

The Old Paths

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“Evidence That Jesus Cares For You”

Jarrod Jacobs

We live in a time in which few people seem to care for us. David knew this feeling, and wrote on one occasion, *“I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul”* (Ps. 142:4). In contrast, we read Peter’s words, reminding us of the care Christ has for us: *“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you”* (I Pet. 5:7).

Yet, how can we see evidence of Christ’s care for us? Let us look first at His care for others while He walked the earth. A very well-known passage is the statement, *“Jesus wept”* (Jn. 11:35). Do we remember the context in which this statement was made? Jesus wept while standing at the tomb of Lazarus! He cared for Lazarus and his family and showed it through His weeping.

We know that Jesus cares for us because of His great sacrifice upon the cross (Rom. 5:8). Before this event, Jesus made the statement, *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”* (Jn. 15:13). Truly, Jesus did this when He died upon the cross to be the great sacrifice for man’s sin. The “lamb of God” took away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29). Yet, unlike a literal lamb, who was taken against its will and killed in Old Testament days, Jesus said, *“Therefore doth my Father love me,*

because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (Jn. 10:17-18; cf. Matt. 26:53-56). Truly, it is evident that Christ cares for us when we see the extent of His sacrifice for us!

Christ’s care is seen when we read of the Lord’s plan for salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). Our Lord wants us to be saved from sin and live with Him in Heaven one day. Therefore, He cares enough to tell us what to do to be saved and have a right relationship with Him. Read I Peter 5:7 again, and remember that these words were written to Christians. Christ wants our care cast upon Him; not some, or part of it, but “all” of it! How many today would look to their fellow-man and say, “Please give me all your cares, concerns, and worries, because I care for you”? Yet, Jesus Christ, the son of the living God wants “all” our care “cast” upon Him, and He means it! Men may disappoint us, but Christ never will! He loves and cares for us.

These are but a few examples of Christ’s care for us. In learning this great truth, let us also remember that the Bible says we are to walk in His steps (I Pet. 2:21-22). We are to speak and act according to what the Lord has authorized (permitted, Col. 3:17). Therefore, who has been the recipient of our care for them (Matt. 25:31-44)? How many can say they have seen “Christ in us” (Gal. 2:20) by the care we have shown them? (cf. Matt. 5:16)

Does The Church Need A Dress Code?

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The church of our Lord constitutes the people of God. In order for God’s people to worship and work together collectively, God has authorized the local congregation – like this one – Christians in a given area agreeing to come together in order that God may be worshiped and that they may work together to save souls locally and abroad.

Christians, in and out of the church services, must be devoted to faithful, holy living before God. While before we were converted to Christ, we were in this world of sin, now, having obeyed the gospel, we have been translated out of the power of darkness and into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love (Col. 1:13). We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-15). We are now *“an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”* (I Pet. 2:9). In our devotion to God, we must be dedicated to holy living, and strongly determined to be different from this sinful world – *“perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (II Cor. 6:14-7:1).

While we always need God’s warnings and admonitions to be faithful in our lives generally, it is apparent that we need reminded of such even in our worship services! If little emphasis has been given to holiness – in action, dress, and speech – one may come to accept such as the norm and have no qualms in bringing worldly behavior into the worship services of the church.

The question of whether this church needs a dress code is a case in point.

Whenever Christians have no problem with dressing immodestly in worship – wearing shorts, tight-fitting and low-cut apparel, mini-skirts, etc. – the question has to be asked. When one feels the need to check themselves when greeted by others – tugging at and attempting to rearrange their clothes so as not to expose themselves in outright nudity, they ought to be ashamed. When those who serve the Lord's Supper feel the need to turn their heads because a dress is too short or a top is too low-cut, there is a problem.

Should it be a surprise to learn that God has already given us such a dress code? *"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety ... (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works"* (I Tim. 2:9-10). One's outward appearance is merely a reflection of their outward character – what's in their heart. The apostle Peter teaches us this when he says our clothing/appearance should be governed by *"the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price"* (I Pet. 3:4). That's why God admonishes us to *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life"* (Prov. 4:23). That's also why the Scriptures refer to the *"attire of a harlot"* (Prov. 7:10). Yes, clothes do make the person.

Therefore, to be holy and pure before God requires we dress modestly in and out of the worship services of the church. Indeed, the fact that this problem exists demonstrates our need to give serious thought to our general holiness before God.

Please consider the following points:

1) The "god of this world" – the devil – is in the business of trying to blind us to the truth of God's word, even to the searing of

our consciences to that which is decent and right. However, we can resist the devil (Jas. 4:7); he won't take control UNLESS WE LET HIM (II Cor. 4:4; I Tim. 4:1-2).

2) We dare not be naïve to the nature of sexual desire and the power of its temptations. We are commanded to *"flee fornication"* (I Cor. 6:18), which necessitates an understanding of lust. Rather than just understanding that the act of sexual immorality is wrong, Jesus said, *"...that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"* (Matt. 5:28). While this imposes duty to the "looker", would we deny, in light of the scriptures above, that it also demands responsibility in dress/appearance to the one being looked at? Any type of dress – be it a swim suit or any other type of dress which draws attention to oneself in a sexual way – is clearly involved in what the Lord condemns here.

3) True to the character of the wicked is a loss of any sense of shame and the inability to "blush" because of their indecent lives (Jer. 6:14). We know why a prostitute dresses the way she does, but what excuse does a Christian have for doing so?

4) We have an awesome responsibility to present ourselves as a good example before others, that by our influence, *"they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:16). One duty in our worship services is that we *"consider*

one another to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). What kind of example does your dress set for fellow-Christians in the worship? And what influence does it wield to non-Christians who may be visiting our services? Will they leave our service thinking that *"God is among you indeed"* (I Cor. 14:25), when they witness some of the members dressed like the world? Such an appearance, in or out of the church services, destroys one's influence for good.

5) Parents are duty-bound before God to *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Prov. 22:6). Godly parents will *"nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord"* (Eph. 6:4). Entrusted with the souls of their children, parents must not set aside these commands so that their children can blend in with the world in order to save them from the embarrassment of feeling different. Instead, we need to be teaching them that Christians are to be different (II Cor. 6:14-18)!

Are these concerns merely the ranting of a fanatical preacher? Have I "stopped preaching and gone to meddling"? Some may think so and, consequently, will dismiss these things as such. Rest assured, though, that your disagreement is not with the preacher – it's with God! Those who want to please God will prayerfully consider what God's word says and recognize the gravity of these matters.

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"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6:16)