome to worship here and be members here
 - e. I yearn to see more Hispanic people here... helping Herbert with his fruitful ministry
 - f. WHEN A SURPRISING UNITY that breaks down these barriers occurs, the world sits up and takes notice, and believes the gospel!!
- 5) Labor on the relational side here: clothe yourselves with Christian love toward each other
- 6) Forgive each other!!!
- 7) Put on the beautiful clothing mentioned in this passage

Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

- 8) Watch the unity in your family and in your church just GROW... and lost people will be saved as a result!!!