

Passover Sewing Bloopers

By Parah Israel

PSALMS 126:5 *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*

There is no stress like the sewing stress of the Passover season. When the goin' gets tough, the true worshippers get goin' with their sewin'!! I have had my share of the good, the bad and the ugly of sewing over the years, but in the end, all is worth the great joy and a giant belly laugh!

My first Passover was at a beautiful hotel. I was very new to the truth. I was also over 6 months pregnant with my first born (that was over 30 years ago...omg!!). I didn't know how to sew in those days, so I had to find a dress to buy. But it couldn't just be any typical special occasion dress fit for the prom or a wedding, it had to be something fit for the Lord's holy day. And as if that wasn't hard enough, my pregnant belly was as big as the house and nothing fit. I was miserable. I remember driving to the mall and before getting out of my car saying a little prayer asking the Most High to please help me find a dress suitable for His Passover. I looked and looked. I found nothing. I left the mall and started going all around town, store to store desperately looking everywhere. A couple of weeks went by before I finally found a dress. It was all white...that made me nervous. As large as my belly was, I was NOT thinking about wearing a white dress, oh heavens NO!! But it was just perfect, it had an ethnic flair to it. So, I broke protocol and just bought it with a white scarf to match. Now remember I said I didn't know how to sew at this time. Well, I had to very quickly learn at least to sew on the ribbon of blue and fringe. The ribbon of blue I had was about ½ inch thick which looked real nice but you had to sew at both edges because it was so thick, you couldn't just sew one quick stitch down the middle. I suffered with that!! I wasn't very good at sewing straight, especially not close to an edge. The seams kept coming close to each other as if it were one seam down the middle...LOL...and in some spots I missed the ribbon all together. It was a hot mess. But I wore my dress with pride because my intention was to follow the law. When I arrived at the Passover, I got many compliments. I was really happy inside. But the best part of it all, the lesson that the brothers taught on that night helped me to really appreciate the white color of the dress because it reminded me of the cleansing and renewing of my spirit. I will never forget that feeling.

A couple of years later, I had learned to sew. Keep in mind, I was very much a novice, but acquired enough basic skills to get me on my way. Sewing for my husband and son was no problem – men's garments are not usually fitted so much easier to sew. Their garments looked fabuloso!! But for me and my daughter, that was another story. Sewing a dress is no easy task, especially since dresses usually require darts and other things to make it fit right. I didn't use a dress pattern because it just looked too complicated. I figured I would just cut out 2 box-like

pieces sew them together and add mini-boxes for sleeves. Believe me when I say that I put my whole heart in it and tried soooooooooo hard. The dress ended up looking like a garbage bag, not a good shape for an already curvaceous woman. Well, in the end, with no time left to start all over again or buy anything, I resorted to my handy-dandy, never-failed-me-before safety pins to add curvature where needed and the dress ended up looking pretty nice. My eyes are rolling right out of my head right now just thinking about all the things that I had to do in a crunch...SMH!! The dress on the inside looked like Frankenstein all in pieces, but you would have never known that from the outside. Another one for Israel's funniest sewing moments!

Now picture this...it's the morning before Passover and I had just barely finished four whole garments. I mean talking about just barely making it!! Naturally, I had everyone try on their outfits just to be sure no one was walking out looking like a clown. Three garments were too long, one was not long enough! Oh my!! Well, without knowing of course how to make proper alternations, I just went to town with my trusty sewing pins and started pinning the garments to size them right. As I was going, I was holding pins in my mouth between my lips. –TIP—Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, hold pins in your mouth, use a pin cushion!!! Well, in all the sewing chaos, a mysterious hiccup came upon me and I SWALLOWED A PIN!!!! Can you believe that?? Yes, I swallowed it and it felt stuck in my throat. My husband had to take me to the hospital. By the time we got there, the pin had dislodged itself and gone down my esophagus and into my stomach. Well, the doctors feared the pin could puncture my stomach and release stomach acid in my blood stream or cause internal bleeding. They put me under anesthesia and tried to fish out the pin with some type of microscopic robot claw, but it had already gone down too far. Now we were just... waiting for it to go through the natural course. You know what I mean, to pass it through! Needless to say, I had to stay at the hospital to be observed that night. Meanwhile, my husband left just before sundown so that he and our kids could keep the Passover. And to make it even more heartbreaking? It was my baby son's very *first* Passover. He was 7 months old and I was stuck in a hospital gown instead of celebrating with my family. Honestly, I was terrified and super emotional. The next morning, they took another x-ray and were like, "Good news! The pin has moved on. You're free to go!" So off I went, waiting to have the world's most terrifying bathroom moment. And guess what? That evening... mission accomplished. I looked in the toilet, and *ta-da* — there it was. The pin was out without any damage to me. Moral of the story, USE A PIN CUSHION NOT YOUR MOUTH!!

My sewing improved little by little as the years went by. I even started using a dress pattern. I took a class at a local fabric store to formally learn the basics (you know, do things the right way...LOL). This particular Passover, I was showing another sister the little I knew and helped her make her first dress. The fabric was beautiful, purple with a gold shimmer, but little did we know it would be HELL to sew!! It shed all this lint and gold shimmer and it was hard to see your seam. OMG...I just wanted to pull my hair out!! If you have never sewn in a sleeve the right way with gathering, let me tell you it is no easy task. Again, I was no expert, and I was teaching a sister how to sew in her first sleeve. Every time she sewed in her sleeves, they were either too puffy or too tight all in the wrong places, it was awful. She very quickly developed a very intimate relationship with that dreaded seam ripper (you know the one tool you wish you never knew but glad you had in a bind). Remember, I mentioned how hard it was to see the seam on this fabric. Well, she ended up ripping a lot of the fabric too. I was like, well let's just trim a bit of what has ripped and try to sew it back in. She did this I believe 3 times. The sleeve

started out as a short sleeve that reached to about the elbow. It ended up being the size of a bandage that barely went past the shoulder. It was hilarious. But it was finally done. I think I traumatized her for life because it was not only her first attempt at sewing her own dress, but I believe she may have made that her last time too...LOL. We both laughed and laughed even years later!!

More and more years went by and my sewing was in full swing. Darts didn't scare me anymore, hemming was easier, I even learned the bodice for my dresses, sleeves were a breeze and our garments even got buttons and zippers. I was on a roll. I was making multiple layered garments, robes, gowns, belts...I was basically sewing a whole biblical fashion line from scratch! But let me tell you, trying to do all that while working a 9-to-5 job was insane! I was pulling 20-hour work days the weeks leading up to Passover. Here was the schedule: Up at 6:00 AM, stumble into the "get ready" mode, out the door by 7:45 to tango with L.A. traffic (on the 405 FWY; named that way because it only moves 4-Or-5 miles per hour), and at my desk by 9:00 AM. I'd work all day, if lucky, escape at 5:30 PM, then brave the freeway one more time, and finally drag myself into the house around 7:00 PM. Quick family hugs and smooches, and then it was straight to the sewing machine until around 2:00 AM. *Every. Single. Day.* For THREE WEEKS before Passover. I was a zombie in a thimble. Naturally, everything else in my life started crumbling. Laundry? A mystery. Dishes? Ha. My cooking? May she rest in peace. But I had no choice. Thankfully, the kids had gotten old enough to throw together some basic meals, and my husband stepped up like a true MVP. But then... the betrayal. Turns out, my sweet little family had a *secret meeting* behind my back to emotionally process how much they missed my cooking LOL. A whole support group. Over food!! I was both flattered and mad. Luckily, this time I planned ahead (miracles do happen), and I actually finished the garments (AND THEY WERE BEAUTIFUL BY THE WAY) a whole WEEK before Passover. That gave me seven glorious days to return to my rightful throne in the kitchen. And let me tell you — I cooked *like I owed them back pay*. The pots were clanging, the spices were flying, and by the end of it? No one was hungry. They were too full to even complain. Victory, sweet and delicious!!

These are but a few of my many, many Passover sewing bloopers. There is just not enough time to share all of my funny and not so funny moments. I thought I would keep it light this season and just go with the flow. Yes, sewing is stressful, but it's wonderful and very gratifying work. I am still no expert, but I try to do the best I can. So, for those that are sewing for the first time and even for those more seasoned seamstresses, just laugh at yourself when the goin' gets tough! Don't take it too seriously. Have fun and just praise the Father and Christ that you have been blessed with yet another virtuous skill.

JAMES 2:2-4 ²My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.