

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1:2,9,10) Amen.

Colossians 3:12–17 (NKJV) — 12 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. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

This is the word of the Lord.

Lord, sanctify us by Your Truth, Your Word is Truth.

Elect, Holy, Beloved: Consecrated to God

1. In our status before God: “elect, holy, beloved”
2. In our clothing before others: “put on ...”
3. In our fellowship with one another: “let the Word dwell richly”

In Jesus name, who is, who was, and who is to come, our Savior in flesh and in glory, dear fellow redeemed,

Luke records that Jesus was presented before the Lord “according to the law of Moses.” He quotes Exodus 13, “Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD.” So spoke Moses to the children of Israel upon their departure from Egypt, “Consecrate to Me all the firstborn... both man and beast.” The word “consecration” means “to keep holy,” that is, “to set apart.” Jesus is, in fact, the firstborn of God – the begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. He appears in the Temple in Luke 2 according to the law, to be “consecrated” to the LORD in your place. He was presented blameless so that you too would be presented blameless – consecrated to the LORD.

1. In our status before God: “elect, holy, beloved”

As our text says, this is your status: elect, holy, beloved.

When the LORD records this ordinance of consecration in Exodus 13 He uses it as a reminder. It is to remind Israel both of what has happened and what will happen. Just one chapter earlier, Exodus 12 records the Tenth Plague and the Passover. This Law of the first born is immersed in the context of the Passover. If you remember, the festival of the Passover was to be a perpetual reminder of how the LORD delivered His people from Egypt. He did so by striking down the first born of those who stood against Him, both man and beast.

Who among us should be spared? Who among us has truly been consecrated to the LORD. As we look through our text, who has done the things asked for? The LORD calls for kindness not just toward those who are kind to us, but toward those who hate us and do evil to us. The LORD calls for patience not just when we are stress free, but when we are most strained and most tired. The LORD calls for love and forgiveness not just toward those who accidentally bump into you, He calls for forgiveness toward those with whom you rightly have a complaint against. He calls for love toward those who intentionally wrong you, however they might “bump into you.” If such things are the meaning of to holy, then who can claim to be consecrated to the LORD? Who can claim to be set apart from sin?

On the basis of our lives and works, no one can claim such a title as holy to the LORD. God alone is holy. We, like the Egyptians, deserve the tenth plague. We deserve to lose what we consider most precious to us. We deserve to lose our own life, separated from God, and consecrated to hell.

However recall the meaning of the consecration of the first born. It was a reminder of the Passover. Recall this sacrificial event ... a Lamb, unblemished, a male of the first year. ... its blood on the doorpost ... the LORD “passes over.” Notice: the firstborn animal is consecrated, set apart for death, so that the first born son is consecrated, set apart for life. *Exodus 13:15 — 15 ...Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all males (of the flock) that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’*

What a picture! The event we consider today where our Lord is presented before the LORD is really the fulfillment of what was spoken in Exodus 13. Jesus is the firstborn of God, the most precious. He is both our consecration in life and our sacrifice in death. He is both set apart in all He has done as the firstborn, and He is also the Lamb who was slain, whose blood covers us. His blood covers us as the LORD “passes over” the judgment we deserve. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

This is why your consecration has nothing to do with you at all. It is a status given by God, not achieved by man. Notice these are all given in a passive sense – “**as the elect of God, holy, and beloved**”. You are “**elect**” because you are chosen by God, saved by

His grace in Christ. You are **“holy”** because you are set apart by God, called to be saints not by our works, but by the His work of faith. You are **“beloved”** because you are loved by God. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” **“Elect, holy, and beloved”** is your status. You are consecrated because God has declared it to be so on account of the perfect presentation of His Son.

Your status: Consecrated to God.

2. In our clothing before others: “put on ...”

The law of the first born was to be a reminder of God’s salvation. *Exodus 13:14 — 14 So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is this?’ that you shall say to him, ‘By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

Once slaves, the Israelites now were free. They had been delivered from “the house of bondage.” This law of consecration can be our reminder too. Redemption means you that you have been bought back. You are no longer a slave to sin. You “elect, holy, and beloved.” You are God’s own possession. Your whole life has been set apart from sin and dedicated to God alone.

Our status becomes our standard. Christ in us becomes Christ on us. **12 ... put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.** Literally, “be clothed with.” This emerges out of earlier verses. *Colossians 3:1 — 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ... 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ... 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

Our status becomes our standard. But make no mistake, our status is not determined by our standard of living. This status does not change anymore than Christ has changed. Where our struggle lies is in living out the life we’ve been given. Our flesh clings to us, always trying to lure us back to that old way, the way of selfishness. So often we forget that we belong to God. We sometimes forget that our life is not in these earthly thoughts, but on things above. We have died with Christ so that our sinful flesh has been crucified and buried. In Christ we are now alive, resurrected and clothed with a new man who lives according to the image of our Lord. Our consecration is to let the hidden become known. We wear Christ.

As elect, as holy, as beloved in Christ – we wear tender mercies. We follow Christ who had that deep seeded compassion for those who are less fortunate. The Greek word is: “splanchna.” So often Jesus was “moved with compassion.” The “splanchna” is a deep, internal concern, where you are truly moved inwardly for the needs of others. We wear patience – not just when we are stress free, but when we are most strained and

most tired. We take a deep breath and remember our Lord who in the Garden of Gethesmene, blood dripping down His face, when He found His disciples sleeping, did not cast them off and leave His mission, but endeavored to go on before them, on their behalf, to patiently bear my sins. So even when others intentionally wrong you, bump into you on purpose, or outright steal from you, as elect of God, put on the new man; wear your status as your standard. You are consecrated to the LORD.

3. In our fellowship with one another: “let the Word dwell richly”

The salvation of Israel from Egypt was a unified event. The massive company of Israel went out together, as one people. What had God given them to keep them united? Concerning this law of the firstborn we read, *Exodus 13:16 – 16 It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.*” The instructions of Moses were to be as a sign before the eyes of Israel so that generation after generation they would remember the grace of the LORD their God who saved them from Egypt and gave them the promised land of Canaan. It was the Word that led them; it was the Word that dwelt among them.

The Word was what truly united Israel into this fellowship. So also with us. The Word of Christ keeps us in the rhythm of true worship and fellowship.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The true rhythm of fellowship and worship always begin with God. Anything that begins down here with us is man made. Any work or praise that we invent falls short of finding the place where God dwells. Only the Word can come from above to draw us into the fellowship of Christ.

In Greek the word “in” most basically means “in a certain area.” The phrase “let the Word dwell in you” could better be translated “let the Word dwell among you.” Because notice the whole context is about fellowship activities. v.15 “you were called to one body.” v.16 “teaching,” “admonishing,” “singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” This is the presence of Christ Jesus dwelling among us. He speaks; we respond.

Outward membership means nothing if the Word is not dwelling among us. We have been called to “one body.” That means we should be consecrated as one people, following one source of teaching, being guided according to one source of peace. We should be drawn here regularly – teaching, singing, praising together with the body of Christ.

This is how the peace of God rules – through the Word. The Word our guide into peace in how we relate to one another. We seek the peace of God. That peace of God is to have no divisions, no complaints that are left to fester, no secret agendas for or against another Christian. “You were called in one body, be thankful.”

Just as Israel was set apart as one people, so we also have been set apart as one people. There are no individuals in this fellowship. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12, *that there be no schism in the body ... if one suffers, we all suffer*. So the admonition we bring against each other is likewise against ourselves. As soon as we start thinking that the sins of that Christian are not my sins too, then we have lost the concept of fellowship. We are all members of Christ. So the teachings of one church in the CLC are the teachings of all. The good deeds of one brother or sister are the deeds of all. And the struggles of one believer are the struggles of us all. This is the peace of God ruling us.

14 ... above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. Love is the bond of fellowship. It fastens us together. The word here is also used of the bond that fastens ships together in port. Love keeps us from allowing one to float away. Love also allows myself to be admonished lest I float away. Instead of jumping to defensiveness, love bears and receives the Word with joy. Love holds fast to those who are drifting. “Above all put on love.” Yes indeed, for love, above all, forgives.

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. Get that “must” out of there. There is no “must” in the original. The elect of God do not need to be told “must do,” for we are under no debt. We are under Christ. “We will do, for we have risen with Christ.” *13 ...even as Christ forgave you, so you also do.*

Our fellowship is consecrated by the Word.

Set apart. The Passover and the consecration of the first born was a picture of our consecration in Christ. Jesus in the arms of His parents is set apart. As our substitute He is set apart for death in order that we may be set apart for life. **By faith in the Presentation of our Lord, you are consecrated to God and by God: elect, holy, beloved.** Amen.