

Fourth Saturday in Lent

Theme: Robe

Centering thought: What are you wearing?

Scripture (s):

“Awake, awake, put on your strength O Zion! Put on your beautiful garments. O Jerusalem, the holy city; for the uncircumcised and the unclean shall enter you no more.” (Isaiah 52: 1)

“As God’s chosen one’s, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ... Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Colossians 3: 12 and 14)

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.” (Isaiah 61: 10)

“ But the father said to the slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe – the best one – and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.’” (Luke 15: 22)

Reflection and Questions to Ponder

In scripture garments are often symbolic of the state of one’s soul. When I was growing up what you wore to church was important. You were supposed to bring your best to God, and I suppose look your best for God. Some of my friends had Church clothes that were only worn to church. What you are wearing makes a difference. Oh, it may not make a difference to those who are around you, but it makes a difference in how you approach the world and the people you encounter in the world. It makes a difference in how you encounter God.

If what you wear was not so important, people would not think about what they wear to a first interview, or a first date. I know, for me, when I am meeting with people, or leading a worship service, what I wear tends to make a difference in my attitude and preparation. If I am thinking about what I put on, then clearly what I am going to be about that day and who I am going to meet with on that day are important. I know that I need to be at the top of my game. Oh sure, I can do dress down Friday, but if I do, I’m expecting to do office work and I have not planned to engage in strategy kinds of meetings with staff or others. What I put on makes a difference not only in my attitude, but it also communicates the value I give to the persons with whom I am meeting, or the activity in which I am involved.

From the time I felt called into ministry, I have clearly thought about what I put on. My life passage is Colossians 3: 12 – 17, which has a great deal of lessons about what to wear. You and I are God’s chosen one’s, Holy and Beloved, - so dress like you believe that truth! Put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience – not every once in a while, but every day.

I find that when I am not feeling very compassionate or patient – I need to think about what I put on my outer body as well as my inner body. The father in the story from the prodigal son seemed to grasp this truth as well. The very first thing the father did was to call upon his servants to bring the lost son a robe – not just a robe – but the best robe. The son was broken, ready to grovel at his father’s feet to be brought back into the house as a slave, but the father was not having that. The father could see through the brokenness, the sinfulness, the self-loathing and needed to do something quickly to begin to transform the son’s head and being. His son is Holy and Beloved, valuable no matter what – so bring the best robe –

my son needs to begin to see himself in a new and different light, my son needs to learn to put on the garments that will remind him of who and whose he is.

It is significant that Joe sculpted me on the rock, at the water, in my robe. When he was sculpting, I was at a deeply broken place in my life. I needed to remember who and whose I was. I needed to live into my life scripture not just for others, but for myself, for my healing and wholeness. When I put on my robe, it makes a difference.

Whenever I put on my robe, my heart, mind, soul, my very body knows that in these robed moments – I am re-presenting Christ to the world in a very visible way. When I have on that robe, it says something to people. Every word and action that comes from me in those moments, has the opportunity to communicate something about the God, the Christ, I say I follow.

The robe reminds me of the call, God's call, and that in whatever I do in responding to that call, cannot be about me, but must be about the gift of Christ to the world – the pathway God gives us through Christ to God's kingdom, the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Of course, I do not wear the outer robe every day, but that does not mean that I do not spend time each day clothing myself, inwardly and outwardly, to re-present Christ to the world. In fact, that is what each follower of Christ is called to do. Together we are the Body of Christ. Together we make Christ known to the world. What we choose to wear inwardly and outwardly can make all the difference in what we are able to accomplish for Christ.

1. How might you pray that God's Spirit decorate, augment, or transform your outer and inner garments for your good?
2. What spiritual practices might you add to your daily life that would remind you often to clothe yourself with Christ?

Prayer:

Almighty God may your spirit move about us and through us so that we come to choose to clothe ourselves with Christ. Christ is the garment of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance, and forgiveness. Above all, robe us with your love, which will bind us together with you and with one another – even as you have created us uniquely and with differing gifts - in perfect harmony.
Amen