

Clothing

by Robert B. Thompson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual clothing, righteousness, and our true appearance before God in the context of salvation and eternal life.

Duration: 59:41

Scripture: Revelation 3:14

Topics: "Spiritual Vigilance", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of staying vigilant and not being complacent in one's faith. He warns that even a small mistake can lead to serious consequences, such as ending up in jail. The preacher also discusses the concept of sowing and reaping, explaining that those who sow to please the spirit will reap eternal life. He then delves into the message of the third chapter of Revelation, focusing on the church in Laodicea. The preacher highlights the church's lukewarmness and urges them to repent and seek true riches and spiritual sight from God.

Transcript

We'll turn in our Bibles to the third chapter of Revelation and we're going to read verses 14-21. To the angel of the church in Laodicea write, These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot.

I wish you were either one or the other. So because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say I am rich, I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.

But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich, and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness, and salve to put on your eyes so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline, so be earnest and repent.

Here I am. I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

To him who overcomes I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Now these words are not written to the unsaved.

They're written to the churches. And if they were written today, it would say, well, you're not doing so hot, but don't worry because you're saved by grace. However, you see, it doesn't say that.

So we're in a mid-course correction now in the beginning of the 21st century to where we can begin to understand the Bible. Notice the accent on what you do. And so, I want to talk this morning about something that we started Tuesday night has to do with clothing.

And you notice it's mentioned here twice. He said, verse 18, he says, white clothes to wear. And then in a preceding verse, he said, you are blind and naked in 17.

18, he says, so you can cover your shameful nakedness. Well, all right, here we go. Our traditional thought about salvation is that its purpose is to save us from hell and to bring us to heaven.

Now, there most assuredly is a hell. The rich man was in hell. And there assuredly is a heaven.

God is in heaven. So we're not saying that there is no hell and there is no heaven. What we are saying is that the stress of the Christian message of salvation is not about escaping hell and going to heaven.

It's about many things being made in the image of Christ and so on. Paul does not mention the word hell in all of his epistles. Not even mention.

When Jesus mentioned it, it always had to do with works, like the rich man was stingy. And Jesus, you know how Jesus said to escape hell? He never, never, never preached belief in him as an escape from hell. We preach it.

It's not scriptural. There's nothing like going by the Bible. How many can say amen? Nothing like going by the Bible.

Well, how did Jesus say to escape hell? Do you know? Pluck out your eye. He didn't say believe in me. He said you want to escape the fire, and some part of your body offends you, well, get rid of it.

He knew that would be a little drastic, so we get the message. What he's trying to tell you is it's important that you don't sin. So, let's see what the Bible does talk about.

If it doesn't talk, if it doesn't emphasize escaping hell. And by the way, the wicked always belong in hell. And the righteous always belong with God.

And Jesus Christ didn't come to change that. He came to make us righteous. Simple thought, but so awesome.

But one thing the Bible does stress is clothing. Now, in the beginning, Adam and Eve were created unclothed, which is remarkable because throughout the Bible, being unclothed is a sign of shame. It's a sign of shame.

So, God created us in a shameful condition. Now, why is that? As soon as they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they knew they were in a shameful condition. Why would God do a thing like that? Because God has prepared clothing for us.

Clothing is very important. I'm talking now about our appearance. I just finished a little booklet on our appearance.

How you appear is important. How would you like to appear in the kingdom of God without being clothed? Appearance is important. How many feel their appearance is important? Do you feel your appearance is important? Do you like to be presentable? God wants you to be presentable.

It's awfully important to be presentable. How would you like to appear in the kingdom with clothes that were all dirty? See, they don't think about that. We think, if I can just get there.

There isn't a place of getting any place. That isn't the idea. The idea is so when you get wherever you're going, you make a good appearance.

A new thought, isn't it? We read these 17, 18, and we didn't even see it. Huh? Is that right? Or wrong? You're not committing yourself, are you? You are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. That's a sorry state.

Wouldn't you agree? And he's writing to the churches. It says what the Spirit says to the churches. He didn't say anything about you're on your way to hell.

He's talking about your condition. Huh? How would you like to be in heaven and be wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked? You say, when I get there, that'll all be changed. Nope.

Scripture says that. If that were the case, what would he be warning about? He'd just say, take it easy. No problem.

When you get here, you will be changed. Remarkable, isn't it? What insight the Bible has compared with the commentaries. And then again, he says, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, which means faith tested by suffering.

So you can become rich and white clothes to wear. Now, this is a church. This is one of the seven lampstands.

And the Lord is looking at them. And they are on clothes. Now, we see with our physical eyes, they're clothed fine.

The richer clothes, extra fine. The poor make do. But in the spirit realm, when God sees us, we're unclothed.

How many want to appear that way in the spirit realm? Nobody? Raise your right hand. There. Well, let's turn to Daniel chapter 12, verses 2 and 3. Now, what we're talking about is appearance.

Appearance. How you appear. And that's true today in the spirit realm as you're viewed by people who are in the spirit realm, however that goes.

The great cloud of witnesses. But it's especially geared to the day of resurrection. How you're going to appear.

How you're going to appear. It's something that you have to do about your appearance if you don't want to be embarrassed. Nobody right here wants to be embarrassed.

Right? Right. All right. Now, in Daniel 12.2. Won't you notice this? This is talking about the resurrection.

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake. Some to go to heaven and some to go to hell. Well, I don't want to run this into the ground, but I'm trying to get you to think.

Because, you know, we read the Bible through the screen of our perception. We don't even see things like this. Is that true? You look very serious this morning.

It must be the rain. The rain's in California. Everybody figures, oh, the end of the world is coming.

All right. Now, some to everlasting life. Not a place, a condition.

We have a token of everlasting life now. We have a token of eternal life. The Bible calls it an earnest or a down payment.

But actually, according to several verses, we are in the pursuit of life. In the world to come, eternal life. We are in the pursuit of life.

You have to sow to the spirit to reap life. He says, on eternal life. We have a portion that gets us a start, a head start, a jump start.

But now the trick is to keep it. Because eternal life is not a legal state before God. Eternal life is a form of life.

We have Adamic life and we have eternal life. And there are two kinds of life in us. Both move us, cause us to think, energize us, give us joy and so on.

There's two kinds of life in us. And every day the challenge is to sow to the eternal life. Lay hold on eternal life.

Because if you don't, then your Adamic nature, which is eternal death, will dictate what you do. It's as simple as that. Very simple.

But you have to mind your business, because this Adamic nature of ours is very powerful. How powerful is your Adamic nature? Did it give you any problems this last week? Or did you float about in bliss with the Lord? Probably not. Now notice what he says.

Some to everlasting life. Now don't say this is all for the Jews. That's the common thing we have today.

Anything that displeases us, we say, oh, that's Jewish ground. Well, this is talking about God's elect or his saints, which we are, along with the elect Jews. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake.

And physical death is only sleep. Real death is separation from God. Physical death is only sleep.

What are you weeping about? He says the maid is sleeping. Those who sleep in Jesus. I'm not preaching soul sleep.

I'm trying to tell you that when your physical body dies, if you've got eternal life inside, you're going somewhere with the Lord. You haven't died. All right.

But notice the other. It doesn't say others will be in a place of torment. It doesn't say that.

It doesn't mean that. That is not what is preached in the Old Testament or the New. There's allusions to it.

But that's not where it is. Because the wicked always belong in hell and the righteous always belong with God. And the trick is in Christ is to become righteous.

Jesus doesn't save us from hell. He saves us from spiritual death. Thank you very much.

All right. Some to everlasting. Others to shame.

That has to do with your appearance. People look at you. How would you like to go to heaven, get raptured up into heaven and stand there? There's the saints.

They all come out, you know, and everything. You turn red. You've got enough blood left to turn red.

And everlasting contempt. Contemptible. Looks like a toad.

You don't want that, do you? That's what the Bible talks about. We'd rather keep it in the heaven and hell like the Muslim religion. But the Bible gets more personal in that.

The change isn't from one place to another. The change is from one kind of person to another. And where you are, you are what you are.

So the point is what you are, make what you are what you want to be. And that's what Jesus came to do. And so we would be what we want to be.

That's what the Apostle Paul said. Who will deliver me from this body of death? We say, who will deliver me from hell? See, we don't understand where the Apostle Paul was coming from. Because we're Gentile.

Now, Paul understands perfectly because he's Jewish. But we don't understand. Paul saw in the salvation.

Now listen, this is kind of critical to understanding. Paul saw in salvation the means of becoming righteous. See, Paul's quest was for righteousness.

Who will deliver me from the body of this death? I want to do good. And when I try to, I mess up. You see, and we Gentiles don't come from that position.

We come from a mythological position. I know when the gospel was preached to me, when I first heard it, nothing was said about righteousness, whatever. The idea was believe in Jesus and you'll go to heaven.

Well, I'm a Gentile dog. And so I took that. That must be what it's all about.

But you can't understand Paul if you come with the idea that I get saved in order so I get out of trouble and get into someplace where there isn't so much trouble, which we think there wouldn't be trouble. But we're only guessing at that. When we die, I might be out of the frying pan in the fire, as far as we know.

But you see, you can't understand Paul. Paul was not groaning that he would escape hell. He was groaning that he would be clothed upon, that he would be righteous, that his love for righteousness would be worked out in the way he could behave.

And if you don't see that, you can't understand Paul. Paul was presenting grace as a way to get out from under the bondage of the law of Moses so he'd be free to walk before Christ in righteousness. We look at grace as an alternative to righteousness.

I mean, we got the whole thing crazy. It was written by a Jew. It needs to be interpreted by a Jew.

Well, I thought I'd throw that in. You don't have to worry about it. All right, now.

Shame and everlasting contempt. Why? Because when you appear in the spirit realm, you're showing us what you are inside. See, down here we can fool everybody.

We can have a beautiful exterior and be rotten inside. Anybody ever get fooled like that? Young people, be careful when you get married. You need to find out about the inside.

Don't fall in love with the outside because sometimes the two are quite different. And you need to find out what you're doing before you get suddenly infatuated with someone's outside appearance and then after six months find out they're a total bum. All the older people look sage.

Yes, that's right. The younger people are wondering, well, you know, I don't know about this. I think I'll try it and see.

That could be a rude awakening. Well, that being the case, in the spirit realm it's not like that. In the spirit realm, what you are is obvious to everyone.

That a frightening thought. So, all you con artists out there, you are in trouble. You can't con people in the spirit realm because they look at you, oh, that's what kind of a person they are.

See, we cover up what we are with words. That's why we talk so much. But in the spirit realm, it doesn't work like that.

Because what you are, God sees you, you're either clothed or you're not. And so that's why the accent, I'm clothing. And that's why in the beginning we're created unclothed.

So we get the message. This is shameful. Problem was, they covered themselves with fig leaves.

They sewed together fig leaves. That must have been a sight to see. Two people running around in fig leaves.

Oh boy. But all religion is fig leaves. All religion is fig leaves.

It's the way we cover up what we are. But God wants to clothe you. And I'm not talking about imputed righteousness.

I'm talking about the clothing that comes as you sew to righteousness. So that in the day of resurrection, you're clothed with what you have sewn. The imputed righteousness is a temporary clothing.

It's what it is, a detour while God's working on the highway. God has no intention, Jesus has no intention of marrying a bride that's beautiful by imputation. How would you like to marry somebody that was beautiful by imputation? But they actually were not really that great.

But imputed they were unbeatable. Beauty had been ascribed to them. And so you look at it and say, I can't see it.

Are you sure? Oh, yes, it's been ascribed to me. It has? What happened in the meantime? Well, it's the same way with the bride of the lamb. How many here would like imputed joy? Well, the kingdom of God is

righteousness, joy and peace.

And they're either imputed righteousness, imputed joy and imputed peace. How many would like peace imputed to you when you're a nervous wreck? Well, the Lord feels the same way about righteousness. He's giving you a leg up on the situation by saying, okay, you're righteous.

Now let's get busy and make this thing a reality. If that weren't true, the third chapter of Revelation wouldn't read like it does. And everybody said, oh, my God.

All right, now, shame and everlasting contempt. Nobody wants to be shameful and contemptible. Not even in heaven.

What good would it do you? You might have no bills. And maybe you can eat all the ice cream you want and not get fat. That's fine.

But everybody's looking at it and saying, that's a shameful, contemptible person. You wouldn't want that, would you? No. All right.

But notice what he says. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens. We're talking about appearance.

Appearance. And here's a knockout. And those who lead many to righteousness.

And that's actual righteousness. You know, how you behave yourself. Like the stars.

Well, you look back in Genesis 2.25, it says something about stars. Again, we're talking about appearance. But these stars also have a function, if you'll notice.

In Genesis 2.25. Well, that isn't right. There's nothing about stars. That's my age.

I'm telling you, it keeps happening more and more. I'll be fortunate to get out of this with my skin. Let's see.

I learned about where he created the stars. It's in here somewhere. I know it is.

I swear, God created stars. All right. Here we are.

16 of Genesis 1. God made two great lights. The greater light to govern the day. And the lesser light to govern the night.

And he made the stars also. Let's throw in a few stars. Mass that's incalculable.

At distances apart from each other that's incalculable. Let's make a few stars. Let's think about that sometimes when you think God can't do something for you.

All right. Now notice that God set these things in the expanse of the sky to give light. To govern the day and the night and to separate light from darkness.

In another place it says for signs and seasons. Yeah, here they are. Verse 14.

Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. And serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years. So when God says you'll shine as the stars.

He means all these things. You'll give light. You know we don't.

When you, we use stars for direction. Navigators for centuries have used the stars for direction. I guess the Royal Rangers use the stars for direction.

Do they learn about the stars and how to follow the stars and the Great Dipper and how to find north? Well anyway, what that means is that the people who in this world turn many to righteousness. Will be guides to the, to the rest of God's creation. You know we don't take our directions from Israel.

Do you know that? We take our direction from the stars out of Israel. Abraham, Daniel, Noah, Job. But the people as a whole were usually backslidden.

But out of this mess comes star, the God's stars. And they're the ones by which we, that guide us. Abraham guides us to total obedience.

Daniel guides us in faith. Job guides us in patience, suffering. The nation of Israel doesn't guide us in this.

God's stars guide us in this. And that's why God says you turn many to. If anything in the world God loves.

It's someone who turns other people to righteousness. If there's anything in the world that God hates. It's people who cause other people to sin.

He hates that. Woe unto you if you offend one of these. NIV says if you cause one of these to sin.

Cry out, take hold of the millstone. Just take hold of the millstone. Because it's going to be tied around your neck and you're going to be thrown in the sea.

God hates that. When somebody causes somebody to sin. But when you cause people to live righteously by your conduct and by your admonitions.

God blesses you with that. Because you're on God's side then. And your reward will be your appearance.

Your appearance. Not a ten story mansion. Who'd want a dust a ten story mansion? Your appearance.

Your shine. Are you kind of getting it? Are you kind of getting to see the difference? Notice in Revelation 16. We have a startling comment.

We can apply it to the Jews, Paul. This is for the Jews. Oh Lord, this stuff that goes on today is enough to make a horse laugh.

Revelation 16.15. Isn't it, Pat? Enough to make a horse laugh. That's a feat. I mean, if you know anything about horses, they don't laugh easily.

16.15 Behold, I come like a thief. Blessed is he who stays awake. How many are awake this morning? Well, some are yawning.

They're trying to stay awake. Behold, I come like a thief. Blessed is he who stays awake.

Awake. And keeps his clothes with him. Now, you never saw that before, did you? Because your perception screened it up.

God is opening our perception today. So we can see what's in the Bible. But it's awfully difficult, because we've got all this stuff we've learned through the years.

We're going to go right over that. It doesn't mean a thing. Well, you don't want your clothes with you.

Evidently, clothes are important. So that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed. Well, who's he talking to? He's talking to anybody that'll listen to him.

I'm coming like a thief. That doesn't mean he's coming to steal. We say he's coming to steal his waiting bride away.

There's no such verse. It means he's coming when you don't expect him. I'm not going to steal anything.

The Lord's not a crook. He's coming when you don't expect him. Alright? Don't expect a thief.

If you did, you'd be already at the door with your 38 police positive. Alright. So that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.

That's our problem. Is that when we don't serve the Lord and stay awake. And that means that when you get up in the morning, you don't forget you're a Christian.

How many, when they got up this morning, forgot they were a Christian? Probably not, because it's Sunday. But when you wake up tomorrow morning, who am I? What am I? I don't know. Who's winning in the Rose Bowl? I don't know.

Anybody got the news? Are the lights on? I think so. Are we in a rolling blackout? Mother, are we there yet? When you wake up in the morning, you remember who you are. And your brain's going like a tree full of birds when a shotgun went off.

Here goes your brains everywhere. Takes you 45 minutes to even think anything that makes any sense. When you get up in the morning, develop a mantra.

The first thing you open your eyes and say, praise the Lord. And say that about 50 times. And it'll pull your thoughts together.

I'm a Christian. What am I doing? Presenting my body a living sacrifice. I'm doing God's perfect will.

I'm here on the earth to do His will. I'd like to do that will, oh God. And all that before you have your coffee.

You had a good start in the day. Amen. You want to be awake so that when He comes, you'll be presentable.

Yes, well, by all means, we want to be presentable. All right, let's see. What are we dealing with? Galatians 6, verses 7 and 8. I preach this so much, it's a wonder it's still in the Bible.

I think I preached it out of the Bible. Galatians 6, verses 7 and 8. But it really kind of zeroes in on the situation. Galatians 6, verses 7 and 8. Now, people say, well, this is written to the Jews, because we're saved by grace.

Well, that's not true. Paul will tell you it's not true. Nobody else does it.

Now, this is written to the church in Galatia. Does anybody agree with that? This is not written to the unsaved. It is written to Christians, believers, okay, that have been saved by grace through the Lord Jesus Christ and not by the law of Moses.

That's the contrast in the New Testament. Not grace and righteousness, but grace and the law of Moses. If we get that one simple thing straight, it helps enormously.

All right, here we are, we're saved by grace. Well, let's see if that's who it's written to. Maybe it isn't.

Paul, an apostle, sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ. Grace and peace to you from God our Father. All the brothers with me.

Well, he doesn't say who it's written to, but the assumption is it's Christians. Whoever edited this Bible wrote into the churches in Galatia. Maybe Paul said that, I don't know.

Maybe it's written to the unsaved. How many believe it's written to the unsaved? Nobody. Paul is shaking his head.

How many believe it's written to Christians? Most everybody. All right, let's see what he says to Christians. Anyone, do not be deceived.

God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. I had a Christian, an experienced Christian come to my house once.

I was living in the Bay Area. And he said, we've got a dissension in our church. He said, some are saying that if we're a Christian, we don't reap what we sow.

Others are saying Christians reap what they sow. What do you say? That's what he says to me. What do you say? Well, I say the Bible says we reap what we sow.

You can't very well sow grass and reap prune trees. The one who sows to please his sinful nature. Now, what does that mean? How many here have a sinful nature? Four or five people.

What does it mean to sow to it? Yeah, let it do whatever it wants. How many let their sinful nature do whatever it wants every once in a while? Bad news. Boy, you can set yourself back five years without any problem.

All right. Now, this is very important, the way this is worded in the NIV. From that nature, from that nature, from his own nature, will reap destruction.

Do you see that it says nothing about going to hell? It's talking about something that happens to your personality. You reap destruction. Why is that? Because when the Lord comes, he's going to bring with him our reward.

Now, what is our reward? Our reward is clothing. Now, every day that you live, you're working on that clothing. We used to sing, I'm working on a building.

Well, in that time, we thought we were going up to a mansion. But when we read 2 Corinthians 5, we find the mansion's coming down on top of us. You, today, by your actions, are creating clothing.

I'll show you that in a minute. I'm not making it up. You're creating clothing.

I want you to concentrate on that. If you yield to your sinful nature, you know you're not supposed to do that. You lie, you get angry and bawl somebody out, you gossip, you do some lustful thing.

That is reflected in your clothing. Know what he says? Lest I come and your shameful nakedness be exposed. Now, if on the other hand, you're tempted to do something wrong, you know it's wrong.

You're tempted to hold someone in unforgiveness, and you know it's wrong. And instead, someone's hurt you and it's been unjust. And instead, you get down and you pray.

You lay hold on the body and blood of Christ. You just pray for his virtue. Until that fire goes out, and in its place comes the peace of the Holy Spirit.

What happens is, you affect that, you have washed your robe and made it white in the blood of the Lamb. Now, you're working on your clothing. Now, when the Lord appears, this is what he's going to bring with him.

When he raises us from the dead. And by the way, this I'm throwing out to you. I don't know if there's a verse for it, but it's very personal to me.

When the Lord raises us from the dead, it will not be a mass thing. I know we shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, but you see, time does not affect the spirit realm. I think the Lord will raise his saints one at a time, without reference to our time.

Because what it is, it's a demonstration to his faithful saints, who have been dragged through the mud for so many years, saying, though he slay me yet, I will trust him. And the Lord knows every one such person. And he's not just going to have everybody raised up like a gang.

He'll come to you, personally, and say, I'm going to show you, my beloved, my faithfulness to you. Very personal. One at a time.

Now, he's going to bring with him, he says, my reward is with me to give every man as his work shall be. Revelation 22. What this will consist of, not entirely, there'll be ranks and roles in the kingdom, and opportunities for service, and all kinds of things, but this clothing is so important.

Who will deliver me from the body of this death? See, our body is our appearance, our clothing of our nature. Our true nature is clothed in a body. Who will deliver me from this body of death? Change in appearance.

And here'll be the saints, those who have served Christ with all their might, have given their lives to him, as we had in our last song. Have really done it. And down will come with the Lord these magnificent bodies.

It says, we will be like him. And the picture of him is in Revelation 1. Clothed with a white garment, a golden sash. We will be like him.

Shining as the stars. It'll be a simple matter after that to put us on the thrones in the air that govern the earth. They sit on thrones, but first, they've got to look like a king.

And there'll be Christians, believers, who have sown from their sinful nature, sown to it, and out from that nature has proceeded clothing. See, the clothing shall reap destruction. King James says corruption

comes out from that sinful nature.

And it's there waiting in the day of resurrection. That's what Galatians 6, 7, and 8 is talking about. And there you stand.

The issue is not one of where you go. The issue is how you appear. Shame.

There for everyone to see. And we think we're all going to be swept into a rapture, and everything else is going to be taken care of, and the Bible doesn't teach that. The resurrection doesn't change what we are except in the clothing.

It reveals what we have become. Remember the parable of the talents. It didn't change the man's laziness.

It took his talent from him. We're hoping for a sudden something that will happen, and all of a sudden we'll be what we never were. We were lukewarm on earth, but now we're caught up to the Lord, and we're a spiritual giant.

We're going to rule the nations with a rod of iron. But the Lord says, I'll spit you out of my mouth. Those are two different concepts.

Your clothing, your appearance, what you are, how you appear, how you appear in the spirit realm will reflect what you are inside. Will it be a real clothing? Yes, it will be a real clothing. What will it be wrought from? Eternal life.

Eternal, incorruptible, indestructible body. That's the reward for sowing to the spirit. The one who sows to please the spirit.

You don't please your body. This decision comes to us every day of our life because God wastes no time. Every day you're tempted to act out according to your sinful nature.

You're all high and exalted coming out of church, and you're driving home and somebody cuts in front of you. They can't do that to me. Go ahead, get mad and see what happens.

You'll probably end up killing somebody or being killed because of the demon population in Southern California is so great you can't afford to relax your vigilance for one minute. One false move and you're down in county waiting for your arraignment. And you say, how in the world did I get here? Because you weren't careful.

You were asleep. And Satan's watching. He pushed your button.

And you did the wrong thing. And the law took over. A lot of Christians walking on the catwalk down in county jail, reading their Bibles.

So I was told by a Christian who was on duty there before he went out into the units. All right. The one who sows to please the spirit, now notice, will reap.

Reap. You reap eternal life. Romans 6.23, which is speaking only to Christians, not to the unsaved at all.

It's the culmination of Paul's argument in Romans 6. We preach it to the unsaved. It's a misapplication. He said the wages of sin.

He's talking, if you read back in the chapter about Christians who have been baptized in water who choose to serve sin. And he says the wages of sin. It's not hell.

It's death. It's an absence of life. It has to do with your state of being.

But the gift of God is eternal life. But if you read the chapter, so to put it in context, the gift of God is really the opportunity to attain life. Because Romans 6.22 says the result of being a slave of righteousness is holiness.

And the end of holiness is eternal life. Eternal life is something. God gives us the opportunity to attain life through Jesus Christ.

But in order to do that, we have to interact with Christ on a daily basis. We can't say, well 20 years ago I accepted Christ and now I have eternal life. Eternal life is a matter of today.

Today is the day of salvation. Today you and I are making the decision whether to sow to life or whether to sow to our sinful nature. We can't say I got eternal life 20 years ago.

That's like the parable of the sower. We might have had life sown in us 20 years ago, but did it bear fruit? Did it get choked out? Did it die because it had no roots? We've made salvation a ticket you take at some point in time. The Bible doesn't teach that.

It says work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Salvation is past, the time we came to Christ. It's present as we work it out.

It's in the future. He that endures to the end shall be saved. So salvation is a very dynamic interaction that makes total demands on your personality.

Total demands. You have to give it everything you've got because the contest is so great. Fight the good fight of faith.

You have to fight with all your might if you're going to win. He that sows to his nature, often that nature will reap destruction. The one who sows to please the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Eternal life is something that you reap as a result of what you have sown during your life. So the issue with Jesus Christ is life. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoso believes in Him should not perish but have life.

That's talking about the resurrection. The term perish is used in the New Testament to apply to the body. Our inner nature doesn't perish.

It's our body that perishes. Jesus Christ says, I am the resurrection. We need to be slanted, people, not toward heaven and hell.

That's a Muslim concept. We need to be slanted toward life. Christ came into this world and we're all dead.

Everybody's dead in sin. The tree of life came striding into the world. He that believes in me shall live.

Mankind is dead because of sin. Dead because of sin. The law of Moses could forgive our sins but it could not bring us to life.

Behold, the resurrection and the life has come. But you can't say I believe in Him and that's a theological stance. Of course we have to believe in Him.

But that believing means that we turn away from our sins according to the book of Acts. Bring forth fruit, meat for repentance and lay hold on the man. Hallelujah.

You've got to interact with Him every day. You've got to make every decision be brought before Him. You've got to live and if you will do that because He lives, you will live.

You will live by His life. You will live by His body and blood. He wants you.

His love is so tremendous it can't be put into words. And He cries unto you and He says, will you live in Me? Will you abide in Me? Will you make Me your life? It's not a belief about something. It's a belief in Him that lays hold on His person.

He is alive and He is the resurrection and He is the life. You have to be resurrected inwardly before you can be resurrected outwardly. The day is coming that will determine who has been resurrected inwardly and that person will be resurrected outwardly.

But those who have chosen to live in the death of the Adamic nature are looking forward to destruction in that day. And they will appear as shameful and contemptible because they will be clothed in their own evil deeds. Out from their nature they will reap corruption.

Is that Bible? How about Revelation 19 verses 7 and 8? Makes very clear what I'm saying to you. There's a lot more in the New Testament about clothing in the Bible but we're getting close to the time when you need to go out and deal with people who cut in front of you. I tell you, people are getting meaner.

Audrey's been going to the post office for some time for trumpet ministries and the lady at the post office, she sees Audrey coming and just lights up. Oh, it's so good to see you. These people around here are so mean.

And then she said things I wouldn't say in mixed company. But she's not happy with the way she's being treated. People are getting mean.

Have you ever noticed that? The whole society, everybody's bonkers. I think we're about ready for a revival, actually. All right, verses 7 and 8. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory for the wedding of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.

You've got to make yourself ready. Now, did you make yourself ready for your wedding or did somebody make you ready? Or did you make yourself ready? Did somebody pin up your dress and do whatever else has to be done? Well, if you're real rich, somebody else probably did it. That's why it says in Revelation 21, she's been prepared.

But you're talking here about those who'll be raised and the Lord comes, the firstfruits of the church. And the firstfruits of the church have to make themselves ready. Make themselves ready.

You don't want to come out and down the aisle and your hair's up in pin curlers. One shoe on, one shoe off, straggling down. Clothing.

It's important in a wedding, isn't it? Is clothing important in a wedding? I think so. I'm led to believe that. I know the mothers stress it tremendously when their daughters get married.

The daughter's got to look just... And I think the husband, too, the groom is probably favorably impressed if his wife doesn't come in with dirty clothes. Dirty, torn robe. Gunny sack and sneakers.

Gunny sack and sneakers right down the aisle. No. We lay a lot of stress on appearance.

Isn't that true? His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean was given her to wear. Okay? That means the Lord makes her shine.

That's a revelation of the manifestation of the sons of God. She shines so that the world can see that God loves her just as He loves Jesus according to John 17.23. And the world will believe that God has sent Christ when they see this wonderful spectacle because she's one with Him. Now, the NIV has interpolated the word stands.

I don't like it and I don't think it appears in the original. The actual thrust of the passage is the fine linen is. I asked Tony about that.

He said in the Greek, it's is. In other words, somehow in the spirit realm, the acts, righteous acts, weave a robe. They actually weave a robe.

So you actually end up being clothed when the Lord comes in your own behavior. See, and that follows Galatians 6, 7 and 8. You sow to your sinful nature. Out from that you reap destruction of how you appear.

But if you sow to the spirit, you're going to be clothed with a body fashioned from life. Eternal life. Eternal life is the goal.

Resurrection which clothes us in that glorious radiance. Fine linen, bright and clean. Not just white.

Because white stands for innocence. And you see, God does not want innocent people. Adam and Eve were innocent.

Had no knowledge of good and evil. Had no sin nature. And they were without condemnation.

And they blew it royally. So it's not enough to have your sins forgiven. It's not enough to have your sins forgiven and removed.

You have to have your sins forgiven and removed. And you have to have Christ formed in you. See, having your sins forgiven and removed is the negative aspect of redemption.

Having Christ formed in you is the positive. And if Adam and Eve had had Christ formed in them, they would have sent Satan packing. But they were innocent.

God doesn't want innocent people. He wants a bride who is terrible as an army with banners. Shall we stand? We're working on a robe.

We're working on a robe. Stand. Music.

How many of us this past week got a little dirt on our robe and it hasn't been washed yet? You haven't gotten down and told the Lord about it? And told Him that behavior is history? Huh? This is the time right

now to take care of your robe. If it's not what it should be, you have no assurance you're going to get home alive. This is the time now.

It's the time of salvation. If you need to come, come while we'll be singing in a minute and tell the Lord about the incident. Just say, Lord, that wasn't right.

I gossiped. I got angry. I did not behave like Jesus.

And I know that's in my robe and I want to wash it in the blood of the Lamb. You're like that this morning. Don't tarry.

Come and get it washed now. Praise the Lord. Let's just see how you did this last week.

God wants us washed in the blood of the Lamb and you have to do that constantly? See, in Revelation 7, these are those who came out of the Great Tribulation. They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. And that's the way God wants your robe.

You're going to be clothed with it someday. You're going to be clothed with your behavior someday. Oh, hallelujah.

Father, I have given to these dear ones the very thought that You placed in my heart to give this morning. And I'm concerned about their welfare as well as my own, Lord. We don't know what's going to happen, whether we're going to have blackouts or what, but we do know one thing, Lord.

We're going to leave this world and there's going to come a resurrection from the dead. And Lord, we want to be presentable. We want to be presentable in Your kingdom, Lord.

So I pray, anyone in here, Lord, that that garment is not what it should be. That they'll not tough it out, but they'll just come. While the fountain is open here in the blood of Jesus, they'll come confess it and get cleansed from all unrighteousness.

They'll walk out of here with a bright and shining robe, clothed with God's glory. Grant that, Lord. If you need to come, this is the time to come.

Tell the Lord about it. Tell the Lord about it. He has shed His blood to make it possible for us or we couldn't do it.

It's on the table for you to eat. His body and blood to give you a robe that's pure and white and shining in that day.

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