



Tuesday Devotion: Exodus Week 10 June 2, 2020

Priestly Garments

Bible Reference: [Exodus 28-30](#)

I grew up in a church with pastors who never wore their collar. For those unfamiliar with a pastor's collar shirt, traditionally it is a black dress shirt with a white rectangular insert at the throat. (Now days you can find collar shirts in many colors.) Why the white on the throat? Great question! The black shirt signifies that pastors are sinners, but the white insert signifies that Jesus uses our voice box to be the Means of Grace and to give forgiveness. Did you know that? Most members of LCMS congregations don't know that. That being the case, why do we still wear this stuff if no one understands its significance?

In my first two churches we wore albs (long white robes), stoles (skinny, colored, embroidered fabric that hangs around a pastor's neck and down both sides in the front), and collars in the places where they were expected (traditional services, funerals, etc.), but we went to the other services in jeans and polos. Did people lose respect for us being pastors dressed that way? I don't think so. The question we asked ourselves as a pastoral staff was what would make us more embraceable? Many times the answer was to look like the people and not wear stuff they don't understand.

When I came to Mt. Calvary, I felt that part of my job was to not ruffle unnecessary feathers. What did that mean? It meant I would wear an alb if that is what you were used to. Now, eight years later, we are in a new time. We are facing a population where the vast majority don't know Jesus. Right now, with our services being online, our reach has gotten bigger. Two to three times more people are watching the service online as would actually attend our service before COVID. Asking myself the same question as before, what is going to make us more embraceable? First, I think, it is to make ourselves relatable, which is why I changed my Sunday attire.

In our Exodus chapters for today, especially chapter 28, it talks about the elaborate garments priests were supposed to wear. But remember, this was for God's people, a specific population. Later in the New Testament when Jesus comes to share the Gospel, we don't see Him wearing anything special, whether He is speaking to the crowds of

unbelievers or to His disciples. What does that say about our priestly garment requirements for today?

I started wearing shorts to worship last weekend. It was hot; and wearing long pants or an alb is not practical in summer heat and humidity when you are outside for any length of time. Does this affect what we do or what you think we should do? Does an unchurched culture desire a pastor who dresses more like them? Would that help them to come to church? I don't know any of these answers, but I do know that Jesus wants to meet people where they are at. I have no clue where this will take us, but the wilderness season has brought us to thinking about our priestly garments. Maybe it is time to step back, re-evaluate and try something new? Maybe our priestly garments look like jeans and a dress shirt in an unchurched culture. Keep thinking and praying about this. Perhaps it won't only be the church that looks different when we come back together, it might be your pastor too!

I love you! I miss you! See you soon!

God's Peace,
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