

WD June 17, 2024

“Clothes Make the Soul”

I do not like shopping for clothes. I am not fond of trying stuff on. I do not care to waste time worrying about Kohls points. I would gladly wear work wear all day every day if I could get away with it. However, most of us know well that what we wear to church is not always what we wear at nighttime before going to bed. I once saw a woman at Kroger’s on a Saturday morning, pushing a shopping cart in a pair of slippers, a bath robe, hair in rollers, like she was walking through her kitchen trying to decide what to have for breakfast. It was so out of place that I did a double take. I thought that kind of stuff was reserved for Walmart late at night. Any rational person knows that being appropriately dressed matters.

Something revealing is given to us in Genesis 2 and 3 that shows us how important it is that one is clothed with the right clothing. Genesis 2:25 says, Adam and Eve were both naked (arommim) and felt no shame. The root of naked is aram. Note that Adam and Eve felt no shame.

As we quickly discover in Genesis 3 aram means not only naked but also crafty or shrewd. Genesis 3:3 says, “Now the serpent was more crafty (aram) than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” The serpent knew how to play on the naivete of the man and the woman. It has been observed here that serpents shed their skin. The serpent is naked deceiver. His craftiness is motivated by a hatred for God’s creation and for God. He is a contrast to God. It’s an interesting play on words. Craftiness nor nakedness are the problem. What does matter is what or who the shrewdness is attached to.

Once Adam and Eve realize they were naked aram their first instinct was to hide because of their shame. Their nakedness was not just an absence of clothes at this point but a shedding of innocence. Now they were no longer the perfect image of God but now they were like the serpent, having shed the perfect image they once had. The nakedness exposed them to God’s wrath as God’s curses are pronounced in the second half of Genesis 3:14ff

14 So the Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,

*“Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!*

You will crawl on your belly

and you will eat dust

all the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity

between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and hers;

he will crush your head,

and you will strike his heel.”

Afterward the woman was cursed with pains in childbearing. For Adam the ground was cursed so that gardening would take a lot of work with lots of sweat from his brow. And most profound is the introduction of death—a return to the dust from which he was made. (Interesting in verse 20 that Eve is finally named, because she would become mother of all the living.) Each of us are bound by this curse as descendants of Adam, the Father of us all, and Eve, the mother of us all. We are therefore all naked before the Lord and exposed to God’s wrath.

Jesus reveals our desperate state in John 3:18 when He tells Nicodemus, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” We are not born neutral but born in sin and exposed to God’s wrath.

Romans 5:12 further confirms this when it says, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—.” In sin we too are naked to God’s wrath unless we are covered with His righteousness.

The solution to nakedness is the right clothing. In Genesis 3:21 we hear, “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” God clothed them. He clothes us too.

We are clothed in the same way as the Prodigal son in Luke 15:22 where the Father puts the best robe on His son—presumably from His own closet. The Father provides the clothes through Jesus. 1 Peter 2:24 tells us: “‘Jesus himself bore our sins’” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “‘by his wounds you have been healed.’”

Our Baptism is where we first receive this new clothing. Galatians 3:26-27, “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Children of God are clothed with Christ. It is a clothing that remains into eternal life. Finally, Revelation 7 identifies the believers of uncountable multitude each wearing white robes; people who have been made righteous in the blood of the lamb.

The nakedness of Eden is forgotten in heaven. The nakedness of our sin is covered in the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Unfortunately, our sin still curses us with age, sickness, bad days, lost opportunities, and eventually death. But this curse is met with a promise just as it was in Eden. Jesus has crushed the head of the serpent and we will finally be allowed to participate in the tree of life. The clothes truly make the soul. Wear them well in Jesus.

*Pastor Matthew Woods
John 3:30*