



May 14, 2011

Without Shame

By Teresa Hampton

Do you remember the classic *The Emperor's New Clothes* by Hans Christian Anderson? The self-indulgent emperor spent much time showing off his new clothes. One day two men convinced him they could make a beautiful suit for him of cloth that was invisible to anyone who was incompetent or stupid. The emperor thought it would help him know which subjects were competent or not. He paid the men a large sum of money and put them to work. When they finished the *invisible* suit, they dressed the emperor in his new clothes. Of course, all of his officials said his suit was magnificent, fearing that the king would think them incompetent. During the procession through the town, the people shouted about the grandness of his attire – they did not want to appear stupid. Until one little boy said, “He doesn’t have anything on!” The emperor, however, was too proud to admit he had been duped, so he continued in the procession without shame, with his head held high.

As I pondered this story, I realized it could be a representation of the deceit, gullibility, flattery, arrogance, and shamelessness that can overtake a person. Satan deceives man into thinking people will love and accept him if he puts on sin. Friends and neighbors, fearing they will be perceived as judgmental, refuse to call sin *sin*. Instead of admitting his sin, man continues to parade himself. With the world cheering him on, he walks shamelessly clothed in sin. *Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things* (Philippians 3:19). His pride does not allow him to admit that he has been deceived and that sin is, in fact, empty – it promises much but delivers nothing. Solomon said, *I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind* (Ecclesiastes 1:14).

The truth is, sin is nakedness in the eyes of God. *For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked* (Rev. 3:17). The sinner needs to feel the sense of shame again and accept the reality of his or her condition.

Let us not be deceived into thinking sin is beautiful. Paul said, *Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires* (Eph. 4:22). Let us not be gullible – there is danger in listening to what we want to hear, *and* in telling someone what he or she wants to hear. If we have believed the lies and allowed Satan to clothe us with nakedness, we should blush with shame, have the courage and humility to confess our sin, and then put on the robe of righteousness!

Today's Verse: *I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban* (Job 29:14), and *Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy* (Psalm 132:9). See also: 2 Thess. 2:9-12, Rom. 1:25

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