

MADRID CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY, JULY 02, 2017

2017 ANNUAL THEME:

PUTTING ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD



EPHESIANS 6:10-20

"PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL" (EPHESIANS 6:11).

WEARING OUR SUNDAY'S BEST: A CLARIFICATION + APOLOGY

I wrote an article a couple weeks ago titled *Our Sunday's Best*. I want to make sure that I clearly say that it was not my intent of the article to condemn those who believe they must wear their Sunday's best, and if this is what you got from it, I apologize if what I wrote offended you in some way or put a stumbling block before you. I encourage you to make your decision of what you wear based on the teachings of scripture and to follow your conscience, whether that leads you to wear your Sunday's best or more casual clothing. The intent of the article was to show that scripture does not approve of binding traditions and making judgments about others based on clothing.

So once again, I offer my sincerest apology if you were in any way offended or hurt by my article.

OFFERING OUR SUNDAY'S BEST: HOW WE APPROACH WORSHIP

As a Christian approaches worship the subject of dress is often raised. How do we decide what to do? How do we make judgments? Fashions change, times change, etc. What is right and what is wrong? In point of fact the New Testament gives us very little instruction on attire so binding anyone to a specific dress code is dangerous business indeed. However, there are certain principles taught throughout the Bible and emphasized in the New Testament that should allow us to make judgments in areas such as this. It is clear in the New Testament from example and command that the Lord's people in the first century kept the first day of the week as a special day of worship. As such the basic principle of scripture regarding worship has always been "offer your best". For example, in Mal. 1:8 the Jews are chided for offering less than their best sacrifices to the Lord. A simple search of the word "best" in an on-line concordance will list a large number of verses where the Jews were told to offer their best and condemned for not doing so. In New Testament worship many feel that the "best" worship they can offer includes wearing clothes that reflect an attitude of respect and reverence for the object of worship, namely, Christ. Certainly, this is a personal application of an attitude of worship supported by scripture and should never be discouraged or attacked.

James 2 is often used as a text to justify wearing any clothing to worship, since the Christians there were condemned for judging the man in vile or shabby clothing over the man in nice clothes. The argument goes that this implies any type of clothing is acceptable to God in a worship service. It is important to realize that the context of James 2 is making judgments concerning people, not clothing, as is made clear in the first verse. The clothing worn is incidental to the point that James is making, which is not to judge your brother. For all we know the poor man could have been wearing his best clothes and the rich man his worst clothes. The point under consideration

really is analogous to the situation described in Mark 12:42 and Luke 21:2 concerning the widow with two mites (KJV). Judging on the basis of physical appearance the rich were giving far more than the poor widow. Yet Christ commends the widow because she made the “best” contribution – she gave all she had. James is neither endorsing nor condemning any type of clothing, he is simply discussing the shallow attitude of showing favor or respect based on a purely physical level.

However, it is important to realize that this story is followed by teaching where James says that judgments can and must be made at times. In the second half of James 2 he teaches us that faith is shown by works, by our deeds, and judgments are drawn from a person’s actions (or lack thereof). The wearing of clothes that are clearly immodest – clothes whose result is to create a physical attraction of the opposite sex to the wearer, whether they be sparse in material, simply too tight, or lavish and ornamented to draw attention, is clearly wrong no matter what a person may say to the contrary. Similarly, the situation where a brother or sister who claims to love the brethren but then wears clothes they know offends others in the congregation as an exercise of their liberty would also contradict any claims of brotherly love.

To some it is hard to understand why a person they know who claims to love and respect the Lord would wear clothing that appears disrespectful and does not reflect an attitude of “offering their best” to the Lord. What do we do in cases where one person considers their dress appropriate while another considers it immodest or disrespectful?

In these cases, Christians must go to Paul’s teachings in Romans 14 and I Corinthian’s 8-10 to find guidance. Paul’s examples in these chapters are concerning what is eaten rather than what is worn, but the principles outlined are clear: don’t judge your brother, don’t offend your brother, and live in a way that promotes peace and love rather than division. Always be willing to give up a liberty you may have to preserve peace. This principle would apply to clothing and a whole host of situations as well as to the eating of meats.

It is in this context that the elders ask people to carefully consider their dress and how it may affect others. We ask this at all times of the year, but especially during the summer when the line between what some consider modest and others immodest starts to overlap. We feel that by making the entire congregation aware of some of the sensibilities of certain members in the congregation it might make it easier for everyone to dress in such a manner as to not consciously or unconsciously offend their brother.

Psalms 51:17 states “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (KJV). Following the principles of the Bible, what is the “best” sacrifice we can offer the Lord today when it comes to worship? A contrite and broken spirit as exemplified by worship that shows fear of God, a desire to keep his commandments and a love for our fellow Christians equal to what we have for ourselves after the principle of Matthew 22:36-39.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 07/02 – Prayer Service @ 9AM
- 07/19 – Labor Day Planning Meeting @ 6PM
- 07/30 – Next Invite Sunday - *The Best Possible News: Jesus is Risen*

Men: Jason is planning to be out of town 7/16, 7/23, and 8/6 to go to a Bible Camp and to preach a Gospel Meeting. Check the preaching list to see where you are on the list so that you can be prepared to give a lesson

DAILY READING:

- 07/03 – Lamentations 4-5; Psalm 30
- 07/04 – Ezekiel 1-4; Psalm 31
- 07/05 – Ezekiel 5-8; Psalm 32
- 07/06 – Ezekiel 9-12; Psalm 33
- 07/07 – Ezekiel 13-15; Psalm 34
- 07/08 – Ezekiel 16-18; Psalm 35
- 07/09 – Ezekiel 19-21; Psalm 36

