Why On Earth Would You Wear That?

-Let’s begin with a little game of: Why on earth would you wear that? (courtesy of Lady Gaga; Rated G.)

-Show a picture of football player, and then another picture of a firefighter. If you came from another planet and saw those guys and what they were wearing, you’d probably be like “What’s that about? That’s a weird outfit? Why would you wear that?”

But when you understand what their job is, their outfit makes sense.

\*It’s kind of like this guy. (Show them the picture of the high priest.) Why is he wearing that weird thing over his chest and a shoulder pads-looking thing? Why a turban and a gold plate in the middle of it? Again, it’ll make sense when you read a little bit more about it.

Let’s begin in Exodus 28.

“Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. **2**And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. **3**You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood. **4**These are the garments that they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests. **5**They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. **6**“And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and of fine twined linen, skillfully worked.

**\*Show them the picture of the priest. Zoom in on parts we are talking about.**

**7**It shall have two shoulder pieces attached to its two edges, so that it may be joined together. **8**And the skillfully woven band on it shall be made like it and be of one piece with it, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. **9**You shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, **10**six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. **11**As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall enclose them in settings of gold filigree.

Ok, this is a weird outfit. Why does this guy have to dress like this?

**12**And you shall set the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders for remembrance.

Interesting. (next slide) Two stones on the shoulder pieces. What’s on the stones? Why? Reminder of the responsibility. You guys have heard someone say something like “I’ve got the weight of the world on my shoulders.” That’s a powerful visual isn’t it?

Life Lesson #1 this morning has to do with the responsibility of prayer: when you come before the Lord whose names do you carry on your shoulders? Who are the people that you feel a great burden and responsibility to go before the Lord on their behalf?

**13**You shall make settings of gold filigree, **14**and two chains of pure gold, twisted like cords; and you shall attach the corded chains to the settings. **15**“You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, in skilled work. In the style of the ephod you shall make it—of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen shall you make it. **16**It shall be square and doubled, a span[a] its length and a span its breadth. **17**You shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius,[b] topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; **18**and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; **19**and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; **20**and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold filigree. **21**There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes.

Just like the two stones on his shoulders. Now here are 12 stones that are going to be where? On the breast piece and where is that located? Skip to to verse 29.

**29**So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart, when he goes into the Holy Place, to bring them to regular remembrance before the Lord.

So the ephod reminded Aaron of the burden/responsibility on his shoulders, and how others needed him to bear that burden. Now look what the point of having the stones here on his chest?

Life Lesson #2: Who are those you keep closest to your heart?

**30**And in the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be on Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the Lord. Thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel on his heart before the Lord regularly.

Reminder of God’s judgment.

**31**“You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. **32**It shall have an opening for the head in the middle of it, with a woven binding around the opening, like the opening in a garment,[c] so that it may not tear. **33**On its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, around its hem, with bells of gold between them, **34**a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, around the hem of the robe. **35**And it shall be on Aaron when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the Holy Place before the Lord, and when he comes out, so that he does not die.

Bells on his outfit? That’s weird? What was the point of that? Look Daddy! Teacher says “Every time a bell don’t ring an Aaron gets his wings.”

All kidding aside, there were strict guidelines to the priesthood. Anybody recognize the sons of Aaron’s names? Nadab and Abihu? (vs.43 foreshadowing) Remember Uzzah? The way that we approach God is serious business. We don’t ever need to forget it either.

**36**“You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, ‘Holy to the Lord.’ **37**And you shall fasten it on the turban by a cord of blue. It shall be on the front of the turban. **38**It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts. It shall regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.

**39**“You shall weave the coat in checker work of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash embroidered with needlework.

**40**“For Aaron's sons you shall make coats and sashes and caps. You shall make them for glory and beauty. **41**And you shall put them on Aaron your brother, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. **42**You shall make for them linen undergarments to cover their naked flesh. They shall reach from the hips to the thighs; **43**and they shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they go into the tent of meeting or when they come near the altar to minister in the Holy Place, lest they bear guilt and die. This shall be a statute forever for him and for his offspring after him.

More Life Lessons

Why does this matter? What can we learn from all this?

1. Today, we are priests.

1 Peter 2:4-5As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We don’t wear the crazy outfits. Why? We don’t live under the Old covenant…)

1. The priesthood reminds us of the great responsibility of prayer.

Stones on shoulders, on breastplate…

1. We see a picture of holiness.

We see powerful things communicated by even in the way that he dresses.

What are some things that you would notice about him if you were taking a look…

What do you communicate in your dress? This man was set aside for a special work. Has it occurred to you yet that you are to be the same way? God has set us aside for a special work.

4. What if you had a sign that hung above your head at all times that said “Holy to the Lord?”

Would it affect the way we treated people? Would it affect the way you treated a girl on a date?

5. Yes we are all priests, but it also serves as a reminder of our need for a great High Priest: Jesus.

-Heb.4:14-16