

I don't know why I buy new pants. Usually the first time I wear them, I spill something on them. And I don't spill water or dirt on them. No, I usually spill oil and vinegar salad dressing, something that creates an immediate stain. Instantly, I try to get the stain out. I put water on it or stain remover. I throw them in the wash. But it's always the same result. The oil imbeds into the fabric and there is no going back. I end up wearing my new pants around the house for a bit, but, eventually, I throw them away.

I wish it was only a problem with my pants. But this is the story of my life. There are blotches of sin that has stained my life. I've said something or done something selfish. And I've immediately tried to fix it. I try to wash away my problem. But there is no going back. My sin has stained my relationships with God and with the people I love.

The Prophet Jeremiah used this very illustration:

**Although you wash yourself with soap
and use an abundance of cleansing powder,
the stain of your guilt is still before me,"
declares the Sovereign Lord. (Jeremiah 2:22)**

You know what Jeremiah is saying. We have done things that no soap could clean. In a moment of frustration, you lashed out at a friend or spouse. And you can't take it back. You acted selfishly. You hurt the people you love. You stained the relationship. You could try to repair it. But you know you can't take back what you said, what you did.

When we really take a look at the stains of our life, we might wonder, "What's going to happen to me? My life is full of the stains of sin. Maybe I should just be thrown out like a ruined pair of pants."

If you feel worthless and stained, then it is time to turn to the promises of God. We are continuing our sermon series through the promises of God in a series called "**Promises, Promises.**" We are looking through God's Word to see if we can find promises that we can hold on to in the most difficult of circumstances. Today we want to find out if there is a promise from God that can help us when we feel worthless, when we want to just give up on life, when we are filled with guilt and shame and regret.

Feeling worthless is not a new emotion. The first humans felt worthless. They felt guilt and shame. Here's how that happened. When we go back to the very first page of the Bible, we see that God created a very good world with very good people. The very first people were named Adam and Eve. Now I believe that this were historical people. But they were not just historical people they are representatives of all humanity. In fact, that's what their name means. Adam means mankind and Eve means life. These two people represent all human life.

In the beginning they are presented with a choice: Will they trust God and his view of good and bad or will humans take God's place and try to establish their own view of right and wrong? And the visual for this choice was a fruit tree: called the tree of good and bad or the tree of good and evil.

Humanity failed to trust God and his view of good and bad. They ate from the tree. From that moment humanity was stained with sin. There was no going back. Like Lady Macbeth, humans couldn't scrub away the stain of their sin. And it wasn't just humans that were ruined. The blotch of their bad decision was imbedded into the very fabric of nature. All of creation was tainted, stained, ruined.

Now when I ruin my new pair of pants, I wear them for a bit, but then I eventually throw them away. And sadly that is what many people believe is going to happen to this world, God's creation. There is this idea, even among Christians, that the stain of sin has ruined humanity and all creation beyond repair. And one day God is going to just crumble it all up and throw all of creation into an eternal garbage dump.

Sure, Christians will talk about salvation. But what many Christians seem to believe that Jesus came to just save our souls. So the whole point of this life is to just believe in Jesus and when you die your soul flies up to heaven somewhere and you will be with God in the clouds. But that is not the message of the Bible. That is not the message of Christianity. That is actually Greek mythology. That is Plato's view of "salvation".

Let me describe it another way. Sometimes when I hear Christians talk about salvation, they describe it like the story of the Titanic. You know the famous story, right? The Titanic was this gloriously famous ship, that many thought was unsinkable. But then it hit an iceberg, cracked open, filled up with water and sunk. The only hope for salvation was to jump to a life raft and float away.

That is how many people look at the story of the Bible. God made a good world. We screwed it up. And one day, it is going down. And the only hope is to jump to the life raft of Jesus to save our souls. And all of creation, all of matter, our bodies and all that is in this life is going to be destroyed and forgotten.

In this view, God will save our souls, but everything else will be forgotten and destroyed. In other words, God will save our souls, so nothing else matters.

If you believe that God is only going to save our souls, then you are really saying, "God couldn't get the stain of sin out. The blotches of our life were too strong for God."

But that is not how the Bible describes the story of salvation. Yes, the Bible begins in a good world, a very good world, with very good humans. And yes, this very good world is stained by our sin. But let's turn to the last few chapters of the Bible and see how it all ends.

Let's look at the book of Revelation. Maybe you have never read the last book of the Bible. You might have heard that Revelation is scary and strange. Sure there are some pictures in Revelation that can be strange and confusing. But the book of Revelation is really a book about hope. You see, Revelation is really a series of visions that the Apostle John received. John was the last living disciple of Jesus. All the other disciples had been killed for their faith. John was the only one left, and now he was in a prison in the island of Patmos, just west of modern day Turkey. The Roman Empire continued to persecute Christians all over the world. And many people, including John, might have been wondering if the Christian faith was going to be snuffed out under all that opposition.

So Jesus came to John and pulled back the curtain of history. Jesus showed John what was really going on in his day, and what was going to really be going on until the end of the world. Evil and all that opposes Christianity would not get the final word. Jesus would continue to rule from on high. And Jesus was going to come back to judge all those who opposed him and rescue all those who followed him.

And that is what we find when we turn to the last pages of the Bible. Revelation 20 gives a quick snapshot of all of history from the time of Christ's first coming two thousand years ago and his second coming. Then it describes Jesus' return. And all people are brought before Jesus and are judged. Those who

rejected him are judged based on their works. Those who trusted in Jesus have their name written in the Book of Life and are rewarded for what they did in his name.

You might have heard that story before. And that's where we usually stop. We usually talk about Judgment Day and some people going to heaven and some people going to hell. But that is not where the Bible stops. Look at Revelation 21:

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. (Revelation 21:1)

The word "heaven" means sky. This vision takes us back to the very first verse in Scripture. The Bible begins by saying, "In the beginning God created the heavens (sky) and the earth." And the Bible ends with God saying, "God is creating a renewed heavens (sky) and a renewed earth."

Do you see? The earth is not ruined beyond repair. It will be renewed. It will be washed clean. God created this world in the beginning. And he is going to recreate it again in the end. It will just be new. It is a "new" sky and a "new" earth. It's not something totally different than this world. For example, if I say, "I'm going to buy a new car." That means I'm going to replace my existing car with a new one. When I say I'm going to buy a new car, I don't go out and buy a bike or a motorcycle.

I believe God is going to use this world, just purify and renew it so it looks brand-new.

What will our relationship with God be like in this renewed world? The next verse says, **"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. (Revelation 21:2-3)**

In John's vision he saw heaven come to the renewed earth, and God dwelling with his people. I think that is different than what we normally think. When I hear Christians pray, it sounds more like Star Trek, "Beam me up, Scotty", "Lord take me up to heaven". But Jesus taught us to pray, "Let your kingdom come." In other words, Lord Jesus come down and rule and dwell among us. These words from the end of Revelation shows us that one day God will answer that prayer in the fullest sense. On the last day, we will not be beamed up to heaven, but heaven will come down to the renewed earth. And God will dwell with us, much like God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

So, we are looking forward to a resurrected body in a resurrected renewed earth. We are looking forward to Jesus dwelling again on earth with his people. So I believe we are looking forward to a world much like the one we see right now. But there will be one huge difference. There will be no more stains of sin. God will get the stains out. Look at what John says in verse 4, **'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'** (Revelations 21:4)

Do you see? God is going to give us this life, but he is finally going to get all the stains out. All the ways that sin has stained this world will be eradicated. This world will be purified of death and crying and pain. The old way the world worked will pass away.

All of this is summed up in Jesus promise, **He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" (Revelation 21:5)** Notice Jesus does not promise, "I am making new things." No, he says, "I am making all this you see, I am going to make that stuff new."

That leads us to our first fill in the blank: **1. Everything is going to be new.** In other words, God is going to get all the stains out.

How could Jesus make such a crazy promise? How could he say that he could really get all the stains out and really purify us and this world? Hasn't this world, hasn't our lives been too tainted by sin?

Not for Jesus. Jesus came into this world of sin. He became one with us. He embedded himself into this world. And all our stains of sin peeled off us and stuck to him. He was like spiritual Velcro. We witness the worst of our world, as the one perfect person who ever lived was abandoned by his followers, ridiculed, stripped naked, abused, whipped, beaten, and nailed to a cross.

This all looked like a tragedy, but then Jesus did something remarkable. The dead Jesus came alive. His dead heart started beating again. His dormant lungs started breathing again. He became a renewed and resurrected Jesus. His old body was transformed into a glorious, renewed, and resurrected body. He then appeared to his disciples over 40 days. He ate with his disciples and talked about his kingdom and his mission. Then he ascended to the Father and said he would come back again.

Now, Jesus, as our resurrected, victorious Lord has the power to do for us, what he did for himself. The Bible says, Because Jesus lives, we too will live. Because Jesus was resurrected, he is going to resurrect us and all creation to be like him.

Paul says this very clearly in Philippians 3 **But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.** (Philippians 3:20-21) We are waiting for the Savior the come from heaven. When he comes he will transform our bodies to be like Jesus' body.

This means you are not like my ruined pair of pants. You have not ruined your life. You are not going to be thrown away. This world is not stained beyond repair. God is not going to throw away his good world. You, all believers, and everything else that God has made will be resurrected and made new.

I believe this leads to a very important application. You see, if we were ruined beyond repair than God should just get rid of us and all creation. Then we would be worthless just like a stained pair of pants. But if you and I will be made new, then we are not junk. We are not damaged. We are not ruined beyond repair. We will be transformed.

Even our pain and suffering will be transformed. And we see glimpses of that truth in Jesus. Jesus suffered the pain of crucifixion. He had nails that pierced his hands and feet. They were evidence of a cruel world of pain and torture. But after Jesus was resurrected and his body transformed, he still had those nail marks. He still had his scars. But his scars were transformed into evidence of his love and sacrifice for his people.

Somehow God is going to do the same with all your scars. Somehow, he will transform your scars into a badge of glory and victory. Somehow, the pain and suffering and sin that you experienced will be purified and made new and glorious.

Therefore, here is the application: **2. Wear your pants.** What I mean by that is “live your life”. You’re your story. When I spill on my pants, I want to cover up the stain. When we sin, we want to cover up our sin and hide it from others. Don’t hide it. Bring it to Jesus and let him wash you clean.

Another thing I do when I get a stain is I want to exchange my pants for something else. We do the same in our life. When we suffer and feel pain, we might compare our lives with someone else. We might want to exchange our lives with someone else. But wear your pants. Live your story. God is going to transform you body and soul to be something glorious. We can be comfortable in our own skin because this skin will be glorified. And what I’ve done in this body will be rewarded by Jesus. And what is stained and broken will be transformed.

I started this sermon quoting Jeremiah, who said there was no soap powerful enough to wash out the stain of our sin. We needed something stronger than soap to make us like new. Revelation gives us the answer. In Revelation 7, John sees a picture of all of God’s people from every different nationality and background. They are real people with real bodies with real distinct features and they are all dressed in white.

A messenger of God asks John who he thinks those people are. He doesn’t know. So the messenger responds, “**These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**” (Revelation 7:14)

John was looking at you when Jesus returns. He saw you in the crowd. Your body and soul. You who have lived through all the pain and suffering. He saw you, but you were made completely new because you will be wash clean in something stronger than soap. When Jesus returns your body will be washed in the blood of Christ.

So, wear your pants. Live your life. Live your story. Be who God has called you to be. Because he wants you. And he loves you. And he is transforming you. And one day, when he returns, he will finish the job. He will make all things new, including you. Amen.