**Put on Love**

**The Word**

Read together Colossians 3:12-17

**The Big Idea**

In a culture of expressive individualism, we are called into a community in which love, unity, sacrifice, and forgiveness carry the day. As beloved children of God, we are called to live lives of love with one another.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. As you consider your own life and the lives of your friends, where do you see “expressive individualism” playing out in how you approach your faith?

2. Consider the list of Christian virtues mentioned in this week’s passage. Share a story where you have recently experienced being on the receiving end of one of these virtues.

3. Again consider the list of Christian virtues mentioned in the passage. is there a virtue that rises to the top as one you’d like to more intentionally pursue?

**Digging Deeper**

Read John 17:20-23 slowly, and consider that this is the one thing that was most on our Savior’s heart as he prayed for us the night before he died. As you consider that, what comes up for you?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

 A. Consider the heart of Jesus for our fellowship together

1. In the upper room Jesus washes his disciples feet and calls them to do the same for each other (Jn 13)

2. Jesus then gives them the commandment of all and promises that their love for each other will be their greatest witness to the world (Jn 13:34-35)

3. Jesus then prays for future believers and his prayer is for their unity (Jn 17:20-21)

 B. Consider how modern society pulls us away from this vision

 1. Expressive individualism

 2. Loose networks over covenant community

II. First, Paul reminds us of who we are

A. chosen, holy, and dearly loved (v. 12)

 1. These are all descriptions of Jesus himself

 2. And these are descriptions of us because we are now “in Christ”

B. Consider two basic postures mentioned by Paul when we are truly living within this beautiful identity in Christ

 1. Gratitude (v. 15, 16, and 17 all mention thanksgiving)

a. When we are living within our identity as God’s beloved, our lives are regularly marked by gratitude

 b. This is a good reminder as we move into thanksgiving week

2. Humility (v. 12)

a. When we are truly encountering God’s grace it leads to being humbled by his love

b. Humility is a very calming quality that quiets the ambition, restlessness, and selfishness

Caught off guard by God’s grace = humility

Humbling in best sense of that word: received what I don’t deserve

C. Consider what it’s like to step into community when we are both grateful and humble: many of the qualities Paul mentions naturally emerge

III. Second, Paul calls us to clothe ourselves with qualities that are consistent with who we are

 A. Qualities that are always good to pursue

1. Compassion = deep affection and mercy

“We must learn to regard people less in light of what they do or omit to do and more in light of what they suffer.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

2. Kindness = something our world desperately needs right now

3. Gentleness/Meekness

 a. Used in 1st century to describe Horses that no longer wild but tamed

b. It’s not weakness but strength under control; restraint

c. Jesus showed remarkable meekness throughout his ministry

4. Love

a. This is “Agape”: a sacrificial looking out for other people’s good

b. This is to be THE definitive quality of Jesus people

5. Let the peace of Christ rule

a. We often interpret ‘peace’ individualistically (=freedom from anxiety) but this is talking about relational peace(inner peace from anxiety)

b. The idea here is that peace/unity is to be the principle that makes the call/gets the final word in terms of how we treat each other

6. Let the Word of Christ dwell

Consider what our conversations are about immediately after Sunday service: sports, tech, politics, business, shows, etc. How about sharing what from the Word is encouraging or impacting us?

 B. Qualities that are especially needed when things go wrong relationally

1. Patience = “long tempered”

2. Bear with one another

This is not a very inspiring command, but often times much of community simply involves putting up with each other.

3. Forgive as the Lord forgave you

This is probably the hardest command of all, but it is also the one about which Jesus has the strongest things to say (“if you don’t forgive others, your heavenly father won’t forgive you”)

IV. Conclusion

This kind of community bears fruit mainly over the long haul

1. In the short term, expressive individualism and loose networks are much easier

2. But the fruit of covenant community is so much richer and deeper in the long term