

## WEDDING GARMENTS

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*Lessons: Matthew 22:1-14, Heaven and Hell 178*

Children, you all wear clothes. But would it be right for you to go to church with dirty or messy clothes? No, of course it would not. If you want to be properly dressed for church, you wash yourself. You put on clothes that are clean and neat; you polish your shoes; because if you are not correctly or properly dressed, you feel as if you do not belong in church. Besides, you might bother others who sit close to you.

The clothes that you wear are signs of what you are doing or thinking. And as you should put away dirty thoughts so that you will be ready to come into the house of the Lord, so should your clothes be neat and clean, so that you will be ready to join with others in the worship of the Lord.

Because clothes can be signs of what a person is doing or thinking, therefore people who do certain kinds of work often wear special clothes. These show what they do. You know that policemen and firemen wear uniforms when they are on duty. Doctors and nurses in hospitals have their white uniforms. Ministers in the church wear robes of white. People who work in offices dress somewhat differently from those who work in factories. When you go outside to play, you wear clothes that are old, so that you can get muddy if you wish. But if you are dressing for church or for a party, then you wear clothes that you try to keep clean and neat. You wear clothes that are right for things that you are doing.

Now in this world you can wear the wrong clothes, can't you? It is possible. You can come to church in dirty clothes, even though you know that you shouldn't. You can forget to clean up before going to a party. Or you can go to school improperly dressed. But this never happens in heaven—never! For the angels always wear the clothes that are just right for what they are doing. The Word tells us that the angels have many clothes. And the wonderful thing is that these clothes are given to them by the Lord. They always have as many as they need, and then they can change them whenever they wish.

Little children in heaven also have different kinds of clothes—different kinds of suits, different kinds of dresses. Some of them are shining white, and others are brightly colored. These suits and dresses are clean and nice-looking as long as the children are good, and as long as they are happy. But if they are naughty or if they begin to think unhappy or nasty thoughts, then their clothes begin to be a little spotted and soiled. And they only become bright and

beautiful again when the naughtiness or the unhappiness or the nastiness goes away. Because in heaven all clothes look like the person feels. They look like what the person is doing or what he or she is thinking of doing. This is why, in the Lord's Word, clothes that are worn around the body stand for, or picture, thoughts that are in and around the mind. A piece of clothing sometimes is called a garment. And so when the Lord told the story about the wedding garment, He really was telling about something that happened in the minds of people. He was telling about something that could happen to you and to me.

Many of you children have been to a wedding. You know that when you go to a wedding you wear your nicest clothes. The men wear their best suits. The women wear beautiful dresses, because a wedding is a very special time—a time of celebration, a time of happiness. It was about such a happy wedding that the Lord told a story or parable.

He said that there was a certain king whose son was going to be married. The king made ready a large wedding feast with all kinds of good things to eat and drink. He sent off his servants to invite people to come and share his happiness and the happiness of the bride and groom. But when the king came in to see the wedding guests, he saw a man who was not properly dressed. The man did not have on a wedding garment. Now in those days that was a very terrible thing. This was a sign of disrespect to the king and to the wedding, to the bride and groom, to everybody. And the man had no excuse. For in those days it was a custom at weddings for the host to have extra clothes ready for those who did not have their own and might need some. The man only had to ask for a wedding garment. All he had to do was ask. But this man did not. So the king said to him, "Friend, why do you come in here without a wedding garment?" But the man did not answer at all—he answered nothing. So the king ordered his servants to bind this man hand and foot to take him away. "Cast him into outer darkness," he said, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mathew 22:12-13).

Now, who do you think was the king in this story? The king is the Lord Jesus Christ. And as the king invited many people to his marriage feast, so does the Lord Jesus Christ invite all people to heaven. For only those people can go into heaven who want to go there. They make themselves ready to go there. And those who are ready are the people who have heavenly clothes to wear. People have heavenly clothes if they have heavenly thoughts. Such people think what is right and what is good, for the things you think about are like the clothes or the garments of your mind.

How can you have good, clean and true thoughts? You get them from the Lord's Word. You get them when you read the Word, when you listen to it, when you have family worship and when you learn what you are taught in school—and also, when you go to church. If you don't care what is in the Word

and if you never try to find Out what it says, then you will be like the man who came to that marriage without proper clothes, without a wedding garment. He was taken away because he did not belong there. But if you learn to know what the Word teaches, and if you learn to love to do what the Lord says, then the Lord will make your thoughts clean and good. You will have heavenly garments like those worn by the angels.

Often in the Word the Lord compares heaven to a happy wedding feast or marriage supper. And the Lord said, “Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9).