

# Put Ye on the Lord Jesus

by Chip Brogden

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of putting on the Lord Jesus to be clothed with Him, to be immersed into Him, and to have Him become our covering.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 17:2, Luke 15:22, Romans 13:12, Romans 13:14, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 4:24, Ephesians 6:11

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Christ Likeness"

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## Description

Chip Brogden preaches on the importance of putting on the Lord Jesus as a practical way to live out our new Christ-Life. He emphasizes that victory is found in Christ, not in ourselves, and that putting on the Lord Jesus is the key to making no provision for the flesh. By being clothed with Christ, we are immersed into Him, and His character replaces our own, leading to a transformation in our behavior and conduct.

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## Transcript

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts (Romans 13:14)."

We have discussed the difference between receiving the Life of the Lord and receiving the Lord as our Life. The two sound very similar, but in actual practice they are not exactly the same. We have seen how that God, desiring that we should not perish, did not give us "eternal life", but gave us His only Son to be our Life. Then we are told, "He who has the Son has the Life, and He who does not have the Son does not have the Life (I John 5:12)." Eternal Life, then, is not everlasting existence, but an eternity of union with CHRIST OUR LIFE.

As we look for some practical help for living out our new Christ-Life, the apostle Paul gives us some rather peculiar advice. We know that Paul is very good about laying the foundation, and then calling us to live out of that foundation with regard to some very practical matters. So it is interesting that he would say, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus." What exactly does that mean? How do we put on the Lord Jesus?

If we are looking for a method, or a technique, then we are apt to be disappointed, for neither the Lord nor the apostle Paul gives us such a method. The method is Christ: He is Way, He is Method, He is Technique. We are not given a three-point sermon for how to put on the Lord Jesus; yet we are told this is the key to making no provision for the flesh. This much is clear, however: victory is bound up in Christ, and not in ourselves.

It is fine to have the theory, but we need the practical application. I am mostly concerned with foundational truth, because the foundation of the Church is more important than anything (and that foundation is Christ). Nevertheless, the saints need some practical instruction on how to put on the Lord Jesus, for this is seldom done. This, evidently, is not an ethereal thing in the clouds, but a practical thing which involves our flesh. May God grant us further insight into His Son.

## CLOTHED WITH CHRIST

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Galatians 3:27)."

What does it mean to be baptized? It is to go down into death and to come back up into life. We were baptized into Christ. The water of baptism does not merely signify the washing away of sins, but the death of the sinner. We go down into the water, and we are brought up out of the water. If we were to stay under the water for long we would surely die. But we are quickly lifted back up out of the "grave". This represents death and resurrection.

The outward sign of water baptism is meant to represent an inward spiritual truth - that I am baptized indeed, not into water only, but into Christ. I died with Him, and I was raised with Him. If I am one with Him then His death is my death; when He is raised, I too am raised. God has placed us in Christ, and since we are joined to the Lord, we are one spirit with Him. The Branches will go the way of the Vine. The Body will go the way of the Head.

So we may say it this way: to put on the Lord Jesus is to be clothed with Him. The apostle makes a connection between baptism into Christ and putting on Christ: he says these two are one and the same. When we signified our oneness with Him through baptism, we buried ourselves into Him and He became our covering. Have you clothed yourself with Christ? Some people are naked altogether, and their shame is evident to everyone but themselves. Others are clothed with the filthy rags of their own self-righteousness. Then there are those who are clothed with Christ. They are immersed into Him, and we touch something in them which is larger than them.

In our relationships it is easy to touch one another in the flesh. But to put on the Lord Jesus is to make no provision for the flesh, even in our relationships. To "know no man after the flesh" is truly a challenge. We "project" a certain something, and either it is ourselves, or it is Christ. We note the personality differences between Paul, and Peter, and John, and James, and Barnabas; even so, they each have the same clothing, having put on the Lord Jesus. So we can touch them on a deeper level than who they are in themselves. We can still see the man, but we mostly see the Lord of the man. When we put on the Lord Jesus then the outward man becomes consistent with the inward man. This is fruitfulness, and this should be the normal experience of all disciples of the Lord.

"Put on the New Man, created in God's own Righteousness and true Holiness (Ephesians 4:24)."

What is the Christian Life? It is leaving our ground altogether and coming onto the ground of Christ. It is deeper than a changed life - it is an exchanged life. Over time we can accomplish a change, but we can do nothing to exchange our life for His Life. This, from start to finish, is God's work, and it is a work of grace. What, after all, is Righteousness? What is true Holiness? Christ is not righteous because He does righteous things; He does righteous things because He is Righteousness. Christ is not holy because He does holy things; He does holy things because He is Holiness. His "doing" flows out of His "being" - and OUR "doing" flows out of His "being" as well.

How so? The old man (self) is put off, and the New Man (Christ) is put on - this is Christianity. Christ then becomes my Righteousness and my Holiness. But too many of us take a natural, intellectual approach to Christianity. We think if only we can instruct people concerning the tenets of our faith, or persuade them with a logical argument, or woo them with some emotional plea, then we will have disciples. This is a falsehood. That is not Spirit and Life. Christianity is not memorizing certain doctrines or disseminating a systematic theology or having people repeat a so-called "Sinner's Prayer". Christianity is becoming one with a God-Man! You can have all the other in its proper place, but for too long that "other" has been offered as Christianity. And so people touch our beliefs, our doctrines, our religion, our theology, our zeal, but they do not touch a Living Christ.

When we are called to put on the New Man we are challenged with something radical, something which by reason of Who He is must result in an upsetting of the natural, earthly order of things. It is a major upheaval. Why? Because this New Man is Totally Other. This New Man is of Heaven. This New Man is Spirit. This New Man is foreign from this world. And when we put on THIS New Man, we are going to be at once set apart from the world and earmarked for something larger than we can fathom with our mind, something apart from flesh and blood, something we call "Spirit and Life".

Many years after having first put on the Lord Jesus, Paul declares that he is still trying to apprehend the One Who has already apprehended him. The height, width, breadth, length, and depth of this New Man, this Heavenly Man, is quite beyond what we can measure apart from Spirit-revelation. We are more familiar with and have more confidence in the old man than we do in the New Man. By the grace of God, this has to change. When we truly see the New Man we transcend the old man. And this, in a nutshell, is how God accomplishes the work of decreasing us and increasing Christ.

"Bring forth the best robe and put it on my son (Luke 15:22ff)."

It would be helpful to illustrate what it means to clothe oneself with Christ. In the story of the prodigal son we find such an illustration. The phrase "put it on" my son is the same Greek words used as in "put ye on" the Lord Jesus. It is even the same word in English - "put on". So the connection is clear. In the fullness of time God brought forth His Son, and we are told to put Him on, to be clothed with the best robe.

Praise God! We are not laying down a rule for Christian life and saying that in order to be a good Christian you must start doing this, that and the other, and then you must stop doing this thing or that thing. That is the natural approach. But when the son returns to his father, we do not hear a word of rebuke (except from the elder son). It is not a question of our being "worthy", for the son frankly admits he is no longer worthy to be called a son. Nevertheless, he IS a son. The remedy our Father has for him is not what we would expect. We are looking for a rebuke, or a reproof. Perhaps we are looking for some new list of expectations, punishments and rewards. Instead, he is given the best robe, a ring, and shoes for his feet. This is grace!

To put on the Lord Jesus is to be clothed with the very best robe. This robe makes us look better than we really are. But when we are dressed with the best we begin to act differently. Our behavior and our conduct is the fruit of who we are, not the cause of what we are. Paul never gives us commandments for the sake of commandments. He gives us a lot of instruction regarding our conduct, but it is always based on who we are in Christ, not who we hope to be in ourselves. Having put on the Lord Jesus, we are enveloped with Him and His character replaces our character. His Life is received in exchange for our life. If we cooperate with the Life we will naturally find our behavior is changed.

But what of the elder son? "Son, you are ever with me, and all that I have is yours (Luke 15:31)." Hallelujah! There is no partiality with God, however much we may think God is being more fair or more generous to some brother or sister. Not so: the robe, the ring, and the shoes only represent the "all", the fullness of the Father, and "of His fullness we have all received (John 1:16a)". The Father says, "All that I have is yours!" Who can dare ask God for a single thing apart from the Son?

## CLOTHED IN PURE LIGHT

"Put on the armor of light... put on the whole armor of God (Romans 13:12b; Ephesians 6:11a)."

In the matter of our spiritual warfare, we must see before God once and for all just what His armor consists of. By now we should know that God has not given us anything outside of or apart from Christ. We should know that God's Answer is Christ, God's Provision is Christ, God's Way is Christ, God's Victory is Christ.

So our overcoming is not bound up with a piece of armor, real or imagined. It is not without significance that just after saying "put on the armor of light" in Romans 13:12, Paul goes on to say "put ye on the Lord Jesus" in verse 14. It is hard for us to miss the point. Christ is the Armor of Light. To put on the armor is to put on the Lord Jesus. So it is not a great leap for us to connect Romans 13 to Ephesians 6 and discern that the Whole Armor of God is a MAN. Christ is Righteousness, Truth, Peace, Faith, Salvation, and Word of God. He is each individual piece of armor, as well as the Whole Armor. How ridiculous for us to go through the motions of "putting on our spiritual armor" in a sort of melodramatic pantomime. "Put on the armor" is another way of saying "Put on the Lord Jesus."

May I frankly say that anyone trusting in "spiritual armor" as a thing in and of itself is going to fail miserably. Anyone relying upon a faith-formula or a spiritual warfare method is going to see both the formula and the method eventually meet with defeat. Why? Because God has not given us a formula or a method: He has given us His Son. He does not give us a ritual or ceremony to follow, He says, "Put on the Lord Jesus". Having the Lord Jesus, I have the Whole Armor of God. It is not necessary to ask for each piece of armor, or to confess anything, or to do anything. It is only necessary, having put on the Whole Armor of God, to "stand therefore". It is only necessary, having put on the Lord Jesus, to abide in Him.

God's Solution to the problem of sin, self, and satan is to have us put on the Lord Jesus. Only through Him can we "make no provision for the flesh", and only through Him can we "stand against the wiles of the devil". We dare not make it more complicated when the Lord has made it simple. To focus on our flesh and on our enemy is a huge waste of time. Instead, we must perceive just how glorious the Son of God is, and press deeply into Him. Do you have a method, or a Man? It is not about me, my flesh, or the devil - it is all about Christ, and as He is increased, none of these other things can do anything but be decreased.

"Jesus was transfigured before them: His face shone like the sun, and His clothing was pure white, as white as light (Matthew 17:2)."

To be clothed with the Lord Jesus is to be transfigured. For too long we who claim a heavenly calling, a heavenly citizenship, and a heavenly birth have lived as earthly men. What light we have is hidden beneath a bushel; there is no glory that surrounds us. We are not talking about an outward display, or something fleshly, but a Light and a Life which demonstrates the presence of Christ. "In Him was Life - and the Life was the Light of men (John 1:4)."

If we are abiding in Him then we will be as He is. If we have put on the Lord Jesus then we are being changed into His likeness, we are being made into His image, and we are in the process of being transfigured. After some time following the Lord we should not have to stop and ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" If we are being transfigured then that Light and that Life will respond spontaneously and effortlessly to any demand placed upon it. Just as Testimony follows Revelation, so Life follows Light. We simply know what to do because He Himself is doing it through us. If we have put on the Lord Jesus then we need not look to the past, or to the future. We need not look up to the heavens, or down upon the earth. We need not look outward at all, for the Kingdom of God is within us. The One Who said, "I am with you, but will be in you" has now taken up residence within all who believe.

We might ask why Peter, James, and John were selected to come apart into a high mountain alone with Jesus to witness this revealing. A better question is, how can we be included in this remnant? We cannot answer why these three only, and not the remaining disciples, were given this revelation. The issue is: have we seen the Lord? Have we, at least once, ascended up the mountain and caught a glimpse of this Light? Have we, at least once, seen the Son of Man transfigured into the Son of God? Eventually all the disciples saw His glory, but in Peter, James, and John we have a type of Overcomer - those who see the glory NOW and possess the Kingdom now, not waiting for a future inheritance or a future reward, but standing for the Will and the Kingdom in advance of its future fulfillment. Because they see in advance, they are able to bring the firstfruits to the Lord.

Moment by moment, hour by hour, we are being changed. This transfiguration is subtle, but powerful. How is it affected? How does God change us? When we put on the Lord Jesus then we become what we have put on. When we see the glory of the Son of God then we are changed thereby. We become what we have seen. When we see Him as He in fact is, when we behold His glory, we will be smitten to the ground. If what we have seen thus far of the Lord has not struck us dumb and blind then we have not yet touched upon His glory. Our vision is too small. May God illuminate our hearts and grant us further revelation into His Son, that we may be transfigured. Amen.

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