



**-- Video – Incredibles: New Suits**

- There is a greater garment than any of those superhero suits.
- It may not protect our bodies, but it does something far greater: It is a mighty guardian for our spiritual lives in Christ.
- Proverbs 4:23 – *“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”*
- Today we will examine two passages of Scripture that teach us how to guard our hearts in this life.
- To do so, we must clothe ourselves with the attitude upon which we annually focus at this time of year: Gratitude.

**-- Big Idea: Gratitude guards us from deception and despair.**

-- Pray

**1.) Guard against despair with gratitude.**

- Exposit Philippians 4:1-7
- Discontentment opens doors to despair.
  - v. 2-3 - Conflict in the church at Philippi.
  - James 4:1-3 – *“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”*
  - Notice what James indicates is the source of conflict: Selfish, discontented desires that won't take “no” for an answer.
- Gratitude to God is the antidote to despair.
  - Paul's remedy for their conflict: Rejoice in the Lord and be gentle toward one another (v. 4).

- Paul's remedy for anxiety: Pray to God with thanksgiving (v. 6).
- When anxiety threatens, not just and prayers and petitions will do, for when we are tempted to become anxious or depressed, we usually want to pray anxious or depressed prayers. (Woe is me!)
- v. 6 – Here, in the face of anxiety, Paul commands us to pray prayers of thanksgiving to God.
- As a soldier stands guard with munitions, so a peaceful heart stands guard with gratitude.

## **2.) Guard against deception with gratitude.**

- Discontentment opens doors to deception.
  - Romans 1:21-23 – *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”*
  - The moment we surrender to discontent is the moment we have believed Satan's deception.
- Gratitude to God is our defense against deception.
  - John Piper – “We are surrounded by the enemy—namely, Satan and his forces. He is ‘the father of lies’ (John 8:44). His weapons are deceit and delusion. His aim is the destruction of your faith and love. And there are enemy sympathizers inside the city of our own souls—namely, the desires of the old self. And there is a song that Satan and his sympathizers cannot tolerate or approach—namely, the song of thanks to God... Unless the song of thanksgiving is being sung in our hearts, the enemy outside will deceive his way into the city of our soul, and the enemy sympathizers within will make his job easy. So for the sake of your own safety, strive to fill your heart with thanksgiving! Guard yourselves with gratitude!”
- Exposit Colossians 2:1-8
  - v. 4, 8 – Paul's immediate concern here is guarding the Colossian believers from deception.
  - v. 6-7 –Paul's defense mechanism against deception:
    - a.) Continue to live in Christ in the same way that you received Him (Deeply moved by the power and the glory of the Gospel) (v. 5).
    - b.) Root and build your life on the foundation of the truth you received (the Gospel) (v. 6a-b).
    - c.) Overflow with thankfulness in response to that truth (the Gospel) (v. 6c)
  - v. 9-14

- Paul reminds the Colossians of that truth in which we are supposed to live, in which must be rooted and built up, and because of which we are called to overflow with thankfulness.
- This essential, foundational truth is the Gospel.
- Thus, very plainly and powerfully, God is teaching us through Paul that gratitude for the Gospel is a guardian against deception.

### **3.) Ground your gratitude in the Gospel.**

- Read Colossians 2:9-14
- No matter what our circumstances may be now, we are all doing better than we deserve.
  - C.J. Mahaney, Dave Ramsey – “Better than I deserve.”
  - This is always true of everyone.
    - It is only temporarily true of those who reject Jesus Christ.
    - It is eternally and magnificently true of those who trust in Christ.
  - Because of our sins, we all deserve the judgment of death and the wrath of a righteous God.
    - Rom. 3:23 – “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*”
    - Romans 6:23 – “*The wages of sin is death.*”
- Regardless what our circumstances may be on earth, for us in Christ, the glories of the Gospel are true of us both now and forever.
  - (Get a Prayer Journal)

Through faith in Christ, we have been completely and eternally forgiven. We have been justified completely through Christ’s perfection. Our death sentence has been covered by Christ and commuted by the cross. All our faults have been forgiven... all our wrongs have been reprieved... our mistakes are met with mercy... our debt has been deleted... all condemnation has been cleared, and from our sins we’ve been set free. Are you grateful for the Gospel today?

Through faith in Christ we have been radically redeemed by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. In Him, we have died to sin and raised to righteousness... we have been rescued from wrath and made masterpieces of mercy... we are reconciled to God and made ministers of reconciliation... We have been crucified with Christ and we no longer live, but Christ lives in us... Through faith in Him, the old is gone, and the new has come, and our rebellion is replaced by His righteousness... our perdition is replaced with His perfection... our guilt with His grace... and our iniquity with immortality... our death with His life... and the wrath that we deserve is forever replaced with an everlasting glory that we don’t. Are you grateful for the Gospel this morning?

But there's more! Because we trust in Jesus Christ, God has sent the Holy Spirit to live within us, and each of us has become a temple in which the Spirit of God dwells. We are, therefore, united with the Lord... and His Spirit is in our spirit... His life in our life... His power as our power... The Holy Spirit is a Seal that guarantees our glory... a Counselor who enlightens our understanding... and an Advocate who strengthens our steps... We have been anointed by God, established by Christ, and sealed by the Spirit, once and for all time. Are you grateful for the Gospel today?

Through faith in Jesus Christ, we have forever been made true sons and daughters of God. We are brothers and sisters of Christ, and God Himself—eternally perfect in love and righteousness—is our Father forever. He calls us His children. He lavishes us with love. He gifts us with grace. Because of the mercy shown to us in Christ, we have been given God's glorious kingdom where we will live with Him forever as joint-heirs with Christ. Through His death and resurrection, our Lord has purchased for us a kingdom that can't be conquered... a hope that can't be halted... a peace that will never perish... a treasure that will never tarnish, and a joy unbounded in jubilation. Are you grateful for the Gospel today?

Because God sent His Son to die for us, and because He has given us the gift of faith in Him, our home is with God, and we will live with Him forevermore. Even now we are citizens of heaven. Even now we have been raised up with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly realms. Even more, all throughout eternity we will know the unparalleled blessing of being God's people. Forevermore, God Himself will be with us, and He will be our God. Because of what Christ has done, God will wipe every tear from every eye. Death will disappear... grief will be gone... bereavement will be banished... crying will conclude, and all pain will pass away. The old order of things will be gone forever, because the Lord we love is making everything new!

Let me ask you, then, are you grateful for the Gospel today? In light of these truths, where is there cause for complaining? Where does whining fit in? Could anyone who truly understands the Good News of Jesus Christ linger long in discontent?

### **-- Application**

-- The circumstances you complain about will become the chains that imprison you.

- As your gratitude grows, so will your spirit.
- Ground your gratitude in the Gospel and give thanks to God at every opportunity.