



SESSION THREE

Out from Behind the Curtain

Key Verse

At that moment the curtain of the temple was
torn in two from top to bottom.

MATTHEW 27:51A

LEADER PREPARATION

It is recommended that you read chapter 8, “All Dressed Up and *Somewhere to Go!*” and chapter 9, “Anyone Can *Talk* a Good Game; But It’s How You Play It That Counts,” in *He Chose You* by Max Lucado before you teach so you will be well acquainted with the stories and principles this lesson is based on.

Materials Needed:

- Student Handouts (1 per student)
- Pens (1 per student)
- Bibles

SESSION THREE OUTLINE

Large Group Lesson: He Chose to Invite Us into His Presence

20 minutes

Introduction

Teaching

Pair Up: An Hour with Your Hero

Application

Small Group Discussion

20 minutes

Questions about the Robe

Questions about the Curtain



LARGE GROUP LESSON: He Chose to Invite Us into His Presence

I. Introduction

- A. I'm going to read you a story, and afterward I'm going to test you to see how well you listened.

Read the story of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11–24, emphasizing the words in bold.

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, **his father saw him** and was filled with compassion for him; **he ran to his son, threw his arms around him** and **kissed him**.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! **Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate.** ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

Luke 15:11–24

B. *Ask a volunteer to come up and list all the things the father did for the son when he returned. If the volunteer cannot name all 9 things, call up another volunteer until someone lists all 9 things.*

1. He saw him coming.
2. He ran to his son.
3. He threw his arms around him.
4. He kissed him.
5. He had the best robe put on him.
6. He had a ring put on his finger.
7. He had sandals put on his feet.
8. He had a fattened calf killed.
9. He threw a party.

C. Often when we hear this story, we focus on how the father was watching for the son and ran to him, and how he threw him a party. But we don't often think about the fact that before he threw the party, the first thing he did was to dress him.

But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet."

—Luke 15:22

D. Robes were given as gifts from a family when a young man left home. According to Jewish tradition, a robe represented the family name and tribe. When the prodigal son was given a robe, the father was signaling that his place in the family was restored.

II. Teaching

A. Jesus' robe was a well-made gift and represented the life he lived.

1. Jesus had been given a robe, and we know it was the work of an excellent seamstress, because it was seamless (see John 19:23).
2. The seamless robe was a symbol of perfection; the robe Jesus wore shows us his character—perfect, without any faults.

3. The seamlessness of the robe made it so valuable, the Roman soldiers did not want to tear it apart.
4. At the cross, the soldiers took Jesus' seamless robe from him. In its place, he wore the ugly garment of nakedness, indignity, and failure. He wore our sin (see 2 Corinthians 5:21).

B. Jesus' human body represented another fabric: the curtain in the temple.

1. The sixty-foot-tall, thirty-foot-wide and six-inch-thick curtain separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple. The Holy of Holies was the back room of the temple where God's presence was, and it was so holy only the high priest could enter, and he could only go in once each year after he had been properly purified.
2. But now we can boldly enter the Holy of Holies because of a shocking connection between the curtain and Jesus' human body. Hebrews 10:19–20 refers to “the curtain” as Christ's “body.”
3. At the moment Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom in an instant. Matthew 27:51 tells us: “At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”
4. We may enter freely and joyfully into God's holy presence because we are dressed in the righteousness of Jesus. Jesus broke down the sin barrier that separated us from a holy God. He opened the curtain for us.

PAIR UP: An Hour with Your Hero, Part 1

Imagine you have been offered the opportunity to spend an hour with someone you admire and respect but have never met. It might be a favorite musician, athlete, artist, author, or an expert in your favorite activity. Turn to the person next to you and describe who your admired person is and what you would like to do together or talk about.

After about one minute of discussion, have a few students share their choice of who they would like to spend an hour with.

PAIR UP: An Hour with Your Hero, Part 2

Now imagine that when you arrive for your appointment, you are told that although you will indeed be spending an hour with your admired person, there will be a curtain between the two of you the entire time. How would it change the way you had hoped to spend your time together? How would it affect your enjoyment of the visit?

After about one minute of discussion, If time allows, have a couple of students share their reaction.

III. Application

- A. Are you living as if God is still confined to the Holy of Holies? Do you act as if he doesn't see what you're doing, is not aware of the expressions on your face, can't see around the curtain to see the real you? Maybe you're living a compartmentalized life, where you live one way when you're at church, where you imagine God to be, and a different way when you're at school or at home or when you are out with friends.
- B. Jesus tore the curtain, removed the compartments, made it so nothing separates us from God anymore. He took care of our sin so we can always be in God's presence.
- C. How are you dressed? What does your moral wardrobe look like? Blouses of jealousy? Shirts of anger? Skirts of envy and worry? Pants of deceit and bitterness? Scarves of selfishness? Belts of immorality?
- D. Jesus makes it possible for you to have a total wardrobe makeover. You can put on blouses of mercy, shirts of kindness, pants of honesty and truth, scarves of giving, belts of virtue.

- E. Because Jesus let go of his seamless robe and took on the rags of our sin, we now may put on his righteous life. We can put on a new self, created in the image of God (see Ephesians 4:24).
- F. Will you make that great exchange today? Will you see Jesus' robe as a wonderful gift for you? Let nothing keep you from receiving Jesus as your Savior right now.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

At this time, if your group is larger than 10 students, break up into discussion groups of 4 to 6, with an adult facilitator or student leader. Pass out the student handouts, pens, and Bibles.

Materials Needed:

- Student Handouts (1 per student)
- Pens (1 per student)
- Bibles

Questions about the Robe:

Jesus gives us the gift of his seamless robe, which represented his perfect character. This picture of clothing is used in the Bible to signify our character too.

Have a volunteer read this passage out loud.

The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

— ROMANS 13:12-14 NLT

Questions about the Robe:

Jesus gives us the gift of his seamless robe, which represented his perfect character. This picture of clothing is used in the Bible to signify our character too.

1. According to Romans 13:12-14, what types of dark deeds are we supposed to remove like dirty clothing?
2. What clothing are we supposed to put on? How do we do that in practical terms? (*Scripture memory, listening to worship songs, talking to God throughout the day, devoting your imagination to loving people instead of letting yourself “think about ways to indulge your evil desires”*)
3. What is the meaning of the phrase “we belong to the day”? (*We belong to the day of salvation; we are destined for heaven*) According to this passage, how is this supposed to affect how we live?
4. What areas of life cause you the most struggles? How can you “clothe yourself with Christ” in those areas?

IDEA: Use your daily routine of getting dressed as a prompt to “clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:14 NLT). As you dress every day, allow each piece of clothing to remind you that you are dressed in his strong love and have constant access to God’s presence and help.

Questions about the Curtain:

At the moment Jesus died, the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies was torn, destroying the room where God had confined his presence. Now everyone has full access to God anywhere, anytime. God came out from behind the curtain. But sometimes we still live as if God is confined to one area of our lives, and we don’t let him into the other areas; that is called *compartmentalization*.

1. Which of these statements represents a compartmentalization you are most likely to make? Share the reasons for your response.
 - ☐ God is in holy places but not here with me.
 - ☐ God was at work at that time but not in my time.
 - ☐ God is involved in big things but not my personal things.
 - ☐ God is seen in spiritual matters but not in my daily matters.

2. When we compartmentalize, we are putting the curtain back up as a way of shielding an area of our lives from God's probing eyes. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing what you tend to shield yourself from when guilt comes between you and God? Share the reasons for your response.

- ☐ I am shielding myself from my fear of God's anger or disapproval.
- ☐ I am shielding myself from facing God until I can get my act together.
- ☐ I am shielding myself from my own shame.
- ☐ I am shielding myself from confessing my failure.
- ☐ I am shielding myself from making things right with someone I have hurt.
- ☐ I am shielding myself from changing my behavior.
- ☐ Other: _____

Pray Together:

Say something like: We are going to pray for each other now about the areas where we need to tear down the curtain that is shielding us from God.

Easter/Lent Focus:

We are challenging all our students to join with the rest of the church and read *He Chose You* in the weeks leading up to Easter. This week's readings will help us understand God's acceptance. Please read chapters 7–9 in *He Chose You*.