

# COVERED IN WHITE

***Yet There are some in the church in Sardis, who have not soiled their clothes with evil and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. (Revelation 3:4)***

For much of the month of October my backyard has been covered in leaves. I am not one of these ministers who procrastinates when it comes to raking leaves. I rake several times a week when the weather permits, bagging up each pile. After I finish, my backyard returns to being covered by green grass, weeds and a few bare patches. Within a day, my backyard will be covered once again by leaves.

This has been my reality every October since we moved into our home in August 2009. On November 1 this year I looked out and saw that my backyard was covered in snow. It was a shock to see and I know many people hate to see the first snow, but it reminded me of some benefits too:

- 1) Since the snow covered my leaves that had fallen in the high winds the day earlier, I didn't have to worry about raking on Monday,
- 2) When I took Daisy out at 6:15 a.m. to do her business in the backyard, the snow on the ground made it far easier to see in the dark,
- 3) Daisy got so excited by the snow that she ran around in circles on her leash and played some more by putting her nose in the snow,
- 4) The snow allowed me to see what animals had been roaming through the backyard that night as their tracks were quite visible.

As hard as it was to see snow so early, the sight of my backyard being covered in white provided me with some blessings too.

As I thought about these blessings it got me thinking about how Christ desires to see us covered in white. This desire of His is seen in a letter that He wrote to the church in Sardis that can be found in Revelations 3. The believers in this church were passionate and committed in their faith in the beginning.

Over time some of the believers there lost their enthusiasm and started moving away from the basics of faith and chose instead to embrace some sinful customs. Jesus was not pleased by their choices and told them their actions did not meet with the requirements of God. He told them to repent and return to the basis of faith by growing in their relationship with Him.

Some believers in the church of Sardis did do this and stayed faithful. Jesus had these words for His faithful believers in Sardis:

***“Yet there are some in the church in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes with evil. They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy”  
(Revelations 3:4).***

Jesus could see that these believers chose to remain covered in clothing of white. This reference to be clothed in white is meant to point out that as believers we are set apart for God and made pure. Some believers in this setting took this seriously and made the conscious decision each day to grow in their faith, to get to know Jesus better, and to do what was required and expected of them by God. By doing all of this, their clothes remained covered in white as opposed to being stained by sin as was the case with other believers there.

It does take a lot of discipline and effort on a believer's part to stay covered in the white clothing of Christ's righteousness. If we lose this discipline it can result in us as believers falling into the same pattern that some in the church in Sardis did:

- Getting way from the basics and truths of faith,
- Letting our relationship with Jesus take a back seat,
- Allowing the comforts and pleasures of life to make us become self-reliant rather than God-reliant,
- Allowing sin to stain us.

To stay disciplined and live pure lives for Him takes sacrifice and effort. We cannot lose sight of the benefits and blessings that come with being covered in the white clothes of Christ's righteousness. Some of these blessings are the same that I mentioned earlier with respect to my back yard being covered in white:

- 1) Just as I did not have to worry about raking because the snow covered the leaves, being covered by Christ's righteousness takes away my worries since I know He is there for me.
- 2) Just as the snow made it easier for me to see in the dark when I took Daisy out, being covered by the white of Christ's righteousness helps me to see better what is right and wrong in God's sight in this dark world.

- 3) Just as Daisy got excited by the unexpected white snow, I get excited seeing times and moments in the day when God blesses me because I am covered by the white clothes of His Son's righteousness.
- 4) Just as the snow allowed me to see the tracks of what animals had been roaming the backyard, being covered by the white of Christ's righteousness allows me to see the plight of others and be more sensitive to their journey and struggle.

All of these blessings come from our efforts and desires to choose to stay set apart by God, and to live pure lives for Him. There is one more added blessing as Jesus pointed out in His letter – knowing with certainty our name is in the Book of Life. Revelation 3:5 reveals this blessing to us:

***All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and His angels that they are mine.***

Seeing my backyard covered by the white snow led me on this journey and reminded me how it is our Lord's desire to see us covered in the white clothing that represents His righteous living. It is easy for us to slip out of this behaviour as we live in this world that embraces sin and as we continue through this pandemic that may have changed our pattern of worshipping and staying close to the basics of the Christian faith.

Our lawns were covered with snow on Monday. It has since melted but over the next few months our lawns will be once again be covered by the white of snow. Each time it is, may we pause and ask ourselves: Just as I see the whiteness of snow covering by lawn, does Christ see me covered by the white clothing of His righteousness by how I am living my faith?

We need reminders like this and if a typical Canadian winter can do that for us then instead of hating a snowy day, we will see it as a blessing from God instead.

Keep safe, keep watchful, keep living pure lives for our Lord.

Pastor Dean