



# *Clothing* OF THE KING

Advent Devotional 2025



# INTRODUCTION

The alarm goes off. Your brain is foggy, and like the rising sun, you're just trying to start the day. You grab a cup of coffee, you brush your teeth, you shower, and then you put on your clothes: socks, pants, shirt, and shoes. And this process is what makes everyone similar, as the cliché goes, "we are all the same, putting on our pants one leg at a time." We all share a common humanity in our clothing, regardless of status, wealth, or culture. At its core, clothes cover. And yet, clothing does more than just cover our bodies, it reveals something deeper. What you wear depends on your vocation, your culture, and even the weather outside. Clothes tell the world who you are. They mark roles, values, and even moods. Mark Twain once quipped, "Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society." And while that may be broadly true, it overlooks two people who had immense influence on all of history: Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve alone lived "naked and unashamed," as Genesis 2:25 tells us. Yet once they sinned, everything changed. Sin shattered creation, introduced shame, and for the first time, revealed the need for covering. Clothing became more than fabric, it became a testimony that we are no longer who we were created to be. And so it should come as no surprise that throughout the rest of Scripture, clothing is never just a throwaway detail. Garments tell the story of salvation found in the person of Jesus Christ.

From the very beginning, God took the initiative. He clothed Adam and Eve with the first blood stained animal sacrifice, a glimpse of the covering that would one day come through the blood of Christ. Joseph's coat set into motion betrayal, suffering, and redemption. In Exodus, God gave meticulous instructions for Aaron's priestly garments, each detail pointing to holiness and sacrifice. David found Saul's armor too heavy, showing that victory would come not through human strength but through trust in God. The Ninevites humbled themselves in sackcloth. A prodigal son was welcomed home with the best robe. And in the heavenly throne room, John sees a multitude robed in white, made pure through the blood of the Lamb. From Genesis to Revelation, the biblical writers use the language of clothing, both literal and symbolic, to tell the story of redemption. Each garment points beyond itself to the final covering that will come in the person of Jesus Christ.

This Christmas season, Jesus comes wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. These clothes, just like every other, are not a throw away detail. The Son of God wraps himself in our humanity, putting on our flesh so that we may be wrapped in garments of praise. Because of this, we can truly say that our God is just like us, putting on His pants one leg at a time. Welcome to our Advent devotional: The Clothing of the King.



**November 30**



## Unclothed and Unashamed

Terry Sullivan

**Scripture of the Day:** *Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. Genesis 2:22-25*

Genesis 2:25 shows us the purity and freedom of life before sin. We get a glimpse of the world as God first intended it to be: a closeness without fear, shame, and love without hiding. Adam and Eve lived openly before God and one another, clothed only in perfection.

Sadly, sin shattered the purity God intended. And now we are left covering up parts of ourselves not just with clothes, but with metaphorical masks, pretending to be happier or stronger than we are. I can relate to this as a facilitator of St. Peter's GriefShare ministry. In grief, we often put on our "happy" masks because we fear that if people really knew how we felt, they would not accept us.

Yet even today, we catch glimpses of Eden: a child laughing and being accepted, a good friend with whom you share your secrets and are deeply known, or with a family where you feel safe and deeply loved. These moments reflect God's original design. Where sin brings shame, Jesus brings forgiveness. And while in our world we do need to wear coverings, we rejoice all the more that we are covered in God's righteousness (More on that later in Advent).

I remember, as a young boy, playing basketball with my older brothers. I missed the hoop more often than I made it, sometimes even missing the backboard completely. But instead of being embarrassed, I laughed and my brothers laughed with me. They would say, "Nice try, shoot it again." I didn't worry about mistakes or try to hide them. With my brothers I felt accepted, known, and loved. I was free to be myself.

That memory reminds me of how Adam and Eve felt in God's garden before sin: completely themselves, having no fear, no embarrassment, and no shame. God's love is like that safe place with someone you trust where you don't have to hide. At this time of Christmas, it is so comforting to know that we are loved just as we are, without condition. The birth of Jesus reminds us that God's acceptance is not something we earn or achieve. It is a gift freely given.

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**Prayer:** *Dear God, Thank You for loving me just as I am. I don't have to hide from You, because You see me and still accept me. Help me to remember that I am clothed with Your love and to live each day with peace and joy in You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*

## The Foretaste of Fashion

Tim Ernst

**Scripture of the Day:** *Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."... The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Genesis 3:8-10, 21*

When asked to write a devotion for the Advent series, the topic provided to me was 'The Foretaste of Fashion'. To borrow a quote earlier from Roger Watters's Lenten devotion, "I thought to myself, do they even know me?" I'm about the furthest from fashion that a person can get, at least that's what my lovely wife tells me, and I believe her!

Growing up, I was the youngest of four brothers, so hand-me-down clothing was a way of life for me. The thing about hand-me-downs when you're the youngest of four siblings is that the only clothing that makes it all the way to you is the time-tested and good quality clothing. Cheap or poorly made clothing could not make it through three other boys and show up at my dresser still intact.

So what does all this have to do with God making garments of skin for Adam and his wife Eve after they had first sinned? The covering of their bodies with clothing was necessary after their sin because they realized they were naked and felt ashamed. God provided garments of animal skin to cover their bodies and their sinfulness. This is the first foreshadowing of the way Christ covers our sin by the blood He shed and His atoning sacrifice on the cross in our place so that we could have forgiveness and ultimately eternal life with Him in heaven. Clothing ourselves with Christ is the best 'fashion' we could ever hope for.

Similar to hand-me-downs (in a good way), the Word of God is time-tested (thousands of prophecies fulfilled) and good quality (full of grace and mercy). It is also handed down and taught to each new generation to learn of the Good News. This Good News is that Christ covers our own guilt and shame through His blood and sacrifice. With the Holy Spirit we make every attempt at turning away from our sinful ways, but we do not need to be burdened down by them and feel we cannot approach the Father in heaven. We are able to be in relationship with the Father because we are clothed in Christ's sacrifice and our sins and burdens are removed as far as the east is from the west. In this manner, even if we are not the most fashionable person according to earthly standards, we can still enjoy wearing the heavenly 'fashion' of Christ's forgiveness!

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You for the forgiveness of sins that clothes us with Your righteousness. Thank You for the gift of Your Son that brought us that forgiveness. Help us to share that message with all those around us. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*



## December 2



### Dressed As Your Brother

Luke Lienhoop

***Scripture of the Day:*** *Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau, her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. Genesis 27:15*

When I was younger, I remember slipping into my older brother's clothes. The sleeves hung past my hands and the shoes didn't fit, but for a moment I felt taller, stronger, and a little more impressive. Of course, it was just pretend.

Jacob did something similar, though far more serious. He wanted his father's blessing so badly that he dressed up as his brother Esau. With his mother's help, he put on Esau's clothes and even covered his arms with goat skins so he would feel like him. Isaac, who could no longer see well, was fooled into thinking Jacob was Esau and gave the blessing to the second born. Jacob got what he wanted, but only by pretending.

That's where Jacob's story is very different from ours. Jacob had to disguise himself to be blessed. We don't. In Christ, we don't need to hide who we are or cover up our flaws. God doesn't bless us because we trick Him. He blesses us because Jesus has already clothed us in His righteousness. What Jacob took through deception, God gives us freely by grace.

Still, Jacob's story at times also feels familiar. We may not use goat skins, but we put on "costumes" in life all the time. We pretend we're fine when inside we're hurting. We act strong when we feel weak. We wear the mask of success, hoping no one sees our failures. Sometimes we even try to look more spiritual than we feel, just to keep up appearances. Pretending might fool others, but it leaves us empty and unsure if we're really loved.

That's why the Good News of Jesus is so freeing. Christ's righteousness means we don't have to perform or pretend. In Him, we are already fully known, fully accepted, and fully loved. Advent reminds us that Jesus came not for the polished and perfect but for real people with real struggles. Because of that, we can take off the costumes. Clothed in Christ, we don't have to steal a blessing, we've already received the greatest one of all.

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***Prayer:*** *Heavenly Father, thank You for clothing me in Your righteousness. Forgive me when I hide behind costumes. Teach me to rest in Your grace and live free in Your love. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*

## Envable Style

Holle Psota

**Scripture of the Day:** *Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. Genesis 37:3-4*

Clothing carries stories. Throughout Joseph's life, his clothing was more than fabric. It marked his seasons. As his father's favorite, he wore the multicolored coat that made his brothers jealous. That coat was ripped from him when they betrayed him. Later, as a prisoner in Egypt, Joseph was stripped again by Potiphar's wife. But in God's timing, Pharaoh dressed him in fine linen as a sign of honor and authority. His clothing marked his journey from favored son to rejected brother to forgotten prisoner to exalted ruler.

Joseph's story points us to Christ. Jesus, the beloved Son of the Father, was also stripped, mocked, and humiliated on His way to the cross. But He rose again, clothed in glory. And just as Joseph forgave his brothers and clothed them in mercy, so Christ forgives us and clothes us in righteousness.

As a mom of three, I've spent a lot of time sorting through my kids' closets, and every piece of clothing seems to tell a story. I find shirts that are too small, jeans with holes in the knees, and uniforms from old sports seasons. Each item takes me back to a memory. There are the worn-out track shoes from a season of cross country meets, the trendy shirts my daughter begged for but never actually wore, and the NFL jersey that's been pushed aside because the player was traded. And then there are the truly special pieces like the dress from a father-daughter dance and the suit from a formal that I can hardly fold up without a lump in my throat.

Piece by piece, these garments tell the story of who my children are becoming. They remind me that clothing is more than appearance. It reflects identity, growth, and seasons of change. But as meaningful as all these pieces are, I know none of them give my kids their true identity. Jerseys will fade. Dresses will be boxed up. Favorite hoodies will eventually be passed on or tossed. What really matters is the clothing Christ gives us. The Bible says He covers us with His righteousness. That doesn't wear out, go out of style, or get outgrown!

Advent reminds us of that hope. Jesus came into the world swaddled in humility, but He is coming again in glory. In the meantime, He covers us with forgiveness, grace, and mercy. So the next time I'm holding an old shirt that my child once loved, I want to remember Joseph's story, and even more, Christ's. Because the most important clothing we'll ever wear isn't made of fabric at all. Instead, it is the mercy and grace of our Savior.

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**Prayer:** *Lord, thank You for clothing us with Your righteousness when life strips us of everything else. Help us remember that our true identity is found in You alone. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



## December 4



### Borrowing from God's Closet

Mike Clancy Jr.

***Scripture of the Day:*** *Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron to give him dignity and honor. Tell all the skilled workers to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest. These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve me as priests. Have them use gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen. Exodus 28:2-5*

When I was a kid, I liked watching superheroes on TV. I'd wear a cape and pretend I was Superman or Batman. Putting on those clothes added to my imagination and gave me the sense that I could do "superhero" things. Children will often make costumes out of most anything and pretend to be someone or something else. Athletes, hunters, sports fans, workers and entertainers all put on special clothes designed for the event or job.

Just as we outwardly prepare ourselves, God outwardly prepared Aaron and his sons, the priests, with the finest of linens. But we know it's not the clothes that make the person, it's what's on the inside. And just like us, Aaron and his sons did not deserve the fine linens God dressed them in. On our own we cannot stand before a holy God. But clothed in Christ's righteousness, given to us in Baptism and received by faith, we are made holy in His sight. Christ inwardly prepares us to start each day with His righteousness, blessedness, and the confidence that He is our strength. This passage reminds us that God alone makes people fit for His service. Isaiah 61:10 says, "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness."

Scripture teaches that men called by God should serve as pastors, but scripture also teaches that every baptized Christian is in the Priesthood of All Believers wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness and proclaiming His goodness and salvation. Our faith clothes us daily in God's armor and gets us ready to do His work. We can be sure of ourselves because Christ dresses us with robes made to forever connect us with the Father. Jesus has pulled your robe from God's closet and calls you into the Priesthood of All Believers.

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***Prayer:*** *Heavenly Father, thank You for dressing us with your Son, Jesus Christ's righteousness, though we don't deserve it. You have called us in Baptism to be Your own and to serve You in faith and love. Guard us this day in Your mercy, strengthen us by Your Word, and keep us steadfast in Christ now and forever. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*



**December 5**



## **The Veil of Glory**

Kimberly Bean

**Scripture of the Day:** *When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai. When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. Exodus 34:29-33*

So many objects of this world can become obstacles for human connection: our opinions, our jobs, social media and our devices to name a few. As a preschool teacher, I often notice how many children spend time on screens. Screens can be helpful tools at times and even a blessing when used wisely, but it seems they've become a regular part of daily life for many families. While technology can have its place, it can also quickly become a barrier to some of the rich opportunities children have to acquire skills and learn from the world around them, most importantly through human connection. In our Scripture of the Day, Moses, after an encounter with God on Mount Sinai, needed to wear an obstacle, a veil, to separate God's radiance from His frightened people.

Is it any wonder that during Jesus's transfiguration while praying He was joined by Moses and Elijah? Jesus challenged the religious leaders, foreshadowing the destruction of the temple. However, those leaders were focused on a physical location, a place where a thick curtain - a veil - separated God's people from being able to be directly connected with Him. The area behind the curtain was reserved for the High Priest and only usable one time each year.

But the destruction of the temple that Jesus was talking about was His own body being destroyed and raised again after three days. Surprisingly, through His death, the physical temple also underwent some unique renovations! According to Luke 23:45, when Jesus laid down His life for all of humanity, God removed the obstacle - a veil to separate God's radiance from His frightened people just like Moses had on Mount Sinai. Because of that, there is now no barrier between God and our human connection.

Just as God tore the veil to invite us closer to Him and we can help tear down the barriers that keep children from growing in relationship with others. But we have the privilege of receiving the gift of that torn curtain: direct access to God.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You for revealing yourself to us in Your Word. Remove the things of this world which would block our seeing and following You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



## December 6



### Dressing Down

Caleb Maley

**Scripture of the Day:** *Then Aaron is to go into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. He shall bathe himself with water in the sanctuary area and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people. Leviticus 16:23-24*

The clothing and the list of examples and their significance in the Word is numerous. The story begins in the garden. In Genesis 3:10, Adam confessed, “I was afraid because I was naked.” Shame, not guilt, led Adam to hide, and that moment revealed a new awareness of self and a tragic separation from God. What had once been perfect communion was now broken.

Our Scripture of the Day points out a fascinating part of the priest’s prescribed rituals. They had to bathe and put on special clothing before entering God’s Holy Place. In comparison to their regular attire, this time they had to dress down symbolizing what was ultimately true: they were sinful people too. They had to offer sacrifices for their own sins alongside the sacrifice for the people’s sin.

But our Heavenly Father is clothed in righteousness, glory, and splendor. All power and praise belong to Him. He knit us together in our mother’s womb. He knew us before we were born. Yet in humility, He clothed Himself in our flesh, what Isaiah calls “filthy rags of sin.” Jesus, like the priests, dressed down. And as we trace this pattern through Scripture, it continues in God’s saving work on the cross.

At the trial of Jesus, the high priest tore his robe in outrage when Jesus declared Himself the Son of Man (Matthew 26:65). In Matthew 27:28, the soldiers stripped Jesus naked in humiliation. They clothed Him in scarlet, pressed a crown of thorns onto His head, placed a reed in His right hand, and mocked Him with false praise. Then they beat Him, flogged His flesh, and nailed Him to the cross. There He struggled for breath—the very breath of life He Himself had given. They tried to humble the King of Righteousness. He who knew no sin became sin for us. Jesus experienced the devastating feeling of separation from our Heavenly Father that Adam first tasted in back in the Garden.

Jesus bore our sin to humbly say “I would rather suffer here than live eternally without you”. By His body and blood, He restores what was lost in Eden, covering us not with fig leaves or rags, but with garments of salvation that never wear out.

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**Prayer:** *Sovereign Lord of Heavens Armies, please continue to grow Your Spirit within us. Send us to where our neighbors are held captive by the bondage of sin and shame and help us to set them free through and because of Your Word. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.*



## December 7



### Two Sizes Too Big Elizabeth Schlaudroff

**Scripture of the Day:** *Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." 1 Samuel 17:38-39*

Sometimes in life we get hand-me-down clothes and they don't always fit immediately. The clothes are typically too big, and so we can't wear them. We have to put the clothing aside and wear what fits us until we grow into the bigger clothing we were given. When we get clothes 'two sizes too big' it can feel awkward to wear them and it just doesn't quite fit right on us. This is similar to what David went through, when he put on Saul's armor, it didn't fit quite right. It was 'two sizes too big'.

Israel is terrified of the giant Goliath. David, a shepherd, goes into battle with nothing but his own personal weapon. Saul was concerned for David's safety and offered his own armor. It was the best, most impressive protection available. David accepts and tries on the armor, but it doesn't fit right. As verse 39 says, he "tried walking around, because he was not used to them". David has to make a decision: do I trust in man's armor that is two sizes too big, or do I trust in what God has given me, which fits just right. He takes off the bad-fitting armor and trusts in God.

We often face "giants" in our lives like struggles in school and work. We can often rely on our own method to cope with our struggles. Maybe we try to be like someone else or maybe we try to do something we were never meant to do. When relying on our own solutions, we can often feel like David in Saul's armor: we just feel awkward. Trying to be someone else is hard because God has given us everything we need already.

What are the "giants" you are facing in your life, and what "Saul's armor" have you been tempted to put on? Take off the bad-fitting armor. It's two sizes too big anyway. Trust God. He didn't fail David, and He won't fail you.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank you for designing me with a unique purpose and for equipping me with everything I need to face the battles ahead. Help me to recognize and discard any armor that is 'two sizes too big' and trust in the methods you have tested and proven in my life. Give me the courage to step out in faith, relying on Your strength alone. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*

## Tearing Clothes in Mourning

Ross Phillips

**Scripture of the Day:** *At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship. Job 1:20*

In Job, we read about a man who is known for his righteousness and wealth, being tested by God through a direct attack from Satan. Early in the story, Job receives devastating news about the deaths of his children and the loss of his earthly possessions. Job 1:20 tells us “at this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship...”

It may sound strange to us, but Job’s reaction of tearing his clothing and shaving his head was a common cultural practice at the time of showing grief. In this moment, Job didn’t hide or downplay his deep sorrow, he expressed it fully and honestly. His raw emotion of mourning was displayed in front of God and everyone else.

However, directly after, Job did something that may amaze many of us. Instead of turning away from God and becoming bitter, Job fell to the ground in worship! This shows us not only the deep faith that Job had, but also how he understood the sovereignty of God and how he found strength in His Creator. It didn’t eliminate his grief, but it showed that Job found hope by trusting in God alone.

Grief certainly is a part of all of our lives, and can hit us especially hard when our loved ones pass away. However, we can know that God’s promise of eternal life through the gift of Jesus gives us a foundation to go through grief with hope. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, “Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him”.

This doesn’t mean that we don’t feel deep sorrow when we lose a loved one: we do! However, through Jesus, we know that we have the promise of reunion, restoration, and eternal joy with those believers who have left this earthly realm. We will join both Jesus and our loved ones together in Heaven. Jesus Himself told his disciples in John 16:22 “So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy”. Even though these words were spoken before His crucifixion, Jesus knew then of the truth of His resurrection and the certain hope of our heavenly reunion.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, forgive us for all the times when we have complained about our situation in life. Build our trust in You so that we can worship You in all situations of life. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

### God Dressed as a Priest

Alfredo Banos

**Scripture of the Day:** *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Isaiah 6:1-7*

Isaiah had a powerful vision. He saw the Lord on His throne. Angels cried, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory" (v. 3). At that moment, Isaiah felt very small. He felt the weight of his sin. He said, "Woe to me! ... I am a man of unclean lips" (v. 5). Before God's holiness, Isaiah could see only his guilt and shame.

But God did not destroy him. Instead, God showed mercy. One angel touched Isaiah's lips with a hot coal from the altar. The angel said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for" (v. 7). God acted like a priest. He gave Isaiah cleansing and forgiveness.

This points us to Jesus Christ. Jesus is both our High Priest and our sacrifice. He does not bring fire from the altar. He gives Himself on the altar. On the cross, He took our sin. By His death and resurrection, He gives us new clothes: clothes of forgiveness and righteousness. Isaiah's shame was removed for a moment, but in Jesus we are made clean forever.

At Advent we remember: the King of kings came down to us. He came in simple clothes, born in a manger. He came to clothe us with His love. Because of Him, He is our Priest. He is our Lamb. He has made us clean. And in Him, we are ready to stand before the Lord who is seated on the throne.

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**Prayer:** *Jesus, thank You for the sacrifice which You made to bring us the forgiveness of sins. Help us to live more like You so that nothing gets in the way with the Gospel message as we share it with all those around us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



## December 10



### Form or Function

Denny Holmes

***Scripture of the Day:*** *I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Isaiah 61:10*

When was the last time you were at a wedding? It's interesting how styles have changed over the years, isn't it? Today's weddings often have the wedding party in simple attire, nice dresses for the bridesmaids - dress shirts and suspenders for the groomsmen. You may even be invited to a destination wedding in a warm climate where everyone is in simple beach attire. But many weddings today continue the ancient traditions of "dressing up" for the very special occasion. You will still see men in tuxedos, ladies in fancy dresses, and the bride in a luxurious flowing gown. Often the bridal party will pay someone to do specialty hairstyles and fancy makeup. Many people still want the wedding to be an extravagant event.

God is extravagant with us as He prepares us (the Church) to be His Bride. Isaiah uses the picture of the bride and groom to give us a visual picture of what God does for us. He doesn't rely on us to get ready for Him - He prepares us Himself. Notice what Isaiah says "he has clothed me with garments of salvation". Christ did all the hard work of dying and rising again for us. Now we have been saved by His work, not ours. Jesus lived the perfect life where we couldn't, so now we are covered by His robe of righteousness.

What is our response? Isaiah tells us that it is to take delight in the Lord. Picture again the joy that is in the eyes of a bride as she approaches the groom waiting at the altar to marry her. The love in the groom's eyes still falls far short of the love in Jesus' eyes as He views us, but the whole wedding experience is a picture of us being joined with Jesus for eternity.

As our souls rejoice in this wonderful gift, we need to share that with those who don't yet know the love of God demonstrated in the atoning work of Jesus. We should desire to invite everyone to the wedding feast of the Lamb so that they too can delight in the Lord.

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***Prayer:*** *Gracious and Merciful God, thank you for the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Remind us daily of what You have done for us. Help us to share that great news with all those around us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## Filthy Garments Removed

Lynne Jessop

**Scripture of the Day:** *Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you." Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by. Zechariah 3:3-5*

During the Advent season, when you look upon a manger scene, can you imagine what it might have been like for Mary to welcome a baby into the world in a stable or cave where animals were kept? Were there unshorn sheep milling alongside the donkey she rode on? Possibly a cow or two, and chickens roosting all gathered around?

Do you see Joseph piling fresh hay to soften the hard ground, attempting to provide any comfort to Mary? Can you imagine Joseph watching as pain crosses Mary's face as it radiates across her back, the contractions coming in waves across her abdomen? Can you see Mary breathing deeply, smelling the aroma of sweat, dirt, manure, and straw, all to birth our Redeemer, our Savior, into this dirty, filthy world?

That filth that surrounded Mary and Joseph, 2,000 plus years ago, remains in this world. Our Scripture of the Day starts with Zechariah's vision of Joshua standing before the Lord of Hosts with the devil at his side, accusing Joshua of the sins that come with the filth of this world. And all that sin and impurity are reflected in the filthy, grimy, putrid, rotting clothes Joshua is wearing. The angel asks to have the filthy garments exchanged for fine garments of purity and righteousness.

Who is this angel? The incarnate Jesus Christ, the Babe who entered this filthy world and died on the cross, so that the devil could no longer accuse us of sin. God demonstrated His profound love by sending Jesus into the filth of this world to pay the penalty for all sins, defeating the devil by removing his weapon of accusation.

As we walk through this Advent season and look upon the many different manger scenes, let us remember that Jesus has clothed us in fine garments, robed in righteousness, to remind us we are cleansed from sin, restored to righteousness, and pure in God's sight.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing our Beautiful Savior into this world of filth. Walk with us through this Advent season, guiding us to share Your love and compassion with all those we come in contact with, that they too may be washed and cleansed and dressed in robes of righteousness. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

**Clothed in Conviction**

Karl Lenz

**Scripture of the Day:** *When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. Jonah 3:6-10*

Jonah was a reluctant prophet. He didn't want to go to Nineveh. He ran the other direction. When God finally brought him to the gates of the great city, he did the bare minimum to fulfill his duty. He proclaimed in Jonah 3:4, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." He didn't explain why. He just explained the facts as God had commanded him.

Yet somehow, miraculously, the Bible records in Jonah 3:5 one of the most astounding phrases in the book of Jonah: "The Ninevites believed God." They took off their usual clothes and donned sackcloth: rough, uncomfortable clothing worn in mourning or humiliation. They repented, even with a slim hope that God would have compassion on them and relent from his fierce anger. And, He did! When God saw their sincere repentance, He relented and did not bring destruction upon them.

How much more should we do the same as God's children? We don't just have a slim hope that God will forgive us like the Ninevites did. We know that He will. As this familiar phrase from 1 John 1:9 reminds us: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." We just have to believe God's promise.

Wearing sackcloth and fasting was the Ninevites' way of showing their repentance, even with little hope of salvation, but that's not necessarily a rote formula. We can swallow our pride, ask for forgiveness, and turn from our wicked ways in the presence of God in a variety of ways. It might be as simple as saying hello or being friendly to someone you're not the biggest fan of; or it might be as terrifying as admitting to a close friend or family member that you have really messed up, and sincerely asking for their forgiveness. What we do will likely be specific to our circumstances. (And don't think that wearing uncomfortable clothing is off the table!) Even if it is tough, and uncomfortable - like wearing scratchy sackcloth - we have assurance because of Jesus that God will forgive us.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, forgive us for all the times when we have put our trust in other things rather than in You. Help us not only to hear your words of invitation to be forgiven, but to share that with others who need to know about Your love. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## The Prophet Clothed in Camel's Hair

Marty Chemnitz

**Scripture of the Day:** *John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. Matthew 3:4*

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City hosts its annual Met Gala on the first Monday of May. The event is known for its celebrity star studded guest list and their unique fashion choices. Guests are expected to curate their fashions to match the theme of the annual exhibit, generally in haute couture. The fashion choices are usually meant to make a statement about our greater culture. For one night it's the fashion mecca, all for the name of art.

I feel like John the Baptist's outfit would fit well into the Met Gala's questionable fashion choices because John's outfit made a statement about the greater culture of his time. Matthew records that John's clothes were of camels' hair and he had a leather belt to hold his whole outfit up. These words parallel almost identically to 2 Kings 1:8 when Elijah is being described. It says, "[Elijah] had a garment of hair and had a leather belt around his waist. The king said, 'That was Elijah the Tishbite.'" Elijah was recognizable by his outfit, even by the king. So when John the Baptist comes onto the scene after Jesus' birth, people immediately recognize the connection.

What connections are there between Elijah and John the Baptist? Elijah anointed his successor, Elisha, and John the Baptist baptized his successor, Jesus. Elijah begins his ministry during a time of spiritual darkness and John the Baptist begins his ministry during the same kind of time. Elijah called people back to God and John the Baptist did the same. John the Baptist's Met Gala inspired outfit was a larger statement of the culture of his world.

Your outfit, given through Christ, is also a larger statement about the culture of this world. In a world clothed with hate, you are clothed in love. In a world clothed with division, you are clothed with the unity of faith. In a world clothed in the darkness of this world, you are clothed with the light of Christ.

So wear your outfit confidently today. Strut your stuff and strike a pose with your outfit. May Christ's love, unity, and light be on display through you for all to see.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, may we, like John the Baptist and Elijah, be recognized by what You dress us in. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## Clothed in Blazing White

Tim Bense

**Scripture of the Day:** *After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. Mark 9:2-3*

In the vast expanse of the ocean, oysters anchor themselves to solid formations, steadfast in their resilience. Many are familiar with the story of the oyster, a tale of transformation sparked by adversity. When a small grain of sand finds its way inside the oyster, an unwelcome irritant disrupts the peace of its shelter. Instead of rejecting this grain, the oyster wraps it in shimmering layers of nacre, transforming what was once a source of discomfort into something radiant and treasured. Over time, what began as an irritation becomes a beautiful pearl, cherished for its luster and purity, a testament to the transformative power hidden within patience and endurance. Through this process, the simple grain of sand is not merely transformed, but transfigured into a thing of beauty.

Similarly, our lives are shaped by those unexpected events that cause us patience and endurance. We all encounter our own “grains of sand”: unforeseen difficulties, moments of loss, or new opportunities that test us. Each of these experiences, whether positive or negative, carries the potential for transformation. God is the master artist, with a divine plan weaving wisdom, grace, and beauty through both our struggles and our triumphs. Much like the oyster cannot create a pearl without the grain of sand, our own character and faith are refined through the disruptive irritants that shape our journey.

In Mark 9:2-3, we hear of an awe-inspiring moment. Jesus ascends the mountain with Peter, James, and John, and is transfigured before them—His clothes become dazzling white, far brighter than any earthly bleach could achieve. In this act, God reveals Christ’s glory, not as a distant promise but as a present reality. The transfiguration stands as a powerful assurance for us: God’s greatness is not hidden but unveiled to those who seek Him. Just as the pearl is revealed in its radiant beauty, God promises to reveal His glory in our lives, transforming us to reflect His light. In both our struggles and our victories, He is at work, assuring us that one day, we too will be made radiant, transfigured by His love, shining with the brilliance of His presence.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, help us to remember that Jesus is God, but was also made human all for us. Purify us daily and guide us to be more like Him in all we do. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

## The Power of a Cloak

Leah Essex

**Scripture of the Day:** *When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. Mark 5:27-29*

Have you ever had a day that felt heavy with anxiety, fear, or a profound lack of peace? It's a familiar, internal weight that makes us restless. In those moments, our first instinct might be to find a way to escape by distraction. We might reach for our phones to scroll through social media, lose ourselves in a Netflix series, or seek comfort in overindulging in food or drink. These are some of our modern-day "cloaks," the things we reach for hoping they will comfort or distract us from the turmoil within.

In the Bible, we meet a woman who knew all too well the grief that comes with grabbing all the wrong cloaks. For twelve long years, she suffered from a chronic, debilitating illness that left her not only physically weak but also an outcast. She had spent all her money on doctors, trying every possible remedy, only to continue to get worse.

She had heard about Jesus and was at the end of her rope. Seeing Jesus surrounded by a crowd, she didn't cry out for attention or a public miracle. She knew she didn't have the strength. Instead, she came up behind Him with one single, powerful thought: what if I grab His cloak?

Her act wasn't a superstitious one. She didn't believe the fabric itself had magical powers. Jesus' cloak was a tangible point of contact for her desperate faith. For her, touching His cloak was a last-ditch effort, a desperate leap of faith that said, "I have tried everything else; now I must reach for the only One who can truly help."

In our moments of anxiety and fear, we face a similar choice. We, too, often exhaust all our worldly cloaks first. We reach for those temporary comforts like the glow of a screen or the taste of a bottle, hoping they will eventually quiet our minds. But like the woman's worldly doctors, these things offer no lasting cure. They can distract us from our condition but cannot stop the bleed. This story challenges us to shift our focus. It reminds us that Christ is the ultimate source of true restoration. He is the only one who can bring wholeness to our anxious hearts.

This Advent season, let us recognize our worldly "cloaks" for what they are: at best distractions from our condition, at worst another deadly disease. Instead, let us turn and reach for Christ and His garments of salvation.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, You are the Healer and the Provider. Help us not to turn to You as our last option, but come to You in trust with all our daily needs. Thank You for providing for us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## The Worst Son and the Best Robe

Remington Wells

**Scripture of the Day:** *But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. Luke 15:22-24*

As a son right now, this story stops me in my tracks. A father forgiving his son for wasting half of the family's wealth. It makes many people ponder just how far am I willing to go for forgiveness? In stark contrast to the Father, we have Saul in the Old Testament. In 1 Samuel 15, we see Saul confessing, but in a superficial manner. He says, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.” (1st Samuel 15:24). Do you see what Saul is doing here? He is making excuses and pushing the blame. Saul is ultimately saying, “I did wrong, but it’s their fault.” And because of this, Saul is rejected as the King of Israel.

Just like Saul in the Old Testament and Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, we humans love pointing fingers. Many times we think and say, “I did wrong, but it’s their fault.” Not only does this shift blame off of us, it also continues to make us look better than we really are. I admit I have forgiven before solely because it shifted the blame off of me and maintained my reputation, while slamming the reputation of the blamed. Instead of opening our hearts to life, we close ourselves in with death.

What do we do when we find ourselves surrounded by death? Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” The only way to get out of death is forgiveness. Yup, time to bring in everybody's favorite man, Jesus! Jesus was able to forgive you and love you enough to die for you. Just take a moment to really think about what that means. He forgave every time you farted and blamed it on the dog. (Oh, is that one just me?) Jesus forgives you every time you thought about yelling at someone and every time you actually did. If the Lord can love you enough to die for you, why can’t you forgive someone for accidentally spilling coffee on you? If the Father can forgive the son in the parable, it makes us ponder, how far are we willing to go for forgiveness?

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**Prayer:** *Lord, You are the perfect Father. You loved me so much that You died so that I could truly know what love was. Because of that, I pray You will help me be a conduit for love, showing it to everyone regardless of whether I like them. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.*



## December 17



### Wrapped in Death

Ellen McCrory

**Scripture of the Day:** *When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” John 11:43-44*

It has happened to all of us: we have all been caught in a rainstorm without an umbrella. Shirt, pants, socks and shoes are absolutely soaked. And you feel weighed down. You feel the actual weight of your clothes. I wonder if this is the feeling Lazarus had in his grave clothes when Jesus commanded him to come out of the grave.

While grave clothes were quite literal for Lazarus, for us, they can be habits that keep us bound in patterns we have carried for years. They may not be flashy or name brand, but they weigh us down and keep us from living freely in the life God has given us. Grave clothes can look like fear of failure, fear of rejection, or even the fear of stepping into God’s calling He has for us. Grave clothes also carry the burden of lingering sin and shame.

Jesus brought Lazarus out and said to those at the tomb, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” (John 11:44). Jesus did not bring Lazarus out so he could continue forever in his burial wrappings. He brought him out so he could live freely and joyfully. Christ saved us from our sins so that we are not defined by our grave clothes. “The old has gone, the new has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17) Remember in our Scripture of the Day, Jesus told the others to take off Lazarus’ grave clothes. We need help from our Christian brothers and sisters to remind us when the weight of our grave clothes are holding us back. Pray with each other. Encourage each other. Provide a listening ear for when the weight is too much to carry.

What grave clothes are holding you back? Maybe it is a sin you keep returning to. Maybe it is a mindset shaped by past experiences. Or maybe it is a fear that is louder than the promise of fulfillment given to us by Jesus. Take heart, Jesus has removed that burden for you. You do not need to feel the weight of your grave clothes anymore! Step forward in faith and live as if it’s true!

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**Prayer:** *Lord, let us stand firm in faith, lifting each other up with love, prayer and encouragement so that the weight of our grave clothes does not weigh us down from deepening our connection with You. May the strength we find in You outweigh the burdens of what we carry with us. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

## The Wedding Garment

Kristen Bodemann

**Scripture of the Day:** *But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless. 'Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*  
*Matthew 22:11-13*

The theme of this parable is fresh in my mind after getting married earlier this year. The planning and preparation that went into our wedding garments was an important part of the day. I picked out my dress, he chose his attire, and our bridesmaids and groomsmen were similarly dressed for the occasion. The pastor wore his alb. Our niece requested a floral headpiece and our nephew looked handsome in his tiny vest and tie. We all “looked the part”, if you will.

In Matthew 22:1-14, Jesus tells the Parable of the Wedding Feast. When Jesus begins speaking in verse two, He says, “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.” The parable goes on to say that the invited guests refused to attend the wedding, which infuriated the king. He then ordered his servants to invite anyone they could find, both “the bad as well as the good,” but one man in particular was not wearing proper wedding attire. The king ordered this man to be thrown out, even going so far as to tell his servants, “Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Jesus concludes the parable by saying, in verse fourteen, “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

The king in the story, who represents God, rejected the man who did not “look the part”, but the meaning goes deeper than the man’s clothing. We can only “look the part” in God’s eyes by setting aside our own pride and self-assurance and relying on God’s gift to the world: His Son, Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He clothed us in the wedding garments needed to spend eternity in heaven with Him.

It is such a relief that where we spend eternity does not depend on our efforts. Nothing we can do on our own could earn us eternal life. As Christians, we know this, but it can be tempting to present ourselves in “garments” like good deeds or pleasing appearances. Instead of focusing on “looking the part”, we can rest in the knowledge that our salvation makes us pleasing in the eyes of our Savior.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You for the invitation to Your wedding feast as well as for providing the proper attire for it - the righteousness of Jesus. Help our lives to reflect Your love in all we do. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

## Unclothed in a Different Garden

Michelle Aton

**Scripture of the Day:** *A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind. Mark 14:51-52*

Have you ever let someone else take the blame for something you did? I was maybe twenty years old and had messed up something at work. My boss was not happy to say the least, but she did not blame me; she blamed my co-worker. As I stood at the top of the stairs and listened to my boss yell and scream, I hid behind the door. I did not confess that it was I who messed up. I let my co-worker be the scapegoat for my wrongdoing. I knew I should have confessed, but I was so terrified of the repercussions, and my boss could be very terrifying and intimidating, so I stayed silent. Because of my shame, I literally could not look my boss or co-worker in the face for a long time. My co-worker never said anything to me or blamed me; she just took the lashing given to her and went on. I always thought she was so much braver and stronger than I ever could be.

In Mark's Gospel, we meet an unnamed young man who literally runs away naked after Jesus is arrested. It's such a brief moment, yet it speaks volumes. Like Adam and Eve in the Garden, who once stood unashamed but then scrambled to cover themselves after sin entered the world (Genesis 2:25; 3:7), this young man's nakedness is a picture of humanity's shame: exposed, vulnerable, and desperate to hide. And in the presence of a holy man, Jesus, shame will always run away, desperate to find a place to hide.

Shame still touches us today. Maybe it comes from words we wish we could take back, a habit we can't seem to break, or a secret we fear others might discover. Shame whispers that we're unworthy of love and belonging.

But here's the good news: while the young man fled, Jesus stayed. While Adam and Eve hid, God searched. While shame ran and hid Jesus died. He Himself was stripped, mocked, and exposed to public humiliation, choosing to bear our shame so we would not carry it forever. The cross is God's answer to shame. In Christ, we are not exposed, we are covered in His righteousness (Isaiah 61:10).

When shame says, "You are not enough," Jesus says, "You are mine."

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**Prayer:** *Dear Lord, thank You for not running from us, but running to us. Forgive us for when we don't accept the blame for our actions - help us to release the shame of our actions because you have forgiven us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

## The Grave Clothes Left Behind

Wendi Bartholomew

**Scripture of the Day:** *Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. John 20:6-7*

I stopped after church one Sunday to greet Pastor Adam, follow up with him about an upcoming event, and tell him I hoped he had a good week. Several days later, I received a text from an unknown number - it turned out to be Pastor Adam. As I read the text and learned it was a request to submit a devotion for this year's Advent Devotional booklet, a familiar family joke came to mind. "See, that's what you get for talking to people." In my family, I am known for striking up conversations with anyone about almost anything.

What most don't see under the surface is my constant anxiety that I will be a failure, that I am not enough. Ironically, I had recently spent a lot of time praying for God to fill me with His Word, to help me grow deeper in faith, and to help me shine His light on others. So I agreed to write a devotion. As I read the verse to prepare, I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. Our Scripture of the Day tells us that the grave clothes were left in the tomb to proclaim Christ's resurrection victory.

We can dive into the scripture and connect with others daily, yet we all still hold onto "grave clothes" that Christ left behind. I myself live in constant fear of being a failure and have a belief that I am never enough.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" This is a reminder that, no matter how many times we fall, we are born again into a completely new spiritual life because we believe in Jesus Christ.

I am reminded that I am worthy to give and receive all the fruits of the Spirit through Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Let go of the grave clothes you continue to carry and exchange them for the fruits of the Spirit. You are a beloved child of God. Be reminded that Christ paid the price for our sins.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, let me throw away my grave clothes and live my life to Your glory because I am your dearly loved and forgiven child. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*



## December 21



### Clothed in Christ Cheryl Carothers

***Scripture of the Day:*** *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:27-28*

In your mind's eye, visualize this: you walk into a store and as you turn down the first aisle, a mom and her two-year-old daughter catch your eye. The two-year-old is strolling proudly with personality down the aisle wearing a color clashing shirt, mix matched socks, a bright blue tutu with a pink boa draped around her neck clunking around in dress-up "heels" and "jewelry" and a huge polka dot hairbow. As you pass by them the mother just smiles and comments, "I let her dress herself."

Just like that mother allowed her daughter to make her own outfit choices, so too God the Father allows us the freedom to choose daily how we dress ourselves. In Romans 13:14, the Scriptures tell us how we ought to dress, "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ...." If you belong to Christ, then put on Christ. Just as we choose what clothes to wear, we can choose to put on Christ, and when we do, it will catch people's eyes, just like a two-year old dressed in full personality.

Our Scripture of the Day talks about clothing too, but it uses an interesting verb tense. Did you notice that Paul writes in the past tense, as something that has already happened, "...have clothed yourselves with Christ..."? Baptism clothes us in Christ marking us with an identity that will never fade. There will be times that we choose to dress ourselves with rags of sin instead of the garments of salvation offered in our baptism. But in Christ Himself we find our identity. We are loved! We are chosen! We are holy! We are redeemed! And that dresses us in Jesus' personality.

In your mind's eye, visualize this: You walk into the Christmas Eve service. Fabrics of reds and greens pop throughout the pews. And then you see them, the ones that you invited. The ones that need to know of Christ's clothes. This Advent season, who has the Lord placed in your circle of influence that needs Christ's robe of righteousness? It might even be the people that you meet as you turn down the first aisle of the store.

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***Prayer:*** *Dear Lord, through Your Holy Spirit, let me put on Christ today so that I may share Your great love with others in all my words and deeds! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*

**Dressed for Battle**

Evan Finke

**Scripture of the Day:** *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:13-17*

Every day feels like a battle, doesn't it? Maybe not with swords or shields, but with schedules, stress, and struggles that weigh heavy on your mind. You wake up with a to-do list that has more energy than you. Worries creep in about finances, health, or your kids. Life is exhausting.

In Ephesians 6:13–18, Paul reminds us that the real battles we face aren't simply about difficult people, long days, or bad luck. He says we need the “armor of God” because the fight is spiritual, not just physical. Paul earlier tells us that our enemy isn't flesh and blood, but against the spiritual powers of evil. And the question is not “if” the battle will come to you, but, as Ephesians 6:12 says, “when the day of evil comes...”. And when that day comes, you will need to be clothed with something much different to stand your ground .

Let's start with the **belt of truth**. God's truth is what holds everything together. It's what keeps up the entire outfit. Without it, nothing else stays in place. Then there's the **breastplate of righteousness**. Christ's righteousness covers us. Even when evil tries to pierce through, His righteousness protects our hearts. Next, the **shoes of peace**. The Gospel gives us Christ's peace and kindness, and that peace lets us walk with gentleness wherever we go. The **shield of faith**—that's our defense. Faith is what we hold up when the world throws its fears and doubts our way. It's how we block the enemy's attacks. Then the **helmet of salvation**. Salvation guards our minds. When the battle rages, it keeps our thoughts steady and focused on Christ. And finally, the **sword of the Spirit**. That's God's Word. It's the one weapon we've been given in this spiritual war—and with it, we stand firm, speak truth, and fight with confidence.

Our Scripture of the Day reminds us that what we wear is crucial for all realities of this world. There is a battle going on around you, a battle for your eternity. And Satan has clothed himself with lies. Jesus puts it this way, those opposed to God “come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15). To defeat the wolves, you need what Christ gives you. You need the full armor of God.

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**Prayer:** *Lord, I can't handle today under my own strength. Clothe me in Yours. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*



## December 23



### Clothing of a Christian Ruth Burdick

**Scripture of the Day:** *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:12-14*

Love has many meanings. It can be love for a family member or a pet, love for a mentor or someone you see as a role model, love for an activity or pastime, and love between friends or two exclusive people. Love generally is defined as, “a complex emotional experience encompassing strong affection and care for another person, object, or concept, characterized by deep emotional connections, loyalty, and commitment” (Merriam Webster). We have all felt love, no matter its form.

So, how does one put on love? In Colossians 3, we are told to clothe ourselves with “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience,” but the instructions don't stop. We then are told we need to tolerate each other, forgive, and be transparent in our forgiveness. Most importantly, however, we need to clothe ourselves with love, which is the binding quality of all the previous attributes.

The clothes you wear each day can show your inner thoughts and feelings. For example, if you're feeling happy or excited, you could choose to wear bright or neon colors. If you're feeling bored, you could wear neutral or drab colors. If you feel upset, you could wear oversized, darker clothing. Feeling bold or silly? You could wear polka dots and stripes together. The point is, your outerwear can often reflect your inner mindset. Naturally then, this can work with emotions as well.

Putting on love is like projecting the love you feel inside of you, outside of you. Your love inside you can be shown to the people outside of you through acts of service, forgiving people easily, encouraging, bearing others' burdens, and gifting people without expecting anything in return. Sharing good, brotherly love goes a long way with how you can be perceived.

This Christmas season, clothe yourself in love. Project the love you feel and the love that God feels for you to others, remembering all the loving things He has done for you.

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**Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, soon we will rejoice when You wrapped Yourself in love, wrapping Yourself in our flesh. Help us wrap others in that same love. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



## December 24



### Wrapped up with Love

Audrey Nordman

**Scripture of the Day:** *While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. Luke 2:6-7*

When we picture the birth of Jesus, many of us see the manger, the shepherds, and the angels filling the night sky with songs of praise. But tucked within Luke's Gospel is a small detail that holds a great truth: "She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger" (Luke 2:7). Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes.

At first, this may seem ordinary: Mary simply cared for her newborn son the way any mother would. Yet this picture carries a deeper meaning. Jesus, the King of kings, entered the world not clothed in royal garments but wrapped in the simplest of cloth. The Lord of all creation was cradled in fabric that signified both His humility and His closeness to us. God chose to be wrapped in our humanity so that we could be wrapped in His love.

Swaddling clothes provided comfort and security for the infant Jesus. In the same way, God's love swaddles us close. Just as Mary wrapped her son snugly and tenderly, our Savior surrounds us with His grace, His forgiveness, and His peace. This wrapping isn't temporary—it's eternal. Paul reminds us that nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38–39).

But how do we live today as people who are secure in that wrapping? First, we rest in the assurance that we are never abandoned. Even when life feels chaotic, God's love surrounds us. Second, we extend that same love outward. Just as we've been wrapped in compassion, we are called to wrap others in kindness, encouragement, and mercy. And finally, we can wear our identity in Christ with confidence, not because of our own strength, but because we are clothed in Him.

On Christmas Eve, as you see gifts wrapped beneath trees and coats wrapped around shoulders, remember the swaddling clothes of the manger. They remind us that God came near, humbly and tenderly, to wrap us in His presence. In Christ, we are secure, loved, and never alone.

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**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, thank You for wrapping Yourself in humanity so that I may be wrapped in Your love. Help me rest in the comfort of Your presence and extend that same love to those around me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*



December 25



## A Multitude in White

Madysin Perry

**Scripture of the Day:** *After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Revelation 7:9*

When I read John's vision of a multitude clothed in white, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, I can't help but picture myself among them. Not because I am perfect, but because I am a survivor both in body and in spirit.

A few months ago, I faced the darkest valley of my life: a cancer diagnosis at age 21. The words "You have cancer," haunted me. I felt the fear and anxiety suffocate me. Treatments drained my strength, my hair fell out, and my body felt foreign to me. There were days I wondered if I would make it through and I questioned why I had to go through this awful disease.

But in the middle of that valley, Christ clothed me not in despair, but in hope. Family, friends, and my church surrounded me with prayers. Scripture became my anchor. I clung to promises that even if my outward body was wasting away, my inward spirit was being renewed day by day. Slowly, healing came. And by God's grace, I can say today: I survived cancer.

When I imagine that multitude in Revelation, I see a collection of saints from every nation and every walk of life. Some faced persecution, some poverty, and some cancer. Each carries a story of struggle, but all are dressed in the same unique white robes washed clean by the Lamb. My survival is not just my own victory, but a testimony to God's faithfulness.

Christmas reminds us that Christ comes to clothe us in what we cannot give ourselves. Not garments of weakness, shame, or fear but robes of righteousness, hope, and eternal life. The white robes are not a symbol of what I accomplished, but of what Christ has done for us. He walked with me through cancer, and He clothes me now in the assurance that my life is secure in His hands.

So when I read about the multitude waving palm branches and crying out, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" I feel a lump in my throat. I hear my own voice among theirs. Because I know firsthand; salvation is a gift. Life itself is a gift. And one day, I will join that multitude, clothed in white, raising my voice in praise to the One who brought me through. Merry Christmas!

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**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, Thank You for clothing us in Your righteousness. Thank You for walking with us through valleys and lifting us up into hope. May our lives, our struggles, and our stories be woven into the great chorus that declares Your salvation. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*





## **Wednesdays of Advent: “He Shall Be Called”**

*December 3, 10, and 17 @ 7 pm only*

The Advent season reminds us that light shines brightest when it breaks through the dark. From ancient promises to our present struggles, and even into the unknown of the future, Christ is the Light who never fades. In this Advent series, we’ll journey through the story of God’s faithfulness—past, present, and future. We’ll remember how He kept His promises to Israel, how His presence meets us today in our laments and longings, and how His return gives us hope for tomorrow. No matter what shadows surround you, the Light of Christ shines with power, peace, and promise.



## **Weekends of Advent: “Clothing of the King”**

*November 30, December 7, 14, and 21*

In Scripture, clothing is never just fabric—it’s a sign of identity, status, shame, and salvation. From Eden’s first garments to Joseph’s robe, from Nineveh’s sackcloth to Jesus’ swaddling cloths, the wardrobe of the Bible points to Christ. He is the King who took on the rags of our sin, who was stripped for our sake, and who now clothes us in the rich robe of His righteousness. This Advent and Christmas, we discover that God is the first tailor, and in Jesus, He has stitched together a garment of grace that covers our shame and declares us His own.

# **Wednesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve**

### **4pm – Contemporary Christmas**

Featuring Christmas songs, a message that brings you back to the meaning of the season—great for young families.

### **6pm & 8pm – Traditional Christmas**

Featuring Christmas hymns with choir, brass, & more.

### **10pm – Acoustic Christmas**

A more intimate celebration of Christ’s birth featuring guitar and voice – with communion.

*Christmas treats will be served at the 4, 6, and 8pm services!*

*All services will include singing Silent Night by candlelight.*

