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## Daily Devotional - Monday, October 28, 2024 - Clothed Like Flowers

OCTOBER 28TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Daily Devotional - Monday, October 28, 2024 - Clothed Like Flowers

In my office at Moody I have a small rock, a gift from one of my daughters. The front is painted with a field of sunflowers. On the back is Luke 12:27: “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.”

Jesus spoke similar words in Matthew 6. He taught that food is nothing to worry or be anxious about (vv. 25–27). It is certainly a legitimate need, but there is abundant evidence in nature and history that God cares about us and will provide. The parallel passage in Luke refers to ravens (Luke 12:22–31). This is probably an encouraging allusion to the story of Elijah and how he was fed by ravens during a drought (1 Kings 17:1–6).

Similarly, we shouldn’t worry or be anxious about clothing (vv. 28–30). Just as God feeds the birds, so He also “dresses” the flowers. What’s more, their “clothing” is not minimalist but extravagantly beautiful. Despite their transience, despite their lack of sewing or spinning, they outdress Solomon. The obvious conclusions? One, worry is utterly useless. Two, God loves and values us far more than birds or flowers. Three,

He can be trusted to provide for our needs.

People who do not know God run after temporal things, therefore, we should not (vv. 31–32). God knows our needs, therefore, we should trust Him (see Phil. 4:6). What should we focus on instead? “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (vv. 33–34). This should be our top priority. When it comes to food and clothing and such, “tomorrow will worry about itself.” Anxiety about the future, when God already has it covered, is both pointless and faithless.

How does Jesus’ reminder that God clothes the flowers change our perspective on our needs and desires? How can social media, for example, interfere with this instruction to seek first God’s kingdom (Matt. 6:34)?

Father God, why do we worry, when Your Word tells us again and again to be anxious about nothing? Take away fear of the future, Lord, increase our faith, help us trust You in all our circumstances. Your lovingkindness is our refuge!

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## Daily Devotional - Wednesday, October 23, 2024 - Baby Clothes

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OCTOBER 23RD 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Daily Devotional - Wednesday, October 23, 2024 - Baby Clothes

This past Christmas, our family visited the Art Institute of Chicago to view a special Nativity scene, a crèche from Naples, Italy, that dates to the eighteenth century. More than 200 figures (including people and animals), each made with exquisite care and artistry, were displayed. The scene included vendors and musicians alongside the shepherds and wise men. But Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus were clearly at the center of it all.

The birth of Jesus was a long-awaited, life-changing event. But despite the importance of His birth, the moment was marked by humility. One would think the incarnate Son of God would be wearing a silk onesie or a royal baby outfit, but this wasn't the case. Instead, Jesus was wrapped in simple "cloths"—linen strips that snugly swaddled the newborn to make Him comfortable (v. 7). In other words, He was dressed much as we might dress a baby today, although we use flannel blankets and baby clothes.

The circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus were also humble, to say the least. Mary gave birth on the road, in Bethlehem. Jesus was born among animals and laid in a feeding trough. Many scholars now believe the family was staying with relatives, though no guest room was available (v. 7). Instead, they were housed on the first floor

with the animals, a common arrangement at the time.

Nonetheless, Jesus was a descendant of David and God’s promised Messiah. Matthew’s genealogy shows Joseph to be of the line of David (Matt. 1:1–17; see also Luke 1:27). Luke 3:23–38 seems to trace His line via Mary, who was also of the line of David. The Roman Empire appears to be in control in the story, since the government ordered the census that took Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem (v. 1). But God was sovereignly orchestrating every detail to fulfill His promises of redemption.

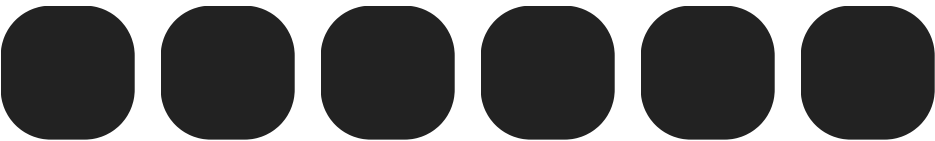
What was the significance of Jesus’ baby clothes? Why do you think He arrived with such humble beginnings?

Jesus, at the incredible moment in history, You came into this world, full of sorrow. You came as a baby in humble surroundings, yet You bring good news to the lost and comfort those who mourn. We love You and praise You!

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# Daily Devotional - Monday, October 21, 2024 - Garments of Salvation

OCTOBER 21ST 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Daily Devotional - Monday, October 21, 2024 - Garments of Salvation

In English, we have many sayings related to clothing. For example: When I need to get work done, I “roll up my sleeves.” When I put on my best outfit, I say I’m “dressed to the nines.” If I don’t have a plan but am making it up as I go along, I’m “flying by the seat of my pants.” If I desire to understand and show empathy to someone, I’ll try to “walk a mile in their shoes.”

In Isaiah 61, clothing is also used figuratively, but here it indicates spiritual transformation. It’s part of the ministry of the Messiah. In “the year of the Lord’s favor,” He will proclaim good news to the poor, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners (vv. 1–2). Jesus quoted these verses when He began His public ministry, announcing, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (see Luke 4:16–21).

Christ’s gospel turns the bad news of the Fall into the good news of redemption (vv. 2–3). Mourning is turned to joy. Ashes become a crown of beauty. The “spirit of despair” is replaced by a “garment of praise.” While some of the promises that follow (vv. 4–9) were fulfilled in the return from exile and the rebuilding of the Temple, other fulfillments still lie in the future, from our perspective in time.

As the Bride of Christ, we have been clothed with “garments of salvation” and dressed in “a robe of his righteousness” (vv. 10–11). When the Bridegroom returns—the day of vengeance of our God” (v. 2)—all will rejoice that the wedding day has at last arrived! Paul also wrote of this truth: Because of Christ’s victory over death, the

perishable will be clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality (1 Cor. 15:53–54).

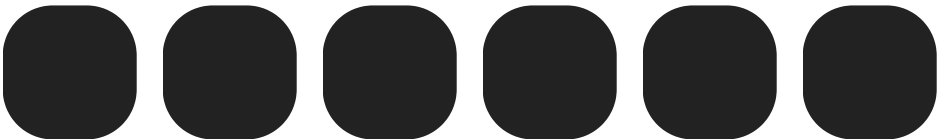
What has been transformed in your own life or your family by the gospel? Where would you be without Him? Who do you know who needs to hear this good news?

Lord, how we long for the day of Your return, the day when we'll receive imperishable clothes and will be clothed with immortality. Our glorious Bridegroom, keep Your Bride watchful and praying! Come, Lord Jesus!

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# Daily Devotional - Wednesday, October 16, 2024 - Clothing and God's Mercy

OCTOBER 16TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Daily Devotional - Wednesday, October 16, 2024 - Clothing and God's Mercy

When Jesus healed the demoniac in Mark 5:1–20, the man's condition was completely reversed. While possessed, the man had acted chaotically, cutting himself with stones and running around naked. After Jesus cast out the demons, however, the man behaved calmly and reasonably, sitting clothed and in his right mind at Jesus' feet. Later he testified publicly "how much Jesus had done for him."

Literally and figuratively, clothing in Scripture is used to symbolize a person's inner spiritual condition. Today's reading is the fourth vision of Zechariah. In it he saw the high priest, Joshua. The prophet was in exile in Babylon, while Joshua had returned from exile and was in Jerusalem. Joshua stood accused by Satan, the adversary, but the Lord Himself advocated for Joshua and rebuked Satan (vv. 1–2).

As the high priest, Joshua should have been wearing special priestly garments (see October 18), but in the vision he was wearing filthy clothing, covered with excrement and thus defiled (vv. 3–5; see Isa. 64:6). "The angel of the LORD"—likely the preincarnate Christ—re clothed him with fine garments and a clean turban. This symbolized forgiveness of sin (v. 4) and restored him to fitness for His priestly duties. Righteousness that was not his was imputed to him by God.

Joshua was then charged with obedience or covenant faithfulness (vv. 6–7) and given a promise of Messiah's coming. Messiah is here pictured as a "Branch" (v. 8), as in Isaiah 11. He's also pictured as a stone with seven eyes (v. 9), indicating omniscience and wisdom. He will remove the nation's sin in a single day, just as He did for Joshua, who could do nothing for himself. God did it all. Messiah's coming will also bring *shalom*—peace and well-being (v. 10).

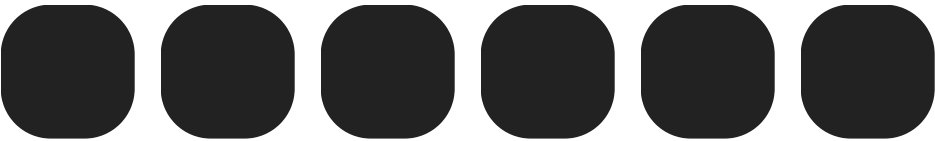
What did the clean clothing in Zechariah 3 symbolize? Why does changing from filthy clothes to clean clothes provide a powerful picture of salvation?

Teach us, Lord, what it means to wear your “fine garments,” as today key verse says. Thank You that You give us new life in Christ, with “the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair” (Isa. 61:3).

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## Daily Devotional - Monday, October 14, 2024 - A Pledge of Friendship

OCTOBER 14TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN



## Daily Devotional - Monday, October 14, 2024 - A Pledge of Friendship

A good friend is a treasure. One study found that ten percent of women and fifteen percent of men say they do not have even one friend. Over the past 30 years, the percentage of women with more than ten friends has dropped from 28 percent to 11 percent. For men, the decline has been from 40 percent to 15 percent.

Against this backdrop, the biblical friendship of David and Jonathan speaks to us powerfully. Friendship between two such different people should never have happened. As rivals for the throne of Israel, they should have been enemies. Instead, by God's grace they "became one in spirit" (v. 1). In Hebrew, this verse literally says, "The soul of Jonathan was bound with the soul of David."

In 1 Samuel 18, David and Jonathan made a formal covenant of friendship (v. 3). It was partially signified by articles of clothing: Jonathan gave David his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt. This was a symbolic way of saying "all I have is yours" or "there's nothing I wouldn't do for you." That was a committed friendship! They reaffirmed their promises later under even more unfavorable circumstances (see 1 Sam. 20:14, 17, 42).

Although Jonathan's father, Saul, was "very angry" by David's success (v. 8), presumably Jonathan was pleased by David's military success and his popularity. We read that "from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David" (v. 9). After "an evil spirit" came upon Saul (v. 10), God used this friendship to save David's life (1 Sam. 19–20). Jonathan not only rescued his friend from his father's threats but also "helped him find strength in God" (1 Sam. 23:16). When Jonathan later died in battle against the Philistines, David used poetry to express his deep grief (see 2 Samuel 1).

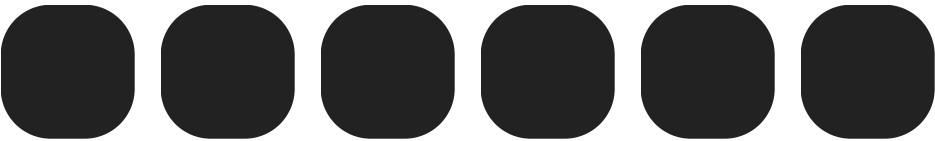
What does the Bible teach about godly friendship? What is different or distinctive about a Christian friendship compared to a secular or worldly friendship?

The story of David and Jonathan’s friendship still resonates in our hearts! Lord, we all yearn for true friendship, for a friend who “loves at all times.” We pray for true, godly friends in our lives.

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