

MODESTY MATTERS

“The Face of God”

Introduction – A Change of Raiment

Zechariah 3:1-7

- 1 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.
- 2 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?
- 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.
- 4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.
- 5 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.
- 6 And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,
- 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by. KJV¹

Like Joshua, the Lord has caused our iniquity to pass from us and has clothed us with a change of raiment. The filthy garments of the old man, our grave clothes if you will, are stripped off and we are to put on the new man which is created in His image.

The clothing of the high priest left only three parts of him bare: his feet, his hands, and his face. His feet were bare (as were those of the other priests) for they served in the “holy ground” of the Temple². His hands were bare that he might minister unto God³ and his face was uncovered that he might fellowship with Him.⁴

The change of raiment included a “fair mitre.” This headdress of the high priest had a plate of gold on the front where it would sit on the forehead. Engraved on it were the words “HOLY TO THE LORD.”⁵ His clothing, that which he wore to minister before God, said “Holy to the Lord.” What does our clothing proclaim? When people see how we are dressed, does holiness come to mind or lasciviousness?

This teaching amounts to theological argument as to why our clothing should draw others’ attention to our countenance. Basically stated, the argument goes like this: since God desires us to seek His face and we are made in His image, we should dress in a way that it causes others to be drawn to our face. This may seem over-simplistic or maybe fanciful, but I believe it is neither. As we shall see, our face is the face of God people see most often. God designed our face to reflect His glory and be the vehicle of the proclamation of the Gospel. If our clothing detracts

¹ All references are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

² Exodus 3:5

³ Psalm 134:2

⁴ Exodus 34:29-30, 35

⁵ Exodus 28:36

from our countenance, or worse yet sends a different message than the Gospel, then the effectiveness of our witness will be hampered.

I. The Image of God

1. We Bear God's Image

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

We were created in the image of God. This truth gives humanity its least common denominator of value.

Genesis 9:6

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

The Lord instituted capital punishment for murder because man is made in His image. When one commits murder (which is different from killing), one belligerently destroys an image bearer of God. It matters not if the victim of the murder was righteous or wicked. They were an image bearer and that is what granted them value.

*This is a truth we must get hold of. We are made in the image of God. Have you ever looked in the mirror and said, "I hate that face"? Just as soon tell God you hate His face! Have you ever looked at someone and said (or thought), "Man, they're ugly!" Just as soon tell God He's ugly! **We are made in the image of God!***

2. His Image Is Expressed in Two Genders

Matthew 19:4

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

God decided to express His image in two genders. There are things about God we will never know aside from seeing them in the face of a woman. There are things about God we can only know by understanding how He has made a man to be. When we confuse the sexes by androgynous or cross-gendered dress, we confuse the image of God. If we do not play our part, or worse yet try to play the other's part, the world will not see the aspect of Himself that God desires to shine through us.

3. Anthropos – A Definition

Anthropos is the Greek word commonly translated "man" in the New Testament. It is a compound word meaning "looking upward with his countenance" or "turning his view upwards."⁶ The very word the Holy Spirit chose to define man in the New Testament has primary reference to his face and countenance.

⁶ This follows E.W. Bullinger's definition in his Critical Greek Lexicon.

II. The Face of God

1. Sin Hides It from Us

Genesis 4:13-14

13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

Cain's sin caused him to be hid from God's face. Sin not only blocks us from fellowship with God, it deceives us into thinking He can't see.

Psalms 10:4, 9-11

4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

9 He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.

10 He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

11 He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

2. We Are Still to Seek It Out

Even though sin separates us from the face of God, we are still to seek it out in confession and then worship.

Psalms 51:9-11

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Psalms 27:8-9

8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

3. It Is Seen in the Lord Jesus

A. Jesus alone Has Seen His full Glory

Unlike Moses, whom God could not allow to see His face⁷, Jesus has and does see the Father.

John 1:18

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

⁷ Exodus 33:18-23

John 6:46

Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

1 Timothy 6:16

Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

B. He Is the Image of God

Hebrews 1:3

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

C. We Are to Reflect His Glory

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

III. Our Countenance

1. We Are the "Face" People See most Often

1 John 4:12, 20-21

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

One of the reasons why God gave us our fellow man is to test how we really feel about an invisible God. If we do show our love to our brothers, how can we say we love God? We usually see ministry to others as ministry for God. We need to see it as ministry to God.

Matthew 25:34-40

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

2. We Should Be Modest

1 Timothy 2:8-10

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Though “modest apparel” is addressed to women specifically in verse 9, the principle of modesty applies to men as well.

3. People Should See Our Countenance

1 Thessalonians 2:17

But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

Like Paul, we should endeavor to see each other’s face. This requires a dual responsibility. First, we should train our eyes to focus on the countenance of others. Second, we should dress in such a way that it helps others focus on our face and not other attributes of our anatomy.

Conclusion

In our next section, we will begin looking at some practical keys to dressing in a way that does not distract from our countenance.