

ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute"

Volume III Number 4

Editor's Note: This "MM" is the 4th email sermon of 2004 in a series that ARM is sending as an encouragement to preachers and Christian workers around the world. This message develops the idea that Jesus gave up ALL for us -- even His clothes. This message was first sent back in 2002, but we have added a number of new readers since then. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, use it or components of it! May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

"...They took his clothes ..."

John 19:23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes ..."

OPEN: **Corrie Ten Boom** was a wonderful Christian lady of Dutch extraction who saved many innocent lives during the dark days of the Holocaust in W.W.II. For her devotion to doing what was right, she and her sister were imprisoned in a concentration camp. On one occasion, they were humiliated by being stripped of every piece of clothing they had. It was an invasion of their decency and dignity and seemed, at first, to be totally without purpose or benefit. But a thought struck Corrie in the midst of her embarrassment... "

John 19:23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes ..."

She turned to her sister and said, "I never thanked Him for all that He endured for me -- I never thanked Him for willingly being stripped and humiliated for me. Now I appreciate what He did for me more than ever before."

More love to thee O Christ, More love to Thee. As we ponder the many aspects and features of the sacrifice of Christ, we come to love Him more.

Join me today as we look at scripture and marvel at the love He holds for us. And when we behold that love, we will be moved, we will be motivated to cry out from our hearts, "What can I do to thank the Savior for all He's done for me?" In SIX words, we find the theme Sister Ten Boom has taught us: **"CHRIST UNCLOTHED HIMSELF FOR OUR SALVATION."**

CONSIDER THESE VERSES ABOUT THE LORD:

Ps 104:1 Praise the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great; you are **clothed with splendor and majesty**. 2 He wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent

Zech 6:13 It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be **clothed with majesty** and will

sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' (NIV)

Rev 1:12-18 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," **dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.** 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. (NIV)

1. HE WHO WAS CLOTHED WITH MAJESTY WAS STRIPPED OF IT FOR US.

The Rich became poor that we, the poor, might become rich. Willingly stripped of his majesty, splendor, and power, he DIED FOR US.

As Paul said in II Cor 8:9 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.

Said the songwriter: "He left the splendor of heaven, knowing His destiny, was the lonely Hill of Golgotha, where He gave up His life for me....if that isn't Love!!"

He divested Himself, He set His majesty and splendor aside that He might be the redeeming Messiah. Unclothed that we might be dressed in the royal robes of our Creator! Hallelujah, what a Savior!

2. HE WHO WAS CLOTHED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS WAS STRIPPED OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR US.

Isa 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath **covered me with the robe of righteousness**, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

THIS IS FROM THE SAME CHAPTER OF ISAIAH THAT CHRIST QUOTED IN LUKE 4 AT THE SYNAGOGUE IN NAZARETH....

Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Our Messiah lived in heaven clothed in not only majesty, but in pure righteousness. Yet He allowed Himself to be stripped of this precious "rightness," this unique perfection, that He might become sin for us. As He went naked to the cross, he

BECAME SIN .. THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM! Here is the verse from 2 Cor 5...

2 Cor 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God 21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Look at the Communion Cup and Loaf -- Herein lie great testimonies to the suffering willingly accepted by our Lord. Blood shed. Body broken. Do we think of it so routinely that we fail to grasp it's significance? He died for you. He died for me. HE BECAME SIN, ALLOWING HIS ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE STRIPPED FROM HIM... all for our sake.

And then he was led to Calvary. And there came the tearing away of a garment all of us have coveted. A robe of precious value all men and women seek. Its name: IMMORTALITY. The power to defy death, the power to live eternally.

3. HE WHO WAS CLOTHED WITH IMMORTALITY WAS STRIPPED OF LIFE FOR OUR SAKES.

1 Tim 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- of whom I am the worst. 16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. 17 Now to the King eternal, **immortal**, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (NIV)

It was Christ's possession. Eternal, immortal. Consider Heb 2:14-15 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity [MORTALITY] so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil--15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

He became mortal on Calvary that we might share in His immortality. We have that promise in I Cor 15:54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

A naked Jesus? Revolting? Inappropriate? To Corrie Ten Boom, the stripped Messiah is the ultimate portrait of love and compassion. The Ultimate picture of the powerful redeemer.

Those who truly love set aside their garments of protection for the sake of those weaker ones whom they would save. Listen closely to this story by Ruth Seamands...

WERE YOU COLDER THAN THIS? by Ruth Seamands

It was Christmas Eve in Korea. An expectant mother walked through the snow to the home of a missionary friend where she knew she could find help. A short way down the road from the mission house was a deep gully spanned by a bridge. As the young woman stumbled forward, birth pains overcame her. She realized she could go no farther. She crawled under the bridge. There alone between the trestles she gave birth to a baby boy. She had nothing with her except the heavy padded clothes she was wearing. One by one she removed the pieces of her clothing and wrapped them around her tiny son - around and around, like a cumbersome cocoon. Then, finding a discarded piece of burlap, she pulled it over herself, and lay exhausted beside her baby.

The next morning the missionary drove across the bridge in her Jeep to take a Christmas basket to a Korean family. On the way back, as she neared the bridge, the Jeep sputtered and died, out of gas. Getting out of the Jeep she started to walk across the bridge, and heard a faint cry beneath her. She crawled under the bridge to investigate. There she found the tiny baby, warm but hungry, and the young mother frozen to death. The missionary took the baby home and cared for him. As the boy grew, he often asked his adopted mother to tell him the story of how she had found him. On Christmas Day, his 12th birthday, he asked the missionary to take him to his mother's grave. Once there he asked her to wait a distance away while he went to pray. The boy stood beside the grave with bowed head, weeping. Then he began to disrobe. As the astonished missionary watched, the boy took off his warm clothing, piece by piece, and laid it on his mother's grave.

Surely he won't take off all his clothing, the missionary thought. He'll freeze! But the boy stripped himself of everything, putting all his warm clothing on the grave. He knelt naked and shivering in the snow. As the missionary went to him to help him dress again, she heard him cry out to the mother he never knew: "Were you colder than this for me, my mother?" And he wept bitterly.

When Christ came, He stripped himself of every royal garment and entered into our world of hatred and cold indifference. Why did He do it? Because He saw centuries of broken lives needing a Savior. And then He died of a broken heart. What broke it? The sin of human hearts. The long history of men making slaves of other men. Centuries of cannibalism and cruelty. Starvation and suffering. The worship of false gods in temples made with hands. War, bloodshed, crime, and greed - those things broke the heart of Christ.

But so did we. Our coldness broke His heart and now it freezes Him out. We complacent Americans who are saved, satisfied, and sitting! We who pray, "Give us compassion for a lost world," and then "sacrifice" a dollar for missions. We with our elegant homes and brimming garbage cans. We who have the money, knowledge, and manpower to take the gospel to every creature, and yet we don't. We who say we love the lost, and neglect to tell a lost neighbor about a loving Savior. Jesus' love thru us is blocked by frozen lips that ought to be warm to speak for Him.

Lord, we take off our garments of pride and self-righteousness, glittering but transparently filthy rags that they are, and lay them at Your feet. In our naked need we cry, "Were you colder than this because of us, Lord?" And we weep bitterly, because we know You were.

Can't you love a Savior like that? Is it hard to serve a Lord like that? What hinders you from giving your heart and life to such a Loving Lord as our Jesus?