

## Romans (135)

This morning I suggested—that verses 11-14 is of Paul's classic NT statements on sanctification—it can be loosely divided into three parts—[1] in vv11-12a—we have the MOTIVATION of sanctification, [2] in vv12b-13—we have the NATURE of sanctification, and [3] in vv13:14—we have the SOURCE and PATTERN for sanctification—thus—as I mentioned this morning—v14 is not merely a repetition of what preceded—but it's a summary and it's the source by which the others are performed—in short, it's the doctrine of sanctification in a nutshell...

### I. The Text Explained

### II. The Text Applied

#### I. The Text Explained

##### A. What is meant by "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"?

1. Now—before we go any further—let me suggest—that "putting on Christ" is a complex activity or action...
2. In short—it entails a conscious recognition and improvement—of our personal and vital union with Jesus Christ...
3. Thus—to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"—is to MAKE USE of Christ BY FAITH—in all that He is and has...
4. Historically—there have been rather heated discussions—concerning the meaning of this amazing phrase...
5. Some have said it refers to our justification and others to our sanctification—I suggest it entails both of these...
6. But—before I show you that—I want examine another passage—where the apostle Paul uses the same phrase...
7. Gal.3:26-27—"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ..."
8. Notice—sinners are made sons of God "through faith in Christ Jesus"—faith and faith alone unites us to Christ...
9. But then notice—every person who has faith in Christ—should be publically aligned to Christ by baptism...
10. But—water baptism—is only the outward expression—of what's already taken place in the heart—by faith...
11. What is water baptism—but the outward expression that the person baptized is in union with Christ—by faith...
12. Water baptism is all about union with Christ—union with Christ in His death and union with Christ in His resurrection...
13. Thus—every person in union with Christ by faith, which is expressed in baptism—"HAVE PUT ON CHRIST..."
14. Thus—whatever it means—"to put on Christ"—every Christian has already done it—it's a past fact or reality...
15. Now—I suggest to you—that in this verse (Gal.3:27)—this phrase refers to our having union with Christ by faith...
16. "For as many of you as were baptized INTO Christ have PUT ON Christ"—that is—these are the same things...
17. In other words—to have PUT ON Christ is to have been put INTO Christ—that is—in UNION with Christ...
18. And so—Christians have "put on Christ" and they need to "put on Christ"—it is both a past fact and present need...
19. That is—Christians have been put in union with Christ—and they need to strengthen and make use of that union ...
20. Philip Melancthon—"To put on Christ signifies not merely imitation, as if he said to put on the ornament of Christ and imitate his virtues. It means more, namely, to apprehend Christ by faith and to believe that

because of him the Father is favorable toward us. Likewise, that he works in those who call on him. For Christ is not merely our example like the other saints. He is the cause and author of our salvation, the sacrificial victim and Savior. Therefore let putting on Christ be understood in both ways, that we apprehend him by faith as our Savior and acknowledge that he is the umbrella by which we are protected against the wrath of God. Then follows the imitation of his example..."

21. Thus—I suggest that—"to put on Christ"—fundamentally entails three things—reckoning, obtaining, and imitating...
22. [1] Reckoning—that is—put on Christ afresh by conscious recognition—of WHO and WHAT you are in Christ...
23. Now—it is true that Christians have by faith already put on the righteous garment of Christ in justification...
24. Thus—I am not here suggesting Christians need to be re-justified—justification is a once-for-all-time reality...
25. But—what I am suggesting is this—Christians need to reflect or improve upon the reality of their justification...
26. 1Jn.2:1-2—"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world..."
27. John wrote this letter with a specific purpose in mind—"these things I write to you, that you may not sin..."
28. But—"if anyone sins [that is, when we sin], we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous..."
29. Now—notice that John does not stop there but continues—"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins..."
30. That is—we all have in Christ—both a perfect righteousness and a substitute—we have blood and righteousness...
31. In other words—what John is doing is—reminding them that Christ is both their righteousness' and propitiation...
32. That is—He not only perfectly obeyed the law for us—but He also endured the penalty of the law in our place...
33. Thus—what John is fundamentally doing is this—he is exhorting sinning Christians—to put on the Lord Jesus Christ...
34. Remember—that you have been justified and thus you ARE justified—you are righteous and forgiven—in Christ...
35. [2] Obtaining—by this I mean—to put on Christ is to avail ourselves of the resources we presently have in Christ...
36. MLJ—"The command to put on the Lord Jesus Christ means that we are to rely on Him. It is like the soldier putting on his armor. We put Him on in this way: conscious of our weakness and of our need for strength and ability and power, we turn to Him and say, I need Thee every hour, stay Thou near by; Temptations lose their power when Thou art nigh..."
37. [3] Imitating—by this I mean—to put on Christ is to walk and live in the way and manner He lived and walked...
38. 1Jn.2:6—"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked"—live as He lived...
39. John Gill—"To put on Christ...is not only to exercise faith on him as the Lord our righteousness, and to make a profession of his name, but to imitate him in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; to walk as he walked, and as we have him for an example, in love, meekness, patience, humility, and holiness..."
40. Calvin's editor—"To put on Christ...is to put on his virtues and graces, to put on or be endued with his spirit, to imitate his conduct and to copy his example. This is in addition to the putting him on as our righteousness, and not as a substitute for it. Both are necessary: for Christ is our sanctification, the author, worker, and example of it, as well as our righteousness..."
41. Col.3:12-14—"Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a

complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection..."

B. What is meant by "the flesh"?

1. Most of you know—the Scriptures use this word in at least two ways—[a] human nature, and [b] fallen human nature...
2. [a] Human nature, 1Pet.4:1—"Christ suffered for us in the flesh" 1Jn.4:2—Jesus Christ has come in the flesh..."
3. In these two texts "flesh" simply refers to human nature—Christ came in the flesh and He suffered in the flesh...
4. That is—He came in human nature and strictly speaking He suffered for us on the cross—in that human nature...
5. [b] Fallen human nature—this is the way in which it is here used—of that remaining principle of evil within...
6. Thus—by flesh is meant—fallen and unchanged human nature—human nature in its native or natural condition...
7. Now—here I want to digress for a few minutes—and give a quick overview of the Bible's teaching on the flesh...
8. [1] The flesh remains but not reigns, Gal.5:24—"those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires..."
9. This—"crucifying of the flesh"—is one time thing—that sometimes goes by the name of—definite sanctification...
10. Every Christian has crucified the flesh—and every Christian has equally crucified the flesh—at conversion...
11. Thus—the Scriptures distinguish between those who are "in the flesh" and those—in whom the flesh remains...
12. For example, Rom.8:8—"so then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God"—that is—they are "all flesh..."
13. They are in the flesh as a way of life—they live according to the flesh—they are ALL flesh and ONLY flesh...
14. Now—this is not true of a Christian—for their nature has been radically renewed or changed in regeneration...
15. But—remember what I've often said—while the whole soul is renewed—to part of the soul is wholly renewed...
16. [2] The flesh remains evil—that is—to the degree that it remains—it retains its natively evil and wicked nature...
17. Gal.5:17—"for the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish..."
18. Thus—while the flesh no longer reigns it REMAINS—and to the degree that it remains—it REMAINS evil...
19. [3] The flesh remains until death—that is—nowhere does Scripture command us to put to the death the flesh...
20. We are told to mortify—"the deeds of the flesh"—we are to weaken and starve the flesh—but the flesh remains..
21. The flesh itself remains within the best Christians—it remains evil—and though weakened it always remains...

C. What is meant by "make no provision for the flesh"?

1. The Gk word rendered "provision" literally means—"to give forethought"—to give prior thought or consideration...
2. For example—if our refrigerator was empty and we needed to buy groceries—my wife would make a grocery list..

3. She would give prior thought or consideration as to what she would buy—she would plan on filling the refrigerator...
4. Then—she would go to the store—and purchase the food—bring it back home—and stock the refrigerator...
5. Thus—here forethought or planning necessarily led to her making provision—the one necessarily leads to the other...
6. This is why—most translations have simply rendered the word "provision"—"do not make provision for the flesh..."
7. That is—do not fill your soul with things your flesh likes—or, put another way—we must STARVE the flesh...
8. The last phrase—"to fulfill its lusts"—means to fulfill its desires or appetites—to satisfy its evil and sinful desires...
9. Thus—the flesh desires things—it desires or lusts after the things of this world—things contrary to God's law...
10. Gal.5:16—"walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh"—the sinful cravings of the flesh...
11. Thus—the flesh will lust or desire—but we must not feed it—so as to FULFILL its sinful desires or cravings...

## II. The Text Applied

### A. The reality of remaining flesh

1. This is an evident point—that I fear too few Christians really understand—the flesh remains within all Christians...
2. Furthermore—the flesh remains an evil principle—that opposes all good and desires or craves all forms of evil...
3. Now—here I want to attempt to answer the question—why?—why has God left the flesh within His people...
4. [1] To keep us humble—every Christian has within them—an evil principle—that opposes the things of God...
5. [2] To keep us watchful—that is—the presence of the flesh—ought to render us always alert and watchful...
6. [3] To keep us hopeful—by this I mean—it makes us anticipate a day—when we shall be freed from the flesh...
7. Rom.13:11—"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed..."

### B. The centrality of Jesus Christ

1. Here—I simply want to remind you—that putting on Christ—includes the entirety of the Christian experience...
2. Or—put another way—Christians put on Christ at the [1] beginning, [2] middle, and [3] end of their lives...
3. [1] Beginning—this is how the Christian life begins—the old man is put off—and Christ, by faith, is put on...
4. This, as I mentioned this morning, could be called initial sanctification—and takes place in relation to our conversion...
5. [2] Middle—this is how the Christians life continues—the old man is put off—and Christ, by faith, is put on...
6. [3] End—this is how the Christian life [our sanctification] ends—we put off this body—and put on Christ...
7. That is—we put on a glorious body similar to His body—and our souls are perfected—to reflect His sinless soul...