

DRESSED TO CONVEY A SPECIAL MESSAGE

This past weekend I was in Kingston to watch my daughter's basketball team play in the Ontario Basketball Championships for her age group. It was a very emotional weekend for my family because these were my daughter's final competitive games in rep basketball before heading off to university in the fall.

Usually when a basketball team comes onto the court prior to the game, they will be wearing a warmup shirt, or their game jersey. These warmup jerseys will usually have the team's name and logo on them along with the player's number and sometimes their last name, too.

Just after my daughter's team finished their final game on Sunday, another team came onto the court to start warming up. Instead of wearing their warmup jerseys, the girls on this team were all wearing white t-shirts over their jerseys. Each player had written or painted the words "Happy Mother's Day" on their t-shirts, and drawn pictures or symbols that represented their love for their mother.

I have been to three Ontario Basketball Association Championship weekends that have fallen on Mother's Day Sunday, and I have never seen a team come up with this idea before. I was impressed by seeing this message of love and appreciation these girls were sending to their mothers watching them in the stands on Sunday. I am sure it brought a lot of smiles and some tears to the moms from that team.

Seeing the effort these young women put into designing and making these shirts for their mothers reminded me when my daughter did this for me on two different Father's Days. On the one Father's Day my wife helped my daughter to make me a shirt that had her handprints and footprints on it. Another year my daughter gave me a blue shirt that not only had "Happy Father's Day" written on it, but also symbols of a cross to represent her daddy being a pastor. I actually wore the shirt to the service that Sunday and led worship in it. I remember wearing this same shirt again on one of our trips to Walt Disney World. A mother saw me wearing it, and after recognizing the love that was put into it said to me, "Good for you for wearing it."

Seeing these shirts the players were wearing on Mother's Day, and remembering some of the shirts my daughter made for me for Father's Day, reminded me how the clothes we wear often convey a message. Sometimes

the clothes people wear for work can reveal to us what they might do for a living. A person's clothes can also reveal something about their style and personality. This got me thinking how various references to clothing in the Bible were also meant to convey messages. Some examples where we see this in the Bible can be found:

- ***In Jacob showing favoritism toward his son Joseph by giving him the colourful robe.***
- ***In God instructing the Hebrews to eat the first Passover meal fully dressed as a show of trust that He would fulfill His promise to deliver them out of Egypt.***

In **Isaiah 61:10**, we see the reference to clothing as an indication that the person has made the choice to seek righteous living by having a relationship with God:

I am overwhelmed with joy in my Lord my God! For He has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom in his wedding suit or a bride with her jewels.

The imagery provided here by Isaiah is meant to convey the message that we are wearing these new clothes because we have ***entered into a right relationship with God by putting our trust in Christ.*** If we have made this decision for our lives, we should be envisioning ourselves clothed each day to convey the message to all that we encounter our love for Christ and our desire to represent Him well. Is this the message we are conveying to others, or are we ***sending mixed messages to them through our words, actions, and behaviours?*** This is an important question for us to examine in this, and every season in our faith journey.

Just like the girls' basketball team did on Mother's Day, we should send the message for others to see each day how much we love and appreciate Jesus by wearing the clothes of righteousness and salvation He has provided to us.

The message the girls had on their t-shirts may have been for their mothers, but their actions spoke to me in such a positive way to turn it into a mid-week message to inspire each one of us.

Keep safe and God bless

Pastor Dean