

In Nomine Iesu

Midweek Lent 4 – 2025 The Naked Truth Genesis 3:7 & 21 and John 19:23-24

“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths ... And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.”

“When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.’ This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, ‘They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.’ So the soldiers did these things.”

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Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who covers our many sins with His own perfect righteousness. Dear fellow redeemed in Christ:

I cannot imagine what it would have been like when the world was new, when the effect of sin had never been experienced by anyone, when the destruction sin does to the lives of people had never been felt by Adam or Eve. I cannot imagine what it is to realize what they realized when their eyes were opened to both good – which indeed they knew very well – and evil, which was all new to them. They saw that they were naked - a concept that had never occurred to them before ... and suddenly felt vulnerable and ashamed. They felt in their minds, their hearts, their souls something was wrong, horribly wrong ... and wanted to hide from their Creator, from the One, the only One, who had always given them only good. I cannot imagine what they felt in that moment their eyes were opened.

“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” Their eyes were opened. Well, let’s stop right there. Here is the difference between them then and us now. Unlike Adam and Eve we have never known what it is to live in a world where sin does not exist. We have never known what they knew ... **and lost.**

We veterans of sin, both in our own lives and in the world around us, usually have our eyes closed when we see our nakedness. That is, we close our eyes at night in order to sleep, but often cannot sleep as the images of things past run through our minds, things that continue to trouble us ... and we see our nakedness before God, but not as the first couple saw theirs, for we see ours repeatedly. We see our nakedness when we close our eyes in prayer, confessing our sins before God. We see them when we close our eyes because we do not want to look at our sins, but still they are there. We do not want to be in the situation we are in. Yet, here we are. We close our eyes, because we do not want to see our sins nor do we want others to see them, to see our shame, our nakedness.

Tonight we consider these weighty matters, matters that, perhaps, do not trouble the people around us much, people who do not see sin as such a problem. But, you know, the difference between a child of God and an unbeliever is not that one is better than the other. That is false, categorically false. Both are flawed and sinful. Both fall short

of the glory of God. Both are, like Adam and Eve, naked and fearful in the garden, the world. The only difference is that the believer fears God and the unbeliever fears everything else. The believer knows that the only solution lies in the hands of the God of grace and mercy, the unbeliever only can look for solutions everywhere else, even though he or she cannot find them.

The first indication of where to look for a solution to the problem of sin, the problem of how to escape the fix we have gotten ourselves into, was given to the two soon after the problem was revealed to their now open eyes. They were naked, fearful, vulnerable. But where could they turn to find help? It was to the very One who gave them only good all the time, the God who created them: “The LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.” God takes away their immediate fear. He clothes them, makes them feel safe again, and in so doing points them to the solution He had just spoken of to them: the Seed of the woman, who He promised would crush the serpent’s head and so undo the damage sin has done.

I would direct your attention to the first stained glass windowpane on my left. I used it one time in school chapel, when asking the students to find all the depictions of sheep in these windows. They found all of them, except this one. When I pointed that out, they objected, saying that the skins Adam and Eve wear in the stained glass are brown, not white. But then I asked how you wear fleece, turned inside or outside? Which is more comfortable and comforting? The Lord God’s purpose in clothing them, you see, was not only to hide their nakedness and shame, but also to comfort them and give them hope.

Mankind would need that comfort and hope in its long wait for the promised Seed of the woman to appear. Generation after generation would come and go until Simeon held the precious Child in his arms and said, “Lord, now You let Your servant depart in peace according to Your word. For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared **before the eyes of all people.**”

Which brings us to the Roman soldiers who divided Jesus’ clothing after nailing Him to the cross. And here we come to another “I cannot imagine.” I cannot imagine the scene of Jesus’ crucifixion as He the eternal Son of God and Son of Man is stripped naked **in front of** the sneering, howling, self-righteous crowd. I can’t imagine the depth of the Father’s love for us that allowed His Son to be the focal point of so much hatred and mockery for sins that were not His Son’s but theirs **and ours.** And yet, that is the love and mercy that lay behind all the promises of the many years God’s people waited for the promised Messiah from the first promise of the woman’s Seed to the final one, to the woman, who would bear Him. Dear friends, that is the love and mercy that covers us who trust in Him who bore all our sins. That is the certainty we have as we approach our own death, not naked and fearful, but covered in the very righteousness of God’s own Son, earned for us by His life lived in our stead and by His death in our place. That is our comfort. That is what Jesus meant when He said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria