

**SERMON: 30 December 2018 – Rev Alistair Cowper**

**“Jesus the Apostle”  
(Colossians 3:12-17 and Luke 2:41-52)**

SLIDE 1

42 - 12 years old - bar mitzvah

46 - listening and asking questions

47 - everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers

49 - he was at home in his Father’s house, the place he “had to be”

(Greek - it is necessary for me to be in the things of my Father)

52 - Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

So how does one grow in favour with God and with people in the way Jesus did?

The Good News is that it is the life of Christ in the heart of the believer that does it.

When that life is born in us, takes root in us, comes alive in us, and we realise this life force is the Source of everything that is good, then we’re in the place to begin to grow in Christ likeness.

Then, we are able to begin to live out in the way Paul urges the Colossians to.

The verses we looked at today begin with the words, 'therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved'.

We must begin with that truth of who we are in Christ; of who we are with the gift of Christ with us, Immanuel.

## SLIDE 2

To be clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; to bear with each other and forgive grievances;

## SLIDE 3

to put on love; to have the peace of Christ rule in our hearts; and the word of Christ dwell in us as we teach and sing in our hearts; and as we do it all in the name of Jesus and give thanks to God through him.

## SLIDE 4

These are gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. They are gifts of grace that Christ has made available to us today to strengthen the body of Christ.

We are to wear them like clothes. In the gift of Christ, God with us, God has given us a new wardrobe. We get all these new clothes to wear!

They are clothes which we need in order to flourish in the way God wants people to flourish.

They are the clothes that fit us properly and never need to be altered - or maybe they are as flexible as they need to be - like expanding waist lines - might be better not to expand that analogy too much!

And, I think these gifts are flowing constantly, between God, the Father and Christ the Son, through the action and the power of the Holy Spirit, in an endless cycle of love.

The gift of Christ, the good news of Christmas, God with us, means that we are caught up in this constant stream of gift giving and receiving.

Its like a warm shower, which we step into, and is so near at hand that we can access it by simply believing in the goodness of God as revealed to us by Christ Jesus.

So, as we come to the end of this year, why don't we imagine ourselves putting on these new clothes or stepping into this warm flow of divine gift giving and receiving?

Which gift do you need to give or receive today?

Let's take a few moments to speak to the Lord about that.