

# When the Mirror Becomes an Altar: A Pilgrim Exhortation on Modesty, the Body, and the Garments of the Bride

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## Abstract

This pilgrim exhortation revisits the Christian question of dress not as a trivial quarrel over fabric, culture, or taste, but as a spiritual inquiry into the temple, the mirror, the market, and the coming Bridegroom. In an age where the body is increasingly treated as advertisement, identity-performance, sexual signal, economic product, and algorithmic currency, the Church must recover the biblical meaning of modesty without falling into legalism, misogyny, body-shame, or cultural pride. Scripture never teaches salvation by clothing; Christ alone saves. Yet Scripture also refuses to separate the redeemed body from worship, because the body belongs to the Lord and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. From Eden's first covering to the white garments of Revelation, the Bible presents clothing as more than external decoration: it can reveal shame, dignity, rebellion, consecration, gendered distinction, humility, or vanity. Drawing upon Scripture and contemporary research on sexualization, self-objectification, social media, and body image, this exhortation pleads with men and women alike to reject both the seductive gospel of self-display and the hypocritical religion that polices bodies while leaving lust uncrucified. The call is not merely to lengthen hems, loosen garments, or change wardrobes, but to return the whole person—eyes, imagination, body, beauty, money, desire, and mirror—to the lordship of Jesus Christ. The Bride must not dress like Babylon while waiting for the Lamb.

**Keywords:** Christian modesty; biblical clothing; holiness and the body; self-objectification; fashion and discipleship; gender distinction; rapture readiness; body as temple; pilgrim exhortation; bride of Christ

## Foreword: A Garment at the Gate

This exhortation is written with trembling, not as a stone thrown at the daughters of Zion, nor as a shield for uncrucified men who blame women for the sins of their own eyes. It is written as a lamp at the gate of the wardrobe, as a whisper beside the mirror, as a trumpet sounded before a generation that has been taught to confuse exposure with freedom, attention with love, and fashion with identity.

The subject of dress is dangerous because it stands at the crossroads of many wounds. Some have been shamed by cruel religion. Some have been consumed by vanity. Some have been trained by the marketplace to measure their worth by desirability. Some have used “modesty” as a whip while hiding lust behind a Bible. Some have used “freedom” as a veil while serving the flesh. Therefore the watchman must speak carefully. A careless word can bruise the weak; a cowardly silence can strengthen deception.

Let it be stated at the beginning: no garment can justify a sinner. No hemline can wash away guilt. No robe, veil, suit, dress, or head covering can add one drop to the blood of Jesus Christ. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8, KJV). Yet the same grace that saves also teaches. “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,” Paul writes, “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly” (Titus 2:11–12, KJV). Grace is not a perfume sprayed upon rebellion; it is resurrection power teaching the dead to walk as living sacrifices.

Therefore, Pilgrim, do not ask only, “Is this garment allowed?” Ask the deeper question: “What spirit is discipling my desire?” Do not ask only, “Can I wear this and still be saved?” Ask, “Does this agree with the holy story my body now belongs to?” The mirror may show the shape of the body, but only the Word reveals the posture of the soul.

## Introduction

There is a pulpit in every wardrobe. Every morning, before a believer speaks with the tongue, the body begins to speak through choices. This does not mean every color is a creed or every style a sin. The Lord who clothes lilies has no poverty of beauty. But neither is clothing morally silent. Garments can whisper humility or shout vanity. They can preserve dignity or advertise appetite. They can conceal what love should guard or reveal what lust will devour. They can honor the difference between male and female, or join the age in its rebellion against created distinction.

The modern world understands this better than many Christians. Advertisers understand that clothing communicates. Influencers understand that clothing curates identity. Entertainers understand that clothing provokes attention. Algorithms understand that the body can be monetized. The marketplace has turned the mirror into an altar, and many kneel there without knowing the name of the god they serve.

The original question—“Is our dressing reflecting our Christian values?”—is therefore not shallow. It is surgical. It asks whether the visible life still bears witness to the invisible Lord. It asks whether Christians are clothed by discipleship or merely styled by the age. It asks whether the Church has been baptized in water but catechized by fashion, saved from Egypt but still wearing Egypt’s jewelry around the golden calf.

Yet this exhortation must be stronger than suspicion and deeper than cultural complaint. It is not enough to say, “The world is changing.” The world has always been changing, and fallen humanity has always found new costumes for old rebellion. The more biblical question is: Has the Church learned to discern the spirit beneath the style? Has she remembered that the body is not a billboard but a temple? Has she trained her sons to crucify lust and her daughters to refuse commodified beauty? Has she taught both men and women that modesty is not

drabness, fear, or shame, but the quiet royalty of a person who belongs to Another?

### **Eden's First Wardrobe: The Mercy That Covered Shame**

The first clothing in Scripture appears after sin. Before rebellion, Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed (Genesis 2:25). Innocence needed no disguise because desire had not yet been diseased. The body was not a weapon, a product, or an idol. It was creation under God, beauty without competition, exposure without exploitation.

Then the serpent preached the first gospel of self-definition: "*Ye shall be as gods*" (Genesis 3:5, KJV). The moment humanity reached for godhood, the body became a battlefield. Their eyes were opened, but not upward. They saw their nakedness and sewed fig leaves together (Genesis 3:7). Sin made them tailors before it made them theologians. Shame entered, and the human instinct was to cover without being healed.

The fig leaf is the first religion of appearance. It is human effort trying to manage the consequences of rebellion without returning to the God who was offended. It covers but does not cleanse. It hides but does not reconcile. It is the ancestor of every wardrobe chosen to manipulate perception while the soul remains unconverted.

But the Lord, rich in mercy even while pronouncing judgment, made "*coats of skins*" and clothed them (Genesis 3:21, KJV). This is not a small detail. The first adequate covering came from God, and it came through death. A shadow fell across Eden pointing toward Calvary, where the Lamb would be slain and sinners clothed in righteousness not their own. From the beginning, clothing carried theology. Human covering said, "*I am ashamed and must hide.*" Divine covering said, "*You are guilty, yet mercy will provide.*"

Thus Christian modesty begins not with fear of the body but with reverence before the God who covers shame. The believer does not dress modestly because the body is evil. The believer dresses modestly because the body is holy property, rescued from shame and purchased by blood. The body is no longer a fig leaf project, trying to build identity through visibility. It is a living temple clothed by the mercy of God.

### **Modesty Is Not Salvation by Fabric**

Let the legalist tremble and the libertine listen. Modesty does not save. A woman may wear a long dress and still carry Jezebel in the heart. A man may wear a suit and still be clothed in pride. A preacher may thunder against short skirts while his phone is a secret sewer. A congregation may measure holiness by sleeves and never ask whether the tongue is modest, whether ambition is modest, whether appetite is modest, whether money is modest, whether the eyes are modest.

The Pharisee is always tempted to turn holiness into an inventory. He loves rules more than resurrection because rules can be counted while resurrection must be surrendered to. But the gospel does not call us to decorate Adam; it calls us to put him to death. "*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,*" Paul writes, "*and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*" (Romans 13:14, KJV). The deepest garment is Christ Himself.

Yet the libertine must also tremble. Some hear "modesty does not save" and conclude that modesty does not matter. This is the old serpent wearing modern speech. Food does not save, yet gluttony matters. Money does not save, yet greed matters. Speech does not save, yet every idle word will be judged. Marriage does not save, yet sexual purity matters. Clothing does not save, yet the body belongs to the Lord.

The apostolic command remains: "*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...with good works*" (1 Timothy 2:9–10, KJV). Peter echoes the same kingdom logic when he calls women away from outward adornment as their defining beauty and toward *"the hidden man of the heart...a meek and quiet spirit"* (1 Peter 3:3–4, KJV). These passages do not declare beauty unlawful. They dethrone beauty as god. They do not forbid care for appearance. They forbid the soul from renting its worth to appearance.

A modest wardrobe without a modest heart is a costume. A modest heart without concern for embodied witness is a contradiction. The Lord desires truth in the inward parts, and then He teaches the outward life to agree with the inward kingdom.

### **The Body Is a Temple, Not a Billboard**

The Church must recover a sentence that sounds simple until it judges everything: *"Ye are not your own"* (1 Corinthians 6:19, KJV). Modern identity chants, "My body, my choice," as though possession were lordship. Scripture answers, *"Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"* (1 Corinthians 6:20, KJV).

The body is not trash to be despised, nor a trophy to be worshiped, nor merchandise to be marketed. It is a temple. A temple is not holy because of marble, gold, or curtains. It is holy because of Who dwells there. The Christian body is sacred not because it fits a worldly standard of beauty, but because the Spirit of God has taken residence in mortal flesh.

This truth rebukes two lies at once. It rebukes body-hatred, for God does not purchase garbage with the blood of His Son. It rebukes body-idolatry, for God does not purchase temples so they may become theaters for vanity. The redeemed body must not be starved for applause, carved into an idol, exposed for validation, or dressed as bait for the appetites of Babylon.

Pilgrim, your body is preaching. The question is not whether it will preach, but whose gospel it will proclaim. Will it proclaim the gospel of self-display, where attention is salvation and desirability is righteousness? Will it proclaim the gospel of despair, where the body is hated because it cannot satisfy the merciless demands of the age? Or will it proclaim the gospel of stewardship, where the body is received with gratitude, governed with sobriety, and offered to God?

Paul commands, *"present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God"* (Romans 12:1, KJV). A sacrifice does not choose the altar; it is laid upon it. A Christian does not ask first what the culture applauds, what the flesh prefers, or what the crowd expects. The Christian asks, "Lord, how shall this body serve Your glory?"

### **The Mirror as Altar: How the Age Disciples Desire**

The world is not neutral. It has a liturgy. It has priests, prophets, sacraments, festivals, and punishments. Its priests are influencers. Its prophets are trendsetters. Its sacrament is visibility. Its festivals are award shows, fashion weeks, filtered feeds, and curated bodies. Its punishment is invisibility. To be unseen is to be dead in the religion of the image.

This is not merely a preacher's metaphor. Contemporary research has long warned that sexualized media and appearance-focused cultures shape how young people see themselves. The American Psychological Association's Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls concluded that sexualized images and messages in media, advertising, and merchandising can harm girls' self-image and healthy development (American Psychological Association Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007). Objectification theory likewise explains how women and girls can internalize an observer's perspective on their own bodies, leading to habitual body monitoring, shame,

anxiety, and other mental health risks (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Even clothing scenarios have been studied in relation to self-objectification. Tiggemann and Andrew (2012) found that scenarios involving revealing clothing produced greater state self-objectification, body shame, body dissatisfaction, and negative mood than more modest clothing scenarios among young women. Their research cannot establish a biblical command; Scripture alone governs the conscience. Yet it does reveal a psychological echo of what wisdom already knows: the way the body is displayed can shape the way the person experiences the body.

The digital age intensifies this formation. The WHO Regional Office for Europe reported that problematic social media use among adolescents in its surveyed regions rose from 7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022, with girls reporting higher levels than boys (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2024). A recent meta-analysis of experimental studies found that exposure to body-ideal social media content decreased body satisfaction among young adult women, while body-positive content improved it; the study also reported stronger negative effects from body-ideal content on video-based platforms (Zhang et al., 2025). Social media does not merely show garments. It trains longing. It rewards exposure. It manufactures comparisons. It teaches the soul to ask, “How do I look to them?” instead of “How do I stand before God?”

Here is the parable of the algorithmic mirror: A young woman stood before a mirror that spoke. At first it said, “You are beautiful.” Then it said, “You could be more beautiful.” Then it said, “Show more.” Then it said, “Compete.” Then it said, “Your worth depends on whether strangers pause.” She obeyed, and the mirror grew brighter while her soul grew dimmer. One night she heard another voice, quieter than the mirror but stronger than its spell:

“Daughter, thou art not for sale.” She turned, and for the first time the mirror looked small.

This is why modesty is not an outdated obsession. It is resistance against a civilization that profits from the restless display of bodies. It is a refusal to let the market define beauty, to let strangers govern self-worth, to let algorithms catechize desire, and to let the flesh convert the temple into advertisement.

### **The Harlot’s Garment and the Bride’s Garment**

Scripture is not silent about clothing as a moral signal. Proverbs warns of the woman “with the attire of a harlot, and subtil of heart” (Proverbs 7:10, KJV). The verse does not say every garment can be judged with mathematical simplicity, nor does it excuse the lust of men. It does reveal that dress can participate in seduction when the heart intends seduction. There is such a thing as clothing chosen not merely to cover the body but to weaponize it.

On the other hand, Proverbs 31 describes the virtuous woman: “*Strength and honour are her clothing*” (Proverbs 31:25, KJV). She is not praised because she is invisible, fearful, or aesthetically careless. She is clothed with dignity. Her wardrobe is not merely textile; it is character. Her beauty is not needy. Her strength is not exhibition. Her honor does not beg to be consumed.

Isaiah also speaks with prophetic fire against the daughters of Zion who walked with haughtiness, seductive movement, and ornamental excess (Isaiah 3:16–24). The issue was not jewelry as metal, but pride as religion. Their outward display had become the visible foam of inward arrogance. God judged not fabric alone, but the heart that used beauty as rebellion.

The book of Revelation gives the final contrast. Babylon is dressed in purple and scarlet, glittering with gold, precious stones, and pearls, holding a golden cup full of abominations (Revelation 17:4). The Bride of the Lamb is clothed in “*fine linen*,

*clean and white,”* which represents “*the righteousness of saints*” (Revelation 19:8, KJV). Babylon dresses to intoxicate. The Bride dresses to belong. Babylon is seductive splendor without holiness. The Bride is radiant purity without prostitution.

Pilgrim, every wardrobe is moving toward one of these two cities. Either the soul learns the aesthetics of Babylon, where beauty is power and exposure is currency, or it learns the beauty of New Jerusalem, where glory is received from God and purity is joy.

### **Gendered Distinction: A Boundary the Age Despises**

*“Male and female created he them”* (Genesis 1:27, KJV). This sentence is now treated by many as a prison, but Scripture presents it as a blessing. Difference is not humiliation. Distinction is not hatred. God did not create humanity as a colorless fog, but as embodied male and female persons bearing His image together.

Deuteronomy 22:5 states, *“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment”* (KJV). The cultural forms of male and female clothing have varied across centuries and nations, so wisdom must not turn one culture’s fashion into universal law. Yet the enduring moral witness is clear: God cares about the preservation of sexual distinction. Clothing should not become a tool for denying, mocking, confusing, or erasing the created order.

This is not a call for cultural arrogance. A robe may be masculine in one context and feminine in another. Trousers, tunics, head coverings, jewelry, and colors have shifted meanings across history. The Church must not confuse Western convention, African custom, Asian tradition, or any local fashion with the eternal Word. But neither should the Church pretend that because applications require wisdom, the principle has vanished. God made distinction before

sin entered the world. Therefore distinction is not a curse to escape, but a gift to the steward.

When an age rebels against the body, it often begins by rebelling against the meaning of the body. Clothing then becomes one of the theaters of revolt. The believer must neither panic nor imitate. He must stand with sober clarity. She must stand with gentle courage. We are not called to mock confused souls, but to bear witness that the Creator is wiser than the creature and kinder than the market.

### **A Word to Men: Crucify the Eye Before You Critique the Garment**

No exhortation on modesty is Christian if it allows men to outsource repentance to women. The Lord Jesus did not say, “If a woman’s garment causes you to lust, blame her.” He said, *“Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”* (Matthew 5:28, KJV). Then He spoke of plucking out the eye and cutting off the hand. Hyperbole, yes—but holy hyperbole, meant to show that lust must be treated like a beast at the door, not a pet in the house.

Men of God, repent. Do not use modesty teaching as camouflage for an undisciplined imagination. Do not praise “decent women” in public while consuming nakedness in secret. Do not demand holiness from sisters while your eyes graze like animals across every passing body. Do not call yourself a protector while your mind is a brothel. The first immodesty many men must confront is not in a woman’s wardrobe but in their own gaze.

Job said, *“I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?”* (Job 31:1, KJV). That covenant is desperately needed in the age of endless images. A man who cannot govern his eyes is not mature because he can quote doctrine. He is a city without walls. He may wear a tie, hold a microphone, lead a family, or sit on a church board; if lust governs his imagination, he is still a captive.

This must be said clearly: immodest dress never excuses harassment, abuse, assault, pornography, adultery, predation, or lust. Sin remains sin in the one who commits it. The doctrine of modesty is not a legal defense for male wickedness. It is a call for every believer to love God and neighbor with the body. A woman's lack of modesty does not make a man helpless. A man's lust does not make a woman righteous. Each will stand before the Lord.

Therefore, brothers, do not wait for the world to dress differently before you obey Christ. Crucify the eye. Starve the fantasy. Flee youthful lusts. Honor older women as mothers and younger women as sisters "with all purity" (1 Timothy 5:2, KJV). The Church does not need men who merely complain about women's clothing. It needs men whose presence makes women safer, not smaller; honored, not hunted; protected, not possessed.

#### **A Word to Women: Refuse the Market's Hunger**

Daughters of God, you were not created to be consumed. Your body is not a public negotiation. Your beauty is not a debt you owe the crowd. Your worth is not measured by how many eyes you can arrest, how many comments you can gather, how many heads you can turn, or how closely your body resembles the image currently enthroned by the market.

The world will tell you that exposure is empowerment. Sometimes it will even borrow the language of liberation while selling you back into the slavery of constant self-surveillance. It will say, "*Show your body because you own it,*" while quietly making your peace depend on whether others approve it. It will call you free while training you to live before a tribunal of strangers. It will flatter you as a queen while feeding on your insecurity like a parasite.

The apostle Peter offers another beauty: "the hidden man of the heart...even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great

price" (1 Peter 3:4, KJV). This is not a command to become timid, voiceless, or erased. A meek spirit is not a crushed spirit. Meekness is strength that no longer needs exhibition. Quietness is not muteness; it is the settled dignity of a soul no longer begging the world to certify its existence.

Do not let anyone deceive you into thinking modesty means ugliness. Holiness is not hostility to beauty. God made color, form, fabric, fragrance, symmetry, creativity, and adornment. The Proverbs 31 woman is clothed in silk and purple (Proverbs 31:22). The bride in Song of Solomon is praised with poetic delight. The tabernacle itself was beautiful. The issue is not beauty, but lordship. Does beauty serve God, or has beauty become god?

A godly woman may dress with excellence, cleanliness, creativity, cultural grace, and noble beauty. But she refuses to dress as merchandise. She refuses to make her body an altar where the lust of men and the envy of women are invited to worship. She refuses the anxiety of comparison. She refuses the lie that dignity is oppression. She refuses to confuse being noticed with being known.

Sister, the Lamb did not bleed so that Babylon could rent your reflection. You are "bought with a price." Dress, therefore, as one who belongs to the King.

#### **The Three Counterfeits: Legalism, Libertinism, and Vanity**

The enemy rarely destroys truth by denying it directly. He often sets counterfeits around it until weary souls cannot distinguish the pearl from the paste.

The first counterfeit is legalism. Legalism reduces modesty to measurements while leaving the heart untouched. It creates pride in those who comply and despair in those who fail. It can become especially cruel toward women, treating them as walking temptations rather than image-bearers. Legalism is a tailor sewing fig leaves in the name of God.

The second counterfeit is libertinism. Libertinism calls every restraint bondage and every boundary shame. It says, “God sees my heart,” while refusing to ask why the heart wants to display what wisdom would guard. It uses grace as a cloak for self-will. It confuses Christian liberty with the right to ignore love. Paul warned, “use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (Galatians 5:13, KJV).

The third counterfeit is vanity. Vanity can wear both revealing clothing and “modest” clothing. It can flaunt skin or flaunt holiness. It can post sensuality or post superiority. It can turn the covered body into an idol just as easily as the exposed body. Vanity is not defeated merely by changing fabric; it is defeated when the self is dethroned.

True modesty walks a narrower road. It refuses legalism because Christ alone justifies. It refuses libertinism because Christ now reigns. It refuses vanity because Christ must be seen as beautiful above all.

### **The Neighbor Principle: Dressing in Love, Not Fear**

Christian ethics is not governed only by the question, “What am I free to do?” It is governed by love. “Let no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Romans 14:13, KJV). “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31, KJV).

This principle requires maturity. It does not mean believers must become slaves to every opinion, cultural preference, or manipulative accusation. Some people will stumble because they are determined to stumble. Some will call holiness legalism because they love compromise. Others will call liberty rebellion because they fear discernment. The conscience must be ruled by Scripture, not by the loudest critic.

Yet love refuses to live carelessly. If a garment is chosen to provoke lust, envy, status anxiety, gender confusion, sensual attention, or pride, love must ask why. If a believer cannot wear something without needing to defend it, photograph it, display it, or harvest attention from it, wisdom should pause. If the Holy Spirit pricks the conscience before the mirror, do not argue with Him as though He were an enemy. Hesitation is sometimes the mercy of God standing between the soul and self-deception.

Ask not merely, “Can I wear this?” Ask, “Can I thank God while wearing this? Can I serve others while wearing this? Can I worship without duplicity while wearing this? Does this draw attention to Christlike dignity or to bodily appetite? Does this garment agree with my calling as temple, witness, pilgrim, and bride?”

These questions are not chains. They are windows. They let light into the wardrobe.

### **The Parable of the King’s Daughter**

There was once a king whose daughter lived among merchants. The merchants praised her beauty, but only because they wanted to sell it. They brought her garments stitched with mirrors, so wherever she walked she would see herself multiplied. They taught her to move so the city would stop. They taught her to smile when strangers stared. They taught her that attention was bread.

For a season she believed them. The city applauded, but her chamber grew cold. She owned many garments and possessed no peace.

One evening a servant of the king brought her a robe. It was not dull, but neither did it beg. It was clean, strong, and royal. “Your father sends this,” the servant said. “He says you have been dressing like the market’s product, but you are the king’s daughter.”

She wept, not because the robe covered her beauty, but because it restored her name.

So it is with modesty. It does not bury beauty. It returns beauty to covenant. It tells the body, “You are not a commodity.” It tells the soul, “You need not beg to be seen by those who cannot save.” It tells the world, “There is a glory not for sale.”

### **Counsel for Parents, Pastors, and Christian Institutions**

Parents must teach modesty before adolescence teaches performance. Do not wait until the world has disciplined your children’s desires and then attempt to shout over Babylon with panic. Teach sons and daughters early that their bodies are gifts from God, not instruments of manipulation, shame, or vanity. Teach daughters dignity without fear. Teach sons purity without entitlement. Teach both that the mirror is a servant, not a master.

Pastors must preach the whole counsel of God. Do not avoid modesty because the age may accuse you of oppression. Do not preach modesty in a way that makes true accusations easy. Speak with tears, Scripture, and balance. Rebuke lustful men. Protect women from shame-based religion. Call everyone to holiness. Make clear that Christ saves, the Spirit sanctifies, and the body belongs to God.

Christian schools, universities, and ministries must not outsource formation to fashion industries and social media. Dress standards, where they exist, should be explained theologically and applied with justice. Rules without discipleship produce rebellion or pride. Discipleship without embodied instruction becomes vague sentiment. The aim is not to create a uniform of fear, but a community where dignity is normal, purity is honored, and beauty is ordered toward God.

Mothers in Zion, teach younger women not only what to avoid, but what to love. Fathers, do not disappear from this conversation; your silence may

leave your daughters to be fathered by strangers online. Older women, model beauty without desperation. Older men, model honor without hypocrisy. Youth leaders, do not make church another stage where bodies compete for attention under Christian music. Let the sanctuary teach a different gravity.

### **Rapture Readiness: The Bride Must Not Dress Like Babylon**

The doctrine of the Lord’s coming is not an escape fantasy; it is a purifying hope. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3, KJV). The Church waiting for the Bridegroom must examine not only her calendar but her garments.

Revelation contains a frightening word: “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked” (Revelation 16:15, KJV). The image is spiritual, but it should make every embodied disciple tremble. To keep the garment is to remain awake, faithful, unspotted, and unashamed before the coming Lord.

The Laodicean church thought she was rich and needed nothing, but Christ called her poor, blind, and naked. His counsel was tender and severe: “buy of me...white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear” (Revelation 3:18, KJV). A church may have lights, programs, fashion, technology, growth, and relevance, yet stand naked before Christ. The most dangerous nakedness is not visible skin but uncovered shame before the eyes of the Lord.

The Rapture-ready Church is not obsessed with fabric; she is clothed in righteousness. But because she is clothed in righteousness, she refuses to dress her body as though righteousness were irrelevant. She does not flirt with Babylon while singing about the Lamb. She does not spend the week cultivating lust and the Sunday lifting holy hands. She does not

call herself the Bride while borrowing the harlot's fragrance.

Pilgrim, the Bridegroom comes. He will not ask whether you were fashionable. He will ask whether you were faithful. He will not weigh your designer labels. He will reveal your heart. He will not be deceived by religious costumes or worldly confidence. His eyes are as a flame of fire.

### **A Watchman's Rebuke and Invitation**

To the believer who dresses to be desired more than to be dignified: repent.

To the man who condemns women's clothing while feeding lust in secret: repent.

To the woman who has believed the market's lie that her worth is measured by exposure, attention, and desirability: come home.

To the pastor who fears preaching holiness because he loves applause more than souls: repent.

To the parent who laughs at seductive clothing in childhood and weeps at bondage in adolescence: awaken.

To the youth who says, "It is only fashion," while the heart is being trained by vanity, comparison, and lust: consider your ways.

To the legalist who turned modesty into cruelty and forgot mercy: fall at the feet of Jesus.

To the libertine who calls conviction "religion" because the flesh hates the cross: tremble before grace.

To the Church that has become visually indistinguishable from the world and then wonders why her witness has no edge: return to the Lord.

This rebuke is not the voice of hatred. It is the cry of a watchman who sees fire moving through the

marketplace while the city admires the color of the flames. The Lord wounds to heal. He exposes to cover. He convicts to cleanse. The same Christ who says "repent" also says "come."

Come, then. Bring the wardrobe. Bring the mirror. Bring the secret hunger to be seen. Bring the shame. Bring the vanity. Bring the lust. Bring the fear of being unattractive. Bring the addiction to comparison. Bring the religious pride. Bring the wounds left by harsh teachings. Bring the whole tangled garment of the self and lay it before the Lamb.

He knows how to clothe sinners.

### **Final Exhortation: Dress from the Coming City**

The Christian life is pilgrimage. We are not citizens of Babylon trying to add Christian accessories. We are citizens of the coming City traveling through Babylon without letting Babylon tailor our souls. The world will continue to sell identity by the inch, dignity by the brand, beauty by the algorithm, and freedom by exposure. Let it sell. The pilgrim must learn to walk past the stalls.

Dress with cleanliness. Dress with dignity. Dress with cultural wisdom. Dress with masculine or feminine clarity according to God's design. Dress with beauty submitted to holiness. Dress with neighbor-love. Dress without fear, without vanity, without seduction, without pride. Dress as one whose body is a temple, whose life is a witness, whose hope is the appearing of Christ.

But above all, put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering (Colossians 3:12). Put on the new man. Put on the armor of light. Put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. Let the hidden garment of the heart govern the visible garment of the body.

For soon the trumpet shall sound. The dead in Christ shall rise. We who remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). In that hour, the fashions of this age will look like cobwebs in a burning house. Only holiness will shine. Only righteousness will remain. Only those clothed by the Lamb will stand unashamed.

Therefore, saints of God, awaken. Do not let the mirror become an altar. Do not let the wardrobe become a shrine. Do not let Babylon dress the Bride. The King is coming, and “his wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7, KJV).

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus Christ.

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