

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

Established 1953

April-June 2011

Vol. 45 / No. 4

CLOTHED, AND IN HIS RIGHT MIND

by Lee Moses

Having passed through a life-threatening storm on the Lake of Gennesaret (Sea of Galilee), Jesus Christ was met by another frightful sight on land: “*And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs*” (Luke 8:27). This demoniac was forced to endure a terrible state of depravity and misery. Thankfully, Jesus was to end this man’s wretchedness. He cast the demons out of the man, the demons entered into a herd of swine that fled into the lake, and the herd promptly expired in a clamor of spluttering “oinks.”

When the people of the area came to see what had happened, they saw a pronounced change in the demon-possessed man. “*Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid*” (verse 35). This man had previously been in a state of utter depravity. He had been possessed by the forces of wickedness. He had been in a state of insanity. But now he was “clothed, and in his right mind.”

Likewise today, one in his right mind will be sufficiently clothed when in public.

Clothed in the Right Mind of God

When God created the first man and woman, “*they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed*” (Genesis 2:25). However, it should be noted that this was a man alone with his wife. Also, this depicts the world before sin ever entered into it. A great number

of things changed once sin entered, including man’s responsibility to clothe himself: “*And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons*” (3:7). Before sin had entered, Adam and Eve were so innocent that they had not even **realized** they were naked. Once they realized, they saw the need of covering that nakedness.

And even after they had clothed themselves with the fig leaf aprons, Adam told the LORD, “*I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself*” (verse 10). Even though Adam had put on some clothing, he still considered himself “naked.” The “aprons” they had made provided limited coverage, not even down to the knees,¹ and Adam felt ashamed of such insufficient clothing. More importantly, **God** did not consider Adam and Eve sufficiently dressed. After rebuking and sentencing Adam, Eve, and the serpent for bringing sin into the world, God took action to make things right regarding both sin and skin: “*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them*” (Genesis 3:21). These coats were **long** garments,² probably at least down to the calves, if not to the ankles.

That God did not consider Adam and Eve properly clothed until they had been covered past the knees ought to give someone pause before going out in public in something less.

Clothed in the Right Mind of New Testament Teaching

The New Testament teaches that

wearing modest clothing is essential: “*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works*” (1 Timothy 2:9-10). Certainly, the question of whether clothing is modest or immodest does not only concern whether it adequately covers. But no apparel is more immodest than that which is intended to draw attention and lustful desire to certain parts of one’s body. Unfortunately, much of today’s clothing is designed for this very intent.

To be adorned with “shamefacedness” (verse 9) is to be adorned with “a sense of shame or honour, modesty, bashfulness, reverence, regard for others, respect.”³ To dress scantily does not accomplish this. “*Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD*” (Jeremiah 6:15). Many have lost their ability to discern that there is something wrong and shameful in the way they dress.

To be adorned with “sobriety” is to be adorned with “soundness of mind, self-control, sobriety.”⁴ Some women who are confronted about their lack of discretion in clothing will respond, “It’s not **my** fault if men can’t control themselves.” But according to the teachings of this passage, the woman who dresses indiscreetly is also demonstrating an inability to control herself. Also, parents who send their daughters out of the house dressed provocatively fail to exercise control Divinely delegated to them (1 Samuel 3:13; Proverbs 29:15; Ephesians 6:4).

Some suggest that modest dress is relative, or that one cannot say with

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

USPS Publication #211780

... is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

FCGN is mailed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or R.R. or HCR number, plus box number, or a P.O. Box number and the **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request. **Mail all address corrections or manuscripts to:**

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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certainty, "This is modest, and that is immodest." Admittedly, one should consider the circumstances when determining what is modest. There might be certain situations where an elegant gown, though not revealing, would be immodest. Likewise, one's wearing of only undergarments within the privacy of his home would not constitute immodesty. But to continue to wear only undergarments in the presence of company, or to retrieve the morning newspaper so scantily clad, would be blatantly immodest. Time, place, and culture might have certain bearings on what determines modest dress or behavior. But none of these variables can ever change the rule set forth in First Timothy 2:9. To argue that one "cannot know" the difference between modest and immodest apparel is to accuse the apostle Paul, and ultimately God, of commanding an impossibility.

According to how God defines nakedness and what the New Testament teaches about modest apparel, there are certain clothes commonly worn today that leave the wearer naked. Bathing suits are one obvious example. There is

nothing sinful about either bathing or swimming. But what one **wears** to swim, **where** one swims, and **with whom** one swims are indeed matters of modesty. Being at a public beach or swimming pool does not automatically grant one license to dress in what would otherwise be described as undergarments. Consider when the disciples, having taken a fishing trip, saw the resurrected Jesus on the shore: "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea" (John 21:7). Just as with Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:10), "naked" here also likely means "insufficiently clothed." But Peter saw a need to wear something more, even though it would make the swim to shore more difficult. It was not because of the cold water into which he plunged—a coat would not have provided any addition warmth when both he and it were submerged in the water. When Peter was "just fishin' with the boys," away from public view, light clothing providing little coverage might have been acceptable. However, when he went to see his Lord on the shore, he knew more would be needed. Even the fact that he was swimming would not have excused him from wearing something immodest.

Also, short shorts and miniskirts constitute immodesty. Truly, they constitute nakedness. As God gave instructions to Moses for the design of the priestly garments, He commanded, "And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach" (Exodus 28:42). So in order for their "nakedness" to be covered, the priests' breeches "were to reach above the navel near the heart, and to the end of the thigh, which is the knee."⁵ So clothes that fail to cover this area leave their wearers naked—a case of the emperor's new clothes accomplished by short shorts and miniskirts.

There are other clothes that leave their wearers naked, including cheerleading and drill team uniforms, skimpy sports uniforms, tank tops or "muscle shirts," low-cut tops, tops that rise above

the belt, and spaghetti-strapped, shoulderless, and backless tops and gowns. Some people insist that they see no problems with such garments. But provocative displays of flesh in scanty clothing can be more sexually seductive than no clothing at all.

Jesus warned,

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell (Matthew 5:27-29).

Do we want the way we dress to cause someone to lose his soul? Hopefully not; because it will cost us our souls as well: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matthew 18:6-7).

Clothed in the Right Mind of the World

For the Christian to base his actions upon what the world thinks is often a bad idea. Many times, people of the world will intentionally cloud their minds against better judgment:

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness (Ephesians 4:17-19).

This “**vanity** of their mind” speaks to the **uselessness** of their minds. This is not because they are **incapable** of using their minds, but because they **choose** not to use their minds. We do not want to appeal to those who have rendered their minds useless when deciding what or what not we should wear. But even though the world often clouds its mind when choosing what to wear, most people are very aware of what constitutes sufficient clothing, and of what immodest attire signifies.

Consider the following sign posted in a jail outside the room where visitors enter to have contact with inmates:

Attention Visitors – No person admitted unless properly dressed.

1. Shorts must be knee length.
2. No tank tops.
3. No short dresses.
4. No sun dresses.
5. No shirts with obscene language or pictures.
6. No see-through clothing.

Should a Christian be any less concerned with modesty than a jail?

Former swimsuit model Kim Alexis regrets the lack of clothing she became famous for wearing when she was younger: “There are pictures I look back on today and think, ‘Oh, why did I let them talk me into that?’ I made some choices I’m not proud of.” She warns other women not to do what she did:

Many women are playing with fire in the way they dress. Dressing like a floozy tells the world, “Look at me, want me, lust after me. I’m easy and you can have me.” Displaying intimate parts of the body is a form of advertising for sex—so if you dress to attract sexual attention, you can hardly blame anyone else if that kind of attention comes your way...Dressing modestly tells the world, “I respect myself and I insist on being treated with respect.” It’s possible to be stylish and attractive without wearing something that is too short, low-cut, or see-through.

Many young Christians would be well-served to forgo future regret in favor of present modesty.

One fashion designer exclaimed, “A dress is successful when it awakens in the man who looks at the woman the wish to take it off, to undress her.” Ladies professing to be Christians then purchase and wear such clothing, claiming ignorance of any possible wrongdoing. But the clothing is admittedly **designed** by its worldly manufacturers to provoke lust.

A newspaper in Trivandrum, India spoke of the problems taking place on their beaches, and they spoke of the **source** of the problems:

Where Scanty Clothing Poses Problems Aplenty

The advice is given (due to recent indecent activities at a beach resort) to dress properly. Nothing of this kind (referring to attempted rape of American and English girls) would happen again if the tourists followed the dress instructions from the tourism department. All that the department would like is to see them covered with an appropriate apparel.

Any man who attempts rape is wicked and vile, regardless of how his victim is clad. However, this does not mean that an immodestly-dressed rape victim is altogether innocent herself.

Even the world views those who dress scantily in an unfavorable light. “*And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart*” (Proverbs 7:10). There is a particular “attire of a harlot” or prostitute, and the world knows what that is. Sometimes a young Christian may say, “Everybody else dresses immodestly—no one else will think a thing about it if I dress immodestly.” But they will.

Clothed in Your Own Right Mind

Christians are to use their minds in a Christian way:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye

may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Romans 12:1-2).

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:23-24).

Too often, and particularly when it comes to the subject of appropriate clothing, children of God think in a worldly way: “What is stylish?” “What will attract the guys (or gals)?” “God never expressly condemns showing cleavage, does He?” But their consciences tell them better. Their common sense tells them better. They **know** better, but they shut off all spiritual light to their brains. They would rather dance along the edge of the chasm than walk in the light of God’s word.

When several friends tried kindly to warn one supposedly Christian woman about her immodest attire, she responded, “You’re just jealous, because you don’t have what I’ve got.” The inspired wisdom of Solomon warns, “*As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion*” (Proverbs 11:22).

Conclusion

One who is insufficiently clothed in public is simply not in his right mind, just as the demoniac was not in his right mind prior to receiving correction from Christ. Too many people are allowing the “demons” of this world to determine what they should wear. However, Christians should use the good minds with which God has blessed them to choose that which is decent. We should realize that even the world holds negative connotations of immodest dress. Christians should look to the New Testament, which reveals the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-13), and provides “*all things that pertain unto life and godliness*” (2 Peter 1:3). Let us always consider what God would think before we speak, act—or dress.

1 The original for *aprons* can be translated “girdles” or “loincloths.” *Hegorah*, in Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the*

Old Testament, ed. Johann Jakob Stam, trans. M. E. J. Richardson, CD-ROM ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1994), BibleWorks, v.8.

2 *Cuthoneth*, in William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), BibleWorks, v.8.

3 *Aidōs*, in Joseph Thayer, *Thayer's Greek Definitions*, e-Sword.

4 *Sōfrusunē*, Thayer.

5 John Gill, *Exposition of the Entire Bible*, e-Sword.

FCGN TO GO TO A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

There can be no denying the good that the *Fulton County Gospel News* has done in the 58 years since it was first conceived by Boyd Morgan, Clovis Ragsdale, and six other visionary brethren. In that time, the paper has grown from a small effort to edify the churches in Fulton County to a worldwide evangelistic effort. There is no way to quantify the amount of good that it has done in leading alien sinners to Christ, refuting soul-damning error, and edifying brethren throughout the world. Ideally, we would seek to get *FCGN* into the hands of every soul on earth who would read it, and we would do so every month—or even more frequently.

The publication of *FCGN* has been funded primarily by the Mammoth Spring church of Christ. Unfortunately, a short-fall in the finances of the congregation has led the elders to determine that they have no choice but to curtail several of the church's efforts. *FCGN* has been additionally affected by the recent substantial climb in postage rates. As such, the elders believe it necessary to change the mailing frequency of *FCGN* from monthly to quarterly. The next issue will be published in July.

Other than frequency, there will be no change in the format of *FCGN*. It will continue to teach the Truth of God's inspired Word. Hopefully in the future, if contributions increase and the Lord is willing, we can once again return *FCGN* to a monthly publication.

MARCH CONTRIBUTIONS CHURCHES

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GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-34; 16: 1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; I Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; I Corinthians 1:18-23).

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Periodical Postage
 Paid At
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 Publication #211780