

The Evolution of Modesty & the Unchanging Word

(Matthew 6:10)

- Introduction:
1. Ills. of General Lee & Stonewall Jackson – “Your smallest desire is my greatest command.”
 2. The issue of modesty, like all over moral issues can be settled if we possess such an attitude.
 3. Ills. of boy who wouldn’t sit with girls at church.

I. Background to this sermon

- A. Preaching on modesty is a delicate matter.
- B. While human sexuality is a Bible topic, it is a sensitive topic.
- C. Ills. Sermon Central – 150,000 sermons – Just 7 on Modesty!
- D. Either we don’t have a problem with modesty, or we’re unwilling to preach on the topic.
- E. While I don’t enjoy preaching on this topic, I want to be faithful to my Lord (Acts 20:27).
- F. Would we sit idly by and allow truth about baptism, role of women, etc. be hijacked or discarded?
- G. (2 Timothy 4:1-4).
- H. I ask for your ear. Listen with an open and honest heart, and refrain from the urge to defend and justify yourself, but instead, justify God and defend his high and holy standards.

II. Modesty is a Problem Among God’s People

- A. It’s an unspoken problem, but it is not hidden. We all see it.
- B. The silence may be due to cowardice, or sensitivity, but we must overcome both.
- C. Ills. (1837) Hans Christian Anderson – “The Emperor’s New Clothes.”
- D. The intent of this lesson is to verbalize what we have all been thinking to ourselves but have been reluctant to say out loud.
- E. It’s time we stop pretending and speak aloud.

III. The Issue of Modesty

- A. Henry Van Til, former professor of Bible at Calvin College
 1. “Culture is religion Externalized.”
 2. The culture of a nation reflects the faith of that people.
 3. The way people live, talk, dress, and work reflect their standards, values, and priorities.
- B. “Dress is religion externalized.”
 1. Cultures enslaved to material possessions fall prey to high fashion.
 2. Cultures that treasure sensuality tend to dress immodestly.
 3. Cultures that embrace Christian piety will make personal holiness the driving standard for their lives.
- C. The way people dress reveals much about their character and what they value.
 1. Dress for success (Matthew 11:8).
 2. Dress makes a religious statement (2 Samuel 3:31; 11:8).
 3. Dress makes a moral statement (Proverbs 7:10).
- D. Some dress not only says, “Sexuality,” but it screams it!

1. Clothing designers have stolen the innocence of youth.
2. Little girls wear under garments as outer garments – prostitutes.
3. Do we really want our 6-year-old girls dressing sexy?
4. Men, do you want your girls ogled?
- E. What message is your dress conveying?
 1. Success? Religion? Morality? Rebellion? Sexuality?
 2. Your actions speak louder than your words.
- F. When speaking on this topic, you're likely to be labeled.
 1. Some will judge me as a legalist, others a libertarian.
 2. My objective is not to bind my scruples or opinions.
 3. I'm not interested in getting out a ruler, what I am going to do is what the Lord and the apostle Paul did – remind you the purpose of clothing and the message our clothing should send.

IV. What Does The Bible Say About Modesty

- A. We have forgotten the fundamental purpose of clothing – to cover and hide our nakedness (Genesis 3:21).
- B. Go back to the beginning.
 1. Naked and ashamed (Gen. 2:25).
 2. Fig leaves – girdle or loin covering (Gen. 3:7).
 3. God made a tunic – coat, long shirt like garment (Gen. 3:21).
- C. (1 Timothy 2:9,10).
 1. Modesty – not limited to sexual connotation. “Respectable, honorable, having regard for decency of behavior or dress.”
 2. Propriety – “Shamefacedness” - sense of shame that would cause one to shrink from trespassing boundaries of modesty.
 3. Our dress should not speak “Sex,” “Pride,” “Riches,” but “Purity,” “Humility,” and “Moderation.”
- D. You can't dress like that and be cool and fit in?
 1. Since when did we get the notion we must fit in?
 2. Paul begged us to be different from the world (Romans 12:2).
 3. Are we really so shallow and undisciplined that we're more concerned about the world thinks than our Lord?

V. Does Culture Have A Role In Modesty?

- A. Yes, but only secondarily.
- B. Tamar (Genesis 38:14-15) vs Paul (1 Corinthians 11:5-6).
- C. Then how do we define modesty...is it subjective?
 1. Respect culture norms (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).
 2. Let God's unchanging word serve as an unchanging standard (Gen 3:21).

- Conclusion:
1. I close with an appeal to love.
 - a. Love toward one another.
 - b. Love toward God.
 2. Make certain you would shrink from any dress or conduct that would be considered indecent or immodest and that fails to profess godliness.

