

## ***God is...My Tailor*** **Preached 4/8/2018**

Clothes are a pretty essential part of our everyday lives and they serve a variety of purposes.

1. **They can provide warmth** – essential here in Minnesota winters
2. **They can identify us with a certain group** – for instance my Chaplain uniform, hockey jersey
3. **They can identify an activity we're currently engaged in.** – gardener, performing funeral (quite often when I go to a funeral home to perform a service the funeral director will approach me, assuming I'm the minister – strictly by the way I'm dressed).

This morning I want to take you down a path in which you to imagine God being your personal tailor. If God were your tailor what would you dress like? Would you dress any differently than you currently do?

I find it interesting and enlightening that one of the very first roles God plays in His interaction with mankind is that of a tailor. After Adam and Eve had sinned by doing the one thing they were specifically instructed not to do, they attempt to hide from God and they tried to sew some fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. After God brings them out of hiding and confronts their sin and pronounces His judgment upon them – right before banishing them from the Garden, God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve and put them on them. (**Genesis 3:21**). I think that act of kindness is remarkable since it seems only natural that God would have been angry at them for directly violating the one commandment He had given them. But I think this shows God's kindness and goodness towards His rebellious people. It's so like our loving Heavenly Father to want to display His kindness and goodness towards His children.

We see God in the role of a good tailor in the shadow of His judgment once again with the Israelite nation wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. Remember, the reason they had to wander for 40 years is because they refused God's generous gift of the Promised Land to them. They didn't trust God to come through in battling the giants in the land and turned their backs on God's promise and provision. So, God's judgment on them was that they would wander in the wilderness until that current unfaithful generation had died. Now, think about that for a moment. News flash – there weren't any Walgreens or Target stores in the wilderness by which they could purchase replacement clothes when their old ones wore out. Let's see a show of hands – how many of you are wearing the same clothes that you wore 40 years ago? (And let me guess – you're hoping they will come back into style some time).

There's a fascinating verse that talks about God's role in preserving their clothes for 40 years.

**Deuteronomy 29:5-6 (NIV)** *Yet the Lord says, "During the forty years that I led you through the wilderness, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet.*

*6 You ate no bread and drank no wine or other fermented drink. I did this so that you might know that I am the Lord your God."*

Somehow God preserved all of their clothes during those 40 years of wandering. Again in the midst of God's judgment upon His people we see His kindness and goodness.

Through the prophet Isaiah, we discover a hint at God's plans for upgrading our clothing in the future. In talking about the future role of the Messiah, God says this:

**Isaiah 61:1-3 (NIV)** *The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.*

That's God's goal for our lives. To enter into our lives and replace our black suits and clothes of mourning and despair with garments of praise instead. Notice what God doesn't promise. He doesn't promise that you'll never need to wear garments of despair. As a child of God you aren't immune from problems and deep pain in your life. But God promises here and elsewhere in Scripture to be with you and walk with you through those times of excruciating personal pain. And as He walks with you through those dark times He promises to replace your **garments of despair** with **garments of praise**. Many of you have experienced that in the past and some of you need those new clothes to put on now.

When we turn to the New Testament writers we find the fulfillment of this prophecy everywhere and it applies to you and to me.

The Apostle Paul writes about our new clothing, in Christ, in his letter to the church at Galatia.

**Galatians 3:26-28 (NIV)** *So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Paul is writing to followers of Christ here and he's saying that when we accept Jesus Christ we put on the clothing labeled Jesus. Some of you are wearing clothes with labels such as: **Calvin Klein, Eddie Bauer, Gucci, J. Crew, Ralph Lauren, Van Heusen** or **Fruit of the Loom**. Paul says that our most basic clothing ought to be labeled "**Jesus Christ.**" When you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior –you were clothed on two basic levels with Jesus Christ.

### 1. **Your unrighteousness was replaced with Christ's righteousness.**

**2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)** *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* This is often referred to as the "Great Exchange". Jesus took all of your and my sins upon his shoulders when he died on the cross and in exchange for that He gave you His righteousness, his right standing before God and His holiness. So, now when God looks at you, He sees you covered in Christ's righteousness. And because that's the core of our identity as Christ followers, it's a level playing field. We are all equal because we were all sinners in need of God's grace and we received it, making us all children of God. Therefore in that passage, Paul says the result of this new clothing we receive is that there are no race or freedom or gender divisions. We're all equal before God.

### 2. **We are given the character and power of Christ.**

As a result of accepting Jesus Christ, God gives us a new tender heart and Christ's mind and His very spirit to teach us how to live in these new clothes we've been given. Shortly before Jesus ascended into heaven, he instructed his disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they'd been clothed with power from on high. And on the day of Pentecost that happened in a dramatic way. The Holy Spirit descended upon them and they began to speak in tongues so that everyone could hear Peter's powerful message about Jesus and understand it in their own native tongues. Every follower of Jesus has also received that same indwelling power from on high. That power enables you to live in extraordinary ways in this world reflecting Christ's love to a hurting and hopeless world.

When Jesus was in the Upper Room with his disciples, shortly before leaving to die on the cross, he told them that the distinguishing mark that they were one of his followers was their love for one another and ultimately for others. And that still is absolutely true today. Last Sunday I shared how Christ's love flowing through us was able to break down some barriers of perception and assumption with a couple of guys that walked by our Hope Restored presentation. At every station these gentlemen were warmly welcomed. They were invited to warm up by one of the fire pits, they were warmly greeted, they were even received a real kiss and a Hershey's kiss, symbolic of how much God loves them and they were prayed with. That's what it means and looks like to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. That's what it means to have Christ on the label of your clothes. If you're clothed in Christ clothes then others ought to expect and anticipate that they if they encounter you that they'd be treated just like they would if they encountered Jesus. They might

expect judgment and condemnation but instead they ought to receive love and grace and acceptance and forgiveness. Paul writes in Romans 2:4 that it's the kindness of God that will lead people to repentance. If that's true – then we should really focus on dispensing God's love and kindness to the people around us everyday.

So we've established that we've been given a new set of clothes to wear that have Jesus' label on it. Additionally we're instructed in multiple places that we need to get dressed everyday with the wardrobe of Jesus. Most people get changed out of their clothes every night to get ready for bed and then change out of bed clothes and into their day clothes every morning (unless you were my roommate who would merely put pants on over his pajama bottoms and finish sleeping while in class). And so while at our core we are clothed in Christ's righteousness – the daily display of the character of Christ is something we need to be aware of as we start every day.

Let me quickly read through 3 of those instructions about getting dressed in Christ's clothes every morning.

**Romans 13:13-14 (NIV)** *Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, **clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ**, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.*

Notice that we're instructed to put on these clothes every morning and then focus on who's brand of clothes we're wearing and wear them proudly. Don't try to live in your old dirty clothes anymore but enjoy and live proudly in your new set of clothes.

**Colossians 3:12-14 (NIV)** *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.** 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

Notice that here Paul puts a name to several of the items of clothing that make up this wardrobe from Jesus. Things like compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness. And then it's as if "love" is the topcoat you put on over all of these other items. So, as you approach someone they first notice Christ's love flowing through you and then they began to notice the various aspects of God's love.

**Ephesians 4:22-24 (NIV)** *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.***

Here Paul talks about the importance of taking off your old sinful clothes prior to putting on your new Christ clothes. And yet, this is a very important and pertinent reminder. Because many Christians are like my grandpa. I remember once seeing him get ready for bed and much to my surprise, when he took off his outer clothes he already had his pajamas on. When I asked him about this rather strange practice he simply said that this way he was already for bed every night by merely taking off his day clothes. Hard, as a young lad, to argue with his logic. My parents did a far better job refuting this logic when I tried it on them later. Spiritually many Christians are like my grandpa. They put on nice looking clothes on a Sunday morning to go to church but once they arrive home they quickly change out of them until next Sunday and they live the rest of the week in their old habits and thought patterns and sinful lifestyles. Paul says that approach to dressing doesn't make sense. I wouldn't think of working and getting dirty and sweaty all day and then come in and simply put nice clean clothes on over them and go to a party. Neither should we take this approach in getting dressed in Jesus. We need to take off those old sin stained clothes and throw them in the trash or burn them so that all we're left with to wear are Jesus' designer clothes that he loves to generously provide us with.

So, how do you put on Christ's clothes and live in them every day? I would suggest three ways.

1. **Get real familiar with what Jesus looked like in his clothes.** Read the Gospels and notice and record what Jesus looked like in each and every encounter. Read through an encounter with

someone that day and then right down or label in your mind how you'd describe the clothes Jesus had on that day. When he encountered many people he was dressed in intrigue and insight and compassion and forgiveness.

2. **Picture, in your mind, what Jesus' clothes looked like on you today.** Play out in your mind encounters you had that day and what clothes you displayed to others in those encounters.
3. **Ask God to help you wear your Jesus designer clothes well this day.**
4. **Include as part of your Jesus wardrobe the armor of God and get dressed in it every day.** (Ephesians 6:11f). Verbally walk through putting on this armor every day because as you walk out of your house every day you're walking out into a hostile world to your beliefs in Christ but you are called to be a change maker out there in the world as you walk around wearing your designer Christ wardrobe.

**Lauren Winner** in her insightful book, "Wearing God" makes this observation. "Fashion" is a noun, calling to mind Paris runways. But "fashion" is also a verb. It means "to mold or to shape". We fashion dough into the shape of a bread loaf; we fashion clay into a pot or a bowl. The word "fashion" had that meaning – the action of making of shaping something – before it became a noun designating clothing and "fashion" came to designate apparel precisely because clothing shapes us. Every time we change into a different kind of clothing, we can play at being a different kind of self.

God wants to use the clothing of Jesus to make us look more and more like Jesus. First on the inside and then on overflows to the outside. That's the fashioning that Lauren Winner is talking about.

**Charles Spurgeon** points out the importance of our Christ wardrobe taking place on the inside when he said: "Christ must be in us before He can be on us. Divine grace puts Christ within, and enables us to put on Christ without. Christ must be in the heart by faith before He can be in the life by holiness."

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How did God serve as tailor for the Israelites while wandering in the wilderness for 40 years?

Through Isaiah what does God promise to replace our spirit of despair with?

**Clothed with Jesus Christ:**

1. Your \_\_\_\_\_ was replaced with Christ's \_\_\_\_\_
2. We are given the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ

**How to Put on Christ's clothes daily:**

1. Get real \_\_\_\_\_ with what Jesus looked like in his clothes.
2. Picture, in your mind, what Jesus' clothes looked like on you \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Ask God to \_\_\_\_\_ wear your Jesus designer clothes well this day.
4. Include as part of your Jesus' wardrobe the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and get dressed in it every day.

**Application:**

In what ways would your friends, acquaintances, co-workers recognize that you're wearing Christ's garments?

How will being aware of putting on Christ's clothes change how you live this week?

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In what ways would your friends, acquaintances, co-workers recognize that you're wearing Christ's garments?

How will being aware of putting on Christ's clothes change how you live this week?

Nana Salisbury, after a 2 month rehab stay in the hospital and care center, moved home this week!!! While she's made great progress, she's not capable of driving yet. However, she has several doctors' appointments coming up that she needs to get to.

If you can help provide transportation please call her and set it up. Her phone # is 651-353-0619 and she lives Brooklyn Park.

**Appointments Nana Salisbury needs rides to.**

4/11 @ 11am in Maple Grove  
4/11 @ 1pm in Crystal  
4/16 @ 11m in Maple Grove  
4/17 @ noon in Maple Grove  
4/18 @ 11am in Maple Grove  
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All appointments will be approximately an hour in length.

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