**Sermon Title: The Priority of Christ in the New Man, Part 3**

**Sermon Text: Colossians 3:14**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to a lifestyle of godly love and enhanced unity.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 stipulations related to loving unity.**

**Illustration:** God’s love toward mankind is pictured throughout the Scriptures. It was and is a love that is unselfish, unearned, and unmerited. This is pictured in God’s love for sinners and His enemies, deserving of His wrath, but instead He sent the gracious gift of His Beloved Son, to die for their sins.

 It is therefore, God’s love for mankind that serves as the foundation stone of the Christian’s love for one another and their fellow man.

**III. The 3rd virtue is the foundation factor. V.14**

A. The **priority** of love in the new man’s life. v.14a

 When asked which is the greatest commandment, Jesus replied, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and prophets.” (**Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:26-27**)

 **Matthew 22:37-40** Jesus said to him, "`You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **38** "This is *the* first and great commandment. **39** "And *the* second *is* like it:`You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

 Jesus was stating that there are no other commands greater than these two commands. Therefore, love is of pre-eminence in the life of a Christian.

 There are several words for love in the Greek language, in prebiblical Greek the verb agapao and noun agape is most common. This love is a self-giving love that is unearned, unmerited, and undeserved.

 B. The **practice** of love in the new man’s life. v.14b

 The imagery here suggests the foundation, fundamental, and flowing piece of clothing that cements everything together. Because God initiated His love toward us by sending Jesus, His Son, believers are exhorted to practice the same sacrificial offer of love towards one another.

 **1 John 4:10-11, 19** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. … **19** We love Him because He first loved us.

 This love is the glue which binds everything together and maintains perfecting unity in the body of Christ (the church) and (churches).

 Love is a supremely important and unifying Christian virtue. The very nature and character of God’s love is now supplied and poured out by the filling of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life. (**Galatians 5:22**)

 **1 John 4:8** He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

 **1 John 4:16** And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

 **Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

 **1 Thessalonians 4:9** But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

 1. The believer’s practice of love is demonstrated by keeping the **commandments**.

 (**John 14:21-26, 31; 16:27**)

 **Romans 13:8-10** Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

 **Galatians 5:14-15** For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **15** But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

 **James 2:8-9** If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; **9** but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

 **1 John 5:1-3** Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. **2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. **3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

 2. The believer’s practice of love **identifies** them as disciples. (**1 John 3:13-16, 18**)

 **John 13:34-35** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

 3. The believer’s practice of love **transforms**.

 4. The believer’s practice of love is **empowered** by God.

 (**Deuteronomy 10:19; Luke 10:27-37**)

 **1 John 4:7-9** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. **9** In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

 **Galatians 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

 C. The **product** of love in the new man’s life. v.14c

 Love for one another is a product of our love for God, our love for God is reflected in our love for one another. This is the key to the perfection of the bond of unity among interpersonal relationships in and outside the church. The love of God binds believers together in complete oneness, in spite of the differences. This supernatural love poured out in our inner man (heart), therefore is the foundation and glue of the Christian’s unity.

 (**Ephesians 4:1-6; Romans 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Corinthians 13**)

 1. Believers are unified in their love for **Christ**.

 2. Believers are unified in their love for **one another**.

 (**Leviticus 19:17-18; 1 John 2:10; 4:12, 20**)

 3. Believers are unified in their love for their **fellow** man.

 4. Believers are unified in their love for **family**.

 (**Colossians 3:19; Titus 2:4; Ephesians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 3:1-6**)

 5. Believers are unified in their love for their **enemies**. (**Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-35**)

 **Romans 12:14, 17-21** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. . . .

 **17** Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. **18** If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. **19** Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance *is* Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. **20** Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

 **1 Peter 3:9** not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

**Ephesians 4:3**  “unity of the Spirit.” The Spirit-bestowed oneness of all true believers (**1 Corinthians 6:17; 12:11-13; Philippians 1:27; 2:2**) has created the “bond of peace,” the spiritual cord that surrounds and binds God’s holy people together. This bond is love. (**Colossians 3:14**)

The particular area of unity:

1. Body

2. Spirit

3. Hope

4. Lord

5. Faith

6. Baptism

7. God and Father

Trinity example of unity: vv.4-6

 The trinity emphasizes that, although they have unique roles, they are completely unified in every aspect of the divine nature and plan.