



*Week Three:*  
GRACE THAT CLOTHES US  
*Worship Helps*

SUNDAY MAY 12, 2019

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## KEY VERSE

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*You are all God's children through faith in Christ Jesus. All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. — Galatians 3:26-28 (CEB)*

## SUGGESTED VERSES FOR WORSHIP

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*Galatians 3:23-28*

## KEY CONCEPT

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We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ, not through obedience to the law. This is symbolized by our baptism as we are cleansed by Christ, clothed by Christ, and made one in Christ.

## CALLS TO WORSHIP

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### *Call to Worship #1 (Responsive)*

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*Leader: In Christ Jesus, we are all children of God through faith:*

**People: There is no longer Jew or Greek.**

*Leader: There is no longer slave or free.*

**People: There is no longer male and female.**

*Leader: There is no longer old or young.*

**People: There is no longer gay and straight.**

*Leader: There is no longer black or white.*

**People: There is no longer poor and rich.**

*Leader: There is no longer abled and disabled.*

**People: For all of us are one in Christ Jesus.**

*Leader: Clothed in Christ, we are heirs of grace!*

**People: Clothed in grace, we are descendants of faith!**

*Leader: Come, let us worship our God, who makes us one!*

**People: Let us worship Christ, for we are Christ's body on earth!**

## Call to Worship #2 (Responsive)

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*Leader: We often feel as if we are wandering through our lives,  
searching for something we cannot name.  
We come today to listen for hope, to pray for strength,  
and to experience God's love.*

**People: Speak to us of faith, hope, and love, O Lord.**

*Leader: As the deer longs for flowing water in the wilderness,  
we long to drink deeply of God's promise for us.  
Knowing God is here, we join together on our journey.*

**People: Lead us to your still waters O Lord.**

*Leader: Imprisoned by rules of our own making,  
we come to remember and claim our faith.  
Assured by the vision of Christ,  
whose sacrifice leads us to heaven,  
we come in fellowship with one another.*

**People: Clothe us in the love of Christ, O Lord.**

*Leader: With shouts of praise and songs of thanksgiving,  
we come to celebrate the God of hope,  
the Spirit of peace, and the Christ of redeeming love.*

**People: We come to pray.  
We come to sing.  
We come to worship and praise.**

(Ministry Matters, Worship Elements: June 19, 2016 ; <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/3954/worship-elements-june-19-2016>)

## WELCOME/SPOKEN WORD INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to worship this fourth Sunday of Easter, which is also Mother's Day, which is also our third week immersed in Galatians: a Gospel of Grace! We are spending these weeks after Easter, with a letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to one of the early Christian churches in Galatia, which we know as the New Testament book of Galatians. Paul has been teaching us a lot about grace. (1) That grace is transformational. Grace changes everything! (2) That when we recognize God's grace in one another, embracing one another, we become the fullest expression of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

And today we will consider that Grace Clothes Us. Have you ever heard the expression "Sunday best"? Well, there used to be a time when folks going to church only wore their "Sunday best:" a suit and tie for the men; a dress, gloves, and hat for the women; boys and girls scrubbed clean from a Saturday night bath and dressed up in finery that they didn't dare get dirty. It was so expected that only the best clothes could be worn to worship that a common excuse for not going became "I haven't got anything to wear." Even years later, as most churches advertise that they are "come as you are," we still have this notion that we must clean up and dress up to go to church.

It turns out, Paul was seeing a similar problem in the Galatian church. Folks were being told that they needed to be obedient to the Jewish Law (their version of dressing up) if they were going to follow Jesus. They were being told that having faith in Christ was not enough and they also needed to follow the Mosaic Law.

And Paul is clear – it is grace that cleanses, grace that clothes us, grace by which we become sons and daughter of God. Let us join our hearts to worship God, whose grace clothes us!

# PRAYERS, LITANIES, ETC.

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## Opening Prayer #1

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God our refuge and hope,  
when race, status, or gender divide us,  
when despondency and despair haunt and afflict us,  
when community lies shattered:  
comfort and convict us with the stillness of your presence,  
clothe us in the grace of Christ,  
that we may confess all you have done,  
through Christ to whom we belong and in whom we are one. Amen.

## Opening Prayer #2

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Most Holy and Eternal God,  
who dwells in the heights of heaven, yet walks among those who refuse to see you.  
Hold out your hand to those who rebel against you  
and free us from the chains that bind us,  
that we may be healed by Christ,  
clothed in Christ's grace,  
and proclaim Christ's saving deeds to all the world.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Illumination

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Holy God,  
author of the Word made flesh,  
scribe holding the pen of your Apostle Paul:  
open us to your Spirit,  
that as scripture is spoken and your Word proclaimed,  
your grace may transform, clothe, form, and sustain us  
that we may bear the fruit of your perfect love  
to the glory of Jesus Christ,  
in whose name we pray. Amen.

[UM Worship & Song Worship Resource, #75, adapted for this series]

## Statement of Faith

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We are children of God.  
We have been water-washed and Spirit-filled.  
We're dead to sin and alive in Christ.  
We're done with law, and live under grace.  
Our hearts are set on righteousness.  
Our minds are fixed on life and peace.  
Suffering is nothing, compared to the glory to come.  
For we're heirs to the life Christ is bringing!  
We are children of God!

[UM Worship & Song Worship Resource, #75, adapted for this series]

## Prayer of Confession

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Leader: *Your light has filled our lives,  
but we have not shared it with others.*

**People: Lord, have mercy on us.**

Leader: *You have marked us as your own in baptism,  
but we have not lived as your faithful people.*

**People: Christ, have mercy on us.**

Leader: *You have called us to be a light to the nations,  
but we have hidden our light under a bushel.*

**People: Lord, have mercy on us.**

Leader: *Transform us by the power of your Holy Spirit  
so that we may live out our baptism  
as your new creation,  
cleansed and clothed in your matchless love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**People: Thanks be to God. Amen!**

*[UM Worship & Song Worship Resource, #97, adapted]*

## Reaffirmation of Baptism

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*[This Thanksgiving over the Water can be used independently or as part of THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT IV, United Methodist Hymnal, p. 50]*

Leader: *The Lord be with you.*

**People: And also with you**

Leader: *Let us pray.*

*We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water.*

*Over it, the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation.*

*Through it, you led the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt into the land of promise.*

*In it, your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the  
Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin  
into everlasting life.*

*We thank you, Loving Savior, for the gift of water to remember our Baptism.*

*In it, we reaffirm that our sins are washed away.*

*Through it, we remember that we share in your death and resurrection.*

*By it, we claim that we are born anew by the Holy Spirit.*

*Pour out your Holy Spirit,*

*and by this gift of water call to our remembrance  
the grace you declared to us in our baptism.*

*For you have washed away our sins,*

*clothed us with righteousness,*

*and united us with one another,*

*that dying and rising with Christ we may share in his final victory.*

*Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord,*

*who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

*As individuals touch the water, or are marked on the forehead or hand by the water, use these words: Remember by grace you are clothed in Christ and be thankful!*

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## Great Thanksgiving

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See Week 2 Worship Helps for a Gospel of Grace/Eastertide Great Thanksgiving.

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## Sending Forth/Benediction #1

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*May the grace of God cleanse you.*

*May the grace of God clothe you.*

*May the grace of God assure you that you are a child of God.*

*May the grace of God convince you, in every situation, to love.*

*Go now to love others, even as Christ loves you.*

*[UM Worship & Song Worship Resource, #176, adapted]*

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## Sending Forth/Benediction #2

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May you weep no more, but eat and celebrate, making provision for those who have nothing. May you care for one another as members of one Body with gifts and ministries for the common good. May God's Spirit be upon you to bring good news to the poor, release, recovery and liberation to the suffering, as we proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you forever. Amen.

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# CREATIVE ELEMENTS

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## Hymns

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*Baptized in Water – TFWS 2248*

*Christ, from Whom all Blessings Flow – UMH 550*

*Easter People, Raise your Voices – UMH 304 [Eastertide]*

*I Come with Joy – UMH 617*

*In Christ There is No East or West - UMH 548*

*One Bread, One Body – UMH 620*

*Sent Forth By God's Blessing - UMH #664*

*Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters – UMH 605*

*What Wondrous Love Is This -UMH 292*

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## Contemporary Music Themes

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Baptism, justifying grace, united in Christ, diversity and unity

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## Eastertide symbol

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Easter Outfit/New Clothes – New clothes have long been associated with newness and fresh beginnings. In the ancient church, the Easter Vigil (on the Saturday before Easter Sunday) was the time that catechumens, those who had studied to profess their faith and be baptized, wore white robes as they entered the baptismal waters, were baptized, and emerged from the baptismal pool into new life as a Christian. Though there is no direct evidence, it is possible that this tradition of wearing a “new” Easter outfit as we celebrate the new life that Jesus gives has been with us for about 2000 years. Some scholars even posit that Paul's referring to “clothed with Christ” in Galatians 3:27 also references this early tradition of being clothed in a white robe at baptism.

We are also familiar with uniforms – where different people doing the same work wear the same clothes and can be identified by the uniform.

Being clothed in Christ is a spiritual clothing that identifies us and enables our unity to transform our social divisions and distinctions.

Consider providing “stoles” of white cloth for each person to put on as they remember their baptism and that they are clothed in Christ. These stoles can be as simple as strips of white cotton/linen ~4 inches wide by 36-48 inches long (whatever the width of the fabric chosen).

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