

Resurrection Life - Remove graveclothes

So many of My people are living in graveclothes.

They get up and automatically step into them.

They sludge around in the heaviness of them.

They are restricted by them.

They are trapped, held back, suffocated, tied-up in them, old, rotten and heavy.. yet they are familiar to them.

So they dress themselves in the familiarity of the old, the dead and struggle in the heaviness and the decay.

'But these are what we know', they say. 'We are familiar with these, they fit'. They are comfortable in the familiarity.

And yet I have said, 'Clothe yourself in righteousness, You are Mine' says the Lord.

Luke 15:11-32

The Parable of the Lost Son

11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

*17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 **I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.** 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.'* 20 So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

*21 "The son said to him, '**Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer***

worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

The son knew his father had so much more. He reached a place where he realised how he was living and he returned to his father, acknowledging his sin. The first thing his father said in verse 22 is 'bring the best robe and put it on him'. He was always his father's son. He rebelled, took his inheritance and squandered it (lived a life of sin)... sound familiar? He came to a place where he recognised where he was at in his life and he knew the best place to return to, to his father.

His father welcomed him back, threw him a party and gave him a new robe. He swapped his old tatty clothes for a new robe. He was his father's son and was clothed as such.

When we come to Jesus He gives us a new robe to wear, we are arrayed in a robe of His righteousness.

Isaiah 61

10 I delight greatly in the Lord;

my soul rejoices in my God.

For 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.

He throws a party for us, He welcomes us back home. We belong to Him.

Luke 15:10

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

What would have happened if the son rejected his new robe and remained in his rags?

The father of the prodigal son didn't clothe him in a beautiful robe on his return, because he deserved it. He had rebelled against his father. But this was His son, He was His Father, they were in relationship. The Father Loved the son, Neither have we done anything to deserve out beautiful robes of righteousness. But Our Father Loves us, we are His children, we are in relationship with Him because of Jesus, Jesus has made a way for us.

So many of us recognise our sin, repent, return to our Father but we are still living in our graveclothes.

What are graveclothes:

graveclothes - the clothes or wrappings in which a body is buried, the clothes that bind you in death.

Imagine them, picture them - dirty, smelly, the weight of them, binding you up.....

John 11

The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) 3 So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

4 When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, 7 and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. 10 It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

12 His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." 13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus

17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "**I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?**"

27 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

28 After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." 29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

38 Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39 "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

40 Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Jesus literally raised Lazarus from death, he removed his grave clothes and set him free.

SHARE MY STORY OF BABY IN WOMB

When the enemy tried to take me as a baby in the womb, Jesus held me and said, 'SHE IS MINE'

I lived in graveclothes for many years, not even knowing or recognising it.

But Jesus called me His. He literally saved my life. He called me home, like the prodigal daughter. He clothed me in new robes. The enemy may try to keep us bound in spiritual graveclothes, things that relate to our former lives when we were dead in sin, wrong thinking - but greater is He who is in us that he who is in the world, Jesus removes the graveclothes, in Him is freedom and life. He is holding me and He calls me Beautiful.

Ephesians 5 says

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord.

So why do we choose to live in the clothes of our past when we can step into our beautiful

robes of righteousness because of Jesus.

Maybe it is because of the familiarity, are we like Lot's wife who looked back on what she was leaving behind?

Is it our thinking, we are called to renew our minds - renew our minds is choosing to accept and believe what Jesus says, the truth of who we are, as we read in John 11 Jesus said to Mary "***I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?***" So if we live by believing in Jesus we won't be living in graveclothes, because we are living in life!

Maybe we are living in who we were and not who we are. Which brings us back to identity.

In the news this week was a story of a beautiful diamond that had been found, a pink diamond. There was a picture of it on tv, a beautiful woman wearing a ring with a huge, pink beautiful diamond being shown off.

They recognised the value and beauty of this diamond, and displayed it to show off how beautiful and valuable it is. It is a precious stone.

Do you know that you are a precious diamond, extremely valuable and beautiful. Bought with great cost.

When I say that to you how do you feel? Do the words fly over your head like the wind? Do they make you recoil? Is there something within you that rejects them? Or do you accept them with the whole of your heart, do you embrace them, do they go straight to your heart and remain?

Are you living as a child of God, walking in your beautiful robe, or is there any area in your life where you feel that you are wearing graveclothes? Is your thinking in line with God's truth? I believe I am meant to share this today not to condemn but to say to us all, Jesus wants to set you completely free. He calls you His, He clothes you in robes of righteousness, He calls you beautiful.

*(Why live in sack cloth when you can have silk? Thinking to change, a **renewal of our minds.**)*

Jesus is who He says He is

He can do all He says He can do

I am who He says I am