

Garment of Grace

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Study Given by W.D. Frazee—November 19,

I am glad He is still calling. Aren't you, friends? He is still calling. And what are we doing? I trust we are answering. That is what God wants us to do.

Now I would like to have you turn to Genesis 3 this morning. The book of Genesis, you know, deals with the beginning of the world, the beginning of life, and the beginning of sin, and the beginning of God's plan of salvation. You remember we found that in the first two chapters we have nothing but a perfect world, beautiful. But in the third chapter who comes in? The serpent comes in. And as men listen to him, trouble is the result. Trouble always comes from listening to the serpent. But thank God, Jesus didn't leave us even with the sad, sad choice that humanity had made. He came to reveal Himself.

Now before sin entered, you remember Adam and Eve were clothed with beautiful garments of light, a token of their fellowship with God in heaven. But when they sinned, when they broke God's law, what happened to those beautiful garments? They lost them. They faded away. Sin and light do not belong together. Sin is associated with darkness, with nakedness. And so the Scripture says that Adam and Eve came to realize that they were naked. They sensed that they had lost something. And oh, dear friends, sooner or later every transgressor, every sinner, realizes that he has lost something.

I have thought about it, you know, as something like this bloom on the grape, that beautiful silvery something that is on the skin of the ripe concord or fridonia grape. You look at a bunch that hasn't been handled and you will see that. Can you rub it off? Oh yes. Easily. Then how do you get it back on? You don't. Ah, dear children, keep the innocence of youth. Do not eat of that tree of knowledge of good and evil. It takes the bloom of innocence away.

Well, Adam and Eve lost it. And so in their endeavor to fix themselves up as many people today try to fix themselves up, they got busy making clothes. Interestingly enough this is the first sewing that was ever done in this world. It came from human beings attempts to fix themselves up. And quite often they succeed just about like Adam and Eve attempts, very partial, very incomplete, very inadequate.

But the next time that we see any garments prepared, we see that God Himself is the clothing business. And so it is written in Genesis 3:21:

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" Genesis 3:21.

That which they sewed together in the seventh verse is called aprons or the margin says "things to gird about." The Jewish translation says "girdles." Much like the heathen wear today whether they are half way around the world or close by. But you notice that God did not accept those fig leaf girdles, and He won't accept them today, friends, either literally or spiritually. God is in the clothing business. It is a wonderful thing, friends, when we think that our literal clothing is to symbolize and represent the spiritual clothing that Jesus clothes us with. For if there were no other reason for having adequate coverage, I think this would be a most wonderful and beautiful and most sublime reason. What do you say?

And now this morning we want to study deeper in to this wonderful subject of the garment of grace provided at such infinite cost. You remember that these first garments that our first parents wore after their coming back to God, they were prepared by God, but they were prepared from what? Coats of skins. For the first time death had come into the world. And their clothing, the clothing that was prepared was a frequent reminder of the fact that the only way they could be clothed in the eye of God was for something to die, Somebody to die. And those lambs that were slain in sacrifice, those bullocks, everyone represented whom? Jesus. They represented Jesus.

And so every time they looked at those coats of skins they remembered that their covering had been purchased by the death already promised and pledged of Jesus the Son of God. But thank God, they were covered. And so this morning we can rejoice in that covering.

Now, I want to read you a most wonderful comment on all this in *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 310 to 312. I am not reading all of it but some sentences. Listen for these are beautiful and wonderful.

"The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden"
Christ's Object Lessons, page 310.

Now these four letters on the board here, they represent these four garments. The first was the garment of light. That is what God gave Adam and Eve in Eden. But they lost that when they did what? Sinned. And then they knew that they were what? Naked. And so they sewed what together? Fig leaves. They made them girdles.

But when God came, He clothed them in the garments of what? The skins of the animals slain in sacrifice.

So there are the four conditions. The Eden condition of innocence with the garment of light. The sinful condition of nakedness. The attempt by human works to sew together something to cover up. And all this my friends is futile and fatal, but, oh, if men will accept the gift of God they will be clothed in this world with these garments of skins which represent the covering righteousness of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Alright. Now I return to the reading.

“The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. ... A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering. This is what the transgressors of God's law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God.

But this they can never do. Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb. ... Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. ... Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us” *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 310-311.

What does impart there mean? Give it to us. Ah, friends, this is a gift. A precious gift of God.

“Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah” *Ibid*.

What does God see as He looks at us this morning? Ah, thank God, the precious robe of Jesus' righteousness.

Brother Atherton called my attention to a wonderful text this morning and I am going to ask him to come into the service just now this precious thought from a text that the Lord brought to his mind as we were studying this.

[Brother Atherton]

If you will turn to Isaiah the 64TH chapter and the 6TH verse. All

“But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” Isaiah 64:6.

Our filthy rags then covering our righteousness do fade as a leaf away, like the leaf that was used by Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness.

[Elder Frazee]

Thank you, brother, Just imagine how long a fig leaf garment would last. It would fade as a leaf and then the wind comes and what? Gone! And as the storms, the tornados of this closing crisis come, let me tell you, friends, every fig leaf garment is going to be gone. That is why it is written in the last book of the Bible the warning. Turn to Revelation 16. Right in the middle of the statement about Armageddon, notice the warning. Revelation 16:15. You notice the fourteenth chapter speaks of the gathering of the nations to the battle, the sixteenth verse speaks of Armageddon. Now in that setting the fifteenth verse.

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” Revelation 16:15.

The whole world is going to be found naked when Jesus comes except those who have on the robe of Christ’s righteousness. No fig leaf garment is going to cover them in that day, my friends. Those leaves are going to fade and the wind is going to do what? Take them away. But thank God the bride of Christ is going to be found with the wedding garment on. God’s people are arrayed in fine linen. Read it in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation and the seventh and eighth verses.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” Revelation 19:7-8.

Notice, friends, it is given to her to do this. Granted to her. In other words it is a gift. We don’t earn righteousness. We don’t deserve it. We didn’t deserve it yesterday. We won’t deserve it tomorrow. Today we are unworthy.

Now let’s go back to Zechariah the third chapter. I want you to notice the controversy that goes on over this matter.

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him” Zechariah 3:1.

Joshua represents the people of God. He was the high priest. The high priest stands for the people. So Joshua represents God’s people. Now where was Joshua standing? Before the angel of the Lord. Who else was around? Satan. Imagine that. Satan has no timidity. He has no modesty. He has no inhibitions. He presses right in. He is a gate crasher.

Now here he comes and what does he want to do? What does it say he does? To resist him. The margin says to be his adversary. That is what the word Satan means. It means an adversary. And an adversary means a what? An enemy. An opponent.

Now what did the Lord say?

“And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” Zechariah 3:2.

What is the this? Joshua. Yes. Why, friends, that is what all of us are, a brand plucked out of the fire. Who plucked us out? Jesus. And, oh, friends, how it burnt Him when He plunged into the fire. He is going to bear the marks of that rescue all through eternity. Isn't He? Yes.

“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel” Zechariah 3:3.

Now before we get through this morning, a number are going to see something here we haven't seen before. So watch carefully.

Joshua was clothed with what? Filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

“And he answered...” Zechariah 3:4.

That is God.

“...and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said...” Zechariah 3:4.

That is God said to Joshua representing the people of God.

“...Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment” Zechariah 3:4.

Did Joshua get a new suit of clothes? A new garment? Yes. Who gave it to Him? God did.

“And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by” Zechariah 3:5.

The rest of the chapter is wonderful, but this will give us enough to study right now.

Alright. First you see Joshua clothed in filthy garments. Then you see Him clothed in beautiful garments. Who made the change? God did. But now I want to ask you something, friends. What was Satan's attitude about this? He was trying to do what? Resist him. Resist who? Joshua. That represents the people of God. That represents you and me. Do you know that every time God tries to do something for us the Devil tries to resist?

I was in a court of law not long ago, and while I was waiting for my turn to come as a witness, I was very interestingly observing what took place in the trials that preceded the one that I was there for. And you know it was interesting, a witness would be put in the chair, and the attorney would ask him some questions. Then the prosecuting attorney would cross examine. I sat there in the audience waiting for the other case to come up. I sat there and I couldn't help but just watch how the thing would go back and forth depending upon who was testifying. I thought, "My, if I was the judge, I wonder how I would decide that?"

Well, I will tell you, friends. What it boils down to in a great many cases, it just depends upon which witness you are going to believe. That is what I want to study with you this morning. What kind of clothes have you got on? Well, that just depends upon what witness you are going to believe. If you listen to the Devil, he will keep clothing you with what kind of garments? Filthy garments. He will keep testifying that you are lost, that you are a sinner, that you are a failure, that you are unworthy, that you don't deserve anything, and he will keep up that testimony, my dear friends, as long as there is any breath in you.

And you need not think that you can shake his testimony. For six thousand years he has cultivated this spirit to accuse.

Turn over to Revelation the twelfth chapter. I want you to see that. Here is the same picture, but a different photograph.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" Revelation 12:10.

Now here in this world you and I have to sleep. God never sleeps, and apparently the Devil doesn't either. And day and night he is keeping up a propaganda barrage. And what is the theme of that? Accusations. Faultfinding. Criticism. Charging the people of God with being sinners. Clothing them with what? Filthy garments.

Now, my dear friends, if you and I really have filthy garments and hang on to them, the Devil is usually not so interested in accusing us. Quite often he likes to give us some tranquilizers so we can go around with those fig leaf garments and feel rather comfortable or even bold about it. But when a man or a woman, or a boy or a

girl, turn to God and give up the nakedness of sin and give up the fig leaf garments of self-righteousness and put on the robe of Christ's righteousness bought by His precious blood, then the Devil begins in good earnest his accusations.

He tells God about it. He tells the angels about it. He tells other people about all the mistakes we have made. And I wonder if he ever tells us about it. Did the Devil ever remind you of some failure you had made? I think of what Martin Luther said once to the Devil when he came around reminding him of some sins. And whether he was really forgiven or not, Martin Luther said to him, That is none of your business.

I think that was a good answer. The Devil is not our friend, is he? He is our what? Enemy. And the one we need to confide in is our own attorney, not the prosecuting attorney. We need to confide in the attorney for the defense. Who is that? Jesus. Alright.

Now did you ever wonder whether you were down here or up here? Did you ever wonder whether you were really clothed with Christ's righteousness or not? I tell you, friends, it just depends on what witness you listen to. That is the message I want you to get this morning. It just depends on who's word you are going to take. The Devil will never testify for you. He never will. He is the accuser of our brethren who accuses them before our God day and night.

Let me read you something interesting from the Review and Herald of November 8, 1956. This is a wonderful article. It is taken from a message that Sister White gave back in 1893. It is page 514 of Volume 6 of the Review and Herald reprints.

Now listen.

"Satan was declaring his sins to be so great that he should not be restrained from destroying him" *Review and Herald*, November 8, 1956 par. 10.

But what did Jesus say?

"The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel.' Who clothed him with filthy garments?" *Ibid*.

The Lord's messenger asks. What is the inference there? Why Satan was clothing him with filthy garments even though his sins had been pardoned. Now many of you know that ahead of us as a people is a great time of trouble called the time of Jacob's trouble. And as you have read in *Great Controversy* and other places about that fearful time of trouble, you know that that awful test is going to be right over this point. Even after probation has closed, even after we have the seal of the living God and in heaven all our sins have been blotted out and our names are

enrolled for eternity in the book of life, the Devil is still going to keep urging upon our souls the fact that we are clothed with what? Filthy garments. That is the point.

What are we going to do? Ah, friends, we are going to hold up the merits of Jesus. We are going to point to Calvary. We are not going to point to the shame of our own nakedness. And we are certainly not going to hold up some fig leaf garments that we have sewed together. We are going to plead the merits of Christ. We are going to point to the sprinkled blood, the blood that was shed on Calvary that has been sprinkled in the holy place to cover our sins, sprinkled in the most holy place to blot them out. We are going to hide under that precious covering of Jesus' life. And we are going to do it by faith, and faith alone.

You know what faith is? Oh, faith is believing what God says. Faith is believing this Witness instead of this witness, believing what Jesus testifies instead of what Satan testifies. And Satan, even though you turn to God and choose Christ as your Savior, Satan still says, You are filthy. You are unclean. You are wicked. You are bad. You are no good. You are clothed with filthy garments.

But what does Jesus say? Oh, Jesus says, Take away the filthy garments from him and clothe him with change of raiment. Which one are you going to believe? Which one are you going to believe?

Now I want to give you another thought on this. Turn to Jeremiah the seventeenth chapter. There is something else that is testifying besides the Devil. As you will see when we look at this text, even if the Devil were to die today, you and I would still have a problem on our hands.

"The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9.

What is the fourth word? Deceitful. What does deceitful mean?. It means telling lies. Now what is it that is telling lies? The heart. Oh, I wonder whose heart that is. That must be Judas' heart. He was a rather a bad fellow.

Whose heart is that? It might be yours. I know it is mine. And the proof of that is what Brother Atherton read a little while ago from Isaiah 64:6. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We are all as unclean thing. But now we are dealing with the inner nature.

What is another word you could put there instead of heart? Mind. The thinking processes. The heart, the mind, is what? Deceitful. How deceitful? Above all things.

Say, folks, if you were on trial for your life, would you want that kind of witness? Would you want that kind of witness on the stand and his testimony being accepted if your life were in the balance? Your life is in the balance! And if you will listen to that kind of a witness, folks, there is no hope. That is talking about your own heart, your own mind, your own thoughts.

Well, you say, "If I can't trust my own thoughts, what can I?" Well, turn over to 1 John the third chapter and we will see. This is wonderful, friends. There is a better witness to listen to than this deceitful heart of ours. There is something more certain than these changing thoughts of ours. Changing feelings. Oh, today we feel wonderful, we feel such a blessing. Tomorrow, I wonder what happened? Well, it is just that the witness we are listening to is what? Deceitful. A deceitful witness may change his testimony under pressure. Your heart can change its testimony. But now watch.

"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" 1 John 3:20.

Listen, friends. You may need to be condemned and your heart may condemn you. Here is a man that has gone and stolen five dollars. In the night his conscience condemns him so bad that he can't sleep. Should it? Yes. Should he listen? Yes, friends. But oh, he goes to God and he gets forgiveness. He says, "Lord, I have broken the law. I have broken the Eighth Commandment that says, 'Thou shalt not steal.' Forgive me." He goes back to his neighbor and says, "Neighbor, forgive me. Here is the money I took last week. Forgive me."

He gets forgiveness from God and man. Then what does the Devil begin to do? Oh, the Devil begins to set up this barrage of accusations. He says, "You don't dare come to church. You don't dare come to church. That is for the saints. You are a sinner. You are a thief. You don't belong there. You can't even pray. You don't deserve to pray. Maybe if you are good for a year, or two, or there, maybe you might get back. But don't dare go today."

Who is saying all that? The Devil.

Now, suppose his own heart says, "Yes. That is it." And his own heart condemns him. Do you see, my dear friends, how dark and discouraging everything can be if he listens to that sort of testimony? The Devil and his own heart joining right in. In the mouth of two or three witnesses of that kind every word is established. He is deep down in the dungeon of doubt and darkness.

But, oh, suppose that instead of listening to the Devil and his own heart either, he listens to God.

"If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" *Ibid*.

Does God know that it is so? Yes. But God knows that he gave up the sin and confessed. God knows that he is forgiven and covered with the precious life of Jesus.

Now turn please to 1 John the fifth chapter and the eighth verse. Oh, here are some witnesses that are a lot better witnesses than the deceitful devil and the deceitful human heart.

“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit,
and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one”
1 John 5:8.

And so it says in the ninth verse if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. Oh, if men will listen to men in a court of law, why shouldn't you and I not listen to God when our souls are at stake? And what does God say?

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us
our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” 1
John 1:9.

So, my dear friends, when our hearts condemn us, when the Devil urges his accusations, when our own mind is weary with the restless striving, let's turn from it all. Let's turn off that radio. Let's listen to these three witnesses—the Spirit, and the water, and the blood.

Let's take them in reverse order for a moment. What does it mean the witness of the blood? Whose blood? The blood of Christ. We look to Calvary and we say, “Yes. Jesus died for me.” We look to the sanctuary and we see the sprinkled blood above there and we say, “Yes. That blood speaks. It speaks for me. It speaks to me. I will believe that blood. That blood covers me.”

And the water. What is that? Oh, that is baptism. Thank God, friends, we were put down in a flowing type. You know, I have just been noticing this week how many different ways God has tried to teach us this lesson of being covered. That is why He gives us baptism by immersion, not just sprinkling. We need, and oh, we feel the need of complete covering. Just burying. And that is what happens in the watery grave, isn't it?

And so the water speaks and says, “Yes. Your sins are covered.”

Ah, but somebody says, “Yes, but what about the sins since baptism?”

That is why we have the ordinance of feet washing every time before we take the bread and the wine. It is a renewal of baptism, a renewal of cleansing. A renewal of getting the witness that our sins are under the blood of Christ.

Alright. Now what is the other witness besides the blood and the water? The Spirit. The Spirit speaks through the Word. This is the inspired Word. Inspired. That means it is the Spirit that is speaking. And the Spirit also speaks to our heart.

Oh, friends, let's listen as the Bible says, “Ye are clean.” Let's listen as the Bible says the filthy garments are taken away. You are accounted righteous. Let's listen as the Bible says, You are My sons and daughters and I have covered you with the robe of My righteousness.

Let's listen as the dove of peace sings in our hearts. Oh, let's listen as that voice that spoke at Jordan echos and reechoes down the halls of time to this moment—“This is My beloved child in whom I am well pleased.”

Oh, if we will listen to these three witnesses what our poor, natural minds says doesn't make any difference as long as our choice is to listen to and believe what God says. What do you say, friends?

Listen, if we will do that now, we will be able to do it when Jacob's trouble comes.

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