



**SERIES: August / September Series “HE IS ENOUGH”**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Wednesday, 09/15/2021**

**Scripture: Colossians 3:12-13**

**TITLE: The Countercultural Challenge**

When I teach chapel at my kid's school, I like it to be interactive. One of the ways I do this is to call upon a kid or two to join me on the stage to help with an illustration. When I ask for a volunteer, the hands go up, and they jump up and down. They are so excited to be chosen.

As soon as I pick a kid, the room goes, “aghhh.” They knew it was a special gift to be chosen. And it is. But how much more so is it a blessing to be chosen by God for His family?

Paul will talk about this as we continue studying Colossians. This is what Paul says in Colossians 3:12-13.

“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”

One of the greatest mysteries in the Bible is how predestination and free will work together. Theologians and pastors debate this heavily today with no clear agreement except that it is a mystery. But there is no doubt that God chooses the saints.

Ephesians 1:4 says, “Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.” You find other passages like this in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 2 Timothy 1:9, and Revelation 13 and 17. I think rather than debate this reality, it’d be better to just stop and say, “Thank you, Father. I don’t get it. I just know I’m forever changed and grateful. Thank you!”

But Paul’s point isn’t just our chosen status. It’s the effect of our new nature. It’s the continuation of our putting on that new nature. Paul says we are to be clothed in tenderhearted mercy and kindness. We are to be sincerely compassionate to those around us. He says we are to be humble, gentle, and patient.

Christ changes our focus from ourselves to others. We are concerned about the body of Christ just as much as our own desires. That care leads to patience with others and forgiveness of others. Paul means both the continual and free forgiveness of others and the forgiveness of ourselves as the body of Christ. If you don’t like this, too bad, Paul says. That’s why he says, God forgave you without any strings attached. Do the same to others.

You see, God chose us and saved us on purpose and for a purpose.

So this is my challenge for you today:

Take one of these characteristics: mercy, kindness, patience, forgiveness, etc., and display it today. For me, I need to work on patience. What about you? What is it, and what will you do?

Put it in the comments below so we can pray for you and encourage you.

Christ's love is transformative each and every day. We simply need to be willing to clothe ourselves in it.