

The Treachery of Immodesty

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09 April 2006

Lord's Day Evening

Isaiah 3:16-4:1

Introduction: Open your Bibles to the book of Isaiah chapter 3. The title of tonight's message is "The Treachery of Immodesty." Isaiah continues in this chapter with a message of God's judgment of his people. Here we see the ultimate decay of the modesty of women in the culture and what they will ultimately reap. Chapter 3 closes out in a very sad way, but then we see that real beauty is in God's presence. Today in our society, even Christians think immodesty is normal. If were ladies were to go back in time a hundred years and show the clothes you wear today even to the lost women of a hundred years ago, they would be aghast at your immodesty and lack of discretion. We are not aghast today because immodesty is considered normal in our society and in our churches today.

The way I see it, you look at the way women have dressed really beginning with the second world war in this country, and you will see that as immodesty a total lack of discretion among women has increased, the outward depravity of our society has gone up. The men went off to war, and the women started going to work. The female element of our society started getting the opportunity to see what it felt like to be a man. Women started doing men's work, they started wearing men's clothing, and the shamefacedness of women began to be more and more and more crass and brash.

In the last sixty years, we have we have seen more women go to work and more marriages fall apart. It's common sense. Take women out of the home, and you will destroy the home. Put women in questionable clothing, and you will destroy the delicateness of a woman. A woman will start to act immodestly because she is immodest.

the English word *modest* appears only once in the King James Version of the Bible:

1 Timothy 2:9-10 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

The Greek word for apparel in this text is *Katastole*, meaning a long flowing garment. *Kata* meaning down - a garment flowing down; and *Stole* - a long garment, covering or wrapping.

John Calvin said this about this modesty:

"This at least will be settled beyond all controversy, that every thing in dress which is not in accordance with modesty and sobriety must be disapproved. Yet we must always begin with the dispositions; for where debauchery reigns within, there will be no chastity; and where ambition reigns within, there will be no modesty in the outward dress."

The Greek word for *modest* is *Kosmos*, meaning *orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest, harmonious arrangement, or adornment*. Modesty is also Biblically applied

to one's demeanor or behavior. This same Greek word is translated *good behavior* in 1 Timothy 3:2 in the qualifications of bishops

Do short dresses, sleeveless dresses, tight dresses, sun dresses, and low cut dresses fit God's definition of modesty? If not, then they are inappropriate in any public setting, and especially in the church. The same could be said about a lady's slacks.

Some do not apply this scripture to this "modern day." But God's view of modesty is not variable. It does not depend on the cultures that men create. It does not depend on the weather. We read of no special circumstances in the Scriptures which set aside this teaching and give liberty for women to display their nakedness. Therefore, we must assume that even in this evil and perverse generation, God still expects us to maintain His standards of modesty.

With that in mind let us look to our text tonight.

16 Moreover the LORD saith, This evening we are going to talk about the proper way for a woman to adorn herself. I did not plan on speaking on this subject tonight. I chose the book of Isaiah to preach through a month or so ago—I did do that. But what lies inside are the words of God. Look here, Isaiah is speaking, but He speaks for a higher authority. "the LORD saith." Therefore these are not my opinions, nor the opinions of the culture or some school of thought. This is the living, God-breathed voice of God giving us His will in the matter of the way women adorn themselves. The Lord is going to say some shocking things in this passage—it is not at all that God is cruel or crass in any way. It is that God is holy, and in His holiness, He must reveal all that is defiled. For He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). And so Isaiah begins to confront the problem. It takes courage to speak up for the Lord in the days of decline, especially on something so accepted in society.

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, So the problem of Immodesty always lies at the heart! Haughtiness is the problem. It is not ignorance. It is not always a heart problem. Worldly dress has always been a fertile ground for arrogance. Women love the worship of men. God made women to be humble, meek, and shamefaced in their demeanor. Worldly dress brings lustful attention to the body and results in the woman being arrogant.

Notice the Lord does not say "women." That is significant. The point is that these daughters have mothers. You mothers are upset at the immodesty and indecency of your daughters. The Lord says in this instance, it is "Like mother, like daughter"! If you are struggling with your daughter in areas of modesty, you've waited too long. Take this to heart mothers of little girls. The time to train your daughters is NOW. There ought never be a double standard in modesty. There ought never be a home and street standard and then a standard for when you are at church. You ought to have the same standard of modesty everywhere in every place.

Remember also the **context** of these verses. Earlier in verse 12, Isaiah lamented that "as for my people, women rule over them." Part of the cause for a weak home and a lack of leadership in the home is because women are dressing immodestly and are dressing like men. What you wear translates into authority. A king does not wear the robes of a peasant for a reason. Clothes communicate. Ladies, your clothes should communicate that you are a woman. Men, your clothes should communicate that you are a man.

Deuteronomy 22:5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, The idea of "stretched forth necks" is a posture of arrogance and pride. Basically Isaiah's society taught the women to "strut their stuff." That's what it basically means. They had "wanton eyes," that is they were somethin' and they knew it, so they would make eyes at men. This is the attitude that is prevalent not only in our society, but in our churches. How we need to repent of this. How we need modesty and shamefacedness in the house of God!

Then Isaiah describes these women "***walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:***" The practice was to wear ornamental chains about their legs, and they would take short steps to make the ornaments jangle. *They wanted to draw attention to themselves!* Now, it is wrong for a woman to draw attention to herself. Always. You might say, well how am I going to get a husband if I don't draw attention to myself? You need to pray, not market your body! The marketing of your body with all kinds of jewelry and low cut blouses and sleeveless dresses is nothing more than culturally acceptable prostitution. Not only that, but if you wear man's clothing, you will also draw attention to yourself. You say, "What is man's clothing?" Well, the most basic way to illustrate it is for you to look on the doors of the public restroom. What picture do you see on the women's door? What picture do you see on the men's door? Now why would you want to draw attention to yourself by wearing men's clothing?

Having said that, Isaiah goes on to pronounce the Lord's judgment on those who refuse to obey.

17 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, the promise here is leprosy. The essence is that if you flaunt the body, you will reap the hardness of sin. Leprosy was the disease where the sin would harden parts of the body. When it went to the head, the hair would fall out.

Remember...

1 Corinthians 11:15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering.

What God is saying is two things. 1. You go ahead and accentuate your wardrobe. You draw attention to yourself, and you will bring ugliness and scarring to your womanhood. There is nothing more beautiful than a meek and quiet spirit in a woman. But a woman who draws attention to herself is like looking at a woman whose has lost her glory!

and the LORD will discover their secret parts. Here the covenant name of God is used. And He Himself will uncover their nakedness. He will allow them to be uncovered. How does this happen?

Have you noticed in the last sixty years since women have been getting their fashions from the prostitutes in the streets and dressing like men that crimes against women and yes, even children have gone through the roof? You want to send a signal to men who are TOTALLY DEPRAVED? If you dress in a way to encourage

shamefulness, God will allow you to be shamed! If women would dress in long, flowing garments I guarantee the violent crime against women would be reduced dramatically.

God says eventually, if you go that route, all your beauty will be gone. Look at verse 18-24. Here we see the vanity of outward apparel.

As we go into these verses dealing with God's judgment of clothing, let us remember what the Lord told us in the Gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 6:25

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, I like the way the King James translators translated this verse. The word "bravery." The word has the idea of a bold beauty. It is a beauty that fills a woman with power. The only place she ought to exercise this boldness is in the bedroom behind closed doors!! To bring this boldness—this swagger, this attitude and display it before all is the spirit of prostitution. It is the root of degradation in our society.

And these ladies were decked out! How did they show this bold beauty? **and their cauls,** headbands that drew attention to their eyes. Ladies you should be careful the way you look a man in the eye. You should not draw attention to yourself by what you do to your eyes. Heavy mascara is popular from time to time for the same reason. It goes in and out of style in popular society, but it is always in vogue with the street walkers.

and their round tires like the moon, these were crescent moon ornaments. This fashion came right from the world. The crescent chains were first popular among those who worshipped the Arabic moon god Shahr.

19 The chains, God condemns these dangling earrings—again these were used to draw attention. Why are dangling earrings out of place for the child of God? Why are you wearing them? To please your husband, or to please everyone else? Don't draw attention in public what belongs to your husband in private.

Having said that, let me say that mothers, you may want to ask yourself if it is a necessity to have your daughters ears pierced. Some babies come out of the hospital with their ears pierced. Is it wrong? I cannot say it is a sin for a woman to have her ears pierced, but I do believe you should ask yourself with everything you put on your body a few questions:

1. Does this please the Lord?
2. What is my motive for doing this—am I trying to draw attention to myself?

and the bracelets, Again the wrists were a part of the body where flesh was exposed, and they wanted to draw attention.

and the mufflers, these are veils. Isn't it interesting that even something designed for modesty can be immodest. It all depends on how a woman holds herself. Modesty is not on the outside. It is on the inside!

20 The bonnets, These are head dresses or basically a little crown of gold or silver that accentuated the woman's head and face.

and the ornaments of the legs, ankle chains
and the headbands, sashes
and the tablets, perfume boxes, aphrodisiacs
and the earrings, earring charms

21 The rings, finger rings
and nose jewels, nose rings

22 The changeable suits of apparel, festal robes
and the mantles, large flowing outer garments
and the wimples, cloaks or shawls
and the cringing pins, money purses

23 The glasses, hand mirrors
and the fine linen, undergarments
and the hoods, turbans
and the veils. robes

We have to ask ourselves if God is outlawing these things altogether or is it the piling on of all these things together? I believe the problem is not whether a woman has earrings or has a hand mirror. The issue is the heart. If all you do is make yourself look beautiful, your priorities are out of order. I think Peter hits it right on the head in applying this for us:

1 Peter 3:1-6

1 Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

24 And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; If you do not take care of your inner beauty, there is coming a day when your body will catch up with your dirty heart.

(24) and instead of a girdle a rent; The basics of what God is saying is godly women do not dress this way, and if you are godly, this will not be characteristic of you. He says here instead of a beautiful belt or sash, you will have a rope around you—you will be in slavery. You will reap what you sow.

Galatians 6:8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Hosea 8:7 "They sow the wind, And reap the whirlwind.

(24) and instead of well set hair baldness;

(24) and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth(24) Instead of a rich robe (stomacher) you will have a robe of sackcloth. Sackcloth is what is worn in mourning.

(24) and burning instead of beauty. That is branding instead of beauty. Branding leaves permanent scars. There are scars you will have to live with forever if you live this way.

Now God turns to the city of Jerusalem—the society in general.

25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. What happens when things go this way? God sends wars and disasters and reasons to take your eyes off of the things of this world. In this instance, he says he's going to send war and wake them up out of their comfort zone. The men Isaiah predicts will ultimately be slaughtered in war. Oh that they would have obeyed, and God would have kept them in safety!

26 And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground. Here the ladies who wanted to draw attention to themselves are now alone and sit on the ground and mourn. That is always the end result of sin. You may feel important with the way you dress for a while, but it will lead you to whoredom and solitude. You cannot win in the end.

1 ¶ And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

In the order of creation man and woman were to be at an equal ratio: one woman for one man. We'll provide for ourselves, but ultimately it is a reproach for a woman to be without the headship of a man.

So that is why if you are a single lady, this church is your family. Your head is Christ and your family is this church.

Next week, we will look at the beauty of the presence of God.

Closing Hymn: May the Lord Find Us Faithful