

BY JAN DE CHAMBRIER



CLOTHED WITH CHRIST

I like to tell people I was born dressed up, a real girly girl from the get-go. I can just about picture myself leaping from my mother's womb into my first pink pinafore and pair of patent leather shoes. How I present myself has always been important to me. I consult the weather app each night before carefully laying out my selection for the following day. I even line

up coordinated choices for our frequent travels a week or two in advance, strategically only packing what will fit into a regulation roller board.

And then there's my husband, who is perfectly content to let me serve as his wardrobe mistress and fashion consultant. Philippe has never felt compelled to give much thought to what he wears—except when on duty. As a pilot, he has

always insisted on absolute impeccability: shoes shined, pants pressed, shirts starched. After all, he represents the company for which he flies—indeed, a worthy consideration.

As I've progressed in my walk with Jesus, I've become far less concerned with what I wear than the One I represent. While reading the account of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration in Luke 9, it struck me how He was suddenly transformed before the very eyes of Peter, James and John from their compatriot into what could only be described as one clothed in glory. Imagine the utter astonishment of these ordinary men as they glimpsed a portent of what was to come, a foretaste of divine glory.

Jesus was transfigured before He was crucified. But we must be crucified before we can be transfigured. He graphically demonstrated before His inner circle the radical, transformational power of God—and then humbled Himself on another mountain as He became sin for us. We first find Jesus at Calvary—and then He puts His glorious, transfigured nature into us. We become clothed with Christ, those who begin to look like Him as we emulate His nature.

NO MATTER WHAT WE MAY HAVE DONE OR WHATEVER EVIL MAY HAVE BEEN PERPETRATED ON US, OUR DESIGNER SPECIALIZES IN REFASHIONING TATTERED THREADS INTO GLORIOUS GARMENTS OF PRAISE.

In the third chapter of Colossians, Paul speaks about putting off our earthly nature, effectively crucifying any remnants of sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language and lies that characterized our old self. He urges us to set our hearts and minds on things above, becoming those whose lives are now hidden with Christ in God because we have died to the sin of self. And then he tells us how to dress.

As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive your grievances against one another. *"Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity"* (Colossians 3:12-14 NIV).

I had a close friend who adopted me as her little sister during college. Alice, a graduate student when I was a just a freshman, offered loving, sound advice and bestowed on me the wardrobe of my dreams—designer clothing that no longer fit her size or taste. The fact that she had only worn these garments herself increased their value in my estimation. I wanted to dress like her, to emulate my esteemed friend.

Then there are the clothes in my closet I wish I'd never acquired—sale items too good to pass up (most likely why everyone else did); impulsive, impractical purchases surely prompted by the shopping demon; things that looked a whole lot cuter in the store lighting than in the harsh reality of my dressing room mirror. Similarly, we may also have a virtual closetful of regrets from the past, those painful life experiences we wish we could have skipped over altogether.

Yet our faithful Father has promised to redesign, to recycle every single garment from the cumulative wardrobe of our past experiences when we relinquish them to His purpose. Our Designer specializes in refashioning tattered threads into glorious garments of praise no matter what we may have done or whatever evil may have been perpetrated on us. When we yield to the restoration of His master workmanship, we can become the equivalent of a Good Will distribution center for the benefit of others. Whether it be family strife, abuse, perversion, trauma, disease, loss of a loved one or a life goal—any of the myriad challenges we all face in this world—God promises to reclaim and reuse it all, bringing beauty from ashes, taking a cloak of despair and refashioning it into a new and praiseworthy garment.

As healing prayer ministers, we have the privilege of offering God the heartaches, grief and life challenges we've overcome to be repurposed by Him as garments of compassion, encouragement and wisdom. Clothed in the love of Jesus, we have the privilege of seeing lives transformed as we offer what He has put into us to bring hope and help to others. How glorious it will be when we all begin to look just like Jesus!



Jan de Chambrier is an ordained minister who serves with her husband, Philippe, on the leadership team of Missional International Church Network as a prayer ambassador. Together, they travel to the nations to teach on healing prayer and restoration. Jan is the author of several books, including *Greater Things than These: Practicing What Jesus Preached* and *Daughtering: Helping Loved Ones Finish Well*. She loves to play the piano, paint with acrylics, cook, hike and bike.