

The Foretaste of Fashion

November 26, 2023

Our Savior is Way Lutheran Church

Pastor Tyson Labuhn

This morning, we are starting a new sermon series called *The Clothing of the King*. Stores have been getting ready for Christmas for quite some time now. Now that Thanksgiving is over, and there has been a change in the weather, many of us have started to look forward to Christmas.

Office parties are being planned, and people are making sure they have their “ugly” sweaters to wear. Colors and outfits are being coordinated for Christmas card pictures. Mothers are picking out matching pajamas for their kids to wear on Christmas morning. And while the sanctuary has not quite been decked out with its Christmas attire, you know that it will happen soon. So, why all this focus on clothes? Because even the clothing of Christmas can also tell us a powerful story that points to Jesus our King. We can even see it in our Old Testament reading for this morning. It is *The Foretaste of Fashion*.

If you recall, Adam and Eve had been deceived by the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Until that time, they had enjoyed living with God. But they had bought the devil’s lie that they would be more like God if they would just eat from the tree of good and evil. And so, when God sought them out, they realized that they were naked and hid from Him.

God was not too happy with them, and as we heard in our reading for today, He shared with them the consequences of their sin. They and all of humanity were to be kicked out of the Garden of Eden. They would no longer be able to enjoy the presence of God in the same way because they would experience pain and frustration in life. They would have to deal with the effects of sin alone—even in death—while feeling far away from the One who loved and cared for them most of all.

As we enter this time of the year, you might be feeling some of the effects of what happened in the Garden. Because even though Christmas

music is supposed to be uplifting and Christmas parties are supposed to bring people together, you might *still feel* alone and isolated. You might even be grieving the loss of a loved one—a spouse or maybe a family member. This time of year, you might be feeling the financial strain of medical bills, the effects of some bad investments, or simply the effects of inflation this year. You want to give and provide more, but you are just not too sure you will be able to do so like you have in the past.

Or maybe it is because of a strained relationship. You stopped speaking with a family member because they hurt you, a child disappointed you, or an in-law said or did something that made you feel isolated from the rest of the family. Or maybe the list of things you have left undone or the regrettable things that you did in the past are just too many to list. With all the heightened emotions this time of the year, even in the middle of Christmas celebrations, each one of us can still feel alone, insecure, and vulnerable.

Adam and Eve once stood alone, insecure, and vulnerable. They were not the same as they once were. When God called out to them, they did not want to expose to Him their true selves. They knew things were different. They were afraid and hid themselves from God because they were no longer unblemished by sin, and they were worried about the consequences of their sin. Before that, they had enjoyed a peaceful existence. They had not felt like they had to cover anything up. Their nakedness almost seemed like a symbol of purity. They had lived in the safety of God's care, but now, with their eyes unveiled to the evils of a broken world, they felt vulnerable in their nakedness. They knew the impurity in their hearts and the all-encompassing shame that reminded them of their fall.

Even though Adam and Eve would have to grieve the consequences of their sin, we see that He still cares for them. As we read in verse 21 of our text, "And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). With His own two hands, He clothed them. He dressed them so they would not feel so exposed and vulnerable. And these were not fig leaves either. These were not clothes

made of cotton or some kind of fabric that was made from plants in the garden. No, the Lord God used skins and dressed them in leather garments.

Adam and Eve had been sentenced to a life outside of the Garden, where they would know sin and death. But the making of their garments was the first time that blood had been shed in God's perfect world. The first time that a being, that was once full of life, took its final breath and died, because of mankind's sin and shame. And while Adam and Eve would go on their way, their guilt and shame were covered by leather apparel.

Now some of you might be wondering, "What kind of God would do something so awful?" Well, this was only just the start, because from the very beginning, God also had your sin, guilt, and shame in mind too. He knew just how vulnerable you can feel at times, how you can fall into temptation, how you can feel pain and experience problems in your life, and just how sick we can all become, when we are close to death, living in this sin-sick world. But He does not stop there, because He wants to make sure that each and every one of us would be covered by His mercy and grace.

That is why He sent His one and only Son into the World, the One whose birth we look forward to celebrating once again. The clothing that the Father makes for all mankind comes from the same thread as those original garments—using His own two hands, by the shedding of blood, the loss of the most innocent of lives, the final breath and death of the perfect life of Jesus on the cross, He makes it possible for us along with all those in the world to be clothed in His mercy and love.

While I might not know exactly how vulnerable you feel right now or what difficulties you are experiencing, I do know that whatever it is, God has poured out His blood for you, so that you might have His mercy and forgiveness, and that, even though we live in this sin-sick world, you might experience His love through His means of grace, just like little Reese experienced this morning in baptism and like we will be able to experience again in Communion.

All of this has been in the works since the very beginning of time. And it came at a very great cost because it is Christ's perfect righteousness that has been given to us. It will fit under an ugly Christmas sweater. It will add a special touch to your family photos, and it will even go well with those new pajamas.

In Christ, we are wrapped in the mercy of God, protected from the harshest elements, namely, the ultimate effects of our sin. We are arrayed in something that has been made perfect for us so that once again we might rejoice and be filled with the peace of God.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.