

April 27, 2015

Have you ever arrived at an event only to find that you had misjudged the type of clothing you should be wearing? I conducted an outdoor wedding in Ganaraska Forest last year and assumed that the dress code would be reflecting the natural surroundings. Much to my surprise it was a full "shirt and tie" event with women in very high heels and full wedding gear. I scrambled to arrange my attire in order to look dressed for the occasion but being tieless I decided to do up the top button on my white shirt so I would look like a preacher from the Reformed church!

Similarly, dressed in my PJ's one morning my prayer commenced with, "Good morning Lord" but it hadn't occurred to me that I might not be "dressed for the occasion" of being in the presence of the Holiest One of all Eternity. Suddenly, I was aware, not of my PJ's, but my casual words of introduction. Was I too familiar? Was I being less than respectful of God? I looked into my heart and saw no disrespect only that God made Himself available at my level of relationship. Jesus as Son of Man has made this possible for us all.

I was however, aware of my "uncleanness," not of any particular sin but as a human being with an old sinful nature. I endeavour to keep "a clean heart" before God so this experience revealed the great gap between natural man and a Holy God. This seemed a paradox to me. On one hand I was relaxed in His presence, talking with Him "face to face" as friends, while on the other hand I was aware of my uncleanness though it appeared not to hinder our personal encounter. Remembering the complex process and requirements laid out in the old covenant, I should be grovelling on my face before God, yet here I was in my PJ's talking with Him face to face.

At this point, the prosecuting attorney (The accuser of the brethren) read me a list of my failures, sins and faults screaming that I was guilty. My only reply was to agree with his statement; "guilty as charged" but I felt no condemnation, only a gentle peace that enveloped me. That was my Advocate, my Defence Counsel, declaring that all charges against me have been dismissed and paid for; I am forgiven! Although I could not see it with the natural eye, it was then that I realised I was covered from head to toe with a pure white garment making me as pure as the Son of Man Himself. I was at home with Father just like Jesus and I could enjoy the same face to face relationship with the Father as He did.

I believe that the implications of this remarkable work of grace and love of God that Jesus accomplished for us through His life, death and resurrection has yet to be fully understood experienced or acted upon. As a wretched man by nature I can become one with God, all because of what Jesus has done for me; He has DRESSED ME FOR THE OCCASION.

Can I boast of this intimacy with God, this familiarity with the Almighty? Absolutely not! I am the beneficiary of this amazing love and my heart cries out with the hymn writer; "Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small, love so amazing so divine DEMANDS, my soul, my life, my all." My reply is to say; "He SHALL have my soul, my life, my all."

So here I am, dressed in my PJ's, a sinner saved by grace, talking face to face with the Father, just like Jesus." Shalom.

*Ron Harris*

