"FROM RAGS TO RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Colossians 3:8-11

HRM – 2-12-2022

INTRODUCTION:

***You can go from rags to righteousness!**

I. GOD'S COMMAND: You Must Strip the OLD RAGS Off Of You! (v. 8-9a)

A. The rags of bad attitudes

1. Anger
2. Wrath
3. Malice

B. The rags of bad speech

1. Destructive words
2. Filthy words
3. Lying words

II. GOD'S REASON: Because God Has Put a NEW RIGHTEOUSNESS Onto You! (v. 9b-11)

A. The old man has been put off at salvation (v. 9b)

B. The new man has been put on at salvation (v. 10)

This new man is being renewed daily.

1. The renewal is continual ("is renewed")
2. The renewal is spiritual ("is renewed (by God)")
3. The renewal is intellectual ("in knowledge")
4. The renewal is incredible ("after the image...")
5. The renewal is impartial ("where there is neither...")

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"FROM RAGS TO RIGHTEOUSNESS"

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9/4/2016

INTRODUCTION:

ILLUS: The fictitious story of "Cinderella" - who went from shabby, tattered, old rags to a beautiful sparkling gown.

The 1991 Atlanta Braves & Minnesota Twins are said to have been two "Cinderella" clubs, who went from the bottom to the top in one year!

In Christ, we too have gone from nothing to everything; from the prospect of hell to Heaven, from sin to a Savior, from confusion to truth, from filthy rags (Is. 64:6) to righteousness (II Cor. 5:21).

Because of this transformation, it is unfitting for the righteous to be clothed in unrighteousness, for God's children to dress in the devil's rags.

ILLUS: Paragraph 3 (John Phillips, Moody Monthly, Nov. 1983, p. 64).

***You can go from rags to righteousness!**

I. GOD'S COMMAND: You Must Strip the OLD RAGS Off Of You! (v. 8-9a)

V. 8

"But now" (in contrast to our past life, God expects us to be different than we used to be. For the believer, everything becomes new (II Cor. 5:17), including our attitudes and actions toward others.

"Ye also" - in addition to the mortifying of sensual sins (internal selfish lusts - v. 5), the believer is to remove from himself sinister sins (external evil treatment of others - v. 8-9).

"Put off" - lit. take off and put away from yourself ("atto" and "tithami"; middle imperative). The analogy is of stripping off from oneself filthy clothing.

"All these" - Don't tolerate any!

NOTE: The putting "off" (v. 8) is joined with the putting "on" (v. 12).

This same expression is found in Ephesians 4:22-24 - "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Before anyone can "put on" Godly virtues, they must "put off" ungodly attitudes and actions.

No one, in their right mind, puts on clean clothing over filthy garments.

If such a feat were attempted, the results would be these:

1) The clothes don't fit (because of the bulky undergarments)

2) Even if one managed to cover himself while retaining the old clothing, the stench of the old, though well-masked from view, sends forth an odor.

SEE: Ephes. 4:22-32 -

Put Off	Put On
Lying (v. 25)	Truth (v. 25)
Stealing (v. 28)	Laboring & giving (v. 28)
Corrupt speech (v. 29)	That which edifies (v. 29)
Bitterness etc. (v. 31)	Kindness etc. (v. 32)

Whereas God commands us to mortify (put to death) internal sins (v. 5) (sins that rage within oneself), now He commands us to put off (remove from oneself) external sins (sins directed toward others).

Paul, having discussed bad desires (v. 5), now moves to bad attitudes (v. 8a) and bad words (v. 8b-9).

A. The rags of bad attitudes

1. Anger

"Anger" (Gk. "orge") - deep-seated anger, an unrighteous smoldering, stewing over a long period of time. A settled or abiding anger that gradually builds (grows).

This type of person bottles up (someone who "clams up" and internalizes the feelings of animosity).

--No forgiveness--

This individual lacks the virtue of mercy. He holds grudges.

2. Wrath

"Wrath" (Gk. "thumos") - a hot, explosive outburst of anger; a sudden hot temper that rises up inside of someone.

*This type of anger blows up (someone who is "hot-headed" and ventilates feelings of animosity).

--No Spirit-control--

This individual lacks the virtue of patience. He is "short-fused"; "flies off the handle" etc.

Two warnings about anger:

1) Don't go to bed angry (Eph. 4:26)
2) Don't give Satan a foothold (Eph. 4:27)

3. Malice

"Malice" - someone who is vicious; a person of "badness."

Paul is describing someone who desires the injury or hurt of others. He is sad when they prosper and glad when they fall.

"Such cancerous behavior is illustrated in Haman, who nursed in his evil heart a hatred for Mordecai the Jew. His malignity almost exterminated the Jewish race" (John Phillips, Moody Monthly, Nov. 83, p. 64).

B. The rags of bad speech

1. Destructive words

"Blasphemy" = (from: "blapto" - to injure; and "pheme" - speech) (Vines, p. 131).

The word refers to injurious speech; abusive words; to rail on someone or speak evil of them (Eph. 4:31); to "gag" on someone and thereby defame their character; to slander someone and thereby harm their reputation.

--Such speech stems from pride (I Tim. 6:4).

--Such speech will be prevalent in last days (II Tim. 3:2)

--Such speech even happens to good people (like Paul - Rom. 3:8; I Pet. 4:4).

--Such speech should not be countered with the same (I Cor. 4:13)

I Peter 3:9-10 - "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile."

We are commanded "to speak evil of no man" (Note: This injunction is in a context describing politicians! (v. 1)

2. Filthy words

"Filthy communication" - shameful words, obscene language, dirty speech.

Any speech that would make you blush if you said it in front of Christ is not for you to say at all.

Applications:

1) Curse words (four-letter words;)
2) Crude jokes ("foolish jesting" is sin - Eph. 5:4)
3) Verbal pornography (gutter language)

3. Lying words

"Lie not" (present imperative - "do not ever lie") - honesty is to be a pattern of our lives.

--Lying is totally contrary to the nature of God (Jn. 14:6; Tit. 1:2), but is Satanic - Jn. 8:44).

--Lying is never justified

--There are no "white lies"

--The penalty for liars is serious (Rev. 21:8).

"Lying has become a way of life for millions. Children lie to their parents without conscience. Men in business tell bare-faced lies to avoid their creditors, to acquire something they want, or to make a sale. People make promises they have no intention of fulfilling" (Phillips, p. 64).

"Bishop Warren A. Chandler was preaching about the lies of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5), and asked the congregation, "If God still struck people dead for lying, where would I be?" The congregation snickered a bit, but the smiles disappeared when the Bishop shouted, "I'd be right here -- preaching to an empty church!" (Wiersbe, p. 107).

The old man's garments are spotted with the leprosy of sin. We should fling them off with the same feeling of horror as if we had realized we had put on a leper's coat" (Phillips, p. 64).

II. GOD'S REASON: Because God Has Put a NEW RIGHTEOUSNESS Onto You! (v. 9b-11)

A. The old man has been put off at salvation (v. 9b)

"Seeing that ye have put off. . ." - Since you have, Because you have (aorist participle giving the cause or reason).

"ye have (past aorist tense) put off" - Interesting observation: On the one hand, God tells us to put off (v. 8); now on the other hand, He says we have already put off (v. 9).

The day you were saved was the day you put off the old man.

In Christ (in a spiritual sense, before the eyes of God), we are clean; but in daily life we are to (in a literal sense) make our life match our position in Christ.

ILLUS: of the prince who acts like a pagan pauper; the king who behaves like a clown. His behavior does not match his position. When he forgets his title and position, he acts foolishly and shamefully.

Whoever you identify yourself with, you will behave like.

"The old man" = the old nature; the old you.

"With his deeds" = the old man's practices; the old way of thinking, talking, and doing things.

B. The new man has been put on at salvation (v. 10)

"Have put on the new" - When a believer is clothed with Christ's righteousness, he is a new man!

"New man" = "neos" - new in time.

"Renewed" = "kainos" - new in quality

"Which is renewed - the new man is continually being made new again.

This new man is being renewed daily.

1. The renewal is continual ("is renewed" - present tense)

   It began at salvation and is continuing to the present.

   Salvation occurs instantaneously, but transformation is an ever-growing feature of the Christian's life (Rom. 12:2) (called "progressive sanctification").

2. The renewal is spiritual ("is renewed (by God)")

   The renewal is accomplished by God (passive voice).

   How? The Spirit of God takes the Word of God and makes us new again.

3. The renewal is intellectual ("in knowledge")

   The renewal is of the mind (Rom. 12:2).

   The word "knowledge" refers to a direct and personal knowledge of spiritual truth (not a knowledge about something, but a knowledge of someone).

   As a man thinks, he does. You are what you think.

   Man's greatest need is not academic knowledge but Scriptural knowledge!

   God commands us in a similar context to be "renewed in the Spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:23).

4. The renewal is incredible! ("after the image...")

It is a restoration of what Adam lost when he sinned!

"The image" - God created man in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27). That image was a spiritual, moral, and personal likeness to God.

When man sinned, he died spiritually; he was depraved morally; and was defective personally (i.e. man's intellect, emotion, and will became defective).

However, in Christ, through the renewal that God performs via His Word, you can reverse that marred image and become progressively Godly (like your God).

"We were formed in God's image, and deformed from God's image by sin. But through Jesus Christ,w e can be transformed into God's image" (Wiersbe, p. 108).

"the image of him that created him" - Who created us? Christ (Col. 1:16). Then whose image are we made into via God's renewal? Christ's!

God's plan is that we be "conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

5. The renewal is impartial ("where there is neither...")

*God's moral standards (v. 8-9) apply to everyone, and God will renew everyone (who is saved) after His own image, regardless of:

1) Nationality (race)
2) Religious heritage
3) Culture types
4) Social status

God will renew everyone (who is saved) after His own image, regardless of:

1) Nationality - "Greek nor Jew" (there is no distinctiveness in terms of spiritual potential).

   A saved Gentile can mature just as fast and grow just as much as a saved Jew.

2) Religious heritage - "Circumcision nor uncircumcision"

   One's spirituality in Christ is not dependent on external surgery, but internal surgery ("circumcision of the heart" - 2:11).

3) Culture types - Everyone from the Greek intellectuals with their "refined" culture, all the way to the Barbarians, yea, even the lowest - the Scythians - can be renewed and spiritually reformed and refined.

4) Social Status - "bond nor free"

   Whether slave or free man, whether blue-collar or white-collar, whether low income or no income or high income, whether company president or company janitor . . . In Christ, your spiritual potential is equal.

   Why? Because Christ is the believer's all (ie. everything), and He is in all (who believer) (Rom. 10:12-13).

Ministries that are based on race, color, or social standing are not Biblical (Wiersbe, p. 110).

Conclusion:

2 Cor. 8:9
For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Christ went from riches to rags so that we might go from rags to riches.
Christ went from the top to the bottom so that we might go from the bottom to the top.
Christ went from everything to nothing so that we might go from nothing to everything.
Christ went from wealth to poverty so that we might go from poverty to wealth.
He experienced rockbottom humiliation so that we might experience mountain top wealth (in Heaven)

If God was to make one statement to His children, it might be:

“I saved you for more than this!”