

“Diversity, Identity & Community”
Colossians 3:11-14
Mercy Hill Church | November 13, 2022

¹¹Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. ¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Big Idea: The Gospel recognizes, redeems and reconciles our (cultural) differences as a church community.

- 1. Jesus unites people of different backgrounds (v.11)**
 - (cf. Galatians 3:28, 5:6, 6:15; Colossians 4:10-11)
 - **Ethnic, cultural and socio-economic differences**
 - **The inter-cultural church vs. the multi-cultural church.**
- 2. Remember who we are in Christ (v.12a)**
 - (cf. 1 Peter 2:9-10)
- 3. Put on the "clothes" of Christ (v.12b)**
 - (cf. Galatians 5:22-23)
- 4. Persevere with & forgive each other (v.13)**
 - (cf. Matthew 18:21-35, Ephesians 4:32, Proverbs 10:12)
 - **The indicative: What God has done**
 - **The imperative: What God commands us to do**
- 5. Put on the "overcoat" of love (v.14)**
 - (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, 1 Peter 4:8, 1 John 4:11)

Reflection Questions

- In what ways do you see (ethnic, cultural, socio-economic) diversity in our church? How have you seen these differences divide or separate us from each other? In what ways have you learned more of who God is through those different than you? What does it mean to be a Christian _____?
- When you look in the mirror (or think of yourself), what descriptions come to mind? In what ways do you forget (or need to be reminded of) your identity in Christ?
- Which of the 5 attributes from v.12b are evident -- or perhaps lacking -- in your life these days? Which characteristics are areas of growth?
- Are there people whom you need to forgive? How might knowing God's forgiveness empower you to truly forgive others?
- In what ways have you seen (and experienced) God's love bring and build unity in this diverse church community? How might our church be a witness to those around us of the the Gospel message of diversity, unity, forgiveness and love?