

Whatever Happened to Reverence?

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

Psalm 89:7 says:

“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.”

A familiar expression being heard among many churches today is this: “Come as you are.” Many regular church-going people are coming to church in their old Blue Jeans or pants that they mow the yard with on Saturday. They are coming to church wearing T-shirts that might say “Do the Dew” or some other popular saying.

There seems to be an all out war going on today between new ways and the old traditional standards that have long represented decency and respect for God’s House. If anyone wants to teach a young convert about the matter of dress and respect or reverence for God’s House he is termed a legalist. Of course, dressing respectfully for God’s House on God’s Day (Sunday) does not make you a legalist unless you think that dressing a certain way will give you acceptance or salvation before God.

There is a need to return to this matter of respect for God’s House. As new people come to our churches we should teach them respect and reverence and set some kind of example for them. Of course we

have all heard the familiar saying that God only looks on the heart and not the appearance (1 Samuel 16:7; John 7:24). But are these verses really giving us the right to forsake all decency and respect in the matter of dress when we meet together as God's people? There is nothing in these texts that would suggest that they are even talking about the actual outward appearance of dress. Rather, they are referring to the countenance and charm of people and the actions of Jesus who was healing on the Sabbath. The matter of dress does not apply to these texts. Of course, we can reverence God in other ways other than just dress. But have we forgotten that the way we dress when we corporately worship together on Sunday does send a message up to God? We are saying by the way that we dress, "God, this is what we think of You."

As a Scriptural principle, God is more concerned with the heart than the outward appearance. But does this really mean that we should stop reverencing God by the way that we dress as we meet together on Sunday? And if we knowingly intend to break traditional standards of respect in regards to church attire is our heart really reverencing God as we should? Yes, God looks on the heart and I wonder what he sees when he looks on our hearts. Does He see a

heart that is ready to reverence Him? **Yes, God looks on the heart but how do we look at God today?** Do we see Him as the great and holy God who is to be revered? Do we see the bush burning as Moses did when he encountered the holiness of God? Can we in some measure get back to seeing God as Isaiah did in Isaiah chapter six? Isaiah saw the smoke ascending from the presence of God's throne and felt the shaking all about him and he knew that God was so infinitely holy that he fell before His presence in humility and reverence.

Psalm 96:9 says:

“O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.”

In the midst of this changing tide that is occurring in the church we must ask ourselves, “Have we gone too far? Have we stepped outside the boundary of reverence for God's absolute majestic holiness and purity? And is not God worth more than a pair of old Blue Jeans?”

