

He Has Clothed Me With the Garments Of Salvation.

Isaiah 61:10,11.

Sunday evening, January 25, 2009.

I. The speaker.

- A. It is not the Servant of the Lord; the Messiah.
 - 1. He has no need to be clothed in righteousness or salvation.
 - 2. He is righteousness and salvation.
 - 3. He brings righteousness and salvation to His people.
- B. It is the Covenant people of God; the Church who is speaking.
 - 1. She is covered by the Lord in the robe of righteousness, and clothed by the Lord in the garment of salvation.
 - 2. It has been the custom of the Ethiopian people since ancient times for a groom to provide the wedding dress for his bride. It is always the same; a long, plain, sparkling white gown, made of cotton. The origin of the custom is unknown, but it is possible that it was formed by their exposure to the Scriptures in the early centuries of the church. In that case it would testify to their understanding of the work of Christ in behalf of sinners.

II. The object of rejoicing.

It is the Lord Himself.

- A. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God."
 - 1. Ultimately the soul needs the Lord Himself.
 - All the knowledge about God can not satisfy our souls, nor can it order our souls aright. The Lord Himself must come and take up residence in our souls for all to be well.
 - 2. This is why the Lord says that He Himself stands at the door and knocks... Rev. 3:20, and He promises to come in and fellowship with those who hear.
 - 3. This is why the Lord promised that He and the Father would come and make their home with the one who would love and serve the Lord. John 14:23.
 - 4. This is why a frequent observance of the Lord's supper is desirable. All the information about the Lord and His kingdom, however necessary, good and true, can ultimately not give what the soul needs, nor can it order and restore our souls aright. For that the Lord Himself must come. We must seek Him and have dealings with Him, and He with us; this is communion.
 - 5. C.S. Lewis illustrates this point beautifully in the Chronicles of Narnia. Not until Aslan, the lion himself, comes and intervenes is the battle won; is the enemy cast out, and are all things ordered aright. And He does not come until He is humbly sought out and asked to come.
- B. Until the soul understands that it needs the Lord Himself it will always pursue earthly things, and it will always seek to rejoice in earthly things; the blessings, the feelings, and the gifts.
- C. The late Dr. A.B. Simpson beautifully captures the difference the presence of the Lord Himself makes in the soul of a believer in his poem (The Lord) "Himself."

"Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord;

Once it was the feeling, now it is His word;
Once His gifts I wanted; now the Giver own;
Once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.

Once 'twas painful trying, now 'tis perfect trust;
Once a half salvation, now the uttermost;
Once 'twas ceaseless holding, now He holds me fast;
Once 'twas constant drifting, now my anchor's cast.

Once 'twas busy planning, now 'tis trustful prayer;
Once 'twas anxious caring, now He has the care.
Once 'twas what I wanted, now what Jesus says;
Once 'twas constant asking, now 'tis ceaseless praise.

Once it was my working, His it hence shall be;
Once I tried to use Him, now He uses me;
Once the power I wanted, now the Mighty One;
Once for self I labored, now for Him alone."

III. Expressions of joy.

Illustrated in the bridegroom and bride.

- A. The bridegroom adjusts his priestly crown. The reference is to the headdress of the groom. A priestly looking mitre or turban to the front of which a crown of gold was fastened.
- B. The bride adorns herself with jewels.
- C. So the Christian, dressed by the Lord in the garments of salvation and righteousness, and in communion with His Lord may give expression to the blessedness of the Lord's presence by wearing the jewels of the fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

IV. Bud and seed.

- A. These things seem so often such a distant reality in our experience. Yet like bud and seed they are present realities, which by the Lord's blessing may spring up into gardens of praise.
- B. One day the bud and seed of God's word, warmed by the sun of God's Spirit and grace, will spring up into gardens of praise which will fill the entire earth.
- C. This seems such a distant reality right now to us. Just like the spring flowers that right now lie encased in snow and ice seem distant to us. Yet the sun will warm them to life and they will spring up in praise.
- D. Even now the Christian may experience this enlivening power of the Lord; this springing up to everlasting life, in communion with the Lord.