“Dressed for Eternity” – Pr Jim Sprengle – All Saints’ Day
November 1, 2026

I. **Revelation 7:14** – “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

II. **What does it mean to be a saint**… and at the very same time, a sinner?

a. Let’s say a young boy lives in an orphanage in one of the poorest countries in the world… he has nothing… no family, no money, and no hope.
   i. However, there is a prestigious academy near the orphanage… one with the best teachers and education… the best facilities and programs that only wealthy people can access.
   ii. But one day, out of the blue, the academy’s headmaster comes to the orphanage and spends some time getting to know him… and before the boy knows it, he gets word that the man is adopting him as his own son.
      1. Of course, the boy has nothing to do with it… he didn’t pass a test or do something nice to earn the man’s love… and he doesn’t have anything to offer in return.

b. Here’s where life gets interesting though… because everything changes in an instant.
   i. He now has a father, a home, and hope for the future.
   ii. And because his new dad is the headmaster of the school, he is officially enrolled at the best school in the whole country!
   iii. All of a sudden, he has all the benefits of being a student… including books, computers, excellent teachers, and access to everything… even a new school uniform, just like all the other students wear… and the best part?
      1. It was all a gift… as he did nothing to earn it or receive it.

c. Now, consider this… when he puts on his uniform, he is a student like everyone else… but does that change <u>everything</u> about him? No.
   i. Just because he has the school uniform on, it doesn’t mean he now understands how to read every book and solve every problem like a genius… and it doesn’t even mean that he will behave by the school rules or how his new dad wants him to.
   ii. He’s still the same kid who lived in that orphanage… with the same fears, weaknesses, bad habits, and trauma as before…
   iii. But here’s the difference… He now has a father who loves and supports him, teachers who instruct him, and people around him who help him learn how to live this new life.
      1. And in time, he does change… as he sees that he’s a part of the family, the school, and this new life… freely given to him.

2. Keep in mind, the uniform he wears is not some kind of costume or pretending… it represents his belonging and place.

III. **In Revelation 7**, John gives us a beautiful picture of our heavenly uniform.

a. An enormous crowd of people… way more than we could count… is standing before the throne of God and the Lamb (or Jesus)… and it's people from every nation, and tribe, and language… and what are they wearing?
   i. They are in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. (v 9)
   ii. All of them are dressed in white praising God and thanking Him for what He has done… and stay with me on this… because it is not about what <u>they</u> have done, but what <u>God</u> has done for them in Jesus.

b. The white robes that they wear are a sign and symbol of righteousness… of holiness that is required to be in the presence of God.
   i. All their good works throughout their lives – even if they were overachievers, star students, found the cure for cancer, or whatever good deeds – do not give them a right to be there… because they are only made right by the blood of Jesus Christ.
   ii. The blood that bleaches their robes white and makes them holy is how they might stand before the throne in glory… in the very presence of God.

c. So, the saints in heaven are the *Church Triumphant*… or in the Kingdom of Glory… and then there's the saints on earth… we who believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior… and we are the *Church Militant* as we continue the battle here in the Kingdom of Grace.
   i. We who are still alive, awaiting the great Day of our redemption are in constant need of grace you see, because we are not saints alone, but saints and sinners at the very same time.
   ii. We read the tension of being a saint and sinner in Romans 7, as Paul writes, "I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway." (v 19, NLT) and in Galatians 5, he says, "The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other." (v 17 NLT)
   iii. Yes, each and every one of us struggles with the sin that clings so closely (Hebrews 12:1), and we end up doing the things that do not reflect God's glory or His gift of salvation for us.

d. As the boy wore his school uniform each day, indicating his part in the student body of his academy… we also wear a white robe of Christ that indicates we belong to the body of Christ.
   i. However, at least while we live in the world, we still deal with the sin, the temptation, and the tribulation of life.

ii. Just because we live under grace doesn't mean we are perfect.

e. What God provides for us is an incredible ability to deal with sin… and it all starts with the gift of Jesus.

IV. **Jesus Christ** took the debt we could never pay upon Himself on the cross.

a. We were hopeless, helpless, and dead to God when He came to us in the Word and raised us to life by grace through faith.

i. He adopted us into the family in Baptism and called us His own… and we did nothing to earn it... because it was all a gift.

ii. And here is what the faith that God gave to us does… it trusts in the promises of Christ… it trusts in the work that Jesus did for us on the cross and through the empty tomb… and it trusts in Jesus as our Savior and Redeemer.

iii. The moment we have faith is the very moment we are given all the work Jesus won for us through His death and resurrection – and He credits His righteousness to our account.

iv. The great exchange, as I said last week, is our sins cast upon Him and His righteousness given to us as a gift… You are forgiven.

V. **The story doesn't end there** because the Holy Spirit is now at work in us.

a. Jesus Himself explains that a Helper will come after He rises from the dead and ascends to heaven at the right hand of the Father.

b. The Holy Spirit is now God's presence in us… helping us to understand the Scriptures… helping us to live with Godly desires and actions.

c. We may not feel like we know much of anything… like that young boy going off to the academy for the first time… but the Lord is always there to support us through it all.

i. And just as that young boy was still learning how to live as a son and a student… we are still learning how to live as the children of God… as we struggle with sin, we fall short, and we certainly don't always act like the saints God has declared us to be.

ii. But the blessing is, we don't have to wait until we get to heaven to become saints! Through faith in Jesus Christ, we already are… we have been clothed in His righteousness… and even now, the Holy Spirit is at work in us, helping us to live as God's people.

d. And one day, that struggle will be over… with all the temptations, the failures, the guilt… and we will hunger no more, thirst no more… and God Himself will wipe away every tear from our eyes.

i. This is what the saints who have gone before us are experiencing right now… the Church Triumphant… and we are united with them in the same Lord Jesus Christ, who has washed us clean by His blood.

ii. It may not always seem like it, but we also have a robe of righteousness as we have faith in Jesus… just as the saints in heaven who are now in glory.

iii. The great truth from God's own Word is that we are dressed in Christ's righteousness today… and through Him, we are dressed for eternity. Amen.