

Vicar Wolfgram

Text: Romans 13:8-14

Date: November 27, 2016

Setting: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Dirty laundry. It is a constant cycle of all the clothes being clean and then finding more dirty clothes. It seems like a never-ending cycle. It is the one thing that stays steadfast when dealing with kids or just your own pets. They will inevitably get into something that they shouldn't, such as mud. You have them go take a bath and you take their dirty clothes away and give them new ones. You never give back the disgusting, muddy, filthy clothes that they were wearing when you found them. You give them clean, fresh, untarnished clothes. Greater than that, put on Christ.

When we think about what we wear, we look at what we are wearing to suit our actions. When you go swimming, you wear a swimming suit. When you go fishing you wear waders to stay dry. If you work at Target, you are easily spotted when you wear a red polo shirt and kakis. What you wear, doesn't always mean what you are doing is good. A robber wears a mask. They don't want to be seen or caught on camera. With all the crime shows on TV we know criminals wears gloves so they don't leave fingerprints at the scene of the crime. They do all this to protect their identity from being discovered or they are caught. They do not want the evidence to trace back to them of the crime that they committed. They want to shed the clothes they wore. This can be seen in the 1993 classic, *The Fugitive*, where Harrison Ford changes his identity to evade law enforcement.

We have confessed our sins and received absolution. We have shed the dirty clothes of our sins. We now want to be told what we need to do next. This reminds me of playing on the

Seminary Preachers basketball team. When the coach took a timeout in the game, our coach would tell us what we are struggling on, but then tell us what we should work on. He would give a game plan of what do to next. He would give us direction as to what we should be doing.

As this text is intended to tell us what we are to do in the future as forgiven children of God, it gives us a guide to follow. As freshly washed children of God, there are clothes of darkness that we should not put back on. Sins that we are familiar with and are comfortable putting on, that serve only our benefit to the detriment of our neighbor and where we sin against God. As our reading from Romans states: “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” When it says “You shall” do this, it is talking about the future. What has happened in the past doesn’t matter, here is what you should do in the future. It is saying do not go back to doing this. Paul is telling us not to run back to our favorite sinful, sin-filled outfit. As our text says: “So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.” Greater than that, put on Christ.

When we think about putting on Christ we are reminded to remember our Baptism. Galatians 3:27 states: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

We are called to put on Christ’s robe of righteousness. Our sinful flesh needs to be killed every day, with the result that we put on Christ. As our text says, “Put on the armor of light”

(Rom. 13:12) as well as in verse fourteen of our text when it says, “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

Remember your baptism. When water poured on your head three times in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In your baptism when God said, “You are mine.” In your baptism when you were clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Do not run back to your sinful desires and clothes of darkness, but put on the armor of light, put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

What do we do with this armor of light that we have been given? We love our neighbor as ourselves. As our passage stated: “Commandments are summed up in this word: you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Greater than that, put on Christ.

We are shown by Paul what this armor entails in Ephesians 6:

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.*

We are given this armor to stand against the devil’s evil schemes. What does this armor entail for us, what armor is this?

Ephesians 6 continues saying, “*Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*”

What do we do while wearing this armor? We love our neighbor as ourselves. As Christ loved us. We put on Christ. Amen.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen."

Ephesians 3:20-21