

Clothed in Christ

Genesis 3:8-15

02/26/2023

Dr. Jeffrey Pulse tells us, concerning today's Old Testament Lesson,
“Adam and Eve have disobeyed God, not trusting His promises, and they find themselves hiding from God in their shame... When God created them in His own image, they were united together, even as a Bridegroom and bride... and now because of their disobedience, they are hiding from God.”

(www.Thejaggedword.com/2018/06/04/ot-encounters-genesis-38-15-clothed-by-God/#more-10155 Pg. 1/3)

It was a wonderful couple with beautiful girls that I thought had the perfect marriage; but they were hiding from the reality that their marriage was in trouble...

He was hiding from the fact that, initially, the growing distance between them was caused by his indifference to her emotional needs.

At one point he was suspicious that he had driven her to even more destructive behavior than she was willing to admit; and she was hiding something as well.

Someone once told me, “Nothing is ever deleted from the internet absolutely.” And I believe it because her secret behavior turned out to be emails with an old boyfriend that her husband discovered almost accidentally.

The digital dialogue he found left little doubt as to her intentions with her former first love.

So, the husband conferenced me in on a phone call with her for couples' counsel lest the marriage slip into irreversible dissolution.

Talking to him and me, she did not yet realize he knew about her concealed communication, but once confronted with the proof she readily admitted it was true.

I asked her why she didn't tell me the truth before, and her answer surprised me, even though it should not have.

She quickly, emphatically, and even matter of factly, replied to my question by saying,
“Well...because it's embarrassing!”

Adam and Eve hid in the midst of the wood in the garden, embarrassed.

And even though they did not realize it; they were not embarrassed by their nakedness, rather they were embarrassed by their actions!

Now in this moment in time they feel they need to hide their embarrassment of their actions by pitifully covering their bodies with limp and tiny fig leaves.

It's a small measure of self-imposed dignity that is nothing more than an imposition to their real problem being solved.

Oh, how frequently we cover our sins in a likewise fashion.

We sinfully deny God's promised security and stability even as we pray for him to give us everything we need.

Sure, we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." But we emotionally and personally deny that God will give us, "everything that belongs to the support and needs of the body" (LSC [335-337] Pg. 459) for us, *and everyone we love*.

We privatize our pain and suffering from brothers and sisters in Christ and God Himself by putting on the mask of happiness when we are together at church, rather than letting God make us joyful through the forgiveness and strengthening of our faith.

Our incognito insincerity with God makes *Him* our emergency doctor when our family physicians fail us, rather than believing that even our illness is for the Glory of God, (John 11:4) *praising Him for it amid our suffering!*

Brothers and sisters: Our sinfully stealthy worry, pain and hypocrisy hide nothing with God.

Jeff continues saying, "The message (of today's lesson) ...is quite clear. Man cannot cover up, pay for, or atone for his own sin and shame..."

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Like when the prophet Isaiah talks about our works before God as "Filthy Rags" or the New Testament Parable of the wedding guest dressed in his own works, thrown immediately out of the hall for *improper attire*.

Only God can provide the true covering for sin and blood must be shed to provide this covering.

Pulse tells us one final time, "The Early Church Fathers along with Luther read this motif backward from the New Testament and identify the garments God gave to Adam and Eve as LAMB skins...these fit with...the text and the promise Seed of the woman."

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Jesus covers us like no work we could ever commit could.

“It’s Embarrassing” she repeated at my silence on the other end of the phone.

And it was. You see, she wore the works of her own weaving, certain she could do the right thing all on her own, justifying her actions and denying the need for being clothed in Christ.

“My Ways are not your ways,” says the Lord...but she simply couldn’t believe it any other way.

Her embarrassment remained, and more importantly her desire to justify it, and the marriage was over.

But *another couple* came to me together, caught up in the horror of her husband’s admitted adultery.

So many similarities only he *had* effectively hidden his shame until he broke his marriage vows.

They came to me together, in person wanting only to save the marriage from the secluded shame he had borne for so long.

Days in my study turned to weeks in my study turning to months.

Endlessly pointing him to the forgiveness won for him in Christ on the Cross: Never letting her forget that only the power of Christ’s death and resurrection would enable her to forgive her husband for his grievous misdeed.

I’ll never forget sitting with them in that tiny little office in that tiny little brown church...

There was no place for him to hide from me as they faced that sin right there. We were right on top of each other; only a few feet separated our knees as we sat.

I noticed every furtive glance they made at each other, I could see the worry lines growing deeper on their faces, and I *even smelled* the stress emanating from their pores.

They were embarrassed naked and ashamed.

But right behind my head was a crucifix just like this one. And he was naked too, for them to look at every time they just couldn’t look at me.

Jesus was naked right there with them, Jesus was hiding with our sin from His Holy Father and Jesus took off his righteous garment so we could be covered and saved from our embarrassment.

You know we cover Jesus a little too much with our depictions of Him today, our Victorian Sensibilities as it were.

But we shouldn't. Because every time we feel that embarrassment and shame, seeing him naked on the cross it reminds us He feels it too.

It's embarrassing, but it's forgiving, comforting, and blessing as well; all wrapped up in one.

Is your sin naked and embarrassing? Don't be afraid, you leave today clothed in Christ.
AMEN.

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