

Poverty and Nakedness

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[0 : 00] Now, as some of you will remember, we began last Lord's Day morning, a short mini-series concerned with the sinner's need and the Saviour's fullness.

The sinner's need and the Saviour's fullness. And last Lord's Day we looked at the subject of hunger and thirst. Today we will look at the subject of poverty and nakedness.

And we'll take as the text, verses 17 and 18, Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich and white-wraiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eyes out that thou mayest see.

Poverty and nakedness. Why do we understand poverty? Well, we could say that it's the inadequacy of supply or insufficiency in relation to what we need.

You know, it's not just a deficit between income and expenditure. One could be a millionaire who is still choosing to live beyond his means.

[1 : 20] And he might have more outgoings than he does incomings, but you couldn't say he was in poverty. Poverty suggests that there's a discrepancy between incoming and outgoing resources to be happening at a very basic level, where the lack of resources becomes critical.

Sometimes poverty can be relational. You might feel poor because all those around you are so much richer than you.

My father had a friend whose son was at a posh private school in England, and yet he was regarded as one of the poorer boys at the school because so many of those around him were what they called seriously rich.

And seriously rich, I think I mean, I've mentioned in illustration in the past, met those with 10 million or more. And he didn't have 10 million. He was still like the poor boy. But that's just relational.

That's just, you know, comparative. There's no way that he was actually poor. But in comparison to those around, he may have felt like the poor relation or the poor boy.

[2 : 26] You just don't happen to be as rich as some others. On the other hand, if everybody's poor, you can still, but you can still get by. Perhaps nobody feels poor.

And some of the old pictures of the St. Kilda Parliament, as it was called, you see the men of the village standing in the village street. And quite a number, perhaps all of them got bare feet.

Now, that might be partly to help them grip the rocks when they were climbing to get the birds out and so on. But it was also probably a fact that they were comparatively cash poor. They didn't have much of this world's goods.

And yet, there they were, all the decision makers of the island, all the decision makers of the community. They were men of standing. They were men of position in their community.

And yet, they were, in terms of monetary, well, they were all comparatively poor. Barefoot indeed. But they wouldn't have felt poor. They wouldn't have felt, you know, that they were so much worse off than those around them.

[3 : 27] They would have thought that they were in a comparable position with everybody else. To an extent, you could say that it is relational. You might not feel poor, as we say. They might not think of themselves as poor.

What is it to be poor? Well, as we've already hinted at, we suggest that it is when what we actually have does not meet what we actually and genuinely need.

In Revelation chapter 3, the Laodicean church does not feel or think of itself as poor. You see it, verse 17. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.

And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Yet the risen Christ says that they are poor and naked and miserable and blind.

They're poor in relation to what? In relation to whom? You know, Laodicea was a rich city in material terms. You know, what is their need over against what they are perceived to require?

[4 : 34] Over against what they actually have? What is it that they need? As we say, in material terms, Laodicea was a rich city. The city had been devastated by an earthquake in the year AD 62.

But they were so strong financially, so comparatively well off, that they refused all help from the Roman state. And they rebuilt their city from their own resources and at their own expense.

And they were very proud of the fact. That's how rich this city was. That's how strong they were. But such material riches were worthless in the eyes of the risen Christ.

Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed. And the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.

[5 : 35] Their currency was of no value in the marketplace of eternity. It's like monopoly money in the real world. If you go into the shop and try to buy a loaf of bread or your portion of meat or whatever, or I am with monopoly money, they're going to say, well, no, that's going to give us some real money.

Or perhaps even if you were to take in foreign money, which is perfectly good legal tender in the country in which it is issued. But it's no use here. It's not going to buy you anything.

The currency is no good. It's like fake money to those who actually want to do the business. Or it's like having shares, masses of shares, in a company that's suddenly faced with meltdown, or found to be in meltdown.

Suddenly, from earning you lots of money, your shares are suddenly worthless. The riches, the currency, the things of this world that we think make us rich in relation to others.

If our object is to buy favour with Christ, these things are less than useless. They're not just useless, they're worse than useless because they give us the illusion of being well off in the eyes of Christ.

[6 : 49] We, then, are indeed poor in this regard. If we have nothing in the eyes of Christ that makes us worthy to receive his blessing, how, then, can this poverty be addressed?

Well, as sure as we have the sinner's need, we have the saviour's fullness. Jesus doesn't just say to a nose, Look at you. You think you're rich, but in fact you're poor.

You think you're well clothed, but in fact you're naked. You think you can see, but in fact you're blind. What a useless bunch you are. He doesn't just leave them at that. There is the sinner's need, which they may not have known, but which Christ definitely identifies and identifies in love.

But then he goes on, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.

There is the saviour's fullness ready to supply their need. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians chapter 8, verse 9, For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

[8 : 18] He who had all the riches of heaven's glory, he became poor, so that we by exchange, through faith in him, might become rich. So when he says, you know, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, he's not just saying, ha, we've got nothing to buy with anyway.

Tough. He is supplying the means to buy this rich gold and white raiment, and to be clothed in his righteousness, and to be supplied with his riches, because his riches are not as the riches of the world.

When Paul writes to the Ephesians, and says unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

He doesn't mean gold and silver. He doesn't mean the money of this world. He means that which is beyond this world, that which will last for eternity. It won't buy you anything, perhaps in the marketplace of this world, but it will buy you eternal blessing and grace in the marketplace of heaven.

The unsearchable riches of Christ, the inexhaustible riches of Christ, that is what he offers, and he freely offers it. It's as though somebody were to say to you, buy this product off me.

[9 : 37] And then you say, well, I haven't got any money. Now, a businessman in this world might say, well, I'll lend you the money, and then you can pay me back with interest, once you get some money yourself.

You can buy this product from me, and I'll even lend you the money in order to buy it, and then you can pay me back. No, with Christ, it's different. Christ says here, buy this product from me. I counsel thee to buy of me gold, tried in the fire of my maestri village, and white raiment of my maestri clothes.

Say, well, Lord, we've got nothing to buy. I will give you, not lend you, give you what you need to buy. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor.

It's not just as though you say, well, I'll give you a little bit of my spare cash, or my spare resource is what I need. In order for us to be redeemed, he emptied himself. He became not only a mere human being, holy God, but holy man, coming down from heaven's glory, emptying himself of all his heavenly power and glory, the rod of his divinity, but also he gave himself up completely, suffering all for the sins of all who would trust and believe in his name.

For all we like sheep have gone astray, says Isaiah, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all, and all who will trust and believe in him. It costs all that he has, and all that he is.

[11 : 08] He empties himself that we might have his riches, such as the love and the grace of God, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. What is it that we understand by this gold?

Well, Peter would tell us, and we turn back a couple of pages, the first Peter talks about the trial of your faith, the faith that we have in Christ, which of course is the gift of God, Ephesians 2, chapter 2, verse 8, this faith we have not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than a gold, that perisheth, though it be tried with the fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

If we will put our trust in him, we give him ourselves, it's all we have to give. We receive from him his righteousness, his grace, his riches, with which we are enabled to buy.

This gold tried in the fire, these white raiment garments that clothe our nakedness, that our poverty be not so visible to all the world.

[12 : 33] To be sure, these are not, when we talk about the unsearchable riches of Christ. These are not the riches as the world sees riches, but nor does the world see its poverty for what it really is.

Revelation, again, in chapter 3, I think it is, in fact I think about chapter 2, verse 9, the Lord says to the church in Smyrna, I know thy works and tribulation and poverty, but thou art rich, and I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews and are not that are of the synagogue of Satan.

They think they're poor, but the Lord says you're rich. The Lord I see and think they're rich, but the Lord says you don't realise how through you are. The unsearchable riches of Christ are not as the riches of the world, but they are freely offered, that we might have the true riches.

Our poverty in relation to God is absolute. There is the sinner's need, but there is the Saviour's fullness.

That is why he is called the Saviour. And related to our poverty is our nakedness. Now in Scripture, often, but not exclusively, nakedness is connected with poverty.

[13 : 58] Scripture is full of references to the blessing and obligation of clothing the naked. We think of how when Judah was at war with Israel in 2 Chronicles, in chapter 28, we read of how after the Jewish prisoners were brought into Samaria.

Then the Israelites then clothed them. Instead of slaughtering the prisoners or just selling them, as it were, into slavery, they went and they clothed them with the spoil.

That's which they had taken off their enemies in the first place. 2 Chronicles 28, verse 15, the men which were expressed by name rose up and took the captives and with the spoil clothed all them that were naked among them and arrayed them and shod them and gave them to eat and to drink and anointed them and carried all the thieves and all them upon asses and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren.

Then they returned to Samaria. So the Israelites returned their Jewish captives back to their own people. They clothed the naked. Now we don't know whether in Scripture when it says nakedness, it always means literal nudity.

You know, when Peter in John 21, it says, you know, he saw the Lord on the shore. He girt his fishers coat about him for he was naked. We don't know whether that means he was literally stark naked or whether it means that he was just inadequately clothed, perhaps just his loincloth or whatever.

[15 : 28] But Jesus says in Matthew 25, remember, that one of the marks of those who are blessed of his father is that he was naked and they clothed him. And he said, Lord, why would we ever see the naked and clothed?

And he said, for as much as you did it unto one of these, the least of my brother, you have done it unto me. The implication in clothing the naked is often one of restoring to them both dignity and comfort.

Dignity in covering their shame because it's a shame not just to be naked, but the shame for the poor in those days was that everybody could see they couldn't afford clothing.

They couldn't afford even the roughest rags, perhaps. This is how poor they were. This is how destitute and helpless they were. And this is a source of shame. It is a source of shame almost to be diminished in the eyes of others, just as it is a source of honour to be exalted in the eyes of others, to be thus diminished, to be thus in such poverty and nakedness, thus to clothe the naked is to cover their shame, to restore their dignity and also comfort because although we think, oh, the Middle East it's always hot anyway so they wouldn't be cold, when the sun goes down at night it becomes freezing cold in the Middle East at night.

It becomes bitter, literally freezing cold at night. And then the sun comes up and there's a brief time where it's just sort of temperate and nice and then the sun gets up in the sky and it's scorching.

[17 : 04] There's almost no happy region. So the poor would have no protection from the scorching sun by day or the freezing cold by night. To clothe the naked is to not only restore their dignity but it is to restore something of their comfort in covering against the elements.

As I say, it's not always clear whether it's literal, complete unity or just barely and inadequately covered but the sense is the same. Even if there is an recovering over of, for example, the private parts and loincloths and so on, it's still clear you don't have anything else.

If one is without adequate clothing it is because one's circumstances have forced the issue either through becoming a captive as we read about in Chronicles there or more often through poverty and helplessness.

Now just as the rich would often be recognized as such by their conspicuously fine and expensive clothing the poor were visibly poor.

You know, if somebody walked down the street with a darn lots of beautiful colors and finely stitched and gold worked through it or purple which was so expensive that it tended to be only reserved as a royal color because, you know, remember Lydia was a seller of purple in the Acts of the Apostles and the purple dye was extracted from a shellfish from whom each one was a single drop, a single drop the dye for each one.

[18 : 40] So the amount that you could accumulate was very, very limited which made it hugely expensive. Somebody was clothed in purple, well you knew they were wealthy and if somebody walked down the street in clothes of silk or fine linen you knew they were wealthy because nobody else could afford it.

Equally, if they were in very rough stitched or hewn clothes or in rags or whatever you knew, well, they can't afford anything else. They're poor. If they had anything better, they'd wear it.

You know, nowadays we're so used to thinking in terms of, well, I'm just slobbing around the house today so I'll just put on own clothes and do a bit of cleaning or scrubbing or whatever household chores may be.

I don't want to put on my best clothes for that but if I was going out somewhere special without a meeting or business or to meet somebody for a meal or something then you might put on something a bit more special.

You dress according to the occasion. but that is a luxury that we have because we have chests of drawers and wardrobes full of clothes full of different kinds of clothes.

[19 : 42] We are clothes rich in that sense. For the people in biblical times they would have if they were well-to-do they would have one set of good clothes and they would have their ornaments which would be rough which would be patched which would be stitched up again probably roughly woven or sewn or whatever the case may be people's station in life people's financial situation was readily identifiable by the clothes that they wore.

The poor were visibly poor by the roughness or inadequacy of their clothing or lack of it altogether. Now it is worth noting in passing of course that nakedness was not originally a problem.

This is how every human being is born into the world and this is how our first parents were created. Genesis 2 verse 25 we read they were both naked the man and his wife and were not ashamed.

Not ashamed before each other and not ashamed before God. But then with the fall and sin enter in and with sin separation from God with this comes awareness of shame inadequacy is it comparison you know who are they you know in our modern you know sex obsessed culture you know nudity pornography all the rest of it is always seeking to turn us into something secretive and dirty and so on but the relationship of course between a husband and wife there will be at times naked with each other and there's no shame in it there's love there's appreciation but there's not shame in it but there's shame when Adam and Eve sin and then they become aware of their nakedness they become aware of their shame they become aware of inadequacy they become aware of perhaps it is comparison comparison with whom is that part of our shame that we fear comparison negatively so with others you know we always know of people whether men or women or whatever who you know are content to put a lot of their flesh on display and we would say of them that they were immodest immodest immodestly dressed because they're putting everything out of the other space hey look at what I've got look at how brilliant I look with as little on as possible and clearly such a person is very content that any comparison made between them and anybody else's body is going to be favourable to them they will look good by comparison they are saying look how great my body is and if it didn't have a stitch on it would still look brilliant that's how good I am not many people are that confident but in the garden of

Eden against whom is any perceived inadequacy to be measured there are lots of people going around with no clothes on Adam and Eve can't say oh they look much better than me I've got to cover away my shame or whatever can only be in relation to God they are made in the image of God and they are sinless before God to begin with and then they are separated from God by their sin suddenly they are aware of their sin they are aware of their separation they are aware of their shame man becomes aware of his disobedience aware of his sin and man is suddenly aware of his naked humanity that although he is made in the image of God he is not God that the serpent has suggested you will become as gods knowing good and evil yes they know good and evil but they only know good and evil now because they have enacted evil and seen by the bitter taste of experience they have seen the difference and one of the harsh and bitter truths they have now experienced is although they are made in the image of God they are not

[24 : 00] God and this sense of inadequacy this sense of shame this sense of I made the wrong choice in a foolish decision of believing they would become as gods and only finding now that the difference between themselves and God has been accentuated there is nothing to do but hide aware of his naked humanity and he must hide it but as is so often the case with our vain attempts to cover our nakedness we only make things worse ugly use filthy rags that's what Isaiah says in chapter 64 at verse 6 but we are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags and we all who fade as a leaf and our iniquities like a wind have taken us away all our righteousnesses all our own righteousnesses all our own covenants are like filthy rags contrast that with the

Lord in Jeremiah 23 and verse 6 we read in his days Judas shall be saved Israel shall dwell safely and this is the name whereby he shall be called the Lord our righteousness when the Lord is our clothing then we are covered not only for our shame but we are covered in honour and glory the Lord our righteousness this is almost kind of implied or hinted at in the prophet Zechariah where there's this vision of Joshua the high priest remember of course that Joshua is in fact the same name as Jesus although it's not the same individual but it means saviour Jehovah shall save and we read in Zechariah 3 showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan standing at his right hand the resistance and the Lord said unto Satan the Lord rebuke thee oh Satan even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee is not this a brand plucked out of the fire now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel now what might these filthy garments be we could say well we could say that's because his own priesthood is so inadequate all of that could be true could it be that perhaps

Joshua may have at times trusted to his office as a priest or any perceived righteousness as a priest either way as he stands before God and stands before the angel of God all that he has to call himself is filthy garments all our righteousness is as filthy garments and he answered and speaking of those that stood before him saying take away the filthy garments from before him and you might think well that's just going to make it worse that's just going to make him make it he said behold I have caused thy iniquity to pass from me and I will clothe thee with change of raiment and I said let them set a fair micro upon his head so they set a fair micro upon his head and clothed them with garments and the angel of the Lord stood by in some ways before we can put on the white raiment of the Lord we must be washed we must be washed and cleansed but none of us let's see you come back from a hill walk or some grubby job or whatever and you're covered in mud and spattered and you're all stinking with all the stuff you've been doing you don't jump in the shower with all your clothes on and then try and get clean you have to strip them off you have to get off your filthy garments you have to put them for the wash you have to get into the shower or the bath or whatever it is and yes you have to be naked if you're going to get clean then you have to strip off that which is filthy that's what's happening here with Joshua the high priest and that is what the

Lord desires to do for us not that we should be increased in our shame but that we should be stripped of that false clothing and false righteousness which only increases our filthiness but Adam and Eve in the garden at least they know that they are naked they know their sense of shame they fear how would I see it if anything it's worse they don't even know that they are naked because thou sayest I am rich and increased with good and I need of nothing and knowest not that thou are rich and miserable and poor and blind and naked they don't even know they don't even see they're like people covered in body paint and outwardly you think oh yeah that person is fully cold are you actually no they're not they don't have anything to cover their nakedness except that it's fake clothes fake paint but they will know now that they are naked they will know now that they are impoverished because Christ is telling them and he is telling them not out of bitterness and not in order to put them down and not in order to crush them or belittle them but in order to point them to how it can be dealt with point them to the solution there is the sinner's need and there is the saviour's fullness as I've mentioned as an illustration in the past if you go to the doctor and you feel there's something wrong with you and the doctor examines you and you say no you're at the peak of hell absolutely

I've never seen such a magnificent specimen as you are off you go home and enjoy life and you think well that doesn't feel right because I know there's something not right wouldn't you rather the doctor say well actually I don't quite know how to tell you this but there's something very very seriously wrong with you there is this that's inside you can't see it but it needs dealt with unless you get treatment and potentially surgery and of course whatever the drugs may be it's going to be fatal good news is we can deal with it we have caught it in time there is the opportunity to get the surgery to get the treatment to get whatever you do need and we can deal with it you can walk away and say how dare you say that to me how dare you imply there's anything wrong with my wonderful body there's anything sick inside no I don't accept that I'm a perfect specimen in wonderful health I really came to you because I wasn't feeling 100% now you're telling me all these things are wrong with it you want the doctor to tell you what's wrong you want him to identify what is the problem inside you want them to diagnose and you want them to provide a solution that's what he does but this is what the Lord is doing here he don't even know he says that you're poor and wretched and blind and naked so this is what

[30 : 45] I'm saying to you I counsel you to buy me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear it is always with Christ the solution to the Savior the sinner's need is the Savior's fullness but as we said by a eagle by the point they are to give themselves afresh to Christ now they already thought they were Christians they already thought they were following the Lord but sometimes we can start that way and we can go astray just like whether you're walking on the moon or whether you're out in the sea or whatever and you think you're going astray right now no I'm not look at how I've heard all over the place you need a compass to set you by you need to come back again and again to the right reading you need to come back again and again to the Savior who alone is our true north as it were our true direction they need to come back to him by faith which is itself the gift of God that the trial of their faith which is more precious than fine gold as

Peter says in perishing may be that which will purchase for them this which will make them rich the consistent message throughout Revelation just to take Revelation as one book case in point is that the Lord will clothe his children in white raiment now we'll come to some examples of that in a minute this clothing in white raiment in Arabia for example the princes of the royal household they are clothed in these long white garments and part of the state the white garments it's not just oh look how clean and nice they look but it's also a statement that I am such an important wealthy rich person that even though white will pick up every little speck and every little besmirching of dirt that there is I am the kind of person who does not do any of the manual or dirty work which will make my clothes dirty I wear this white because I am a prince

I wear this white because I am rich and privileged and special if it should ever get dirty I simply change it for another one this is a statement of my importance my wealth my position my primacy this is what it is for a radiant prince to this day of course you could say that in terms of paint or perhaps in terms of fabric white to some people represents the absence of colour that's perhaps one way of looking at it in scientific terms as far as light is concerned and some of you may remember doing this at school as I mentioned in the past white light is in fact the presence of all the colours of the spectrum and it's only when that white light is dispersed whether you see it in the sky as water disperses the light in the spectrum that's when you get the rainbow or sometimes they may have shorn light through this little triangular glass prism and they split out all the colours and show you all the colours of the rainbow coming out in this multi-colour that the single white beam of light breaks up into white is the presence of all the colours where light is concerned as far as the Lord is concerned yes it may encompass all the beauty and wonder and colour of his creation in this single statement of purity and perfection and completeness thus we read in chapter 3 that we did read from verses 4 and 5 chapter 6 verse 11 verse 12 verse 13 verse 14 verse 15 verse 16 verse 17 verse 18 verse 19 verse 20 verse 21 verse 22 verse 23 verse 24 verse 25 verse 26 verse 27 verse 28 verse 29 verse 30 verse 31 verse 32 verse 33 verse 34 verse 35 verse 36 verse 37 verse 38 verse 39 verse 40 verse 41 verse 42 verse 43 verse 44 verse 45 verse 46 verse 47 verse 48 verse 49 verse 50 verse 51 verse 52 verse 53 verse 54 verse 55 verse 56 verse 57 verse 58 verse 59 verse 60 verse 61 verse 62 verse 63 verse 64 verse 65 verse 66 verse 67 verse 68 verse 69 verse 70 verse 71 verse 72 verse 73 verse 74 verse 75 verse 76 verse 77 verse 78 verse 79 verse 80 verse 81 verse 82 verse 83 verse 84 verse 85 verse 86 verse 87 verse 88 verse 89 verse 90 verse 91 verse 92 verse 93 verse 94 verse 95 verse 96 verse 97 verse 98 verse 99 verse 100 verse fulfilled in chapter 7 verse 9.

I beheld, though a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindreds and people, in town he stood before the throne and before the land, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest, please, who are these that are raiding white robes?

Sir, thou knowest, these are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. What if you wash your robes in blood?

[35 : 35] You're expected to be red, to be stained. You know, like it says in Isaiah, who is this that cometh out of Eden would dye garments from Bosra, who's trodden the winepress, stained red.

You'd expect such garments to be stained red, but such is the power, the purity, the strength of the blood of Christ, that robes washed in his blood become purer than ever they were before.

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Likewise, in chapter 15, the angels are described as being clothed in white.

And perhaps most significantly of all, in chapter 19, let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to him, verse 7. For the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. What is the righteousness of the saints?

[36 : 37] The Lord, our righteousness. His purity. His perfection. The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. Further on down that chapter, we find the risen Christ coming with all the armies of heaven.

The armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. It's again and again and again throughout Revelation. The clothing of his children, of his elders, of his messengers, of his bride, with this white purity.

Washed in the blood of the Lamb. This is the clothing of our nakedness. Once we ourselves have been washed and cleansed.

This is the means by which we ourselves are no longer naked. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 2. For in this we groan earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

If so, be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened. Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

[37 : 49] Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God. Now if somebody were to bring to you either your dream dress or gown if you're a lady or the ideal Armani suit or whatever it was, you can imagine.

You say, oh that's a fantastic Armani suit, that's a beautiful gown. I really would love to try it on. Say, well go ahead, here's a fitting room, here's a fitting room, and so on. And the first thing you've got to do is strip off your old clothes.

If you're going to strip off your ordinary clothes, to get on this fantastic suit or this beautiful gown. If it falls, we don't want to be stripped off. We don't want to be unclothed. But we do want to be clothed upon.

It's not that we are so desperate to die, but we are desperate to enter heaven. We are desperate to be clothed upon with the righteousness of Christ.

In poverty or in nakedness or in both. In the shame of our inadequacy, in the dehumanizing of our dignity, we are acutely conscious of the sinner's need.

[39 : 02] Of our weakness, our inadequacy. We are conscious of the sinner's need. But whatever there is the sinner's need, let us be even more conscious of the Savior's fullness.

He is the one who puts his finger on our knee. He is the one who identifies it. He is the one who says, this is the state you're in. This is the thing you need. Here is what you need.

I will give it to you freely. The sinner's need and the Savior's fullness, whether we be in poverty, whether we be in nakedness, whether our dignity be diminished or our humanity be debased, it is he alone who would lift us up and restore us to men and women made in the image of God, stripped of our filthy rags and false righteousnesses, washed in the blood and clothed in the righteousness of Christ our God.

Let's pray.