

1 Self-Cleaning Clothes

2 Scientific Breakthrough

- Chinese material engineers have recently invented self-cleaning clothes.
- Soon, our everyday, ordinary clothes will have the capacity to clean themselves.
- This is achieved by dunking cotton into a vat of specially-crafted nanoparticles creating a material that self-cleans when exposed to sunlight.
- In one test, Chinese engineers dyed materials for 30 minutes in an orange dye.
- They then hung the clothes beneath simulated sunlight. The dye's hold over the fabric broke, and, after a time, easily washed off with water.

3 Scientific Application

- Imagine the applications! College students will no longer need to peel off their clothes after a long night of ... studying.
- They now can awaken, splash a little water on their faces, and stroll to class, ready and prepared for the day.
- Or, no need to stuff a carry-on bag with extra T-shirts or blouses.
- You can take a couple changes of clothes for your trip and call it good.

4 Misconceptions

- Self-cleaning clothes, however, aren't an excuse for laziness.
- Something is still required of the one who desires cleanliness.
- You can't rip off your clothes and lump them into a pile, only to wear them afresh come dawn.
- You still need to, at the very least, do some cleaning, which is, strangely, similar to God's demands on Israel in Isaiah.
- In other words, to be fresh as a daisy -- to be washed clean -- some work is required of us.

5 Dirty Laundry

- The connection to laundry is in verse 18:
 - "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."
- The stains of sin that defile the fabric of righteousness can be removed, so that our garments look as pure as the driven snow, and as soft and pleasant as wool.

6 Dirty Laundry

- But the backstory, provided by the text, is that God is not happy.
- According to Isaiah, Israel has turned away -- the nation is worshiping false gods (vv. 2-4).

- But that's not the only reason why God is not pleased. Israel has not only forgotten the Lord their God, Israel has forgotten Israel.
- The people have lost their way.
 - They were once an oppressed and exploited people.
 - They were once slaves in Egypt.
 - But, somewhere in their journey as a people, they who were once the oppressed have become the oppressor.

7 Dirty Laundry

- A people who believed they were acting rightly -- offering sacrifices, remaining ritually clean -- were, in fact, both sinning and unclean.
- They're so filthy that God shouts through Isaiah:
 - When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations — I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. (Is 1:12-14 NIV)
- So then, while Israel was faithful to the ceremonial part of the Mosaic Law, they were nevertheless a sinful people in God's eyes and whose ears would not listen to their prayers.
 - When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. (Is 1:15 NIV)

8 Dirty Laundry

- According to the context, Israel wasn't the biblical community that God had intended.
- Instead of watching out for each other and helping the weak and needy with their burdens, they exploited, oppressed, and took advantage of each other.
- So what was God's instruction?
- Your hands are full of blood; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. (Is 1:15-17 NIV)

9 Dirty Laundry

- God didn't demand from Israel more piety, (prayer, sacrifices, or temple worship). "Even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood;" (Is 1:15 NIV)
 - He wanted to see a real change in attitude and action.
 - He wanted to see a total redirection in their lives.
 - He wanted to see true repentance.

- If not, they were going to suffer the consequences of not having their prayers answered or even listened to.

10 LTDR

- The solution to washing oneself clean then, the solution that God offers to Israel, demands purity and cleanliness, a purity and cleanliness rooted in action.
- In order to restore their stained hands -- their relationship with God -- Israel has to, "Learn to do good" (LTDR).
- This is particularly important because a right relationship with God, according to Isaiah (1:16–17), is centered on right action—good deeds carried out on behalf of the community of faith.

11 Biblical Cleansing

- Listen to the list of demands that God makes of his people:
 - Wash yourselves . . .
 - Make yourselves clean . . .
 - Take your evil deeds out of my sight!
 - Stop doing wrong!
 - Learn to do right!
 - Seek justice!
 - Encourage the oppressed . . . Defend the cause of the fatherless . . . Plead the case of the widow.

12 LTDR

- Notice the contingency! In verse 19, Isaiah says: "If you are willing and obedient."
- The washing clean only happens after the obedience -- the LTDR -- which is explicitly defined in verses 16–17.
- In other words, in order to be washed clean, in order to "make yourselves clean," God's covenant community must change the way they're treating each other.

13 Consequences

- Yet, the consequences are steep: "But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword" (1:20).
- In other words, injustice is akin to violence, and to act unjustly is to be devoured by your own violence.
- According to Isaiah then, there is no middle ground.
- You either act according to God's will -- in this case, in accordance with God's equitable justice -- or you risk a consequence of ruin.

14 Message for the church

- We often think: "Well, that's true of them, but not of us, not the church."

- Except that God isn't talking through Isaiah to the unbelievers. God is confronting his own people.
- This was an in-house conversation. This is a message for the people of God, for the church, for believers, for Christians.
- Isaiah is talking to those who already follow the one, true God.

15 Where do we go from Here?

- As Christians, we must understand that we are God's covenant community and called to be a biblically functioning community, where we care, encourage, and build-up each other according to need.
- We are not a group of selfish individuals who come together to compete with each other over personal wants and wishes.
- This kind of attitude is toxic and will produce all kinds of slander, arguments, and strife.
- This is why the Apostle Paul says . . .
 - But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. (Col 3:8 NIV)

16 Where do we go from Here?

- Instead we ought to be . . .
 - kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. (Eph 4:32 NIV)
 - ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. (Titus 3:1-2 NIV)
 - Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. (Phil 2:3 NIV)
- And as the Apostle Paul exhorts us . . .
 - Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Col 3:12-14 NIV)

17 LTDG

- But just like Israel, we have to be willing and obedient or God too won't listen to our prayers.
- The church at Corinth was a church that was alive with spiritual gifts, but God was not answering their prayers.
- It wasn't because they didn't have faith or didn't spend enough time in prayer.

- It was because they were cliquish and turned a blind eye to the needs of others around them. {See 1 Cor 11:17–22}
- That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. (1 Cor 11:30 NIV)
- Like Israel, Corinth needed to “learn to do good.”

18 The Devil’s Schemes

- However, in LTDC, we have an adversary who challenges, combats, and opposes us at every level.
- For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Eph 6:12 NIV)
- In other words, there are intelligent beings whose job it is to tempt us to sin against God, so that God’s promises are not fulfilled in our lives where we ruin our witness of God’s glory.
- The primary way that the devil uses to accomplish this is to use disobedient and immature people to sin against us where we repay evil with evil.
- Friends, we have to not only put on the full armor of God to stand against these trials, but be on constant high alert because we never know when, where, and whom the devil will use to tempt us.

19 Key to Answered Prayer

- The LORD is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous. (Prov 15:29 NIV)
- Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:21–22 NIV)
- If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. (John 15:7 NIV)
- The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self–controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love [cleans us from] a multitude of sins. (1 Pet 4:7–8 NIV)

20 Summary

- Self–cleaning clothes, in the end, are a great idea, but a bit misleading.
- They still require something of us, namely, a removal, a rinsing, and a hanging.
- All of which are necessary before our clothes can be cleaned, made new, restored.

- For us, and to bring the analogy home, God’s covenant community needs to come clean as well. We must be that biblically functioning community so that God can display His glory in our midst.

21 Conclusion

- Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. (1 Pet 3:8)
- Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. (1 Pet 3:9)
- For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.” (1 Pet 3:10–11)
- “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” (1 Pet 3:12 NIV)