

THE PRIEST WITH
Dirty Clothes
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The Priest with Dirty Clothes

Text: © 1997, 2011 by R.C. Sproul

Illustrations: © 2011 by Justin Gerard

Previously published (1997) by Tommy Nelson™, a division of Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Published by Reformation Trust Publishing
a division of Ligonier Ministries
421 Ligonier Court, Sanford, FL 32771
Ligonier.org ReformationTrust.com

Printed in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico
RR Donnelley and Sons
February 2012
Third edition

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Creative direction: Geoff Stevens
Cover and interior design: Matt Mantooth
Illustration: Justin Gerard

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sproul, R. C. (Robert Charles), 1939-

The priest with dirty clothes / by R.C. Sproul ; illustrations by Justin Gerard. -- 2nd ed.
p. cm.

Summary: Grandfather tells Darby and Campbell the parable of the priest who is not allowed to preach until he changes the dirty clothes he is wearing for clean ones.

ISBN 978-1-56769-210-5

[1. Christian life--Fiction. 2. Cleanliness--Fiction. 3. Parables.] I. Gerard, Justin, ill. II. Title.

PZ7.S7693Pr 2010

[Fic]--dc22

2010047588

To my grandchildren
and great-grandchildren:
lovers of the King,
whose robe of righteousness
covers them.

- R.C. SPROUL

LETTER TO PARENTS

The Priest with Dirty Clothes is my attempt to help children understand one of the most difficult concepts of Christianity—how we are made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’s righteousness. It is my hope that as children begin to grasp the truth that righteousness comes through Christ, they simultaneously will grow in their understanding of the glory of God.

This story is based on one of my favorite Scripture passages, Zechariah 3:1–5. In this passage, Joshua, the high priest of Israel, stands before the angel of the Lord wearing dirty clothes. The angel of the Lord speaks to Joshua, telling him that he has been cleansed of his sin, and then replaces Joshua’s dirty clothes with beautiful, clean garments. This passage offers a magnificent illustration of how Christ cloaks us in His “garment” of righteousness so that we may stand faultless, or clean, before the throne of God.

Before reading this story to your children, please read them the passage from Zechariah [see page 7]. After you read the story, interact with your children using the questions in the “For the Parents” section in the back of the book. I pray God will bless your efforts to show your children the love, grace, and forgiveness of God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

— R. C. Sproul



THE VISION OF THE HIGH PRIEST

ZECHARIAH 3:1-5

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan. "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?"

Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him."

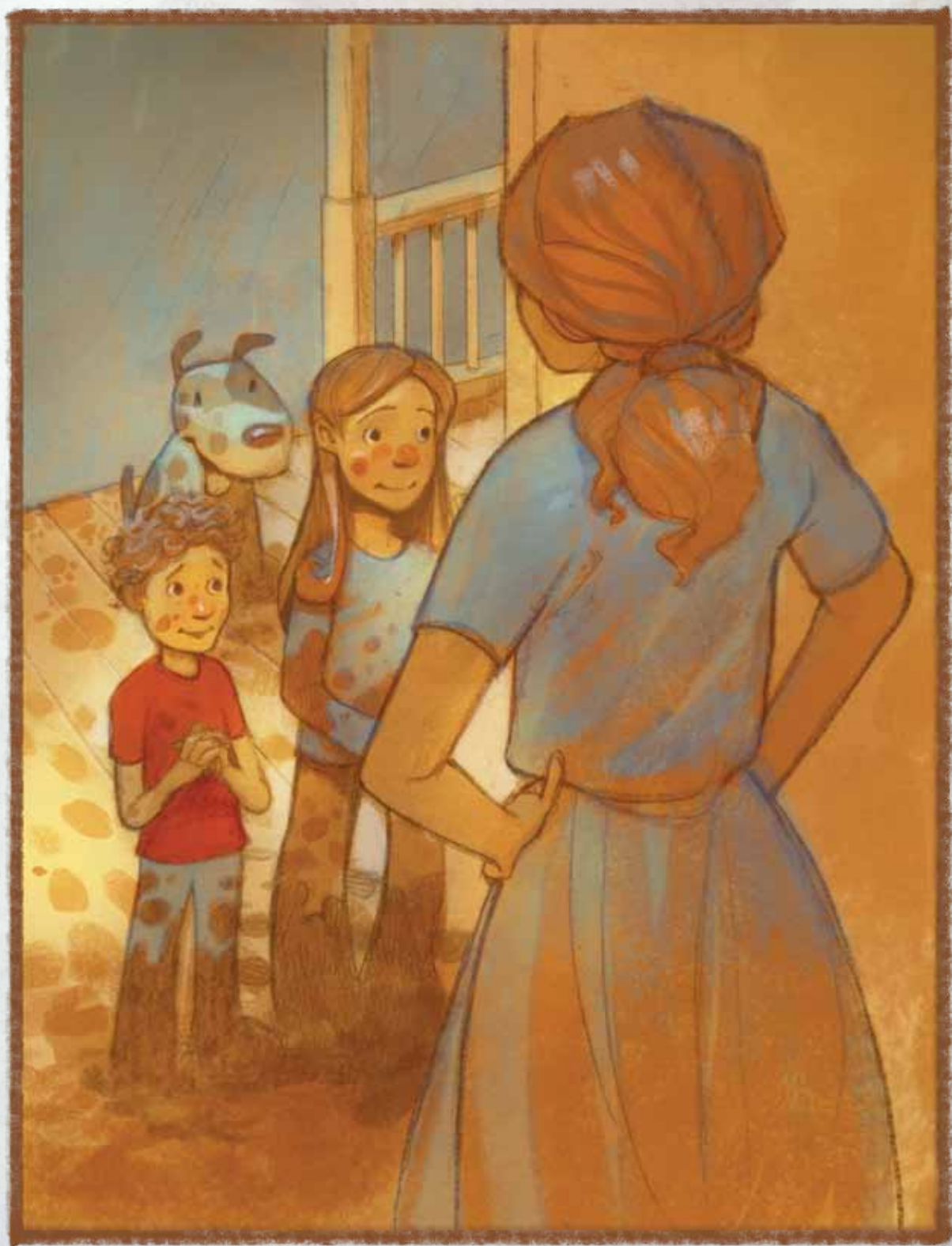
And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will cloth you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by.



Darby and Campbell MacFarland lived near a beautiful lake in Scotland called Loch Lomond. Seven-year-old Darby was always finding ways to get herself and her little brother, Campbell, in trouble.

One day after it had rained, they went outside to play. “Let’s make mud pies,” Darby said.

The children pretended they were bakers. They found some mud and rolled it, patted it, and fashioned it into pretend cakes and pies. As they played, they wiped their hands on their clothes, spreading mud all over themselves. They laughed and giggled as they got muddier and muddier.



When their mother saw them, she did not laugh. “Just look at you! You look like mud pies yourselves,” she cried. “Hurry and take off those filthy clothes, and I’ll give you both a bath.”

After the children were clean, their mother looked at the muddy clothes. “I’ll never be able to get these dirty clothes clean,” she said to herself.

Just then, there was a knock at the front door. It was the children’s grandfather. As Darby and Campbell rushed in to hug him, Grandpa grinned and said, “It looks like someone made a mud pie bakery in the front yard.” The children giggled.

“It seems that our little bakers have ruined their clothes,” Mom said.

“That’s too bad,” Grandpa said. “But it reminds me of a strange and wonderful story.”





“Oh, tell us, please,” Darby begged, pulling Grandpa toward the sofa.

As soon as they were all seated, Grandpa began the story . . .



MANY YEARS AGO IN A FARAWAY LAND, the people of a small village crowded into a large church. It was nighttime. The church was dark except for the candles that were lit inside, casting shadows on the high walls.

