

The Grace of God



"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us..." (Titus 2:11-12).

April 13, 2008 (Vol. 8)

"Shamefastness" and Dress

J.F.

In the context of holiness, Paul instructs women to "...adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

We communicate many things about our selves through dress. It should not be surprising that the woman of a "wily" heart is dressed "with the attire of a harlot" (Proverbs 7:10). The disposition of heart not only finds expression in word but often it manifests its character in dress. The ostentatious or showy spirit often finds an outlet through extravagant hair styles, expensive jewelry and costly raiment. Paul is warning women readers to guard against inappropriate dress.

How does he combat the problem? Fight fire with fire. An unbecoming spirit is behind inappropriate dress, so if we concentrate on having a right spirit when we dress, our adornment should be appropriate.

One characteristic of a holy and godly heart is "shamefastness". According to Vine, this "is that modesty which is 'fast' or rooted in the character." Like "bedfast" is describing one confined to bed, "shamefast" is modesty firmly imbedded in character. This godly heart understands the limits or boundaries of propriety and shrinks back from ever crossing the line instead of seeing how close one can come to the line.

Shamefastness is that character of heart that is concerned with how certain actions will affect others. We see this clearly when Jesus speaks of the "importunity" or "shameless persistence" (the opposite of shamefastness) of one who approaches the door of a friend at midnight. He is

persistent in asking for bread, but shamelessly so. He does not care if his friend is in bed at midnight with his children or what the friend will have to do to accommodate his request. He has no shame regarding how his actions are affecting his friend (Luke 11:5-8).

Our dress has an effect upon others. "Shamefastness" factors this in and makes sure the dress for the occasion will be fitting within the limits of propriety, therefore not adversely affecting others. Our purpose in assembling this morning is to worship and honor God, not put on a show with the new Spring fashions. Shamefastness does not keep women from new things, it keeps her within the limits of modest dress, that manifests sobriety. Her dress never distracts other worshippers from the lofty purpose of honoring God by bringing undue attention to herself, or attracting the envious or even lustful gaze of the distracted.

Spring and summer seasons also tempt the ostentatious and showy spirit to show off more of the body rather than keep it modestly covered. Shamefastness will not allow an ostentatious spirit to take root and find expression in skimpy clothing. The woman with shamefastness considers how shorts exposing the thighs; halter tops, attracting eyes to the bare midriff; or swimsuits boldly revealing the female form will attract the wrong kind of response from men. So, she avoids such attire before the public's eye.

The woman wanting to dress becomingly as one who is manifesting godliness can do so in any society. Developing shamefastness will help tremendously in dressing for all occasions.

RACIAL PREJUDICE AND THE GOSPEL

Current events in the light of Scripture

J.P.

Over the week we have heard Rev. Jeremiah Wright of the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago speak in regrettable tones and hateful language against America and against whites in America. We have heard Barak Obama speak of the "typical white person". Many whites in America are also guilty of racial attitudes, words and conduct. But, just identifying racial words and actions like these and others will not solve the problem.

God is colorblind; often men are not (1 Sam. 16:7). History is filled with the prejudice of one race against another. Whatever the particular causes, it is not God's will that anyone should hold prejudice in their heart toward another (Jas. 2:1).

One basic problem with racism is judging another person based on appearance; it is not judging righteous judgment (Jno. 7:24). You and I have no control over the color of our skin or our ethnic heritage. But we do have control over the character of our heart, and that is what concerns the Lord. In Christ "there is neither Jew or Greek, there is neither slave or free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28; cf. Col. 3:11).

Yes, people of all races have acted hatefully toward each other for millennia, including here in America. The solution to all such sins is in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord calls for the repentance of the prejudiced and for forgiveness from those sinned against.

Until people who speak and act out of prejudice lay aside their pride and repent, prejudice will continue to cause trouble where God wants peace. And, until the one sinned against will be like Jesus on the cross and forgive the sinners ("Father, forgive them..."), hardened hearts will prevail and strife will continue. In such cases, the greatest tragedy is that Satan wins the souls of both.

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

Jean Gambrell, Mag Bumbalough, Mary Cox, Monie Petty (Cookeville Hospital), **Dave Poteet** (NHC 225), **Betty England, Thelma Klein, Ed Williams, Michelle Austin, Larry Bumbalough, Matthew Taylor** (leukemia), **Bill Frazier** (cancer), **Emma Featherston** (Adam's grandmother), **Michael Harris** (Gerald Harris's Son, medical complications), **Edwin Hayes, Allie Cantrel** (Life Care 320, Jack's grandmother), **Brandon Breeding** (wounded soldier), **Doug Stafford** (Heart concerns, Jack's father), **Christina Blankenship** (surgery 25th).

OBEY THE GOSPEL!!!

Hear (Rom. 10:17) Believe (Mark 16:16)

Repent (Acts 17:30-31) Confess (Rom. 10:9)

Be Baptized (Acts 2:38) Live Faithfully (Rev. 2:10)

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Radio Program** - Every Sun. 2pm, AM 1050 WSMT
- **HBS/Singing** - April 26
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. April 27
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

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Place
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Speaking As The Oracles Of God (1 Pet. 4:11)