

Leaving the Bright Clothes and Ornaments Behind (Exodus 33:1-6)

Expository Lessons from the Book of Exodus

I. Review and Background

- a. Moses has descended from Mount Sinai with the two tablets on which were engraved the 10 Commandments, after being with the Lord for 40 days. Aaron and the people had constructed a golden calf and referred to it as the god who delivered them from Egypt.
- b. When Moses sees the calf and the revelry, he is furious. He smashes the two tablets on the foot of the mountain. Then he burns the golden calf in a fire, smashes it to dust, scatters the dust into a stream coming down from the mountain, and compels the people to drink it.
- c. Three thousand people die as a result of their idolatry. Then Moses intercedes with the Lord to make atonement for the people, and even tells the Lord to blot his own name out of the Lord's book, the Book of Life, if the Lord is going to destroy all the Israelites.

II. Bright Clothes and Ornaments

- a. Read **Exodus 33:1-6**.
- b. Storyline:
 - i. The Lord again tells the people to go up to Canaan, the land promised to Abraham.
 - ii. He says that *He will not go in their midst*, because they are a stiff-necked people. Instead, the Lord says, "I will send *my Angel* before your face...". The people are discouraged by this statement, which they consider to be "bad news", and they "mourn in lamentations".
 - iii. Apparently, in connection with this mourning, Moses instructs the people to remove their *brightly colored clothing and ornaments*.
 1. In the phrase translated "brightly colored clothing" in the OSB in **Exodus 33:5** from the LXX, the Greek word translated "brightly colored" (δόξα, doxa) is a very common word in the LXX and New Testament that is often translated "glorious", "magnificent", "expensive" or "bright in appearance".
 - a. In other English translations based on the LXX:

- i. The Lexham English Septuagint (LES) renders the expression “*splendid garments*”.
 - ii. Brenton’s translation renders it “*glorious apparel*”.
 2. The Greek word in the LXX in **Exodus 33:5** that the OSB translates “ornaments” (κόσμος, kosmos) is a very common word in the LXX and the New Testament. It has an unusual range of meanings; depending on the context, it can mean: *world, universe, ornament or decoration*.
- c. **Question:** Who or what is this “Angel of the Lord” who will accompany the people on their journey to Canaan, who will go before them to drive out their enemies?
- i. Keep in mind that the word translated “Angel” here (Greek = ἄγγελος, angelos), is the same word that is translated “messenger” or “angel” (depending on context) throughout the LXX and the New Testament.
 1. It is the same word John the Baptist uses in **Mark 1:2**, where he quotes from **Malachi 3:1** from the LXX when John the Baptist says, “Behold, I send my *messenger*....”
 - ii. Here in the OSB translation from which I am reading, the word *Angel* is capitalized. In the Old Testament, often the translators will capitalize a word if they believe it refers to God (the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit).
 1. Note that while the translators of the OSB and NKJV capitalize the word ‘*Angel*’ in **Exodus 33:2**, there are other modern translations that render it “my angel”, “my messenger” or “an angel”.
 - iii. There are many places in the Old Testament where it refers to angels, or to an angel. There are also places where it refers to *the* Angel (or Messenger) of the Lord, which early Christians understood as referring to the Word of God, the Son of God.
 1. Recall that it was the Angel of the Lord who spoke to Moses from the burning bush (**Exodus 3:2**), Who then said, “I am the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob....”
 2. Justin Martyr (early Christian writer originally from Samaria, a philosopher who converted to the Christian faith), writing to Roman pagans c. 160 AD about the identity and nature of Christ, in his *First Apology*:

- a. "Now the Word of God is His Son, as we have before said. And He is called *Angel* and Apostle; for He declares whatever we ought to know, and is sent forth to declare whatever is revealed; as our Lord Himself says, 'He who hears Me, hears Him that sent Me.'
- b. "From the writings of Moses also this will be manifest; for thus it is written in them, 'And the Angel of God spoke to Moses, in a flame of fire out of the bush, and said, I am that I am, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of thy fathers; go down into Egypt, and bring forth My people.' (**Exodus 3:2-10**)
- c. "And if you wish to learn what follows, you can do so from the same writings; for it is impossible to relate the whole here. But so much is written for the sake of proving that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God and His Apostle, being of old the Word, and appearing sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the likeness of angels; but now, by the will of God, having become man for the human race, He endured all the sufferings which the devils instigated the senseless Jews to inflict upon Him; who, though they have it expressly affirmed in the writings of Moses, 'And the Angel of God spoke to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, and said, I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' (**Exodus 3:2-6**) yet maintain that He who said this was the Father and Creator of the universe.
- d. "Whence also the Spirit of prophecy rebukes them, and says, 'Israel does not know Me, my people have not understood Me.' (**Isaiah 1:3**) And again, Jesus, as we have already shown, while He was with them, said, 'No one knows the Father, but the Son; nor the Son but the Father, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him.' (**Matthew 11:27**) The Jews, accordingly, being throughout of opinion that it was the *Father of the universe* who spoke to Moses, though He who spoke to him was indeed the *Son of God*, who is called both Angel and Apostle, are justly charged, both by the Spirit of prophecy and by Christ Himself, with knowing neither the Father nor the Son.
- e. "For they who affirm that the Son is the Father, are proved neither to have become acquainted with the

Father, nor to know that the Father of the universe has a Son; who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God. And of old He appeared in the shape of fire and in the likeness of an angel to Moses and to the other prophets; but now in the times of your reign [*speaking to the Romans*], having, as we before said, become Man by a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe on Him, He endured both to be set at nought and to suffer, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death.

- f. “And that which was said out of the bush to Moses, ‘I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and the God of your fathers,’ this signified that they, even though dead, are yet in existence, and are men belonging to Christ Himself. For they were the first of all men to busy themselves in the search after God; Abraham being the father of Isaac, and Isaac of Jacob, as Moses wrote.”
- g. (Source: Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, chapter 63; found in ANF vol. 1, p. 184)

3. For more on early Christian understanding of the term “the Angel of the Lord” applying to the Son of God, see David Bercot’s *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, article on ‘Angel of the Lord’.

- iv. Based on the above, the early Christians would have understood that “the Angel of the Lord” refers to the Son of God (prior to His incarnation as a man in Jesus) who spoke with Moses at the burning bush, and who would accompany the Israelites and drive out their enemies.
- d. **Question:** Is there anything *for us to learn* from the way the people mourned here, setting aside their fine colored clothing and ornaments/ jewelry?
 - i. Even today, when people mourn, the custom is to remove brightly colored clothing and put on black or other plain clothing at funerals. In some countries you can tell who the widows are, because they wear black clothing.
 - ii. I’m not sure about it, but one possible application for us comes to mind, as expressed by Clement of Alexandria. He is a well-known early Christian writer who was a teacher of the church in Alexandria, Egypt. I will share it for you to at least consider. He makes a compelling case

on many points, based on the Scriptures, that I believe is well worth at least considering, in a work titled *The Instructor*, written c. 195 AD. First, from his argument regarding fine (expensive) clothing:

1. “Neither are we to provide for ourselves costly clothing any more than variety of food. The Lord Himself, therefore, dividing His precepts into what relates to the body, the soul, and thirdly, external things, counsels us to provide external things on account of the body; and manages the body by the soul (ψυχή), and disciplines the soul, saying, ‘Take no thought for your life (ψυκῆ) what you shall eat; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on; for the life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment.’ (**Matthew 6:25**)
2. “And He adds a plain example of instruction: ‘Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Are you not better than the birds?’ (**Luke 12:24**)
3. “Thus far as to food similarly He enjoins with respect to clothing, which belongs to the third division, that of things external, saying, ‘Consider the lilies, how they spin not, nor weave. But I say unto you, that not even Solomon was arrayed as one of these.’ (**Luke 12:27**) And Solomon the king plumed himself exceedingly on his riches. What, I ask, is more graceful, more gay-coloured, than flowers? What, I say, more delightful than lilies or roses? “And if God so clothes the grass, which is today in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith!” (**Matthew 6:30**)
4. “Here the particle what (τί) banishes variety in food. For this is shown from the Scripture, “Take no thought what things you shall eat, or what things you shall drink.” (**Matthew 6:25, Luke 12:22 & 12:29**) For to take thought of these things argues greed and luxury. Now eating, considered merely by itself, is the sign of necessity; repletion, as we have said, of want. Whatever is beyond that, is the sign of superfluity. And what is superfluous [= *more than what is needed; therefore unnecessary*], Scripture declares to be of the devil. The subjoined expression makes the meaning plain. For having said, “Seek not what you shall eat, or what you shall drink,” He added, “Neither be of doubtful (or lofty) mind.” (**Luke 12:29**)
5. “Now pride and luxury make men waverers (or raise them aloft) from the truth; and the voluptuousness [= *given to*

indulging in sensual pleasures], which indulges in superfluities, leads away from the truth. Which is why He says very beautifully, “And all these things do the nations of the world seek after.” (**Luke 12:30**) The nations are the dissolute and the foolish. And what are these things which He specifies? Luxury, voluptuousness, rich cooking, dainty feeding, gluttony. These are the “What?” And of bare sustenance, dry and moist, as being necessities, He says, “Your Father knoweth that ye need these.” (**Luke 12:30**) And if, in a word, we are naturally given to seeking, let us not destroy the faculty of seeking by directing it to luxury, but let us excite it to the discovery of truth. For He says, “Seek the kingdom of God, and the materials of sustenance shall be added to you.” (**Luke 12:31**)

6. “If, then, He takes away anxious care for clothes and food, and superfluities in general, as unnecessary; what are we to imagine ought to be said of love of ornament, and dyeing of wool, and variety of colours, and fastidiousness about gems, and exquisite working of gold, and still more, of artificial hair and wreathed curls; and furthermore, of staining the eyes, and plucking out hairs, and painting with rouge and white lead, and dyeing of the hair, and the wicked arts that are employed in such deceptions? May we not very well suspect, that what was quoted a little above respecting the grass, has been said of those unornamental lovers of ornaments?
7. “For the field is the world, and we who are bedewed by the grace of God are the grass; and though cut down, we spring up again [*referring to the resurrection of the dead*]. But hay figuratively designates the vulgar rabble, attached to ephemeral pleasure, flourishing for a little, loving ornament, loving praise, and being everything but truth-loving, good for nothing but to be burned with fire.
8. “There was a certain man,” said the Lord, narrating, “very rich, who was clothed in purple and scarlet, enjoying himself splendidly every day.” (**Luke 16:19**) This was the hay. “And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at the rich man’s gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.” (**Luke 16:20**) This is the grass. Well, the rich man was punished in Hades, being made partaker of the fire; while the other flourished again in the Father’s bosom.
9. “...And our life ought to be anything rather than a pageant. Therefore the dye of Sardis, and another of olive, and another

green, a rose-coloured, and scarlet, and ten thousand other dyes, have been invented with much trouble for mischievous voluptuousness. Such clothing is for *looking at*, not for *covering*. Garments, too, variegated with gold, and those that are purple, and that piece of luxury... and those costly and many-coloured garments of flaring membranes, *we are to bid farewell to...*

10. "The Instructor expressly admonishes, 'Boast not of the clothing of your garment, and be not elated on account of any glory, as it is unlawful.' (**Sirach 11:4**)
11. "Accordingly, deriding those who are clothed in luxurious garments, He says in the Gospel: 'Those who live in gorgeous apparel and luxury are in earthly palaces.' (**Luke 7:25**) He says 'in perishable palaces', where are love of display, love of popularity, and flattery and deceit. But those that wait at the court of heaven around the King of all, are sanctified in the immortal vesture of the Spirit, that is, the flesh, and so put on incorruptibility.
12. "As therefore she who is unmarried devotes herself to God alone, and her care is not divided, but the chaste married woman divides her life between God and her husband, while she who is otherwise disposed is devoted entirely to marriage, that is, to passion (**1 Corinthians 7:32-35**). In the same way I think the chaste wife, when she devotes herself to her husband, sincerely serves God; but when she becomes fond of finery, she falls away from God and from chaste wedlock, exchanging her husband for the world...
13. "...For, in truth, I am ashamed when I see so much wealth lavished on the covering of the nakedness. For primeval man in Paradise provided a covering for his shame of branches and leaves (**Genesis 3:7**); and now, since sheep have been created for us, let us not be as silly as sheep, but trained by the Word, let us condemn sumptuousness of clothing...
14. "The blessed John [the Baptist], despising the locks of sheep as savouring of luxury, chose 'camel's hair', and was clad in it, making himself an example of frugality and simplicity of life. For he also "ate locusts and wild honey," sweet and spiritual fare; preparing, as he was, the lowly and chaste ways of the Lord (**Mark 1:6**). For how possibly could he have worn a purple robe, who turned away from the pomp of cities, and retired to the solitude of the desert, to live in calmness with

God, far from all frivolous pursuits—from all false show of good—from all meanness? Elijah used a sheepskin mantle, and fastened the sheepskin with a girdle made of hair (*presumably referring to 2 Kings 1:8*). And Isaiah, another prophet, was naked and barefooted, and often was clad in sackcloth, the garb of humility. And if you call Jeremiah, he had only ‘a linen girdle’ (**Jeremiah 13:1-10**).

15. “...The covering ought, in my judgment, to show that which is covered to be better than itself, as the image is superior to the temple, the soul to the body, and the body to the clothes. But now, quite the contrary, the body of these ladies, if sold, would never fetch a thousand Attic drachms [*one drachma was a small silver coin, equivalent to perhaps a day's wage -CP*]. Buying, as they do, a single dress at the price of ten thousand talents [*one talent was a weight of silver equivalent to perhaps 600 drachmae -CP*], they prove themselves to be of less use and less value than cloth [*In other words, the dress would be worth thousands of times the value of the woman wearing it, if she could be sold! -CP*]. Why in the world do you seek after what is rare and costly, in preference to what is at hand and cheap? It is because you do not know what is *really* beautiful, what is *really* good, and seek with eagerness shows instead of realities from fools who, like people out of their wits, imagine black to be white.”
 16. (Source: Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, book 2, chapter 11; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 2, pp. 263-267)
- iii. From the same work by Clement, he gives even stronger admonitions regarding jewelry and other ornamentation:
1. “It is childish to admire excessively dark or green stones, and things cast out by the sea on foreign shores, particles of the earth. For to rush after stones that are transparent and of peculiar colours, and stained glass, is only characteristic of silly people, who are attracted by things that have a striking show. Thus children, on seeing the fire, rush to it, attracted by its brightness; not understanding through senselessness the danger of touching it. Such is the case with the stones which silly women wear fastened to chains and set in necklaces, amethysts, ceraunites, jaspers, topaz, and the Milesian emerald...
 2. “And the highly prized pearl has invaded the woman’s apartments to an extravagant extent. This is produced in a kind

of oyster like mussels, and is about the bigness of a fish's eye of large size. And the wretched creatures are not ashamed at having bestowed the greatest pains about this little oyster, when they might adorn themselves with *the sacred jewel, the Word of God*, whom the Scripture has somewhere called a pearl [*presumably referring to Matthew 13:45-46*], the pure and transparent Jesus, the eye that watches in the flesh,—the transparent Word, by whom the flesh, regenerated by water, becomes precious. For that oyster that is in the water covers the flesh all round, and out of it is produced the pearl.

- iv. Clement then addresses objections that some Christian women in his day made, who were trying to justify their desire to wear pearls and gems (strikingly similar to rationalizations we hear today):
 1. “We have heard, too, that the Jerusalem above is walled with sacred stones; and we allow that the twelve gates of the celestial city, by being made like precious stones (**Revelation 21**), indicate the transcendent grace of the apostolic voice. For the colours are laid on in precious stones, and these colours are precious; while the other parts remain of earthy material. With these symbolically, as is meet, the city of the saints, which is spiritually built, is walled. By that brilliancy of stones, therefore, is meant the inimitable brilliancy of the spirit, the immortality and sanctity of being.
 2. “But these women, who do not understand the symbolism of Scripture, gape all they can for jewels, adducing the astounding apology, ‘Why may I not use what God has exhibited?’ and, ‘I have it by me, why may I not enjoy it?’ and, ‘For whom were these things made, then, if not for us?’ Such are the utterances of those who are totally ignorant of the will of God. For first necessities, such as water and air, He supplies free to all; and what is not necessary He has hid in the earth and water...
 3. “But you also oppose Scripture, seeing it expressly cries “Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you.” But if all things have been conferred on you, and all things allowed you, and “if all things are lawful, yet all things are not expedient,” (**1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23**) says the apostle. God brought our race into communion by first imparting what was His own, when He gave His own Word, common to all, and made all things for all. All things therefore are common, and not for the rich to appropriate an undue share.

4. "That expression, therefore, 'I possess, and possess in abundance: why then should I not enjoy?' is suitable neither to the man, nor to society. But more worthy of love is that: 'I have: why should I not give to those who need?' For such an one—one who fulfils the command, 'You shalt love thy neighbour as yourself' (**Leviticus 19:18**) - is perfect.
5. "For this is the *true* luxury - the treasured wealth. But that which is squandered on foolish lusts is to be reckoned waste, not expenditure. For God has given to us, I know well, the liberty of use, but only so far as necessary; and He has determined that the use should be common. And it is monstrous for one to live in luxury, while many are in want.
6. "How much more glorious is it to do good to many, than to live sumptuously! How much wiser to spend money on human beings, than on jewels and gold! *How much more useful* to acquire decorous friends, than lifeless ornaments! (**Luke 16:9**) Whom have lands ever benefited so much as conferring favors has?
7. "It remains for us, therefore, to do away with this allegation: 'Who, then will have the more sumptuous things, if all select the simpler?' Men, I would say, if they make use of them impartially and indifferently. But if it be impossible for all to exercise self-restraint, yet, with a view to the use of what is necessary, we must seek after what can be most readily procured, *bidding a long farewell to these superfluous things*.
8. In fine, they must accordingly utterly cast off ornaments as girls' gewgaws, rejecting adornment itself entirely. For they ought to be adorned within, and show the inner woman beautiful. For in the soul alone are beauty and deformity shown. Wherefore also only the virtuous man is really beautiful and good. And it is laid down as a dogma, that only the beautiful is good. And excellence alone appears through the beautiful body, and blossoms out in the flesh, exhibiting the amiable comeliness of self-control, whenever the character like a beam of light gleams in the form.
9. "For the beauty of each plant and animal consists in its individual excellence. And the excellence of man is righteousness, and temperance, and manliness, and godliness. The beautiful man is, then, he who is just, temperate, and in a word, good, not he who is rich...

10. "But the love of ornament, which is far from caring for virtue, but claims the body for itself, when the love of the beautiful has changed to empty show, is to be utterly expelled. For applying things unsuitable to the body, as if they were suitable, begets a practice of lying and a habit of falsehood; and shows not what is decorous, simple, and truly childlike, but what is pompous, luxurious, and effeminate..."
11. "...Apelles, the painter, seeing one of his pupils painting a figure loaded with gold colour to represent Helen, said to him, 'Boy, being incapable of painting her beautiful, you have made her rich.'
12. "Such Helens are the ladies of the present day, not truly beautiful, but richly got up. To these the Spirit prophesies by Zephaniah: 'And their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's anger.'
13. "But for those women who have been trained under Christ, it is suitable to adorn themselves not with gold, but with the Word, through whom alone the gold comes to light.
14. "*Happy, then, would have been the ancient Hebrews, had they cast away their women's ornaments, or only melted them; but having cast their gold into the form of an ox, and paid it idolatrous worship, they consequently reap no advantage either from their art or their attempt (Exodus 32). But they taught our women most expressively to keep clear of ornaments.*
15. "...Resigning, therefore, these baubles to the wicked master of cunning himself, let us not take part in this meretricious adornment, nor commit idolatry through a specious pretext. Most admirably, therefore, the blessed Peter says, 'In like manner also, that women adorn themselves not with braids, or gold, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.' (1 Peter 3:3-5) [Note that the word "merely" in many modern translations is not in the Greek text, and the application Clement makes here! -CP]
16. "For it is with reason that he bids decking of themselves to be kept far from them. For, granting that they are beautiful, nature suffices. Let not art contend against nature; that is, let not falsehood strive with truth..."
17. "It is suitable, therefore, for women who serve Christ to adopt simplicity. For in reality simplicity provides for sanctity, by reducing redundancies to equality, and by furnishing from

whatever is at hand the enjoyment sought from superfluities. For simplicity, as the name shows, is not conspicuous, is not inflated or puffed up in anything, but is altogether even, and gentle, and equal, and free of excess, and so is sufficient. And sufficiency is a condition which reaches its proper end without excess or defect...

18. "...Modesty and chastity are collars and necklaces; such are the chains which God forges. 'Happy is the man who has found *wisdom*, and the mortal who knows *understanding*,' says the Spirit by Solomon: 'for it is better to buy her than treasures of gold and silver; and she is more valuable than precious stones.' (**Proverbs 3:13-15**) For she is *the true decoration*.
19. "And let not their ears be pierced, contrary to nature, in order to attach to them earrings and ear-drops. For it is not right to force nature against her wishes. Nor could there be any better ornament for the ears than *true instruction*, which finds its way naturally into the passages of hearing. And eyes anointed by the Word, and ears pierced for perception, make a man a hearer and contemplator of divine and sacred things, the Word truly exhibiting the *true beauty* 'which eye has not seen nor ear heard before.' (**Isaiah 64:4, 1 Corinthians 2:9**)"
20. (Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, book 2, chapter 13; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 2, pp. 267-270)

v. Further thoughts on fine clothes and adornment:

1. From the context, some of the women in the church in Clement's day were struggling with this and giving reasons why they thought it was permissible to enjoy fine clothes and expensive jewelry.
2. Clement considers this one of the teachings of Jesus in the gospels.
 - a. He points to Sermon on the Mount, the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke 16**, John the Baptist vs. the wealthy who were in Herod's palace.
 - b. Many heroes of faith dressed very simply throughout the Scriptures, providing us with an example.
 - c. This is also what the apostles taught.
 - i. "Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing

jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands:" (1 Peter 3:3-5, ASV 1901)

1. Here is how **verse 3** appears in the NKJV translation:
 - a. "Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—" (1 Peter 3:3, NKJV)
2. Note that the word "merely" found in the NKJV and other modern translations is *in italics*, because it was added by the translators. That word is *not in the Greek text* of the New Testament.
 - ii. Paul similarly says: "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works." (1 Timothy 2:8-10, NKJV)
- d. We should learn lessons from the Israelites at Mount Sinai with the earrings and the golden calf. Let us get rid of the fine jewelry and clothing. Live simply, without adornment.
- e. Clothing is meant to be a covering, not something to draw attention from others.
- f. We should live simply and give to others in need.
 - i. This is not Marxism (government-enforced redistribution of wealth), but giving *voluntarily*,

motivated out of *loving our neighbors* as we love ourselves.

- ii. Adornment is a lie.
 - iii. Don't chase after things (like clothes and jewelry) that the world pursues.
 - iv. It corrupts us.
 - v. It takes our focus off of the true beauty we should be seeking (spiritual gold and pearls).
- g. Keep in mind that things may vary from culture to culture regarding what is expensive and showy. The goal is to be simple and modest, not to draw attention to ourselves.
- h. This lesson is not to weaponize us to focus on the externals and become legalistic. Our primary focus must ALWAYS be *the inside*, as Jesus said.
- i. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also." (**Matthew 23:25-26**, NKJV)
 - ii. If we *first* clean out the inside (our hearts), cleaning the outside should follow that!