

What are You Wearing?

Luke 12:27

I

27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.

Last Monday evening at our class on the Promises of God we had a discussion concerning dress codes in our school systems. Depending on which study you pick, and there are many multiples of choices out there, you can read about the weakening, decline, or destruction, again, depending on which person you are reading, of the school systems of America. One of the studies that I looked at pointed out three things that have contributed to the apparent weakening of the education being offered by the public school systems.

A quick disclaimer, if you will, this has virtually nothing to do with the dedicated people that make up the faculty doing the teaching. Sure, there might be those rare individuals that have stopped trying to teach and are just biding time until they can quit, but in general, the people that have dedicated themselves to teaching are doing the absolute best that they can, given the limits and restrictions that have been placed on them by the politically correct and the government authorities, who think they know best. The three things that the one study I looked at pointed to were...

- 2**
- 1) Lack of Respect;
 - A) For Authority
 - B) For Others
 - C) For Themselves
 - 2) Decline of the Home
 - 3) Rise of electronics and social media

As you can readily see, all of these things stem from the first point, lack of respect. Young people today truly want to fit in with their peers, but I have noticed something, as much as they want to fit in and to be thought of as part of their peer group, they also have an independence about them that they want to express. This is most often seen in what they wear. I am sure we have all seen some, at least in our perceptions, some really weird things that people wear, and especially young people. The point is that the clothes we wear tend to be a statement of who we think we are, who we want to be, or at the very least, who we want people to think we are. We want people to respect our individuality and the choices that we make for ourselves. One of the more famous motivational speakers Zig Zigler, put on a seminar on how to dress for success by John Molloy. I was sent to that seminar when I first started in sales because my dress of preference was cowboy boots and western slacks. That was some 30 years ago, but to this day when you watch a political discussion or politicians, you will see that for the most part they are all wearing dark suits, light colored shirts and power ties, ties that make a loud statement because of color or some other eye catcher. There is a reason different professions wear different types and colors of uniforms. It is because over the years tradition and experience has told them that this particular uniform sends the message they want and generates the feelings that are best conducive to what they want to achieve. Those suits, those uniforms, the things people wear, help to generate an atmosphere of respect, help to identify those that are wearing them for who and what they are.

In our profession as Christians, God has given us an attire to adorn ourselves with. He has asked that we quit wearing our boots and western slacks, so to speak. So, the question we want to look at in this lesson is...

3

What are You Wearing?

Col 3:8-9

4

8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,

So you see, God has defined boots and western slacks as;

- 5** 1) Anger **Orge-** originally any "natural impulse, or desire, or disposition," came to signify "anger," as the strongest of all passions.
- 6** 2) Wrath **Thumos-** "hot anger, passion,"
- 7** 3) Malice **Kakia-** "badness in quality" (the opposite of arete, "excellence"), "the vicious character generally" (Lightfoot)
- 8** 4) Slander **Aischrologia** (ahee-skhol-og-ee'-ah); from NT:150 and NT:3056; vile conversation: KJV - filthy communication.
- 9** 5) Abusive Speech **Blasphemous-** "abusive, speaking evil,"
- 10** 6) Lies **Pseudos-** "a falsehood, lie", it stands by metonymy for an idol,

These are the things that man wears that God has said to do away with, to no longer allow these things to be the clothes you wear. Once we have come to God through Christ our relationship with the world must change, not only in our actions but also in how the world views us. If someone can't look at us and see that we are different from the world, then maybe we're what is known as wannabes. We want to be Christians, children of God, but we still want to be part of the world, we don't want to give up our past life. We're just wannabes. How much respect do you have for those who exhibit these characteristics and yet still demand you respect them? How much respect do you think the world gives to someone who exhibits these traits and then claims to be a Christian?

Paul's admonition warns us that our old nature must still be dealt with in this life. The two verbs translated "put off " in these two verses are not the same. The one in verse **8**...

11 **8** But now you also, *put them all aside*: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

Apotithemi (ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee); NT:659 **12**

From NT:575 and NT:5087; to put away (literally or figuratively):
KJV - cast off, lay apart (aside, down), put away (off).

This is imperative in its nature, an absolute must if you will, meaning "distance away from oneself." These sins of our old life will try to seduce us. But because Christ put them to death on the cross...

Rom 6:6

13

6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;

We now have the power in our lives to overcome the ways of the world and sin. But the responsibility of distancing ourselves from them is ours, not Christ's. Before we were saved, we could not separate ourselves from sin because these sins were a very part of our own sinful nature, as was the burden of the penalty for those sins. The verb to "put off " that is used in verse **9**...

14 **9** Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside (or put off) the old self with its evil practices,

Is from the Greek...

Apekduomai (ap-ek-doo'-om-ahee); NT:554 15

Middle voice from NT:575 and NT:1562; to divest wholly oneself, or (for oneself) despoil: KJV - put off, spoil.

16 Where verse **8** means to stop engaging in these things, verse **9** would seem to indicate to put away from ourselves the inclination or motivation to do these things. This garment of verse **9** represents our sinful nature which must be removed before we are able to resist sinning. If we will reckon ourselves dead to sin as Paul commands in **Rom 6:11** because of our identification with Christ as seen in **Col 3:3**, then we will have the power to distance ourselves from the individual sins mentioned in verses **8** and **9**.

The progression is simply this, to be adorned as a child of God we must first discard the trappings of the world, to be able to discard the trappings of the world, we must first discard the sinful nature that moves us to commit those sins.

Is our adornment of life the things of this world because that is who we think we are? Or maybe the ways of this world are who we want to be? Or maybe that's who we want people to think we are?

How sad to think that someone has no greater ambition or respect for themselves than to be thought of as *"of this world"*.

Brethren, God has a greater vision of us than I think we sometimes do for ourselves. God sees us as His children and wants for us to be adorned as such, putting off this world and putting on His righteousness, and that is the real point of this lesson, putting off the old man is not enough, we must put on the new man as well. Had I started wearing old jeans and tennis shoes, I still would not have satisfied the boss's vision of how he wanted the company represented, even though I was no longer wearing the boots.

In verse **10** we have the Greek word **enthusámenoi**, from the verb, **endúœ**, and it means

17 *"To Dress One's Self"*

This is the exact opposite of **ekdúœ**, "to put off one's garments" used in verse **9**. Because the Christian is one who has both the divine nature of God as well as the sinful nature of the world within himself...

2 Peter 1:4 18

4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

There is a personal undressing and dressing to do. The imperative of these two verbs is used, indicative of a once and for all undressing and dressing. We must consider who we are, who we want to be, and who we want the world to see when it looks at us. Are we willing to mortify, to put to death our old nature, and set our affection on things above? That is what God asks of us in...

Col 3:1-2 19

1 If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

In Rom 7, Paul describes the constant struggle he had trying to conform his outer life to his inner desires. He describes that struggle as a daily adornment with Christ-like qualities.

Rom 7:14-20 20

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. **15** For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. **16** But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. **17** So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me. **18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. **19** For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. **20** But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

I don't know about you, but this passage seems to be a description of me. I know what's right and I want to do what's right. But, like Paul, my flesh sometimes wins. God tells me that it is up to me to learn self-control, to learn how to put off the things of this world.

In ...

Gal 5:22-23

21

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Paul shows the contrast to those things that must be **“Put Off”**. The fruit of the Spirit is...

22 Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control, these are some of the things that the Christian should use to replace the things that need to be **“Put Off”**.

Interestingly, the two concepts, very closely related, that are translated as **“kindness”** or **“goodness”** and **“gentleness”** come from the same Greek root. The first idea is passive, indicating character, we are kind, we are good, and the other indicates active benevolence, it is how our kindness is manifested towards others. We may not always be able to help others, but we must always show the gentle spirit of Christ in us.

1 Cor 15:1-2

23

1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, **2** by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

Paul makes the point in Corinthians that it is the Word which saves when received, if, and that is a big if, one holds fast to the word, otherwise one believes in vain. James explains how that happens...

James 1:21

24

21 Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

If we don't put aside filthiness and wickedness then we lose our souls. The Christian who is trying to be what God wants and not follow their own desires must also cover themselves with **“humility”** by implanting the Word of God. The idea is we are to be **“one who recognizes his true condition,”** and has a **“mind set,”** on being humble, by measuring ourselves against the standard of the Word. The compound word in the Greek actually means the set of mind that correctly estimates one's true worth according to the standard of the Word. When we ignore the Word in our being and actions, we show our faith to be empty, vain.

Peter addresses this in...

1 Peter 3:3-4

25

3 And let not your adornment be merely external, braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; **4** but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

Take note, Peter does not say don't fix your hair or wear jewelry or nice clothes. He is talking about the Christian having a meekness, a gentile spirit, strength under control, which according to Aristotle, is the virtue which stands between "not showing any anger or wrath when justified" and "being angry without cause." You see, contrary to popular opinion, "meekness," can involve getting angry for the right reason, at the right time, and in the right measure, as demonstrated by our Lord...

Mark 3:5

26

5 And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Jesus felt anger toward the disciples because of their lack of faith, hardness of heart, but His reaction was one of control, one of love.

In the passage we looked at in Galatians, the first thing Paul describes as the fruit of the Spirit is Love, the crowning garment of the new man in Christ. The Christian begins a life of righteousness because of the Love of God and because he has chosen to love God in return. The Greek word there that is translated "charity" or "love" is **agápē**, which is that type of love that considers others in light of what we can do for them and not what they can do for us. Do you see the implication of that meaning? God so loved man that He sent His Son to die for him. God did everything for man. But man is to love, **agápē**, God in return. So what can man do for God? He can faithfully obey, he can reflect God's love towards all men. Such love "is the bond of perfectness," holding all the other virtues of the Christian life together so they can reach their divinely intended goal, the goal that God has for each of us. Love one another. Without love, all the other attributes that we display will contribute nothing to the glory of God.

1 John 4:19-20

27

19 We love, because He first loved us. **20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

Are you wearing the cloak of love and the apparel of Godly virtues? Have you "Put Off" the things of this world, the things of Satan? Or are you a wannabe, someone who wants to be seen as a child of God but is unwilling to give up the old man of this world.

Gal 5:24

28

24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.