

Clothed in Glory: How Relationships Shape Our Spiritual Garments

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Scriptures - [Exodus 28.1-4](#), [Ephesians 4.16](#)

Exodus 28.1-4

1 “Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron’s sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

2 And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, *for glory and for beauty*.

3 So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron’s garments, to consecrate him (*set apart, remove from common use, to render holy*), so that he may minister to Me as priest (or serve Me as priest - NASB).

4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, *that he may minister to Me as priest*.

Point 1:

The primary role of the priest is to stand before the Lord and minister to Him (see [Ezekiel 44.15-31](#)). Aaron was called and commissioned as priest with a very specific task; minister to the Lord. There were other important functions of the priest, like making sacrifices on behalf of the people, but any of his other responsibilities were secondary. Ministry to the Lord was primary.

The role of the priesthood is not my main point today, but it is important for us to know that a priest is not just someone in the Old Testament...a priest is not just someone in the Catholic Church...if you are a follower of Jesus Christ then according to the *New Testament*, you are a priest.

[1 Peter 2.5](#) says we are being,

“Built up as living stones into a spiritual house as a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices to God.”

We are to minister to God through the sacrifice of our lives lived before him (see also [Romans 12.1](#)).

A few verses later he says that we are,

“...a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” ([1 Peter 2.9-10](#)).

Our lives are first lived out vertically before they ever turn horizontal. We are priests unto God before we are preachers before men.

If we never take our stand before YHWH we will have nothing of eternal value to proclaim to the world - we are chosen as a royal priesthood so that we will *then* proclaim the praises of Him to the world. It is our ministry unto the Lord that qualifies us to minister to others. If we stand before men before we stand before the Lord then we are standing in our own power, we're out of order.

But when our lives are poured out to Him, then we become fit to stand before men... because we've emptied ourselves on Him and there's nothing left of us. See how that works? We empty ourselves on Him, He fills us with Himself, and sends us out full of Him instead of full of ourselves.

So Aaron is called, commissioned, and anointed to minister to the Lord as priest.

God then says this in [v2](#),

"You shall make *holy* garments for Aaron, for *glory* and for *beauty*."

Holy garments, for glory and for beauty.

Point #2:

There was a garment that the priest was required to wear before He could stand before the Lord. The priest was to be covered in something holy. Remember, holy means unlike anything else, unique and distinct. These priestly garments would set Aaron apart from everyone else around him.

He would be clothed in glory and beauty. These priestly garments would radiate (that's what glory implies). The garments would project and emanate the priest's distinction.

Here we arrive at my main point, **v3**,

"Speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, so that *they* may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, so that he may minister to Me as priest."

Aaron was called, Aaron was anointed, Aaron was commissioned by God to be the priest...but Aaron could not clothe himself in glory...there was someone else in the camp called, anointed, and commissioned to create the holy garments for Aaron.

To put it plainly, it didn't matter how gifted or anointed Aaron was; Aaron was insufficient within Himself to do what God had called him to do. Aaron needed community...and so do we.

God has determined that He will call you, set you apart, and He will anoint you to walk in the works that He has prepared beforehand. And you faithfully being who God has called you to be (*priest* and *ambassador*) is directly connected to the people of God around you being who God has designed them to be. This is the necessity of community. This is the family of God building itself up. This is **Ephesians 4.16**,

"...the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

God has determined that the community of His people will clothe one another in glory and beauty.

I have a gift. I have a calling. I have a role within the body that God has designed me for. But God does not intend for me to exist within a vacuum...He designed me to exist within a community of Jesus People...to function within a body of believers that also have their own gifts, calling, and purpose within the body. And it's at the intersection of my life with yours that God continually shapes us and conforms us into the glorious, beautiful image of the radiant Son. It's our interaction with one another in the daily grind of life where we actually become more like Jesus.

On my own, God's word is theorized. I understand conceptually that I am to love others more than myself, that I am to walk humbly, and choose mercy and forgiveness...that I am to now live like Jesus. But it's only when I come out of the prayer closet and bump into the community of believers that those things are put into practice...it's in the community of God's people where I now have the opportunity to love, honor, serve, forgive, walk in humility toward those around me, demonstrate the life of Jesus and the transforming power of His gospel. Real life, lived with the family of God, gives me the opportunity to put flesh around things that may only exist as ideas when I am isolated. Or to use our metaphor; real life, lived with the family of God, clothes me in glory. Forgiveness is only a concept if I never suffer a wound inflicted from another. Humility is never tested if I don't have opportunity to choose me over you but instead choose to serve you rather than my flesh. Forgiveness, humility, love, and the other qualities of Jesus become our holy garments...which is why Peter says,

“All of you, clothe yourselves with humility to one another” (1 Peter 5.5).

Life lived with one another clothes us in the glory and beauty of Jesus...who laid down His life for others and as a result was glorified (see John 17.5).

Paul

Paul had an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. He saw the resurrected Lord. The encounter left him blind. The encounter was attested to by the men he was traveling

with. He had a head-on collision with the God-Man, Christ Jesus. Modern Christianity (especially in our charismatic circles) would say an encounter like that qualifies the man for ministry. Paul may have had a powerful encounter with Jesus, but Scripture shows that he still needed to be healed, taught, matured, **he needed to be refined in the crucible of Christian community.** I understand that he didn't consult with flesh and blood regarding his *gospel*...but there is nothing in Scripture that suggests Paul attained maturity of character in one encounter with Jesus. Jesus may have knocked Paul off his horse and changed his life forever, but he still needed the Jesus People to clothe him in the character of the Messiah. Paul needed community to clothe him in glory.

He needed Ananias to lay hands on him and heal his eyes.

He needed the affirmation of the leaders in Jerusalem.

He needed the community of Antioch (**Acts 13.1-3**) to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit saying, "Set apart...consecrate for me Saul and Barnabas." And then he needed to hear his church community say "AMEN!...this man *is* called by God and we agree with the Holy Spirit. Saul, we have witnessed your development in the Lord, we have heard *with you* the commissioning of God, and collectively as the family of God we lay hands on you and WE send you out with the blessing of our church community."

That's what **Acts 13.3** says, "Having fasted and prayed and laid hands on (Saul and Barnabas), *they* (the church) sent them out." Paul was gifted, Paul was called, and Paul was connected to a church family. So Paul was properly clothed in priestly glory.

We live in a cultural Christian climate that knows very little of God's view of community and family. We are spiritual drifters, Holy Spirit hoboes content to bounce from one event to another, we are disconnected renegades roaming about with suitcases full of church hurt and offense. This has produced a church culture that too quickly elevates individuals solely on the basis of gifting and talent. We know nothing about the man on stage other than what we see under the lights, but he can prophesy the paint off the wall...let's follow him. Another may be a gifted teacher and leader, he may be charismatic and speak with the tongue of angels, but is he clothed in the glory and beauty of humility? Impact has been prioritized in the church over fruit and character, and that chicken has come home to roost. Just last week another prophetic leader resigned his position because of improper behavior...a man that ministries here in our community had no hesitation in placing

before their people to minister to them and speak on God's behalf... "don't worry, you can trust his gift" they say.

What local church is he from? Who are the people he is doing life with? Who is he accountable to? What's his family like? I get that people are sent out. Paul would send people out on his behalf...which is why he would vouch for Timothy using family language; "this is Timothy, my true son in the faith." Timothy wasn't just gifted, he was a son. But we just assume because someone has the microphone and their picture is on the website that they are credible.

There should be no one among us who becomes qualified for the work of the Lord by anything other than who they have become within the family of God. Gifting, talent, money, network, you were given a vision of heaven, you were given a prophetic anointing, you worship like an angel, you can work miracles...great. But are you clothed in the glory and beauty of Christ-like character...do you radiate? Paul was taken up to the third heaven, but it wasn't that encounter that clothed him in glory and beauty...it was his life lived with the saints in the rhythm of life together. The early church was a devoted church...they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread together, to prayer. Their devotion to God and to one another clothed them in glory.

God intends for us to say the same thing. We are devoted. We have grown up in our gifting and calling in the context of God's community. Our character has been forged in the fires of life with others. Scripture is unbending on this issue...God intends to conform us to the image of His Son through lives lived with His people.

We need each other saints. We must ask God for the grace to be the family of God that He desires. We are living in a cultural climate that says its ok to not be connected to a church family, to graze on the fringes and simply attend. Everything is prioritized right now except devotion to the things God says are ultimate. The kid's ballgame, the second cousin's birthday party, the weather, another vacation, the surf swell, the fishing trip, the long week at work...there is an unending list of things that will always be more important than gathering with the people of God if we think we can clothe ourselves in glory.

There is a sense today that if you attend every now and again that you are part of the local church. That is false. You may be saved, you may be born again; but isolated, disconnected Christianity has nothing in common with biblical Christianity...it is a modern invention. That way of living will result in a stagnated walk with God. It will plateau very quickly. Covid made acceptable what so many secretly had hoped for all along...couch potato church...Facebook prophecies on demand.

“I can stay at home, listen for a few minutes, send a tithe online and never have to do life with people? Finally!”

Youtube sermons are great supplemental resources, but they are not going to clothe you in glory the way that doing life in community will. Reposting your favorite social media prophet is not going to guard you from the schemes of the enemy the way family will. Even attending multiple services a week all over town does not make you part of a church if you never open up your life to others and do the hard work of relationship...if you never actually submit yourself to a local church body.

Closing

Michael Jordan won 6 NBA championships...but he needed Scottie Pippen.

Derek Jeter won 5 World Series...but he needed his the Yankees.

Steve Jobs was brilliant but he needed Steve Wozniak to help build Apple.

At Berklee there were some of the most gifted musicians on the planet...and they all knew they needed something they couldn't get on their own:

training by someone who was further along on their journey,
different perspective because no one sees their own weaknesses,
discipline,
knowledge and experience that someone else has who is willing to impart it to them.

What happens to the zebra grazing out on the fringes by himself? He gets eaten.

We understand these things in every other area of life...do we understand it when it comes to the kingdom of God?

Everyone of us has a calling. We are all called to be conformed to the image of Jesus, and minister to Him with the sacrifice of our lives. We were designed to shine. He intends to clothe you in garments that radiate with the glory of a trillion sons...and those garments are going to be woven by someone else in the camp. This takes time. This isn't microwave Christianity. Read the rest of **Exodus 28** and consider how long it must have taken for the gifted artisans to clothe Aaron;

they had to forge the breastplate with four rows of precious stones,
an ephod made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread and fine linen,
a robe with blue, purple, and scarlet pomegranates on the hem,
a skillfully woven tunic,
a turban, and
a sash.

It's not like there were sewing machines or fabric shops, either.

For us to become the church family that clothes one another in glory is going to take time, too. But we'll never get there if we don't give ourselves to the process.

My prayer is that by God's grace, and our willingness to devote ourselves to His design for His house, we will shine.