**The Garments of Grace**

Exodus 39:1-31

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* When loss is my own fault….
  + Story #1 from CCEF Conference – Nurse in ER sets the wrong rate of flow in an iv… the older man died…. He would be blacklisted from the health care industry for the rest of his life… and there was one conclusion….
    - I deserve it.
  + Story #2 from RYM Conference – Adulterous man… abandons his wife and family… moves in with the woman… becomes violently angry… holes in the walls… rips out his own hair… constant muttering and talking with a growling irritableness… the women with whom he had the affair concluded… I live with a demon possessed man… and there was one conclusion
    - I deserve it.
* Many people go through sorrows and loss due to multiple factors…
  + Change in the economy….
  + Governmental regulations…
  + Unpreventable health challenges….
    - The difficulties are hard… but the reason for the difficulty is due to some factor outside of your control or choice.
* But what about when your loss….
  + Is the direct consequence of your choice…?
    - Wouldn’t you agree that the hardships of the situation are even more compounded by the guilt of your own conscience?
      * I knew better.
      * I was foolish.
      * I can’t believe I did that.
      * My loss is MY FAULT.
  + Wither that is you or someone you know…
* Exodus 39 speaks to that subject.

**The Reading of God’s Word** – Exodus 39:1-31 (Page 79 in the Pew Bible)

*Making the Priestly Garments*

*39:1 From the blue and purple and scarlet yarns they made finely woven garments, for ministering in the Holy Place. They made the holy garments for Aaron, as the Lord had commanded Moses.*

*2 He made the ephod of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. 3 And they hammered out gold leaf, and he cut it into threads to work into the blue and purple and the scarlet yarns, and into the fine twined linen, in skilled design. 4 They made for the ephod attaching shoulder pieces, joined to it at its two edges. 5 And the skillfully woven band on it was of one piece with it and made like it, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen, as the Lord had commanded Moses.*

*6 They made the onyx stones, enclosed in settings of gold filigree, and engraved like the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the sons of Israel. 7 And he set them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod to be stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel, as the Lord had commanded Moses.*

*8 He made the breastpiece, in skilled work, in the style of the ephod, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. 9 It was square. They made the breastpiece doubled, a span its length and a span its breadth when doubled. 10 And they set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle was the first row; 11 and the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; 12 and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 13 and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in settings of gold filigree. 14 There were twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They were like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes. 15 And they made on the breastpiece twisted chains like cords, of pure gold. 16 And they made two settings of gold filigree and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two edges of the breastpiece. 17 And they put the two cords of gold in the two rings at the edges of the breastpiece. 18 They attached the two ends of the two cords to the two settings of filigree. Thus they attached it in front to the shoulder pieces of the ephod. 19 Then they made two rings of gold, and put them at the two ends of the breastpiece, on its inside edge next to the ephod. 20 And they made two rings of gold, and attached them in front to the lower part of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, at its seam above the skillfully woven band of the ephod. 21 And they bound the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, so that it should lie on the skillfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastpiece should not come loose from the ephod, as the Lord had commanded Moses.*

*22 He also made the robe of the ephod woven all of blue, 23 and the opening of the robe in it was like the opening in a garment, with a binding around the opening, so that it might not tear. 24 On the hem of the robe they made pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. 25 They also made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates all around the hem of the robe, between the pomegranates— 26 a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate around the hem of the robe for ministering, as the Lord had commanded Moses.*

*27 They also made the coats, woven of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, 28 and the turban of fine linen, and the caps of fine linen, and the linen undergarments of fine twined linen, 29 and the sash of fine twined linen and of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, embroidered with needlework, as the Lord had commanded Moses.*

*30 They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, “Holy to the Lord.” 31 And they tied to it a cord of blue to fasten it on the turban above, as the Lord had commanded Moses.*

**The Preaching of God’s Word**

1. The Priest in the Tabernacle (Exodus 39:1-31)
   1. Making the Ephod (vs. 1-7)
      1. These seven verses perfectly correspond with Exodus 28:6-14.
         1. Here there is a little bit more information about gold being used, but everything else is repeating the details that Moses already communicated.
      2. POINT - What does this have to do with the stories of loss from your introduction?
         1. In Exodus 28, Moses was on the mountain meeting with God and receiving the instructions for the Tabernacle (with all its furniture) and the details for the priest’s wardrobe who would serve in the Tabernacle.
         2. But in Exodus 32, Moses comes down off the mountain and sees his brother Aaron abandoning his leadership role by enabling the people to worship a golden calf.
            1. Aaron does not accept responsibility when his own brother confronts him.

He talks about the fire itself spitting out the golden calf (Ex. 32:24).

He talks about the people being filled with evil (Ex. 32:22).

* + - 1. It seems like plan for a High Priest to serve in the tabernacle would be forfeited at that point?
         1. But then… comes the renewal of the Covenant (Ex. 34:10ff).

J. A. Motyer expresses the power of this passage helpfully when he writes….

“Nothing, of course, justifies our sin, but not even the grossest rebellions of his people can defect the LORD from his purposes. Such is God’s overruling sovereignty in power and mercy that, without besmirching his holiness or condoning or in any way accommodating himself to the moral calamity of what Israel did, the disaster of the golden calf became the occasion when Israel learned the sinfulness of sin, the exceeding graciousness of grace, *and* the inflexible determination of the Lord to fulfil his stated purposes.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

* + 1. Motyer’s comments are not just general statements for the whole community… they are specific and personal for one man… AARON.
       1. The older brother of Moses… spoke in Pharaoh’s court with boldness as an 80-something year old man.
          1. He saw a staff turn into a snake to humiliate the wicked magicians (Ex. 7)… then he turned into a false prophet (Ex. 32:5).
          2. He saw the plagues that revealed the power of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (ex. 3:15)… then he told the people that an idol delivered them out of Egypt (Ex. 32:8).
          3. He, AARON, saw the most powerful nation in the world get destroyed at the Red Sea (Ex. 14)… then he gave way to fearing the people and letting them “break loose” in their lusts (Ex. 32:25).
    2. That man… Aaron… felt the sinfulness of sin…. The loss in that moment is due to HIS CHOICE.
       1. What are the clothes he wears out in public?
          1. Failure…. Weakness… loss… shame… humiliation… worthlessness… inferiority… rejection…
    3. But in our passage… he is decked in “holy garments” (Ex. 39:1).
       1. The ephod conveyed majesty… strength… and splendor.
    4. TRANSITION: Then the shift to the breastpiece.
  1. Making the Breastpiece (vs. 8-21)
     1. Once again the word of God is wonderfully… mundane.
        1. Why?
           1. Because everything mentioned here has already been outlined in Exodus 28:15-28.

The garment with gold filigree is still studded with 12 precious jewels.

* + - * 1. The shame of failure did not stop Aaron from being clothed in emerald, jasper, sapphire, and onyx.

CONTRAST… it’s not like the craftsman Bezalel shifts the design and now the breastpiece is made out of tinfoil and gravel.

* + 1. It is still the produce of “INGENIOUS WORK” (in the Hebrew).
  1. Making the Other Vestments (vs. 22-31)
     1. The robe is mentioned next with the bells signifying safety in the Holy Place and the pomegranates signifying fruitfulness in keeping with the Covenant.
        1. The fine linens are then listed to convey… holiness… glory… beauty… and purity…
           1. As the final word… spoken to the man whose feet were made out of clay is…

“HOLY to the LORD” (vs. 30).

* + 1. What are we to do with this passage?
       1. Doesn’t justice demand for Moses to rise up and say… Aaron, you are NOT worthy?
          1. Because when we search the scriptures…

You have broken the 2nd commandment (calf)….

The 3rd commandment (took God’s name in vain)…

The 7th commandment (immorality)…

the 9th commandment (you lied)…

and the 10th (you coveted respect from the people)

ALL because you broke the 1st commandment.

* + - * 1. Aaron is the living reality of Isaiah 52:5…

“And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed.”

* + - * 1. Aaron seems to lead the people in a trajectory that God points out in Number 14:11.

“The Lord said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them?”

* 1. Yet Aaron is clothed in the vestments of honor, respect, beauty, and dignity.
     1. WHY?
        1. Because there would be another High Priest.

1. Our Priest in The True Tent (Hebrews 8:1-2)
   1. Hebrews 8:1-2 - *Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, 2 a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.*
      1. When the writer of the Book of Hebrews teaches believers about what Jesus Christ has done for them…. He draws on this image from Exodus.
         1. Theologians… The Old Testament typology establishes upon the eschatological trajectory of the Inaugurated Eternity.
            1. What?
      2. Jesus Christ is the better High priest robed in righteousness with the life of obedience that is “Holy to the LORD”.
         1. Philip Graham Ryken is so helpful.
            1. Jesus Christ ministers in a superior place.

Hebrews 9:24 - *For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.*

* + - * 1. Jesus Christ minister with a superior righteousness.

Heb. 7:26-27 - *26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.*

GOOD NEWS: He is untouched by our infirmity.

* + - * 1. Jesus Christ ministers with a superior sympathy

Heb. 4:15-16 - *15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

GOOD NEWS: He is touched by our infirmity.

Ed Welch – “If you are reluctant to come to this Priest, remember that his one of us…. If you think your High Priest couldn’t wash you well enough, remember that he is not one of us.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

* + - * 1. Jesus Christ minister with a superior longevity.

Heb. 7:23-25 - *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

* + - * 1. Jesus Christ minsters with a superior sacrifice.

Heb. 9:25-26 - *Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

At the cross, Our Great High Priest, who what dressed in splendor and majesty (Ps. 104:1-2) was robed in shame so that you would be dressed in fine linens, white and pure, through His blood (Rev. 19:11ff).

1. Conclusion
   1. What do you do when your loss is your fault? (Motyer’s summary is so good)
      1. Application #1 - grieve the sinfulness of sin
         1. See your sin as your greatest danger.
            1. Steve and Bert have been taking us through the Gospel of John.

In John 5, a man is healed and Jesus later approaches him and says…

John 5:14 - *Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”*

* + - 1. There is something worse that being a paraplegic for 38 years… it is living in unrepentant sin.
    1. Application #2 - embrace the exceeding graciousness of grace
       1. See your Savior as your greatest joy.
          1. John 5:24 - *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

The adulterous man who pulled out his hair and acted like he demon possessed… do you know what changed him?

John 1:12 - *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,*

* + 1. Application #3 – rejoice in the inflexible determination of the Lord to fulfil his stated purposes
       1. John 1:13 - *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*
          1. Friends, you are a kingdom of priests robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ because…

Eph. 1:4-6 - *he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

**Prayer – Ephesians 3:14-19**

*For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

**Benediction – Ephesians 3:20-21**

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

1. The Message of Exodus, 322-323 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Shame Interrupted*, 190 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)