

## Garments of Grief By Peg Arnold 2013

Death is the ruthless thief that rips away a vibrant spirit at the most unexpected time.

Death is the uninvited visitor that lurks in the corners and leaves with a precious soul in spite of the prayers for healing.

Death is the expected and sometimes welcome guest that escorts a loved one up the golden stairway to their heavenly Savior.

Whether you experience death as the thief, the uninvited visitor, or the guest, Death leaves a wardrobe of grief garments, for those who remain behind.

- The quilt of memories offers a refuge in the lonely times and sometimes lulls you back to sleep on those mornings it is hard to move.
  - The scratchy undergarments of despair, makes every task difficult, yet there is no easy way to remove it in exchange for another garment.
  - The hooded sweatshirt of avoidance, covers your head and eyes and allows you to escape from connecting with others and continue on as if nothing has happened.
  - The shoes of shock provide a deceitful opportunity to run away from the truth of death.
  - The black shawl of sorrow exposes your grief and loss to everyone you know.
  - The heavy coat appears normal, but everywhere you go, you carry the invisible burden of loss.
  - The healing robe is like a hug and provides security at the end of an exhausting day.
  - The wristwatch of time marks celebrations and memories as a constant reminder of the permanency of the loss of your loved one.
  - The mask of cheer conceals your anger, loneliness, and tears from the world, and lets you pretend that everything is okay.
  - The suit of acceptance, hides in the back corner, you look at it now and then, but each time you try it on, it doesn't fit quite right, yet.

Each garment is neatly stored in the wardrobe that Death leaves, and it's normal for us to wear any one of these garments throughout our grief process.

Some garments we choose to wear, other times the garment chooses us.

Some garments lose their usefulness early, but others linger in the corners, and we are caught by surprise when they appear.

The one garment that Jesus offers to us every morning is the garment of faith. It is a promise of heaven's gift of reunion for all those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Isaiah the prophet reassures us that the Lord;

*"provide for those who grieve in Zion, to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise."*