

John 19:23-24 – *Naked Shame*  
Good Friday – March 29, 2024

The truth of the matter is that some of what we see about the crucifixion in art, movies, and even on crucifixes may not be entirely accurate. We're not modest in a lot of things, but in this we are. It's not nice to think about. It is disturbing. It offends our sensibilities. But when our Lord was put on the cross He probably was left without a covering of any sort. He was hung there naked. The text says that the soldier in charge of executing Him "*took His garments and divided them.*" It doesn't say they took *some* of them. No. They probably took everything He had. All four Gospels give us this incidental bit of history. But is it incidental? Not really. The nakedness of Jesus shows that He suffered total shame. That was part of the nasty, brutal business of crucifixion, and thus a part of His being the Savior of the world. He had to be naked because we are naked. Originally for us that was a physical condition. In the pre-Fall state there was no shame. But disobedience, rebellion, and sin entered the picture and with them shame, disgrace, and guilt came also, so now there is much more to it. We've got to deal with spiritual nakedness, as well.

Like Adam and Eve we sew together fig leaves of our own making – excuses and reasons for our rebellion. *That's the world we live in now. Everybody else is doing it. I was made this way; I can't help it. It seemed right for me at the time. It's legal these days, you know.* In today's world, where what was formerly called sinful behavior is now transformed to a civil right, we're getting closer to the description Jeremiah talked about when he said the people of Judah "*were not ashamed; they did not even know how to blush.*" But these false, transparent garments of our own making don't cover up the fact that we have violated God's law, and we will be judged accordingly. Hebrews 4:13 says, "*No creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.*" Job was right, "*Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall return.*" The undertaker may put our best suit or prettiest dress on our body, but those garments will not get us through the scrutiny of Judgment Day. We might even grab at something more material, like the soldiers who gambled for the tunic. "*I lived a good life. I was a nice person.*" That doesn't clothe us either.

Instead, our clothing comes from the stripped, shamed God Man on the cross. The first Adam attempted to conceal himself. The second Adam reveals Himself as the Savior of the world. By His humble, shameful, pitiful, awful, and awe-full sacrifice He becomes our garment of salvation. Through faith in Him we wear the robes of righteousness. "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have **put on Christ.***" The salvation He gives is seamless. It is totally His work. It's not a patchwork of Him & us; grace and works; mercy and rewards. It is all His to give – willingly, lovingly. It was planned. Even the division of His garments was foretold. This is part of the ugliness of the crucifixion. It was a ghastly day, but its results for us make it a Good Friday. *Now from that tree of Jesus' shame flows life eternal in His name. Amen.*

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