

Soiled Garments(*Letter from Connie*)

I've been thinking of you a lot these days. Recently the Lord has been speaking to us concerning our devotion to the Lord. I really have been seeing my need more and more (as we all continue to do in our coming to know Him). Every ounce of our energy must be spent in loving Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and all our strength. Our strength is our passion for the Lord. We must totally be filled up with loving Him and not allow ourselves to be dissipated by all other spirits. Our energies go into self-pity, etc., and even idolatry.

Idolatry takes the place of God's love in your heart. It can be things, possessions, a person, your industry, your function in the Church, or whatever; and you will find yourself operating in the flesh and apart from the power of the Holy Spirit (which only comes when we have perfect fellowship with Him).

It is so important to have perfect, unbroken fellowship with Him. But most of the time we go on — even trying to worship Him with soiled garments. Whenever we are baptized, the Lord provides us with a pure, spotless wedding garment, which we are to maintain until the end of this age. Whenever our garment gets soiled, we must confess our sin, its very ingredients, in order that our garment can remain white and we may have communion with Him. “If we just admit that sin has deep roots within us, His cleansing blood can wash away all of our guilt.” Some will try to enter in that day, thinking they have a wedding garment, and the Lord will tell them, “I never knew you.” Our Father jealously desires the spirit which He has put within us and He deserves our whole-hearted trust and obedience.

Our passion is also towards the brethren. The Lord poured out all His passions on us, and we must in turn pour out and lavish our passions on the Body. You could substitute the word passion in this verse— “You know you've passed from death into life because you have *passion* for the brethren” (1 Jn 3:14). There can't be any imperfect deeds. Our deeds must be free from imperfection, by confessing our sins. An incomplete deed can be when the Lord gives you something to speak and you hold on to it. Sometimes we wait until the situation is right, or wait to bring it on the Lord's Day, and by then the anointing is gone.

Often we try to enter into worship with our garments soiled and wonder why it seems like the Lord is not with us. We've tried to enter in without confessing the ingredients of the soil in our garments. It could be that we've been living a totally self-centered life apart from the empowering of the Holy Spirit, apart from loving and obeying Him with all our heart. Maybe we haven't been pouring ourselves into the precious young ones whom God sent to us. If we haven't been giving them pure milk, but have been caught up in the day-to-day problems and the cares of this life, then if they suffer their blood will be on our hands. If we are not being violent to put all our enemies under His feet: fear, intimidation, worthlessness, self-pity, pride, greed, sensual pleasures, etc. — all these things which dissipate and waste our energies and keep us from loving Him with all our heart — then how can we expect to rule and reign with Him in the age to come?

These things are constantly waging war against our soul. This is why we need to be in constant communion at all times — praying without ceasing (1 Ths 5:17), because we are not ignorant of the evil one's devices (Eph 6:10-18). This is why Paul would write to the Church in Thessalonica and say, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Yahshua the Messiah” (1 Ths 5:23). If we waste our passions on the world or on other loves, we cheat (rob) God from having what He rightly deserves from us (all our passion), and we place ourselves outside of His covering, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. If we can flagrantly do this, thinking all along we have eternal life, then where are we getting our confidence from?

Our confidence comes from laying our life down for the brethren — wasting our passions on them. Matthew 25 shows who enters into life and who does not. We must obey all the Lord's commands, which demand a response from us. An example is practicing hospitality without complaining. If we practice hospitality with the slightest amount of complaint, we have soiled our garment and it is an incomplete deed. We must treat each person who enters our household as the Lord Himself. Practicing hospitality is more than just giving a person a place to stay and something to eat. We know within our own heart if we've held back one little bit. Our conscience knows all things and we will not be able to say, “I didn't know.” Only those who walk with white robes will be able to

rule with the Lord.

I don't mean to make this sound hard and impossible, for nothing is impossible with God to the one who has a believing heart and not an obstinate heart (Mk 9:23). We have nothing better to do than to waste our whole lives — energies, ambitions, resources, time, etc. — on Him (who loved us first) just as Mary did when she broke the alabaster jar of perfume and poured it on Yahshua's feet (Mk 14). Without this outpouring of everything within us, there is no Church, no true expression of the Body of Messiah. All our energies, etc. are needed for God's purpose to actively come about. We must use all the talents, etc. that He's given us for His purpose and His glory — to build up the Body — or we are unfaithful stewards. Anything which would take our devotion from the Lord and keep us from being faithful to Him in *all* things is an enemy. Our love for the Lord must be concentric and not dissipated by every *unholy* spirit.

The Ephesian Church lost their first love (passion) for the Lord. We must guard ourselves, keeping our garments pure white and our love fervent for the Lord and His people. His love and mercies are new *every* morning. If we don't see them that way, we have an obstinate heart. We cannot approach God when our garment is soiled, without confessing the very ingredients of that soil. God knows everything, anyway. Who do we think we're fooling? As Elbert said many years ago, "You can pull the wool over man's eyes, but you can't pull the wool over God's eyes. He can't be fooled." He knows all things, and so does our conscience. We must daily allow that sword to divide between soul and spirit — cutting down to the very marrow, piercing our heart in order that His salvation may come to us. If we don't do this, our sins begin piling up as high as heaven, causing our soils to become deep stains in our garments; and we can't think that we can scrub these out at that very last minute before the Lord returns, because there will be no time. We will be caught unaware if we are in this condition. But God has provided a way for us to maintain our pure white garments, and that's through communion with Him. A garment is given to those to wear *in* the Church where it can remain spotless — not outside of the Church. We must be diligent to be obedient to all the Lord has shown us in the Church — especially about being the seed of Abraham — those who walk in the *way* of the Lord. Not all Israel is Israel, just as in the days of old. Any one of us could betray the Lord *if* we are not loving Him with all our heart and giving ourselves to His discipline every day — so that we will not incur judgement for 1000 years.

May we be the true Israel of God and be rooted and founded in Him. These things are meant to bring us hope, a way out through giving Him all of our heart and all of our passion — communion. Everything we do must be with a perfect conscience. Pursue righteousness, *sanctification*, without which no one will see the Lord.