

Podcast Episode 92: Garments, Part 2

This is part 2 of a series about garments, where Denver discusses temple garments, wedding garments, and other clothing as mentioned in the scriptures.

DENVER: One of the things that I was reminded about this week by a friend (I coined it, but he suggested the idea) is that it's important that you not get the misimpression that before you wind up in the presence of the Lord, *you* have the responsibility of making yourself absolutely spick-and-span. In terms of connecting with the Lord, it is essentially a come-as-you-are party because you're never going to be able to do the heavy lifting required to be clean in His presence. He does that; you don't. He extends the invitation; you accept it. It's a come-as-you-are party.

There are two parables that the Lord told that I want to put together to help illustrate the point. One of them is in Matthew chapter 22 (see also Matthew 10:17-19 RE). It's a parable about a wedding feast. And the Lord, in that parable, talks about how the folks that were invited wouldn't show up. And because the folks that were invited would not show up, an invitation was extended, essentially, to whoever was out on the streets. And the folks that were out on the streets were brought in. Begin at verse 8 of chapter 22: *Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy* (Matthew 8:22; see also Matthew 10:18 RE).

You know, he's telling a story, largely about a condition that persists whenever you find a religious organization functioning, because institutions have a way of having their own cares. Joseph Smith was a disastrous businessman. He created financial debacle after financial debacle. The most notorious one was the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Group—*Anti*, because they couldn't get the bank charter. But if you file for bankruptcy in the state of Utah, one of the things that they do at the discharge hearing—in order to help people feel better about themselves—is they remind people that at the time of his death, Joseph Smith had a pending petition in bankruptcy. And that is supposed to salve the conscience of those who find themselves in that extremity.

The fact is that Joseph was not a particularly good businessman because he didn't care for business. He wound up giving away his inventory to the needy folks, rather than trying to profit off of the needs of the Saints. There was some exasperation about that. Well, we fixed that. We have, managing the church and attending to the financial interests of the kingdom (as we call it now), those that are more than qualified financially. I suspect a profligate like Joseph Smith would be unsuitable for management today. But in any event, the parable

starts with the Lord, who's trying to get people to come to the wedding, telling the servants the wedding's ready but those that I've asked are not worthy:

Go...into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid [them] to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways [always the servants, always angels do this work; they do the gathering], and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. ...when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there [was] a man which had not...a wedding garment...Saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou...hither not having a wedding garment?...He was speechless...The king [said], Bind him hand and foot...take him away...cast him into outer darkness. There shall be weeping [and wailing] and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 22:9-13; see also Matthew 10:18-19 RE)

So, I won't put that on the table, because in this part of this parable you have anyone who will come being invited, because the people that were targeted for attendance simply aren't worthy to come. So anyone gets to come. And now you have among them someone who doesn't have on a wedding garment. And for that I want to refer you to Luke chapter 15, because in Luke chapter 15 we run into the Lord talking about a robe being supplied. This is the son who found himself, having been in a far-off land, filling *his belly with the husks that the swine did eat...no man gave unto him*. He comes to himself, says: *How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?* So when he goes back to see his father, look at what happens in verse 22 of Luke chapter 15: *But the father said to his servants [again, it's the angels that do this], Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; ...put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet* (Luke 15:16,17,22; see also Luke 9:13-14 RE).

You see, this, I think, has to be kept in mind whenever you're looking at someone who's arrived at the feast, bidden from the highway, who arrives and doesn't have on the robe. The Master is the one that wants you to wear it. The Master is the one that will furnish it. Don't think that the purpose of the Lord is to judge. The purpose of the Lord is to redeem, and for that purpose He is infinitely patient and willing, if you will respond, with forgiveness of your sins, as He does consistently throughout the Book of Mormon.

If we are going to begin again, it must be in conformity with the Doctrine of Christ; it must be taught by the spirit of truth, and it must follow the pattern that was given in Kirtland for us to follow.

Now, having said all that, let me read to you some things which the Lord said concerning *this* moment, because He's talking about an event that will happen. This is from Matthew chapter 22, beginning at verse 2:

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go...therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So [the] servants went out into the highways and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen. (see also Matthew 10:17-19 RE)

Now, several things about this: This is one of those places in scripture in which "remnant" is used in a negative way. A remnant. God invites *all* to come to the wedding feast of his Son. This is when the kingdom is going to be established in the last days. He invites all to come. And from among all of those people who had been invited, there's a remnant of those who still hold onto the Restoration, and they are the worst of all. They have the hardest hearts. They are the ones who will not come.

And after the Lord deals with them, then He goes out and invites *everyone* to come. Everyone! Come in! And included among those that are invited in, are *as many as they found, both bad and good* (ibid). They're all invited to come in, and there's no excluding the bad—speaking after the judgments of this world. Bad people get invited in and when they come, and when they arrive, it's not whether they're a bad person or a good person that determines whether they get to stay or not. It's the presence or absence of a wedding garment.

Well, turn to Luke chapter 18. This is Luke chapter 18, beginning at verse 10:

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:10-14; see also Luke 10:7 RE)

Didn't matter that he was a "bad man." Didn't matter that the other was a "good man." I tell you at the wedding feast, it would be the publican who wore the "wedding garment." The first wedding garment—if you want to call it that—is the original garment that was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden to cover their nakedness, and to cover their shame before God. All of which is an allegory.

The covering required the sacrifice of an animal to teach them the principle of sacrifice, and to foreshadow the death of our Lord that would be required in order to restore us back to a state before God. And so, what the covering given to Adam and Eve in the Garden represented was the sacrifice of our Lord. It was our Lord's atoning sacrifice which makes it possible for us to be covered, so that our shame is no longer there. Instead, God looks upon the righteousness of His Son, who has clothed us; and not upon our own guilt, and our own weakness, and our own shortcomings. He beholds the image of His Son in the garment that we have put on.

And so it is, that in the wedding feast to which people are invited, the first who got invited would not come. But even the "bad ones"—even the "bad ones" who are out in the byways, even the ones... There's about 13 million inactive Latter-day Saints. There's a lot of "bad ones" out there, who are only kept from the truth because they haven't heard it yet.

If I had the means, I'd buy an ad space in the *Los Angeles Times* and I'd say: "Here's the Doctrine of Christ," and I would quote 3rd Nephi. And I would say afterwards: "If you believe this doctrine and you want to be baptized and get the Holy Ghost, meet me at..." and I would put a location; and I would hope that included among those who came would be gang members—inner-city people who live lives of desperation and violence—who want a way out. Can you imagine what would happen if you sent someone back into an abusive neighborhood, clothed with the power of repentance and the Holy Ghost?

We can't fix this world by legislating, but we can fix *anything* by changing hearts. Those that are invited will not come. They'll even abuse those who try to take them in. But there are

plenty of folks in the byways who are only kept from the truth because they don't know where to find it. This is your responsibility. This is your work to do. This is the day in which these things need to be done.

Oddly enough, in our own day—in our own day—the Lord tells a slightly different version of exactly the same stuff, prophesying how it's going to happen among *us* in our day.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 58. This is talking about—well, I'm going to begin at verse 7: *And also that you might be honored in laying the foundation and in bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand* (see also T&C 45:2 RE).

I am going to put this into some footnotes when I finally get around to publishing in a book form the talk that was given in Grand Junction. But I'll stick it in here because we've touched on the words, *the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand* (ibid). I pointed out there all of the historical reasons why Zion could exist somewhere other than in property owned in Jackson County, Missouri, and could, in fact, be constructed elsewhere.

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, in their first trip out to Jackson County, Missouri, came there in order to confirm and ratify that this was the place where Zion would be built, and they got language and revelation that said this was “the land of Zion.” And so everyone since then till now, are all relying upon that language saying, “it's going to be Jackson County, Missouri.” That same month that Joseph and Sidney went out, Sidney Rigdon gave an explanation of what the geography of that “land of Zion” was. He said it began at Kirtland, Ohio, and it ran to the Pacific Ocean. So the land of Zion is rather flexible in where the Lord might choose ultimately to locate it.

So there's going to be some land where Zion will stand. *And also, that a feast of fat things might be prepared for the poor* (ibid, vs. 8). So the feast—the feast that is being prepared—has a highly specific audience in mind in the revelation. It's the poor.

Yea, a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined, that the earth may know that the mouths of the prophets shall not fail; yea, a supper of the House of the Lord, well prepared, unto which all nations shall be invited. First, the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble; And after that cometh the day of my power; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come. Behold, I, the Lord, have spoken it. (ibid, vs. 8-12)

Did you get that? First they invite “the rich,” and then “the learned;” and the nations shall all be invited—“the wise, the noble.” Doesn’t say they enter in. Doesn’t say they’ll partake. It was prepared, after all, for “the poor”—and the people who will enter in—who do finally make it into Zion where they get to partake. *Then shall the poor* [that’s who it was prepared for] *the lame, the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come* (ibid).

Every time you partake of the Sacrament, it’s a reminder of the promise that there will, at last, be some great wedding feast. It’s not just in remembrance of the blood and of the body, but it’s also a preliminary to the final feast that the Lord intends to offer.

Well, who are “the rich”? Who are “the learned”? Who are those that are presently considered “wise”? And who are those who make the claim that they are “the noble, the elect”? They do not enter into the wedding feast in Zion.

And who is it that is “the poor”? Who is it that is derided, even in today’s vocabulary, and accused of being “lame”? Who is it that is considered to be “blind” and “misled”? Who is it that is referred to as being “deaf,” because they cannot hear and respect all the great wisdom that pours forth from these empty cisterns, having nothing but drivel to offer? Quoting one another endlessly, as if one misled man on a false path can offer light to a fool following after him.

I hope we are “the poor.” I hope I am speaking to “the lame.” I hope you are counted among those that are considered “blind,” and I hope that you have ears not for what any man has to say, but for what the Spirit alone has to confirm to you. I hope you’re “deaf” to everything in this world, but have ears for what our Lord has to say.

This is the day in which, at long last, it is possible for what God intended to happen before His return, to actually begin. The Gospel is not supposed to be merely a record of how God dealt with other people at another time. Joseph Smith talked about how we can’t read the words of an old book, and then apply those words in an old book—that were meant for someone else at some other time—to us; and then restore ourselves back to God’s grace. That is just as true of the revelations given in the days of Joseph Smith, as it is true of the revelations given in the New Testament.

It becomes really apparent when you read them out of the scriptures, because all our footnotes, and all of our chapter headings, and all our cross referencing—it sort of gives you an impression that this stuff is talking about *us*. Right here. Right now. When you read them as they were written in *the Joseph Smith Papers*, it really becomes clear that when God

is talking about how the church is "living" and "alive" and "approved," it's because He's talking to Joseph Smith. And the church is listening to what Joseph Smith had to say. And "rolling forth" is the voice of God in *that* day. And Joseph Smith commissioned people to go out and to take it; and they took it, and they went out and preached it; and when they preached it, others were converted. And the people that were converted actually had experiences and came to know God. But that's because God acted to set it in motion in the person of Joseph Smith. Joseph had a covenant given to him by God. Therefore, Joseph could testify to these words, and they were true, and God owned them; and people who follow them received the wages of those who follow God. It worked! We can't mimic that and have the same effect.

God has to say: "This is what I want to do." And if no one else will say it to you, I'm saying it to you. Everything that has been said in this talk—which began in Boise and concludes here today—everything that has been said is, in fact, exactly what happened when God offered something through Joseph. He's offering something again, right now, in our day, to you, to any that will hear, to any that will listen. The work is beginning again.

I suppose it was necessary that what began in Joseph's time had to run down to the condition that it's in at present. That it had to become a leaky ruin of a farm, that Joseph himself no longer even wanted, before it was possible for the Lord to say, "At this moment we turn a new leaf." But my word, can't you see the signs of the times? Can't you look about and see that the whole world is waxing old like a garment? Can't you see that there is, right now, a balance of things that are kept at bay only to preserve the possibility that a remnant might be claimed? God promised He would do this.

Well, all things testify of what is currently getting, at last, underway. And make no mistake about it, it *is* getting underway. And I don't care where you look; I don't care what society you look at; I don't care what economy you observe, what culture you observe—the earth and all of the people on her are waxing old like a garment. And do you know what they do with garments that are old? They're burned. The way to preserve yourself consists in having faith in God. And the conditions upon which faith in God is obtained are exactly the same for you as they were for Moses, and Abraham, and all of those who have ever had faith; Joseph Smith being the latest, great example of that.

The foregoing are excerpts taken from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #2 entitled "Faith" given in Idaho Falls, ID on September 28th, 2013; and
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #10 entitled "Preserving the Restoration" given in Mesa, AZ on September 9th, 2014

Today's podcast addresses important questions about garments, but is only an introduction to ideas that listeners of any denomination may find important and relevant. These topics are more fully addressed in Denver's blog, including but not limited to these entries:

[1 Nephi 14:3-4](#), posted July 6, 2010

["this" and "that"](#), posted January 5, 2019