



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

January 5, 2014  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Christmas  
Sermon Text: [Isaiah 61:10-62:3](#)  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 61:10-62:3](#)  
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 148](#)  
Second Lesson: [Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18](#)  
Gospel Lesson: [John 1:14-18](#)

### Promises Kept: He Has Clothed Us With Salvation

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

When it comes to Christmas gifts, how excited do you get when you unwrap it and you lift the lid off the box and you see it's clothes? Do you get all pumped up about clothes? Socks? New underwear? Stuff like that? Does that get you really excited that you don't even want to look at the next gift? Or do you kind of remember that you're supposed to smile and say thank you, but you're really just raring to tear into the next gift because you don't really care? Is that kind of how you are?

Or are there some clothes you get excited to get when you lift up that box and lift the top off that box and what greets you and looking back at you is Honolulu blue and silver? It's kind of exciting, right? Maybe you get a jersey of your favorite team? That's kind of cool, right?

Or maybe you get clothes with a label on that you usually wouldn't get. Now you have the right label on your clothes and you can wear it at school or something and it's going to look really good to everyone else and you're going to kind of strut around now because you've got the right clothes.

I bought a new coat a week or two weeks ago. I really like it. It's really nice. So when we were talking about something as we were walking to the car with the kids one day, Claire said something about modeling or something. So I started doing modeling poses with that new coat. I thought it was great. She didn't think so, not so much. But sometimes it's clothes and you get it and you're excited and you're showing it off.

This morning that's what our God talks to us about. I certainly hope when you look at the clothes God says he has given to you today that you don't go "That's nice. I want to tear into the next gift." These are those clothes that get you excited. These are those clothes that make us what we are. These are the clothes that give us the joy and the peace and the comfort that we need as we live in a fallen world, because our God has kept his promise. He's clothed us with the garment of salvation. Isn't that what it says in there? Did you see that in verses 10 and 11?

*he has clothed me with garments of salvation  
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,  
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

It tells us these clothes that God has given us, the garment of salvation, they're something special. That's what that next verse was really saying, like a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest. That probably doesn't make a whole lot of sense to us today, but think about a bridegroom and a bride. When you see them on their wedding day, they aren't wearing their normal clothes, right? They have that neat tux that they're never going to wear again and that beautiful dress that, Lord willing, they'll never wear again. But it's something special. In those days it was a turban, a headgear like the priest wore that you'd wear on your wedding day. Your special jewels. It was something that you were really proud of, something that you were excited about, something that was saying to everyone else that saw you that this is something special.

Some people debate the first few verses of our text. Is it the Messiah speaking or is it God's people? I don't really think it matters. If it's the Messiah speaking, the garments of salvation that God dressed him in are the garments he won for us. If it's us speaking, it's the benefit of what he has done for us. It ends up being the same thing. These clothes, these garments of salvation are ours, not because we made them, not because we picked them out but because the Messiah gave us clothes that we could never have on our own. What we are like on our own is sinful, lost creatures who cannot stand before God because God says, "You have to be perfect." You and I aren't perfect. We can't stand in front of God.

It's kind of like those recurring dreams that some people have. Did you ever have one of those dreams where you show up in public and you're just in your underwear or something like that? You're all worried and embarrassed? Did you ever have a dream kind of like that? That's what we are. That's not a dream. That's reality. We can't stand before God in our own clothes because we have nothing. He demands perfection. We don't have it. We are without clothes before him in that sense.

That's why the Messiah came. That's why he was born in Bethlehem. That's why he lived under the Law. On the 8<sup>th</sup> day he was placed under the Law when he was circumcised. That's why he did everything in our place to fulfill the Law because you and I can't do it. Then God gives us, through the Word and through the Sacraments, faith that Jesus is our Savior. Then we are clothed with these garments of salvation. And I hope you're still excited about that. There are a lot of things that keep us from being excited, right?

As we go through life, we face so many troubles. We face so many challenges. We face so much sadness. We face so many things that weigh us down and make our shoulders hunched over just with the burdens we carry through life. On those days, reflect on you are the bride of Christ. He has put you in his best garments, the righteousness that Jesus won for you. Reflect on that truth that your God loves you that much no matter what, and he wants you to be excited that he loves you, that he's taken away your sin, that he's opened heaven to you, that no matter who you are or what you've done, Jesus paid for every last one of those sins. When you believe that Jesus

lived and died in your place, you are forgiven. Heaven is yours. You are the dressed up bride of Christ. It's a glorious truth. Don't take it for granted. Don't become so used to it that you don't marvel at it anymore.

But not only are we dressed in the garments of salvation. In this reading from Isaiah, God tells us that we are dressed in it also for a purpose. He tells us that he wants the nations to see our vindication, that we have been declared not guilty. He wants kings to see our glory. Our glory is Jesus. Our vindication is Jesus. Part of the reason we wear these garments of salvation is so that others can see them. Others can believe them. Others can have them. Think of how different that is.

If you grew up with a sibling that was about your size, did you ever fight over clothes? If you have a sibling in your house right now about your size, do you guys ever fight over clothes? I thought so. It's something that we do all the time. We don't care about whether or not we're going to wear it or not until we see our sibling in it. Then that's exactly what we have to have. We don't like to share, right?

Think about these garments of salvation. If I tell you about the garment of salvation, if I share the garments of salvation with you that Jesus lived and died in your place and you get to put them on and you get to wear them, you get to have the same joy I do, and I'm still wearing them. I don't have to fight over them with you. It's not like if I share Christ with you there's less Christ for me. That's the glorious truth about our God. He loves us each personally. Each perfectly. When we share him with someone else, other people come to know it and they know that they have been clothed with the garments of Christ's salvation as well. That's God's plan.

But the rub is, sometimes that means we put ourselves on the line in a way that we don't really want to. If I'm going to live in my garments of salvation, if I'm going to speak about my garments of salvation, who Jesus is and what he has done, I have to put myself on the line at times. That means first of all that I have to be speaking it to myself all the time. But then there are those that maybe have known it and are drifting away. I need to tell them about it. Tell them how important it is and say come back to Christ. Be connected to him. Or if I know people that don't know Christ at all, if they die, they're going to hell. I don't want that to happen, so I have to say something. And they might not like it. It might cause me problems. So we are tempted to keep our mouths shut, don't rock the boat, and let everything go along just fine. When we do that, we fail our God. He's told us we are his messengers. We are to declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light so that others might know the everlasting light.

When you and I fail to do it because we are worried about ourselves, we've sinned against the First Commandment, you shall have no other gods, because we have made my feelings my god. That's more important than what my God wants me to do. Then I've failed to honor and proclaim his Word when I have had the opportunity to do so, so I've sinned against my God also by neglecting to share his Word.

Then all of a sudden on the garment of my salvation there is a big old stain. You dribbled off the side of your lip and stained your nice pretty shirt. It's called sin. When we fail our God, we have sinned.

But here's the beautiful thing about our God. When we are clothed in Christ's righteousness, Christ takes that stain out. He forgives that sin and says, "You have failed me, but through faith in Jesus, you are forgiven and heaven is yours." That's what makes me want to share Christ all the more. It makes me want to maybe endure someone being upset with me because I told them Jesus is really important for them. We want to do it. We don't have to do it. We want to do it as Christians because the garment of salvation has brought us so much joy. We want others to have it.

It's not always going to be easy. It might not even be fun. But when someone hears you and they believe, there's no cooler feeling in the world to know that God used you. He did the work. But it's cool that he works through people like you and like me who don't deserve to have him give us this high privilege. But he gives it to us. Not only to have the garments of salvation, but to proclaim them day after day in how we conduct ourselves and, most importantly, in the words that we speak.

That's why we are here as a congregation... to gather around the Word and the Sacrament, to grow in the Gospel and to go with the Gospel. We do a lot of other things that support that, but those are only means to an end. The reason we exist is the Gospel. To focus on it. To grow in it. And to share it. Don't let the other things distract us from that end. Don't let the means to the end become the end in and of itself so that we never get around to sharing the Gospel. That's what God has called us to do.

So tonight when you put your head on the pillow and you fall asleep, maybe you'll fall sound asleep, maybe it'll take you awhile as you toss and turn, but when you wake up the next day and you get out of bed, I don't care what kind of pajamas you're sleeping in, you are wearing the garments of salvation because of God. That's a glorious truth that you should not take for granted. Amen.