

THE DISCIPLE'S WARDROBE

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The Armor of Light

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.”
(John 10:27-28)

“I give them eternal life...” ...What does that mean- “eternal life”?

Is it a ticket you get so that when you die, you show the angel your ticket and you’re ushered into Paradise? That’s nice, but what good is your ticket going to do you here in this world?

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life...”

Eternal life is more than a ticket you cash in when you die.

Eternal life is a **gift** that brings about a big change in you...already, on this side of the grave.

One way to describe it, is to say it’s a robe of light you are given to put on...

As Paul says in Romans 13, **“The night is gone. The day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.”**

You have been given eternal life as a robe of light, but you’ve got to put it on! You’ve got to wear it!

Remember Jesus’ story about the king who prepared a magnificent marriage feast for his son? He sent his servants to tell those who were invited, “The feast is ready. Come!” But they wouldn’t come.

Then he sent other servants to try again. “Behold, I have made ready my dinner. My oxen and fatted calves are killed. Everything’s ready! Come to the feast!” But they made light of it and went off; one to his farm, another to his business. They even took some of the king’s servant’s and beat them up...some were killed.

“Okay”, says the king, “we’ll take care of them. Meanwhile, go out to the streets. Bring in as many as you can find. Anybody - bad or good. It doesn’t matter. Bring them!” Now the hall is filled with guests.

The king comes into the hall to see how it’s going and he notices a man who is not wearing a wedding garment. “How can you come in here without a wedding garment? The man is speechless. “Bind him hand and foot and cast him out into the outer darkness.”

Now why would the king do a thing like that? Just because the man doesn’t have on a wedding garment?

Well, here’s the point. That man was **given** a wedding garment. Everybody invited to that feast was given a wedding garment and it was understood that this is what you wear when you come to the feast. But this guy chooses not to wear his. He likes his own clothes better.

Now he can do that if he likes, but not at the king’s banquet. He’ll wear his own clothes in the outer darkness.

The wedding garment stands for the same thing we see in Revelation 7.

“A great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes...”

Not one there that does not have on a white robe.

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

These people are no longer stained by: all the stupid things
all the evil things

all the pitiful and vain things they did and said in the past.

They are covered with a robe of light. A robe washed in the blood of the Lamb. Without this robe to cover and cleanse them, they would burn to a crisp as close as they are now to the throne of God.

Clothed in these robes, they serve God.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."

When you become a follower of Jesus, when you are born of the Spirit, you are given this new robe called eternal life. But it's up to you to put it on.

It's surprising how many people say, in effect, "I like what I'm wearing now. Why should I change? I've had this coat for years. It may be a little shaggy. It may have a few holes but, I like it - it's me. Of course, I've noticed I have a lot of fleabites. And people are starting to back away from me when I come into the room wearing my favorite coat. Funny, I don't mind the smell. Why should they?"

This "coat" may be comfortable, it may be "me", but, it's full of fleas. It has an aroma.

This "coat" I like so much is my nature. It's how I am, how I think, the way I use my time and it's really not all that different from all the other coats around town.

My "coat" has fleas. Your "coat" has fleas. My "coat" has an aroma. So does yours. And as long as we are wearing these coats, we're going to be self-centered, easily hurt, anxious, and edgy.

But over here on the rack is this new coat I was given by the Spirit of God - Eternal Life. And this new coat is God's nature. If I put on this new coat, there are no fleas, no smell. It's clean - washed in the blood of the Lamb. If I put on this coat, I discover I can actually think differently, act differently, just by putting on this new coat.

Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:22-24)

In other words, take off that old fleabag and put on the new coat. You can do it! You alone can do it. Nobody can do it for you.

Many a morning when I wake up and throw some water on my face, it's like, "Wait a minute! What am I doing in this fleabag again?" The things I was stewing about through the night...the chip on my shoulder as I think about facing another day...why, I **am** in the old fleabag!

So now I have to take some time to change... ***"to put off the old nature which is corrupt through deceitful lusts and be renewed in the spirit of my mind"***...put on the new nature...lift my heart to God...open my mind to him...clothe myself in the coat he gave me; his nature, his thoughts, to see people as he sees them. I can do that - and what a difference it makes! If I catch myself through the day wearing the fleabag, I can **stop** and **change**!

Our goal is to get to the point where we realize we don't have to wear that fleabag anymore - where we can walk around clothed in a new coat all the time.

Then he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with rich apparel." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments; and the angel of the Lord was standing by.
(Zech. 3:1-5)

Satan could accuse Joshua, the high priest, as long as he was clothed in filthy garments and a dirty turban, but once he put on that new robe and clean turban (a sign of a renewed mind), Satan lost his power over Joshua.

If you at any point in your life, opened your heart to receive Christ:

- you already have a new coat
- you have this robe of light.

It's a matter of **constantly** taking off the fleabag and putting on the new coat.

There are a lot of well-dressed people out there who are actually wearing a fleabag and there are some poorly dressed people walking around in a coat of dazzling light. It shows in the way they live, in what comes out of their mouths, in the things they consider important.

The fleabag always causes you to be sidetracked from God. You spend your life caught up in your own ego - in the trivial but, when you're wearing that coat of light, you know what's important - and you go for it.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand."
(John 10:27-28)

Eternal life is a gift from the Lord himself. It's a robe of light, but it's up to us to put it on. The king has given you a wedding garment to wear.

Don't leave home without it and for goodness sake, don't leave this world without it!

The Wedding Garment

Part One

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Ten Cities and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: *‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’*”
Matthew 4:23-5:3

Now these multitudes that came to Jesus with their sick bodies, and their twisted minds, their troubled consciences, and their confusion, their pain, and their anguish, were not exactly, what you would call, the “cream of the crop”.

They would be the first to admit that their lives were a mess, that they were, what the Pharisees would call “sinners”.

But somehow they knew that Jesus would welcome them. They knew that they could bring to him their sin, their trouble, their anguish. They knew that Jesus would heal their sin-sick hearts, their wounded minds, their broken bodies. Though they had no vision of the Messiah’s atoning blood, they knew that it was safe to come to him.

And Jesus healed them.

Cast out their demons.

Broke their chains.

Relieved their consciences with forgiveness.

And then Jesus would follow these signs of healing with teaching.

He taught them about the kingdom of God.

He taught about righteousness.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

“For I tell you unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“You therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

“The door of the Kingdom is open. Come as you are. Bring your sin. Bring your troubles. Bring your pain. Whatever it is that is bogging you down...bring it. But understand that when you walk through the door of the Kingdom, you are entering into the realm of righteousness. You are now going to begin to walk in righteousness.”

Sometimes people get nervous when we talk about righteousness.

We are not talking about “works” righteousness.

We are saved by grace. We are saved by the blood of the Lamb.

But after having received salvation, we walk in righteousness.

we grow in righteousness.

Otherwise our salvation turns out to be a sham.

Again Jesus spoke to them in parables saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.’ But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there was a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Matthew 22: 1- 14

“Everybody’s welcome to this wedding feast!
It doesn’t matter how bad you’ve been, what kind of sins you’ve committed.
Just come... Come as you are.”

Now everybody who responds to that invitation, is given by the king, a wedding garment to put on. And this wedding garment is not made of cheesecloth, it’s rich and beautiful. As a tribute to the king, as a sign of accepting his hospitality with gratitude, every guest puts on this garment which the king has so generously provided.

At last the king comes in to survey his guests, and he notices this wise guy who refuses to put on the wedding garment he was given. He prefers his own clothes, which he considers more attractive. What does the king do? He has the man tossed out. A man with no respect for the king does not belong in the king’s presence.

In like manner the door of the kingdom of heaven is wide open to us all. What a wonderful thing that even though our lives have been far from what they should be, (We know what goes on inside in our hearts.) the Lord says, “Come! Come as you are. Welcome!”

And the Master gives to each of us a wedding garment to put on, a garment made by God himself. It’s God’s work. All we have to do is put it on. It’s a garment of righteousness, washed in the Lamb’s blood shining with the Spirit’s glory.

Of course we Twenty-first Century Christians get nervous when we hear that word “righteousness”.
We think “self-righteousness”

“This lady walks around with her righteous nose in the air.”

“This man who thinks he’s more righteous than anybody else.”

“I don’t want to be thought of as righteous.”

But the word righteous is found on the lips of Jesus many times. In fact, all scripture is alive with the word “righteousness.” And for good reason....

“Clearly, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you won’t enter the kingdom of heaven.”

“Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

“The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”

“The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, joy and peace and the Holy Spirit.”

“ For he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

The robe of righteousness that we are given is threefold:

- It is a righteousness of the heart.
- A righteousness of the tongue.
- A righteousness of deeds.

First of all the wedding garment is a righteousness of the heart

Jesus was speaking to a Pharisee and was asked by the Pharisee to dine with him...***And so he went in and sat at table. The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. The Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup or the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? But give for alms such things that are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. Luke 11:37***

The Spirit of God never ceases to emphasize the inside, the heart.

“Create in me a clean heart , O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

“Behold thou desires truth in the inward part and in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom.”

“Nothing is covered that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the private rooms will be proclaimed upon the house tops.”

To have a clean, righteous heart, simply means that I prepare the way of the Lord in my heart. I begin to dump out the things he puts his finger on.

Righteousness of the heart means that I no longer walk up to somebody with a smile on my face while I’m burning inside with bitterness and resentment for that person. I take off my mask. .

An unrighteous heart is a heart that covers things up.

No longer do I say behind somebody’s back that which I am unwilling to say to their face.

Every time I try, the Spirit of God begins to deal with me.

- He puts his finger on it.
- Calls me to repentance.

“Come on. Clean up your heart. Open up the windows. Open up the doors. Let the light come in.”

“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaimed to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”
1 John 1: 5 -7

And to walk in the light is simply to be open.

No longer covering.
No longer deceiving and dissembling with our hearts.

If Jesus sits on the throne of our heart, what do we need to hide?

***“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sin, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
1 John 1: 8-9***

He will cleanse the unrighteousness of our hearts.

Secondly, the wedding garment is a righteousness of the tongue.

***“Again you have heard that it was said to men of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.”
Matthew 5: 33***

“Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.” Matthew 12:33

The fruit Jesus is talking about here is the fruit of our mouth. For the very next words are:

***“You brood of vipers! how can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”
Matthew 12: 34-37***

It’s not an accident that the one public sign that the early believers were filled with the Holy Spirit was that they began to speak with new tongues.

This unruly member of our bodies now begins to manifest the glory of God.

Of course,

we can speak in tongues,
we can prophesy, and
we can cast out devils with our mouths...and still end up in hell.

To speak in a **new** tongue means basically two things:

1. It means that the tongue begins to clean up its act:

One thing that happens as God’s Spirit moves on our lives is that our tongue begins to give up its old ways....

Perhaps I’m in the habit of constantly complaining.
Maybe I’ve been quick with cynical remarks at “opportune times.”
Or I tend to exaggerate, or lie, or gossip, or slander.

Now the Lord begins to deal with these “tendencies of the tongue.” He won’t let me get away with it. Every time my tongue steps out of line, the Spirit convicts me, calls me to repentance.

How can I be praising God in Sunday morning, and demeaning my brother with my tongue on Sunday afternoon? To wear the wedding garment of righteousness my tongue has no choice but to clean up it’s act.

2. The tongue gives itself over to the glory of the Lord.

We seem to have no hesitation in using our tongues to complain, lie, exaggerate. But we are quite hesitant to use the tongue to speak the name of Jesus. Oh, we can say it in church, sing it in a hymn, praise the Lord when we're with believers. But in the place where we work, or in our neighborhood, to speak the name of Jesus seems almost impossible.

But as the tongue gives itself over to the service of God things begin to change. The tongue starts to recognize when the moment is right, and loses its fear of speaking the Word which rises from the heart.

“Grant thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed in the name of thy holy servant Jesus.”

The righteousness of the tongue is twofold.

It is a tongue that starts cleaning up its act and it is a tongue that begins to speak the things of God.

Finally the wedding garment is a righteousness of deeds.

When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’

Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?’

Then he will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these you did it not to me.’ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. Matthew 25: 31-46

We put on the garment of righteous deeds by showing his mercy to those whom this world shoves aside and neglects. And you don't have to go to Calcutta, or Somalia or El Salvador to find those people. They are indeed in those places, but they are also right where we are. All we have to do is open our eyes with the Spirit's help, and we will begin to see them:

- Here's an old woman sitting in a dingy nursing home staring at the walls.
- There's an lonely man rocking in his rocking chair in the kitchen of a house that nobody ever visits.
- Children who have not one soul to take them by the hand to show them the way.
- Somebody at the place where you work who nobody talks to...people can't stand him. He always eats his lunch alone.

When she comes to the water fountain everybody leaves.

The Lord is calling us to do just what he tells us to do in Matthew 25:

A kind word...an invitation to dinner...

A listening ear...a few dollars...

A letter...a phone call...a visit.

Start with the small things, and the big things will follow.

Even as you read these words, the Lord opens wide the door of his Kingdom and says to you, "Come on in. I know you have stumbled. But I love you and I want you to come and break bread with me. And as you come through the door into my Kingdom, be sure to put on the Wedding Garment.

Righteousness of the heart...

that cleans out the filth and the obstacles and prepares the way of the Lord.

Righteousness of the tongue...

that cleans up its act and begins to serve the Glory of the Kingdom, in the name of Jesus.

Righteousness of deeds...

"... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

May the Spirit of the Lord help us to put on the Wedding Garment, and wear it well.

The Wedding Garment Part Two

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast. But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there was a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”
Matthew 22: 1- 14

We’ve all read books about revival which often describe it as a kind of invisible cloud that comes in over a town and saturates everything with the atmosphere of God’s presence.

Everybody in town senses, with fear and trembling, that God is near.

Often it begins in a very simple way...

A man puts a little ad in the newspapers inviting anyone interested to come to prayer in a certain church at lunch hour on a certain day.

The first day a handful of people show up.

The next day the handful doubles.

The next day the number doubles again.

In a few days that church is overflowing. Soon it’s happening all over the town. A man sitting on a bar stool half drunk comes to his senses, falls to his knees and cries out to God in repentance. Women pace the floor all night long trying to find peace with God.

Church services that were dead for years come to life, as people fall, with fear and trembling, before God’s presence. The phenomenon spreads like wildfire, skips from village to village, town to town.

The problem with these “epidemic revivals” is that they end as quickly as they began. They evaporate like a spent storm, and soon everybody settles back to the way things were before. They look back on their weeks or months of devotion to God as a kind of hysteria which was never meant to last.

If you were to ask the people who were shouting for Jesus’ blood on Good Friday, “How come you are doing this, when just a few days before you were calling him the Son of David?” they would answer, “We don’t know what came over us back then.”

But there’s another kind of revival, which isn’t as flashy...doesn’t take in the town by storm. This kind of revival seems to bring with it opposition, and disruption. It inspires criticism.

And yet, this revival lasts in a way that the other kind never seems to.

This revival has enemies, it has hecklers, things seem to keep going wrong.

Yet in the middle of the confusion, the movement continues---not just for a few months, but for years and years.

The greatest revival that ever came to the nation of Israel,

was not when Moses swept them by the hundreds of thousands out of their Egyptian bondage,

or when Elijah overcame the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel.

The greatest revival that ever came to nation of Israel took place with such division, and confusion, and hostility that the center of this revival was nailed to a cross.

But that revival didn't end at Calvary. It went right on.
For fifty days after our Lord's resurrection the revival remained hidden.
Then it suddenly broke out on Pentecost. Thousands of people found the Lord.

This was followed by more persecution.
But the persecution was followed by more life. It went on and on and on.

This second kind of revival is a fulfillment of the Parable of the Wedding Garment.

Folks are not all suddenly overwhelmed by the presence of God.
Like the people who refused their invitation to the wedding,
and treated the servants of the Lord spitefully, and killed them, so the Word in this
kind of revival generates hatred as well as faith.

But notice, in spite of the indifference and hostility that greeted the servants of the Master, the banquet table was soon filled. The hall came alive with rejoicing---joy such as people had never experienced before in their lives.

And day-by-day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
Acts 2:46- 47

So we have two kinds of revival: one called "the epidemic revival",
and the other called "continuous revival."

The difference is simple – epidemic revival is followed by almost total judgment: i.e. how many of the people who came out of Egypt with Moses' "epidemic revival" ever got into the promise land? Joshua and Caleb, two men out of a million.

No doubt there will soon be one final "epidemic revival" to sweep this earth. Perhaps it will begin in Africa, spread across the Middle East, bypassing Israel, and sweep through Asia. Maybe the wildfire will dip into Australia and New Zealand, picking up speed in Latin America, leaping over to Europe. "Christian" North America will suddenly feel the impact of the Holy God as never before.

And finally this last revival will shower blazing life on the land where it all began: Israel, the sons and daughters of Abraham---people to whom Jesus himself belongs.

That revival will be followed by night - cataclysmic judgment.

In Continuous Revival, on the other hand, judgment doesn't follow.
Judgment goes on in the middle of the revival.

When the king comes into the banquet hall and finds a man who doesn't have on the wedding garment he was given to wear, he doesn't stop the banquet. He simply deals with that one man. The wedding feast goes on.

There may be a few people reading these words who will remember what happened at Messiah Church, Detroit on Palm Sunday of 1970.

On that day a revival broke out and has been going on ever since.
It was the work of God's sovereign mercy.

It was preserved by God's sovereign mercy down through the years, and it brought into the Messiah flock a variety of people no one ever dreamed would find their way into that church. And with it came changes in people's lives beyond imagining.

Unstable men and women became strong in God.
Folks who were predisposed to gloom found lasting joy.

Of course it has not been all "peaches and cream." There have been casualties. People have dropped away. Men and women who for years were basking in the joy of the Lord awakened one day to find it gone. Dissipated. What happened?

"A month ago, I knew the Lord. And now, I don't even know if I ever knew him." "I had such peace in my heart last year. Things were going so wonderfully. And now it's gone. What went wrong?"

And the first thing we usually conclude is, "Yeah, well, I guess the revival ended. But did it?"

Over here are people who are still rejoicing in the Lord, and over there are people who are still pouring into the banquet hall.

"So what's wrong with me?"

"How come I don't have that sense of God's presence, which once was mine?"

The answer is very simple:

you've lost your sense of God's presence because you are no longer wearing your wedding garment.

When you came in to the marriage feast, you put on the garment that the Lord gave you.

That wedding garment is simply the garment of God's nature, which his Spirit imparted to you.

Those who wear that garment receive the power to become more and more like Jesus, to become sons and daughters of God, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and Godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us to his own glory and excellence. By which He has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape the corruption that is in the world through lust and become partakers of the divine nature.

That's the wedding garment. We can wear it if we will.

But we have to put it on. We have to put off our old nature and put on the new.

Put off your old nature, which belongs to your former life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts. And be renewed in the spirit of your minds and put on the new nature created after the likeness of God and true righteousness and holiness.

There is no such thing as being incapable of putting on the wedding garment. Anybody can put it on.

It doesn't matter what your IQ is,
or what your hang-ups are,
or how weak you feel.

You can put on a wedding garment.

The wedding garment can be described in two words, which Jesus spoke and lived continuously –
lowliness and mercy.

First: The Garment of Lowliness

Look back on your own experience.

Isn't it true that when you came into the kingdom of God, the first thing you did was descend from your pedestal?

You gave up your pride.

You stopped pretending to be what you weren't.

You humbled yourself before God, became poor in spirit, like a child.

And as you emptied yourself of your false glory, you began to experience the presence of God in your life.

You found yourself a guest at the wedding feast, filled with peace and joy – feeling at home for the first time in your life.

While you were wearing this garment of lowliness, you were clothed in the very nature of God. Because the God who holds the stars together is also lowly, as we see when we look at Jesus, his Son.

The proud can't see God because God, the Lord of the universe is lowly.

And so long as the scientist is caught up in the pride of his knowledge,

or the philosopher in the pride of his knowledge,

or the theologian in the pride of his knowledge, he or she cannot see God.

So long as our hearts are proud and lifted up, we cannot see God.

So you became lowly. You began to enjoy the comfort of God's presence and the reality of his kingdom.

Then one day for some weird reason, you laid aside the garment of lowliness and put on, once again, the garment of pride.

Perhaps somebody offended you.

Or mistreated you.

Or took advantage of you.

So you said to yourself, "I've had enough!"

Quickly, you put on your old garment of pride and begin to defend yourself. Your back was up.

And as soon as the lowliness was gone, not only did the pride come back, but all the lusts, and all the evil, ugly, vile, viscous things that were part of your old way returned.

And Satan tries to make you feel that you are locked into your old garments as in a straight jacket. But all you have to do is lay aside again that crummy garment of pride and put on the garment of lowliness, which is still within your reach.

If there is anything the Spirit of God is saying to each reader right now it's, "Put on that garment of lowliness while you still have time. Before the king comes in to check over the wedding guests."

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Secondly: The Garment of Mercy

Look back at the day you first entered the kingdom, and remember how you were overwhelmed with a sense of God's rich mercy toward you. "That of all things, he should receive me as I am! And make me his child, in the shape that I'm in! It's beyond my understanding."

Consequently, you were filled with an attitude of generosity,

and kindness,

and forbearance,

toward people, which you knew was not natural to you.

You just couldn't do enough for people.

You put up with all kinds of things you never put up with before. And you were filled with peace.

You began to realize that God requires, not sacrifice, but mercy.
And you were learning to practice mercy.

Then one day for some weird reason you decided to take off the garment of mercy, and, once again, put on the garment of covetousness.

Maybe it began when you asked yourself the question, “What have I gotten out of all this? Here I’ve been trying to follow Jesus for all these years and where did it get me?”

So you started measuring what you got.
And suddenly you were right back in the pit of covetousness once again.
You left the Spirit of mercy behind, and all your old ways came crashing down on you again.
Your old lusts.
Your old habits.
Your ugly thoughts.

And then came the thought, “God forsook me. He walks with other people. He puts up with their sins. But me, he abandoned.”

The truth is, you did it.
God didn’t forsake you, you took off your wedding garment.
All you have to do is put it back on again and you’ll be back in the wedding feast once more.

The minute you put on the wedding garment, which God has provided for you, you are back in the revival--- a revival, which will go on until the King returns.

Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Colossians 3:12-14

Having trouble putting on the wedding garment?

Cry out to the Lord Jesus. Ask him to help you. He will.

We also need a covering when we walk through the Valley of Human Anguish.

God, in his mercy, is watching over our movements out in the world among men. Because the minute we begin to open our hearts to human need, we are exposed to seen and unseen danger:

- physical danger
- hatred
- discouragement
- the temptation to jump down into the “mud bath” ourselves.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness,” (Ephesians 6: 12)

We need to be shielded, protected, covered.

It is dangerous to draw near to God, or the heart of human need, without a covering. The priestly robes that were worn in the Old Testament were symbolic of this.

They weren't getting all dressed up to prove that they were priests.

They were wearing this clothing, at the command of God, as a sign that they had to come into his presence clothed with a righteousness which was not their own.

They also wore this garb as they came out from God's presence and ministered God's mercy to the people - again as a sign that they were clothed in a righteousness which was not their own.

This covering, which was symbolized in those Old Testament priestly robes, became actual the day Jesus came up out of the Jordan River from his baptism and began to minister as the Messiah. Jesus was under a threefold covering as he went off into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan and as he came forth to reveal the Living God to Israel.

He was covered first of all with the water of his baptism.

He who was without sin and yet became sin for us commanded that he be baptized to fulfill all righteousness.

He was covered with the Holy Spirit

who came down upon him as he emerged from those waters, making him the Anointed One, the Messiah.

He was also covered with blood -

His own blood. And that blood was effective every time he forgave sin or touched somebody for healing.

“For he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of calves or goats, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.” (Heb 9:12)

So covered, our Lord came as the Son of Man into the presence of the Holy God for us. And now, through the Spirit, he comes out from God's presence to minister eternal peace for those reading these words who will receive his word.

But what about our covering?

What do we put on, as we approach God, and as we move out among men?

We also need the water, which is a symbol of our death in Christ.

We need the Spirit who is the sign of our life in Christ.

We need the blood - our forgiveness in Christ.

This threefold covering becomes ours when we take Jesus himself to be our protecting Rock.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (Psalm 91)

Most of us have no conception of how completely we can be enveloped in the reality of Jesus...how necessary it is for us to be covered by his abiding presence. As Paul says, we are to be dead - hid with Christ in God - so that our lives are truly wrapped up in him, before God and man.

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation/ she is a new creation; the old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

We are to put on Christ.

“Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

Now this covering,
this enveloping ourselves,
wrapping ourselves in the reality of Christ,
is not something we obtain by mysterious spiritual exercises, or long periods of fasting,
or reading certain wonderful books on the deeper spiritual life.

This awesome blessing is obtained by an act of faith in each of four situations:

1. By faith we cover ourselves with Christ as we draw near to the Father.

***Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?”
Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.” (John 14: 5-6)***

He’s not just talking about coming to the Father after our death,
or when the trumpets sound, but now.

“If you ask the Father anything in my name, He will give it to you.” (John 16:23)

To ask something of the Father in Jesus’ name,
is to come under the covering of Jesus,
to be wrapped in him,
enveloped in his life.

“Lord God, I make bold to draw near to you, not on the strength of anything I am or have done, but on the strength of your Son, Jesus, my Lord. Covering myself in his righteousness, I now make bold to ascend into deep heaven; into the place of eternal life, and worship your holiness, and lay my petitions before you.”

And the more totally we are permeated with the Spirit of Christ, the more direct and swift is our approach to the Father.

2. By faith we cover ourselves with Christ as we move out among each other - and among people out there in the world beyond.

“When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1Corinthians 2:1-2)

Paul approached those Corinthians absolutely wrapped up in the Crucified Jesus – this was an obsession with him.

This was a passion with him.
So much so that one could say, “This man is out of his mind.”

And from this obsession flowed life everywhere Paul went.
Notice how his epistles are filled with the passion of Christ.

Paul makes clear that it is impossible to move out among men with any effectiveness, except as we are covered with Christ.

“I am crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” he says in *Philippians 1:21*

“For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” *Colossians 3:3*

The problem with many of us is that we don't take that covering with us as we leave the assembly.

Maybe we experience a taste of it when we are at the Lord's Table, but then when we go out, we leave it behind –

we forget to take it into our jobs,
or into our homes,
or out on the highway,
or visiting in the hospital.

“Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

What is the armor of God?

“Having your loins girded about with truth” – the truth is Jesus.

“Putting on the breastplate of righteousness” – who is that but Jesus?

“Taking the shield of faith”

– ***“the helmet of salvation”***

– ***“the sword of the Spirit”***

– ***“feet shod with the gospel of peace”***

– all of these things are Jesus himself.

We are to be wrapped in the Person,
the Presence,
the Living Reality of Jesus himself so that we
can then go out with something real to offer people.

We are to practice that Presence day and night everywhere we are.

3. By faith we cover ourselves with Christ when our minds come under the assault of temptation.

“Not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its lusts.”

And the mind loves to make provision for the flesh;
to think ahead,
to scheme,
to plan,
to worry,

to fret,
to fantasize,
to dream dreams - good and bad.

When this happens, it's necessary to clothe our minds in the sanity, which is Jesus himself - to bring order into our mental chaos.

It's a matter of choosing his Presence instead of the flaky thoughts we indulge in.

“Lord, come into my mind. Flood me with your light. Fill me with your reality again. Take me away from these inmost lies.”

4. By faith we cover ourselves with Christ as we approach the reality of our own death.

No matter how near the Lord's return may be, don't forget that your death might precede his coming.

“For we know that if this earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made by human hands which is eternal in the heavens. Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we should be unclothed, but that we should be further clothed, so that this mortal might be swallowed up in life.” (2 Corinthians 5:1-4)

So that this naked spirit might be clothed in a new body which is the body of Jesus himself.

So that the same covering that

- takes me into the presence of God,

- takes me safely out among human beings with something good to give them,

- protects my mind against the lies that constantly bombard it,

now also takes me through the door of death.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.”

When I take to myself the covering of Christ, the anxiety, and dread, and terror of death leaves me.

I begin to see death as something, which is far better than what I now have.

I begin to say that with my heart, not just with my mouth.

“That I might depart and be with Christ which is better by far.”

If it should be the Lord's will that we remain until the King comes back, good.

If it should be the Lord's will that we should be taken in the meantime, praise God, provided we're covered with his life.

In order for us to live a life that makes sense, we have to take the covering...

Help us, Father,

- that we may clothe ourselves, with the presence of your Son,

- that we might truly come up into his presence and touch his throne,

- that we might go out among men and women and touch their broken hearts with healing,

- that we may conquer the enemy as he attacks our minds,
- that we may approach our coming death with holy joy.

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not the things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” (Colossians 3:1-4)

PUT ON THE MANTLE

Then Elijah said to him, “Tarry here, I pray you; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle, and rolled it up, and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.” And Elisha said, “I pray you, let me inherit a double portion of your spirit.” And he said, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if you do not see me, it shall not be so.” And as they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it and he cried, “My father, my father! the chariots of Israel and its horseman!” And he saw him no more.

2 Kings 2:6-12

And as Elisha is looking up into heaven something comes floating down and drops at his feet. It's the mantle of Elijah.... the symbol of Elijah's authority his power in the Spirit of God. Elisha has now received a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.

Let's suppose for a minute that Elisha looks down and he sees this mantle ... the very mantle which had been thrown on him when Elijah called him to be a prophet in his place. He picks it up and carefully wraps it in plastic so it won't get dirty. He comes to the Jordan River and he holds it up high as he goes down into the water and wades to the other side. When he gets the mantle home he hangs it on his living room wall for everybody to see. Soon people come from miles around to talk to Elisha about his life as the understudy of the great Elijah.”

“And here is the mantle that fell from the sky the day I saw my master ascend into the heavens. It's the very mantle that was thrown upon me the day he called me to be a prophet in his place.”

But the authority is locked in this thing hanging on the living room wall. And all Elisha can do now is sit around and talk about the past.

The rest of his life would then be spent as a public relations prophet. They send a reporter and a photographer from Time Magazine and do a marvelous article on the “Mantle Of Elijah.” They take a picture of Elisha standing in front of it. Elisha is invited to university campuses all over the Middle East. He fills the football stadium in Samaria...people come to hear about his days with Elijah...

...but the power is gone!

The mantle is hanging on the wall as a useless relic.

Now of course we know that's not how it happened. When Elisha sees that mantle at his feet, the first thing he does is tear off his own clothes and put on the mantle of his master. Now the Spirit that was on Elijah is on Elisha.... and he moves forward in power and confidence.

Then he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces. And he took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other; and Elisha went over.

Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him over against them, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.

2 Kings 2:12b-15

And so Elisha doesn't wrap it up in plastic,
doesn't hang it on the wall,
doesn't sit around and talk about it,
he puts it on! He moves in the power of this anointing!

He goes forward!

But what about us? What do we do when the mantle of Elijah falls to us? Do we take the mantle, carefully wrap it up in plastic so it won't get dirty, talk about it, conduct seminars about it, share wonderful things about it? Or, do we put it on?

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:6-9

"Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Lord, what are you going to do now?" "That's not the issue what am I going to do now.... it's not for you to know. The issue now is: what are you going to do? The issue is what you are going to do as I now give my mantle to you ... I pass the authority of the Spirit on to you, and it's your turn now to be my witnesses on the earth."

And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Acts 1:9-11

Then ten days later the mantle comes down.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Acts 2:1-6

The mantle had now come. And immediately they put it on. And they began to witness to the resurrection and to the lordship of Jesus. They announced to the world that Jesus is Lord and the words that they speak are confirmed with great power.

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

The mantle that came to them on that day is still here. It hasn't faded. It hasn't worn. It's just as bright and strong and alive and clear and powerful as it has ever been. Wherever believers are gathered in the name of Jesus this day the mantle comes down upon them. The mantle comes upon us today. The issue is: what are we going to do with it? Are we going to wrap it in plastic,
nail it to the wall,
sit around and talk about it,
or are we going to put it on?

"Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Lord, we hear about all kinds of problems in the Persian Gulf and about armies massing to the north, and about the financial structures of the western world cracking and shaking. And we see evidence everywhere we look that things are out of control is now the time?"

“Stop sitting around speculating. It's not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority, but I'm giving you the power to be my witnesses. I'm giving my mantle to you. Put it on and prepare the earth.”

The word of the Lord to the Body of Christ on earth at this hour the word of the Lord to you as a believer at this hour is,

“Put on the mantle! Stop walking around wringing your hands complaining about your problems and wondering about what's going to happen next. Put on the mantle and get out there and be my witnesses!

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come to you.

I am giving you a fresh measure of my spirit....
receive it.

Open your mouth and breathe it in ...

Open your heart and receive it...

put it on!”

How do you put on the mantle? You put on the mantle the same way you put on salvation by faith. You don't wait for the goose pimples or the lightning or the thunder. You open your heart and receive.

Put on the mantle so that you may have life. Reading from Romans 8 (which is the big chapter about the mantle),

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. (His righteousness.)

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.

Romans 8:9-11

The same life that raised Jesus from the dead, the same life that turned the water into wine, that opened the eyes of the blind comes to you now. Put on the mantle and you will have life Life is nowhere else.

The life of God is in the mantle.....

The life of God is in the Spirit.....

It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh --is of no avail. The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life.....

put them on.

Put on the mantle so that you may overcome the weakness of your own flesh.

So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.

Romans 8:12,13

Many of us are walking around resigned to the idea that “I'm going to be an emotional cripple the rest of my life.”

God knows I love him. Jesus knows I love him. But there are certain weaknesses in me that I'm just going to have to live with the rest of my life. It's a lie straight from the pit.

Some of us are saying,

- "Every once-in-a-while I'm just going to have to go out and get drunk. Get high. Indulge myself"
- "I can't help it, but every once-in-a-while I slip into sexual sin."
- "I can't help it but I get eaten up with obsessions of jealousy."

And this goes on and on and on. We know these weaknesses are there and we say,

"Well, I'm human. Everybody has their problems. God understands."

Nonsense! put on the mantle and by the Spirit overcome the weaknesses of the flesh. It can be done.... there's no reason why we have to do any of those things anymore. By the power of the Spirit you don't have to get drunk any more, or high any more, whatever it is that we're involved in.

If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.

Put on the mantle so that you can walk as sons and daughters of God.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Romans 8:14-17

Many of us are walking around like orphans. We feel we really don't belong anywhere. Nobody really knows us, or loves us, or cares about us. And this is why many of us are obsessed with the idea that we have to make our mark somehow. We get our sense of worth by how much we can acquire or how much we can achieve or what kind of dent we can make in other people's lives.

Put on the mantle and immediately you will begin to hear a cry from your inmost heart,

"Abba! Father!"

And you will know that he is your Father you belong to him. You don't have to prove anything anymore. You're his daughter, his son, you're royalty walking down the street!

Put on the mantle so that you can pray with power.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:26,27

Paul the apostle who has been laboring for years and years still says,

"We don't know how to pray as we ought."

He includes himself ... he doesn't know how to pray. Nobody knows how to pray. There are no experts in prayer. The ones who pray are the ones who wear mantles. It's the mantle of Elijah that makes it possible for us to pray.

Many of us become so discouraged. We've tried and tried to have some kind of prayer life. We know we have to have a disciplined prayer life that we can't make it if we don't have a disciplined prayer life but we fail again and again. The reason we fail is because we try to do it without the mantle. Put on the mantle. Go into your room and shut the door and receive again the Spirit of the Lord.

“God, I don't know how to pray. Father, I don't even know what to say ... my mind doesn't concentrate. Lord, fill me with your Spirit again. Put the mantle over my shoulders....”
... and he will. You will find yourself crying, “Abba! Father!” You will begin to pray as you've never prayed before with confidence and freedom and power and joy.

Put on the mantle so that you can have bread to feed the hungry. People come to us with problems that are absolutely overwhelming. We don't know what to say to them. We don't know what to do. We feel so stupid. Put on the mantle and you'll have bread for these people!

And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything'? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit (the mantle) to those who ask him!”

So we ask for the mantle ... daily, hourly. “Give me bread Lord God,” and he gives it. Now they come to us and we have bread for the hungry ... we have healing for the sick ... we have hope for the despairing ... we have wisdom for the ones who are confused ... we have truth for those who are in error ... we have life for those who are dead ... and we have a word that will awaken those who are fast asleep.

Put on the mantle so that you can have a living word....
a word that will succor and strengthen those who are weary.

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.
Acts 4:31

They all spoke. Not just the ones who had the special gift of gab..... everybody.

Again we feel like we just don't have it. We open our mouths and so often nothing of any value seems to come out. But the mantle of the Lord gives us a door of utterance. Every one of us is called to open our mouth.

*He who believes in me, out of his heart shall
flow rivers of living water.....*

and this is true. Open your mouth and God will give you words that will be life.

Finally, put on the mantle so you don't have to spend the rest of your life in fear. So you can cast aside the spirit of fear.

Hence I remind you (Timothy) to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power and love and of a sound mind.

Most of us are so hampered and inhibited by fear.
We're afraid somebody might hit us,
We're afraid we're going to be rejected,
We're afraid we might fail,
We're afraid our friends might laugh at us,
We're afraid afraid afraid.

Timothy, a strong and wonderful servant of God, allowed his mantle to get loose and Paul had to rebuke him.

“Come on, stir up your gift! Get that mantle on again! What's the matter with you?”

And he says that to us today....

“Put on the mantle and don't be afraid! Defy your fear and move ahead.”

If we today will walk out the door wearing the mantle of the Lord we're going to have a week like we've never had in our lives. We'll hit the Jordan and the waters will part. We'll speak to the rock and it will open and living water will come out. We'll rebuke the devil and he'll flee. We'll call upon the Father and he'll answer. We'll announce to the world that Jesus risen from the dead is Lord and he himself will come in behind our words and confirm their truth.

“Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

“It's not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses.”

That power has come and is coming now. And if we'll put it on and wear it and move in it we will be his witnesses ... witnesses like we've never been before.