

## *A New Suit for the Coach*

Maxie Dunham, professor emeritus at Asbury Theological Seminary and an excellent writer, likes to tell the story of the University of Tennessee football coach who bought a bolt of cloth, thinking he would have a suit made of it.

He took the material to his tailor in Knoxville, where the University of Tennessee is located. The tailor measured him, examined the bolt of cloth, did some computations on a piece of paper, and said, "I'm sorry, Coach, there just isn't enough material in this bolt to make a suit for you."

The coach was disappointed, but he threw the bolt of cloth in the trunk of his car, wondering what he was going to do with it.



A couple of weeks later, this same coach was in Tuscaloosa, Alabama – the home of the Crimson Tide, arch enemies of the Tennessee Vols. He was on his way to the coast for a vacation.

Driving down the main street in Tuscaloosa, he noticed a tailor shop, which reminded him that he had that bolt of cloth in the trunk. He stopped, thinking he would give it a try. He told the tailor he had bought this bolt of cloth and wondered if he could do anything with it. The tailor measured him, measured the blot of cloth, and did some computations.

Finally, he said, "Coach, I can make you a suit out of this bolt. What's more, I can even make you an extra pair of pants. And if you really want it, I can give you a vest out of this, too."

The coach was dumbfounded. "I don't understand," he said. "My tailor in Knoxville told me he couldn't even make one suit out of this bolt of cloth."

The tailor replied, "Coach, here in Tuscaloosa, you are not nearly as big a man as you are in Knoxville."

We all like to think we're a big man or a big woman in some arena, don't we? It's no fun when our ego trip gets derailed.

It's a mistake to define ourselves by what we are not, instead of who God is. If we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are adopted into God's family and are children of God. So, our identity is not based on comparing ourselves to others or boasting of our achievements. Our identity is not even based on our right actions. Our identity is based on who God is. And the Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy.

(more)

Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, both of whom went to the temple to pray. “The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God I thank you that I am not like other people – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”

Then Jesus added: “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (From Luke 18:11-14 NIV).

Wisdom for the people of Jesus’ day – and for us.

– Beecher Hunter