

August 20

Isaiah 61:10 (NIV) ¹⁰I 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. **2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)** ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin^[a] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Madeline had struggled most of her life. In high school, she did well until she began running with the wrong crowd. She never found herself in bad trouble, but she had earned herself a reputation that caused others concern. Opting to forgo college, Maddie looked for a job that would provide her the ability to make a new life for her, but one door after another was closed. One day she ran into an old family friend who ran one of the most respected businesses in the city. Seeing value in Maddie, he offered her a job representing his company. Maddie was thankful and gladly accepted the position. Unfortunately, some of her past behavior continued to make itself known, which made Maddie ashamed. Finally, she went to the family friend and told him she was not fit to wear the company logo, so she was going to quit. He looked her in the eyes and said, “Maddie, I would rather you give up the bad behavior instead of giving up your position.”

An old cliché states, “Clothes make the man.” The Bible tells us something very similar. At one time we were all clothes in the stains of sin. Yet, through Jesus, we are clothed in robes of righteousness. These are not the robes of the Pharisees that come by legalistic endeavors where one earns them. These are the robes of righteousness that come by the blood of Jesus Christ. No one can earn such a garment. No one deserves it. It is a gift from the Lord Jesus to those who love and follow Him. However, we can find ourselves in situations similar to Maddie, where our behavior does not fit with our robes of righteousness. We stumble. We backslide. We resist the urgings of the Spirit. Such actions make us feel unworthy of the robe of righteousness that Christ so lovingly gave us. We can feel ashamed to be wearing them, so we choose to take it off. Each time we do so, Jesus lovingly stops us and encourages us, instead, to throw off the sin that so easily entangles us (Hebrews 12:1). Jesus is never ashamed of us. He never condemns us. He paid the price for our robes of righteousness and wants us to wear them.