

## Love Flows

I mentioned that I when I was younger I wore some pretty incredible clothes that I thought was cool. Bell bottoms, platform shoes, silk shirt....I was cool. Clothes say a lot about someone. We use clothes to express ourselves. To show people who we are. We spend a lot of money and time putting ourselves together. We spend a lot of time making assumptions about people based on their clothes. Some try to impress others by wearing clothes or labels that they can't actually afford. But then again seem to be unable to afford to do anything else.

No doubt about it, clothes make an impressive first impression. **PHOTO 1-3.** When we get tired of dressing ourselves, we tend to look for other things to dress up. We sometimes go to extremes, we dress up dogs, all kinds of animals, babies, children, and yes even husbands.

But have you ever thought about how you are spiritually dressed? What do you put on spiritually to let others know what is most important about you? When people look at your spiritual attire do it align with your words and actions?

Paul has warned the Colossians that people are coming in false spiritual clothing. They will try to impress you with their appearance so that you will not notice their words. But then Paul turns to the Colossians and asks...but what about you?

What are you wearing Spiritually? What have you embraced? When people see you...do they see you....or Christ? Paul is transitioning in his letter to the Colossians...we have warned about false teachers, now lets look inward and make sure that there is nothing false about us...

Colossians had the Wrong Context. They had let others define them...they had missed their Freedom in Christ because they struggled remembering who they are in Christ. They, like we...have a New Master. New Perspective. New Future...New Values and New Self But despite all of that, they were missing out on their potential. This letter is Paul to his Brothers telling them HEADS UP! Look up! Do you realize who you are!!! CHRIST HAS SET US FREE!

He has been reminding them of previous truths Jesus: Preeminent...You died. Rose with Him. Live In Him. Live free from expectations of others Faith in One. Audience of One. Freedom through One. Transformation by One. We are being renewed daily New Master. New Perspective. New Future New Values and New Self

Your salvation is free You have to work hard each day to position yourself You have to stay connected to God Stay committed to His word You must prioritize your life to stay connected to the Vine...It is hard work....very hard to position yourself But if you stay connected to the vine, God renews you and grows you.

Now he is Transitioning to Unity No Jew. Greek. Circumcised. Uncircumcised. Slave. Free. All are in Christ and Christ is in all New Self....it is time to dress like it.

Colossians 3:12–17 (ESV) 12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Go through what we see here...

Every thing hinges on the first verse Chosen. Holy. Dearly Loved Do You believe that? Really? This is the part of the verse where we really need to slow down and meditate. This is a very visual passage that is full of metaphors. Paul says that the Colossians....you...me...all who believe in Christ are Chosen....Holy...Dearly Loved.

Think about that list....Why those three things? Why in that order? Which is hardest to believe? Is one any more true than the others? How can we be Holy? Why dearly loved and not just loved?

Notice the structure of this sentence....This is a command of response....The command is to Put on compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.....another list to consider...but for now... This command is a response to something...The realization of the given truth that you are God's chosen....holy...and beloved.

Have you ever put on something and immediately thought "This is not me" You immediately feel foolish dressed in clothes that don't define you....you feel silly trying to wear something that is not really for you....

Many of us and many at Colossae had not embraced who they really are. That is what everything in this letter has led to thus far. Paul telling them and us who we really are and we are still saying....Really? We are chosen...holy....and deeply loved? Really?

There is a response to the realization of who we really are in Christ.....When we understand...really understand...that we have been chosen.....we are Holy...and we are deeply loved...called beloved by God...then everything about us changes.

The understanding of who we are...is the single most important thing...that determines what we experience while on earth.

God through Paul tells us...There are clothes that you belong in...There are some things that you must choose to wear that will tell everyone....all that they need to know about you.

Jesus says...since you belong to me...it is time to dress like me....Put on what you see in me....or better yet...allow me to put upon you...in you....those things that reveal who you really are to the world.

Allow me.....The Holy Spirit says...to express my compassionate heart, my kindness, my humility, my meekness and my patience through you....

Let's show the world WHOSE you really are!

Prior to this passage, the message from Paul has been all about what to avoid...what not to do....Now Paul moves to who and what we are to embrace. What we are to do.

Paul tells all of us....I want you to take off your grave clothes....and put on your grace clothes.

Turn to the person next to you and say....I replaced my grave clothes...with Grace clothes.

Our spiritual growth in Christ is the process of replacing our vices...with His virtue. It sounds easy...but exactly how do we do this?

We are going to see 5 "R's" as we explore this passage.

### 1) Requirement- Love of Christ

Colossians 3:14 (ESV) 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Humans were created in the image of God.....and God is Love. We were created to love....we crave to be loved. Every person on earth was created with a desire and a place within them to hold God's love. We don't all know it....but there is a God sized hole in us....placed there when God created us...a hole a storage place...designed for His love.

We need to be loved. We must experience love. If we don't receive God's love....we will be driven...to find the cheap substitute in the love of other people. We will use other people...to pursue the love that we need....even though they can never actually fill that void.

All of us....deep inside....crave to be loved....truly loved...fully...and unconditionally. We crave it....We know that there is a love out there for us....a love that accepts us exactly as we were created...a love that embraces who we really are and loves anyway. A love that doesn't demand anything and yet gives everything....We all just want to be loved.

Above all....God tells us...Put on Love. If you put nothing else on...If you embrace one thing about Jesus....put on His love... Why? Because God tells us...that love binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Paul has already taught us that In Christ all things hold together....All things were created by Him, For Him and through Him and He holds all things together....Now Paul tells us...His love is what hold us together. Why are we all in this room? We likely have nothing really in common....probably would not have even met one another....but we are here because Jesus' love....that we have put on because we are chosen, Holy and loved....holds us together. And not just together....put in perfect harmony.

Perfect harmony....living in God's perfect peace...Not uniformity....not clones....each of us exactly who we are and exactly in the transformation process where God has us....but when we come together....like a chorus of praise....our lives together bring each of us together in His love.

That is what is so incredible about the Church of those who believe in Jesus Christ. Everything is held together in His love...Do you know what a soloist doesn't experience? Perfect harmony. As long as they sing solo...they may sound great....but they miss out on the harmony that comes from singing with others. That sense of creating something together than neither of you could create alone...that is the church.

Have you ever noticed that the person singing harmony doesn't sound right by themselves? Harmony requires people...people who are different...people who sing differently....If you try to create harmony by making everyone identical...all you get is volume. Let me repeat that....if you expect everyone at church to be identical to you....you get volume...lots of it...and not harmony. Remember that when someone at church looks at how to do things differently that you do. The church is called to unity...not uniformity and unity requires diversity.

When we realize all that Paul is trying to remind us of...who we are...and whose we are....when that sinks in...really becomes the key part of our reality about ourselves....when we replace the lies of Satan and this world with the truth of who we really are....something critical happens.

When you embrace and experience the love of Christ...the unconditional love....the unconditional...love..the unconditional love...When you and I know above all else that we are His beloved...everything changes. We have been looking for love in all the wrong places....but when we find God's love....we know that love exceeds anything that we can find from other people. We stop pursuing fulfillment from other people....we stop pursuing the love that we think we need from them...and we soak in the love that completes us.

We change from receivers of love to dispensers of love. When we stop seeking love from man...from man made things...from other people...when you receive God's love overflowing and renewing...you can't help but give it to others...it flows over you...through you...and expresses itself through every pore of your being.

This reality is life changing. There is a flow of love...We think that love flows to us....our spouse loves us...our children love us...our friends love us...our church family loves us....we see ourselves as a repository of love. And then we give our love to God. We see love flowing up. Our worship...our praise our love going up to God. We are blessed by others and we want to share our blessings with God. It sounds good but it is messed up. The love that we receive from the world is an imitation of His true love for us.

Instead of love flowing up to Him....it actually is the other way around. God is Love....He is the source of Love...He is the keeper of Love...He is the dispenser of Love...all Love...all true love...comes from God...It pours out from the throne of God in Heaven...Like waterfall of love....living water...poured out as God directs.

That is why it is so amazing. Amazing love how can it be? God pours His love out on and through Jesus. Jesus came so that we could experience this love....a love that our sin had prevented from flowing...Prior to Jesus no one had experience this love....this love that is poured out unconditionally.

**1 John 3:1 (ESV) 1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.**

Notice John does not say See the love the Father has given to us....See WHAT KIND of love...The love of God from the throne of God is poured out through the Son of God onto the children of God. Amazing Love how can it be. Everything Jesus did was to reveal to us the nature of the Father...the Father's UNCONDITIONAL love.

**SING YOU ARE MY KING**

Why did Jesus come to earth? God's Love. Why did Jesus minister for three years? God's Love. Why did Jesus Die on the Cross? God's Love...Why did Jesus overcome death and resurrect? God's Love. Why did Jesus send the Holy Spirit? God's love....Why did Jesus say He would return? God's Love....Why are we reborn spiritually? God's Love. Why are we invited into eternity? God's Love. Why did God not give up on us...on you? God's Love. God is....not just has....God is Love.

So Love does not flow from man to God...The only love that matters flows from God to Man. We receive the overwhelming unconditional love of God...we can't contain it...it pours over us...and through us. The love that we offer back to Him in Praise and Worship...originated from Him...Our Worship back to Him is a tithe of the love that we have received to give to others. We are not a receiver of man's love...we are a distributor of God's love to man. Love...true love...unconditional love...the love that fills our void....comes not from man...but from God and God alone.

1 John 4:7–12 (ESV) 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

Everything naturally flows from love ...Compassion replaces selfishness ...Kindness replaces malice Humility replaces arrogance ...Patience replaces impatience ...Forgiveness replaces anger Love of Christ changes us ...We presume the best of each other We hope the best for each other ...Pursue the best for each other Celebrate the best with each other ...We put on the Love of Christ by realizing we are Chosen, Holy and Deeply Loved.

So we change when we realize...the Love of God.

## 2) Rule: the Peace of Christ.

Colossians 3:14–15 (ESV) 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Notice that Paul says to let this happen....as if it is a natural thing that we tend to stop. The peace of Christ want to rule in your heart...think about that for a moment....Christ's Peace must rule in our heart...there is a battle going on for leadership of our heart...We choose who wins...We are instructed here to allow...to let...the Peace of Christ rule in our hearts...

When God's love pours over and through us...when our heart is saturated in it....there is a peace of God deposited in our hearts as a result of that love...I mean really if God loves us that much what are we to truly be worried about?

All of us who have the Holy Spirit of God in our hearts...in us...have the peace of God. Not just peace from God...Peace of God...His Peace...His essence...it is in your heart right now.

But here is the question...Are you allowing His peace to rule or are you allowing something else to rule in your heart...your worry...your anxiety...your fears....Paul says...realize whose you are....and let that peace rule.

You can strive to be at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18–21 (ESV) 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God,

When God's love flows through our heart and we allow His peace to Rule in our heart...all these manmade divisions fade away....

We don't compete for the approval of others because we don't need it....We don't compete for the love of others because we don't need it. There is no longer a reason to divide us....we aren't competing for God's love we are drowning in it. So Paul tells us...

There is no Jew or Greek....No Circumcised or Uncircumcised...No Male or Female...No Democrat or Republican...No Windows or Mac...no Texan and everyone else.

So we realize God's Love....We Let God's Peace Rule and our third R.

### 3) Reflect: On the Word of Christ.

Colossians 3:16 (ESV) 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Dwell richly. Tourist vs. Explorer God's Word changes you as it permeates Your heart softens you are transformed

Teach All of us. Share what we learn All of us collectively

Admonish To use God's truth to lovingly and gratefully redirect them. All of us collectively.

Sing Collectively lifting up our praises to God together. Uniting in one voice of praise to God  
Somehow this helps God's Word dwell in my heart

My Conviction: Arriving Late Example Something supernatural happens when God's people worship Him together Teach admonish and Sing. In love with thanksgiving.

### 4) Response: Gratitude

Colossians 3:14–17 (ESV) 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Repeated three times.

3 Times: Attitude of Gratitude. God examines your heart More interested in Motive than Actions When you begin to soar. Realizing who you were actually created to be When you experience the joy and freedom Jesus brings Like the Eagle you develop a deep sense of gratitude. God's people are to be humble, thankful and appreciative The false teachers are arrogant, entitled and judgmental

### 5) Reason: Jesus

Colossians 3:16–17 (ESV) 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Everything in the name of Christ. Everything in the name of Christ...There are many things I do...that I must stop..because I cannot do them in the name of Jesus. Name of Someone in the Bible Power, Purpose and Promise In the name of Caesar. In the name of the President In the name of Jesus In Jesus name I am looking for His purpose in what I am doing I am asking for His power to do it I am depending upon His promise to complete it We are to do everything. In Jesus Name. With Thanksgiving.

So Imagine Remnant All of us recognizing that we are eagles Not just flying by ourselves But with each other. Celebrating our freedom. Discovering who we were meant to be. Thankful for the gift of soaring. That is the description of God's Church. Experiencing the joy, freedom and thrill of soaring in Christ Overflowing with love and attention....not competing for it. Giving love to everyone Because we have positioned ourselves to be renewed each day By the One who never Stops And pours out His love on us until it can't help but overflow. Making peace and encouraging one another So permeated with God's Word that we can't help but let it spill out

As we teach and share it with others Admonish in love And collectively pour out our praises in Song And because of all the above, grateful about everything. Doing it all in the name (the Power, Purpose, and Promise) of the One who is above all things Is that too hard to imagine?

People accuse me of being an optimistic dreamer So I just invite them here...to this place....to meet you. Those who visit here are overwhelmed by our loving community They too have been seeking love in all the wrong places But then they walked into this place And it was different Like something not of this world They are drawn by Jesus' love manifested in His people

That as our love overflows the world sees Remnant as different That all of us each day stay on our knees, in the Word and on mission to be the church? Do you know what I am so passionate about filling these seats? I can go to my friends, coworkers and family and tell them all about Jesus...and I do. I can answer their questions about God... and I do. I can live my life as the best example of Jesus I can be....and I try but I fail every day. But I invite them here to see something I can never show them on my own. It is not our worship music...though that is amazing. It is not the sermon...though I with bias think they are good. I don't invite them here to grow our budget or feed our pride. I invite them here because I want them to know Jesus And they see Jesus when they see how we love each other. I can never show them THAT on my own.

God has a plan on how we change the world. Paul reminds us that our love and unity is our best witness I bring them here to see the love that God's people...that you...have for each other. The Disciple John said it this way...

1 John 4:11–12 (ESV) 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

The strength of our church and our strongest witness is our love for each other That is not too hard to imagine. I see it every week More than anything else we do. I want us to grow in our love for Jesus To the point that it overflows in all of us to each other And then flows out of our love to those we are called to reach. I keep thinking and praying about that. I can't let it go.

Something in me tells me that God has a deeper experience for all of us .....together. But People Tell me....I should probably stop daydreaming Stop looking up....keep my focus here on what we have done.... What Remnant has done. What Ashton has done. Do you know one of my biggest fears for our church? That we get so focused on our past..... So comfortable with maintaining what God has built..... That we forget...we are suppose to be as focused on building His church..... As much if not more than back when we were at Sarasota Alliance at the beginning. Or when the foundation was laid on this building years ago.

When you are starting something new...you invite everyone. You have nothing to do but build. All of your energy and attention is on building Then once you build something...your focus turns to maintaining it. In fact you can get so focused on maintaining it that you forget to keep building. And yet the only reason to have it was to grow it. Everything God creates continues to grow. So it gets easy to maintain....and expect others to invite for you.

Church we can never stop building....never stop inviting...never stop taking this message to others. Never stop sharing with others the Love that we have experienced. So....how do you know if you are Maintaining or Building? Just go back to the last time you brought a guest here. To show them what you can never show them alone The love of Jesus that overflows from us when we are together worshipping Him.

So many tell me that the church can never be that kind of Community That an abundance of unconditional love, overflowing gratitude, peace, and harmony Are not possible in today's church. They tell me to look around at the many churches who thrive on conflict, control and manipulation. And Yet....as I look to the sky.....as I look across our church. I see and experience the love that we have for each other. I see what God is doing at Remnant And I just know He wants all of us to grow deeper. So that everything about Him...His love....His peace...His harmony... overflows in everything that we do. Who wouldn't be drawn to a church that loves Jesus like that? Can you imagine it? God did and He revealed it to Paul in this passage. And I have been praying this week that I could be used in some way. So God can reveal the same to you. And above all these things....put on Love....which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And whatever you do. Do it in the name of Jesus...Giving thanks to God through Him. Let's Pray