

The Giving Habits of Strange Women

Matthew 26:1-16

Pastor Peter Hiett

November 13, 2005

[The worship band plays “Everything’s Alright.”]

Everything’s Alright

(Jesus Christ Superstar)

Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber,

Lyrics by Tim Rice

Mary: Try not to get worried, try not to turn on to
problems that upset you, oh, don't you know
everything's all right, yes, everything's fine
and we want you to sleep well tonight.
Let the world turn without you tonight.
If we try, we'll get by, so forget all about us tonight.
(everything's all right, yes, everything's fine)

Mary: Sleep, and I shall soothe you, calm you and anoint you
myrrh for your hot forehead, oh, then you'll feel
everything's all right, yes, everything's fine
and it's cool and the ointment's sweet
for the fire in your head and feet.
Close your eyes, close your eyes and relax
think of nothing tonight.

Judas: Woman, your fine ointment, brand new and expensive
could have been saved for the poor.
Why has it been wasted? We could have raised maybe
three hundred silver pieces or more.
People who are hungry, people who are starving
matter more than your feet and hair!

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problems that upset you, oh, don't you know
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and we want you to sleep well tonight.
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Close your eyes, close your eyes and relax think of nothing tonight.
Close your eyes, close your eyes and relax.
Close your eyes, close your eyes and relax.

[Peter shows a film clip from Spiderman 2. Mary Jane Watson has just run from her former marriage as a bride adorned for her groom. She runs to the dingy apartment of Peter Parker in spite of the risk and pain. . .]

MJ: I know there will be risks, but I want to face them with you. It’s wrong that

we should only be half alive, half of ourselves. I love you. So here I am, standing in your doorway. I've always been standing in your doorway. Isn't it about time somebody saved your life? [Long pause...] Well, say something.

Peter: Thank you, Mary Jane Watson.

Peter and MJ kiss until they hear sirens in the distance.

MJ: Go get 'em, tiger.

We then see Spiderman swinging from building to building and shouting with joy as he saves the world.

And so Spiderman—the superman, the eschatos man, the Lion of Judah—saves the world with great joy because His bride saw Him in her suffering and His, in her poverty and His... saw Him, came to Him, stood in His doorway, and gave Him a beautiful kiss, a good for nothing kiss.

She didn't save Him as He saved her, but she ministered to Him as He saved the world. She served Him with the mercy with which He had served her. She is a strange woman, that is, a holy woman.

Strange, for in a world that always takes,
she longs to give.

she longs to soothe Him.

[Peter sings...

“Sleep and I shall soothe you,
calm you and anoint you,
myrrh for your hot forehead,
oh, then you'll feel. . .]

You know, this is a worship service. We serve someone with our worship. The One we serve is Jesus the Christ, present to us as body broken and blood shed.

We are this woman.

[image: Mary holding the body of Jesus at the foot of the cross, from *The Passion of the Christ*]

We are the church.

This is a continuation of our sermon two weeks ago titled, The Glory of Strange Women. This sermon is The Giving Habits of Strange Women.

We met the strange woman in Matthew 26. She's archetypical. She's all the strange women rolled into one—Mother Mary, and the wise virgins—the bride. She's the prostitute that anoints Jesus' feet in Simon the Pharisee's hours,

Mary who anoints Jesus' feet in Lazarus' house,
now this woman in Simon the leper's house.

She's the church.

Jesus had just told us of wise virgins who eagerly hope in the bridegroom, and faithful servants who enter “the joy of their master,” and sheep that love Him in the “last and least of these His brethren.” He's just told us about His church of hope, faith, and love... in a word, mercy.

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, “You know

that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.” Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.” Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.” Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

Two people were into “ministry to the poor:” Judas and the strange woman. And the difference between them was the difference between heaven and hell.

Two people can put money in the same offering plate, and one is the work of heaven while the other is the work of hell. One can be a “son of waste” (no matter how much he gives), and one the strange woman (like the old widow dropping a penny in the temple coffers).

So, how did this strange woman give?

Verse 7,

Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she. . .

very carefully and responsibly measured out 10% of her flask of ointment.

I’m sorry, my mistake...

Verse 7,

. . . A woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table . . .

Then she said unto Him, “Is that enough? Is that good enough to get in? And yeah, verily, may I have a receipt for I believe this is tax deductible? And I want to be a good steward, so I hope you plan to use this ointment responsibly, and I will be able to read about it in the annual review.”

I’m sorry, my mistake.

It’s so hard to read scripture faithfully.

Verse 7,

. . . A woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. And when the disciples saw it, they were . . .

really impressed. They all commented, “Hey, we should name the fellowship hall after her.” Then Jesus fixing His eyes upon her said, “Good job. If everyone did their part like you, we could build the Gospel outreach bowling alley and save sinners from hell.”

I’m sorry.
I did it again, didn’t I?
Didn’t we?

Well, she poured out the flask of ointment and the twelve (the church) became indignant. Jesus said, “The poor you have with you always, but this was a kalos ergon—the good work, the beautiful thing.” *Then* Judas goes to betray Him. This is a strange story, a strange woman, and a strange kind of giving, especially for the church.

So how did she give? (I just thought of some things. You might think of more.)
She gave:

1) What she had.

Judas wanted to give what he didn’t have and not what he did have. You can’t give what you don’t have.

She gave what she had. What do you have? A house, a car, some money? How about some talents? Some write books, some paint paintings, some raise children, some manage businesses... so give that.

Give all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. What do you have? What about some wounds? How about some sin?

In Luke, the strange woman is a prostitute. In a society without much bathing, fragrant ointment is like the livelihood of a prostitute, and she gives it to Jesus.

What do you have? How about your heart? “Where your treasure is there your heart is also.” Then we usually say, “Your treasure is your money, so give 10%.” Well, if you give 10% of your heart, you’ll have a heart attack. You need to keep your heart in one place and undivided. So if you give it, you better give it to one thing. Kierkegaard said, “Purity of heart is to will one thing.” Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”

Well, she gave:

1) What she had, and...

2) All she had.

Mark records the ointment was worth a year’s salary. It was all her treasure and all her heart. Mark also records that she broke the flask over His head, “A broken heart and a contrite spirit He has yet to deny.” She gave a broken heart. I bet that’s painful.

3) She gave painfully.

Yet she appears to have hardly noticed. The strange woman weeps pain and joy. Out in “that region where pain and delight flow together and tears are the very wine of blessedness.”

4) Painfully, joyfully.

Like giving birth.

5) Painfully, joyfully, sacrificially.

I think I've tasted that, or at least the picture of that—an open temple, a living sacrifice, ecstatic communion in a sanctuary, in a covenant that refers to Christ and the church.

And yet it's very difficult to talk about here for people think I'm unholy, inappropriate, and trying to be raunchy. Some even grow indignant.

6) Well, she gave joyfully, sacrificially, and naturally.

I mean no one had to say, "You better give your naked heart and all your self to the Messiah. It's your purpose. Now do it!"

I mean, it's hard to describe her as a purpose driven woman. In fact, it wouldn't surprise me if on judgment day, the King on the throne says to this woman, "Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was destitute and dying in the form of a slave, and you anointed me high priest, King of kings." And the strange woman will say, "I don't remember that."

See, I don't think she's real conscious of herself at this moment. She's like lost in Jesus—hidden in Him, dancing to His music. Not driven but called. Compelled by

love. Animated, intoxicated with new wine, another Spirit.

That's what happens in the presence of great beauty. You lose yourself. John Piper says, "No one stands at the edge of the Grand Canyon and says, 'Aren't I something!'"

You stand at the edge of the Grand Canyon or at the base of Niagara Falls and, unconscious of yourself, without trying, you worship. You pour out a sacrifice of praise. It's your nature. You say, "Wow!" and for a moment you forget yourself and taste ecstasy.

Then you give birth to Gospel. You say, "Look at that! Kids, get out of the van and look at that! It's beautiful!"

Once you see it, no one has to tell you to do it. Once you see it. So if you don't do it, you haven't seen it. You must be blind. Only God can open the eyes of those born blind.

7) Well, the strange woman sees beauty and gives beautifully.

Jesus says she did a beautiful thing, a "kalos ergon," a good work, not good for something... just good, beautiful.

We've been waiting for a kalos ergon ever since that strange woman stole the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now Jesus—Superman, ultimate

man, that is, Eschatos Adam—says to Eve, “That was a good thing, beautiful fruit.”

But she wasn’t trying, grasping, taking in order to make herself good. She saw beauty, saw the good, and surrendered to the good... the good for nothing good, and then she, like, gave birth to good, beauty.

My children are beautiful. I mean, they’re good for nothing. Fruit of good for nothing love, for my good for nothing bride, my beautiful bride.

I am to love them for nothing, for no purpose. I’m not to use them but worship the beautiful One in the temple of each of them.

8) Well, she gave beautifully, extravagantly.

Not prudently, not usefully, not sensibly, not purposefully... I don’t meant there wasn’t a purpose, I mean she didn’t know it.

It was extravagant,
 like a million dollar pipe organ,
 like a great stone cathedral,
 like a big haired Tammy Fay Baker weeping on TV,
 like a king dancing in his underwear (what’s the purpose of that?).

You know, we need to be careful when we judge other people’s worship for the strange woman gives extravagantly.

She acts as if Jesus could turn ordinary water into wine, take a poor boy’s lunch and turn it into a feast for thousands, or tell His disciples how to find gold in the mouths of fish.

She acts as if the things given are not the issue for Jesus, but *that* they’re given... what we have, all we have, painfully, joyfully, sacrificially, naturally, beautifully, extravagantly.

“What a delightful thing it is,” says Dorothy Day regarding her soup kitchen, “to be boldly profligate, to ignore the price of coffee and go on serving the long line of destituted men who come to us good coffee and the finest of bread.”

That’s a strange woman and extravagant, but if you really want extravagant strange women, read about Israel and her temple. When Solomon dedicated the temple they offered 22,000 bulls and 122,000 sheep. Just to slaughter them would take 20 sacrifices a minute for 10 hours a day for 12 days. Some just burnt up. Some eaten. We’re talking 16.5 million pounds of steak and 12 million pounds of lamb joyfully consumed by the fire and the worshipers in this, like, wild romp of uncontrolled giving and ecstatic communion.

There would have been a literal river of wine, fragrant ointments, and blood that flowed from the temple, flooding the Valley of Gehenna and eventually pooling in the Dead Sea—the sea of Arabah, sea of waste.

“The life is in the blood.” says the Lord, and “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” says Jesus.

The river would flow every Passover, including that day after the strange woman anointed Jesus. Every Jew would bring his Passover lamb to the temple to be ritually slaughtered. That’s thousands upon thousands of lambs. The river of lamb’s blood would flow from a temple of stone, and the river would flow from a temple of flesh on an altar called a cross, filling all the land to the depth of a horse’s bridle (Revelation 14:20).

Well, throughout Leviticus and Numbers the sacrifices are referred to as a pleasing aroma to God, as fragrant offerings. Moses was actually commanded to make a strange fragrant oil and anoint the tabernacle, which would become the temple. He was to anoint the tabernacle and all that’s in it, specifically the altar.

In Israel, the king was anointed, the high priest was anointed, and everything about the temple was anointed, but the king and high priest never sacrificed in the temple. Moses and the priest were also commanded to make a strange fragrance, a holy fragrance... incense to burn on the altar of incense. The fragrant smoke would fill the house of the Lord making all things fragrant.

John records that when Mary anointed Jesus’ feet, the house was filled with fragrance.

The strange woman’s worship is fragrance. Fragrance infects everything with beauty.

9) She gave fragrantly.

Matthew 26:3, the chief priests and elders gather in the palace, and it smells like death.

The strange woman anoints Jesus in the house of a leper, and it smells like the temple.

As Jesus—the Passover Lamb, High Priest, and King of kings—is sacrificed on the altar of His cross in the temple of His body and blood, as the blood flows in a river through Gehenna to the sea of waste, it will be mingled with anointing oil and the offering will be fragrant because of that strange woman.

Ephesians 5:2, Christ is the fragrant offering. The fragrance is love, hesed, mercy.

When we give mercy, we smell like Jesus.

Judas smelled it and hated it. It was the aroma of death unto death.

The disciples smelled it but couldn’t smell it. They saw it but couldn’t yet see it for they say, “Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.”

The poor...

Karl Marx was all about “the poor.”

Joseph Stalin was all about “the poor.”

Hitler, Osama bin Laden, the kings of the earth, Judas...

they all sell their agenda, their Zion, as concern for the poor.

One of my favorite strange women is Mother Teresa. She wrote,

“If you are preoccupied with people who are talking about the poor, you scarcely have time to talk to the poor. . . . I had the most extraordinary experience once in Bombay. There was a big conference about hunger. I was supposed to go to that meeting, and I lost the way. Suddenly I came to that place, and right in front of the door to where hundreds of people were talking about food and hunger, I found a dying man. I took him out, and I took him home. He died there. He died of hunger. And the people inside were talking about how in 15 years we will have so much food, so much this, so much that, and that man died. See the difference?”

Judas would give to “the poor.”

The strange woman gave to “a person.”

For Judas, the poor were a problem to be fixed.

For the woman, the poor were a person to be loved.

See the difference? You say, “Yeah, but the person died, and Mother Teresa, you still have the poor with you.”

Listen to Jesus, “The poor you have with you always” (verse 11, NAS).

Last time we asked, “Isn’t that rather defeatist?” Well, yes, if God’s purpose is growing economic prosperity, but no, if God’s purpose is growing mercy because mercy grows in poverty. In fact, mercy grows in persons (poor persons).

Mercy is the harvest of the earth.

Natural and unforced, like fruit.

Fragrant and beautiful.

Yet painful like giving birth.

Painful yet joyful.

Sacrificial.

Like body broken and blood shed; bread and wine.

That is Jesus. The love of God poured out. Mercy.

The woman saw mercy,

received mercy,

and gave birth to mercy.

But Judas wanted to give to “the poor.”

Maybe sometimes, maybe most times,
we give to “the poor” because we hate mercy.

We're afraid to see mercy,
 feel mercy,
 experience mercy.

We give to "the poor" because
 we don't want to feel their pain.

I have a friend who ministers to prostitutes. The Lord has met her in her pain, and she longs to love others in their pain. She's a strange woman. Her ministry is her joy, and yet it hurts.

Recently, it really hurt. A girl she works with went back into her old lifestyle.

My friend said, "I was so angry I went to confront her, but the Lord stopped me. He said, 'Don't. Don't. You're confronting her because you don't want to feel her pain.'" In other words, "It's not mercy, so it's not me."

Maybe we give to "the poor" because we don't want to feel their pain. That is we give to "the poor" to eliminate the poor.

In this world, everyone's poor. Everyone has need, everyone has pain, everyone dies. Eliminate the poor, and I eliminate life. Just ask someone like Joseph Stalin.

Well, I give to this ideology or that ideology...

to Osama bin Laden or Karl Marx or Uncle Sam or World Vision or the institutional church to eliminate poverty which means eliminate the poor.

- So I don't have to feel guilty about the poor.
- So I don't have to relate to the poor.
- So I don't have to feel their pain.
- So I don't have to experience mercy.
- So I don't have to touch the heart of God (which is mercy, who is Jesus).
- So I don't have to experience Jesus, receive Jesus, and give birth to Jesus.

Judas wanted to give to "the poor" to eliminate Jesus, crucify Jesus. He wanted to fix things so he wouldn't know Jesus. He didn't love "the poor" for the poor was right in front of him. Jesus had emptied Himself and taken the form of a slave.

Judas wanted to fix poverty by eliminating the poor
 so he wouldn't have to love the poor
 so he wouldn't have to give himself
 to Jesus.

Sometimes Judas seems frighteningly familiar to me.

- Maybe I betray Jesus.
- Maybe I give him up to be crucified.
- Maybe with my anxiety, fear, striving, and religious works—my control—I betray mercy. I betray Jesus.

In which case, I am “wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.” You know, Judas was really poor, but he would not see his poverty and so give his poverty. He saw that he was poor in cash but not poor in spirit for “blessed are the poor in spirit. Of them consists the kingdom.” So the poor you will have with you always.

Well, if I see God’s mercy... body broken, blood shed, Jesus Christ crucified. If I see God’s mercy, maybe I can see my poverty and so surrender my poverty, receive God’s mercy, and so give mercy.

Like the strange woman.

Remember the prostitute in Simon the Pharisee’s house? She anointed Jesus’ feet with ointment and tears. Jesus turned to Simon and said, “The one forgiven much loves much.” If I see that I’m already forgiven much, maybe I’ll love Him much.

Like the strange woman.

10) She gave to a person she loved.

When you give to a person you love, it changes the way you give. You give what you have, all you have... painfully, joyfully, sacrificially, naturally, beautifully, extravagantly.

Christmas is coming. Susan and I always say we’ll only spend so much on the children... but we always spend more. It’s painful, but it’s fun. “Oh, the kids would love this and that...”

Is that how you give to the church? “Oh, I’ll only spend so much,” but you always spend more? It’s painful, but it’s fun. “Oh, Jesus would love this, love that...”

I just give my paycheck to my bride, naturally. I told you when I bought her wedding ring I almost jumped the counter and grabbed Harry, the jeweler, by the collar yelling,

Harry, I want to pay more! I don’t care what it costs as long as it costs me all I got. They all look the same, Harry, so just give me one worth all I got. All my student loan money. I’m giving all of me to all of her. She wants me, Harry! She loves me, Harry!

You know, my children have a poverty for me. They love me. My bride has a poverty for me, an emptiness for me. They’re poor without me. That’s their greatest gift to me. I hope “that poverty,” “those poor” I have with me always.

We have a poverty meant for God the Father and a poverty meant for Jesus, the bridegroom, and it’s a gift.

And that poverty of Jesus that night in the leper’s house and that day on the cross, that poverty of Jesus was the greatest gift the strange woman ever received, for the King of kings chose to be loved by her, and so He emptied Himself and made

Himself poor.

11) So she gave to a person, a poor person... the person of Jesus.

Jesus says, "She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me."

". . . Not always have me."

Yet Matthew's Gospel ends with Jesus saying, "And lo I am with you always." At the cross He descended into our wounds, our poverty. So maybe He always has us, but we don't always have Him.

We always have the poor, the lower class, the least of these. But when we go to them in mercy, we go in Jesus and then we have Jesus and we make brothers. Jesus just said that on the last day He'll say to the sheep who perform acts of mercy, "Whatever you did to the least of these, my brothers, you did to me."

Speaking to the goats, He doesn't call the least of these His brothers. So I've wondered if mercy gives birth to brothers, like mercy gives birth to eternal life and certainly mercy gives everything meaning.

Mercy is the meaning.
Mercy and meaning is Jesus.

Jesus gives the woman's gift its meaning. She didn't seem very purpose driven, but that doesn't mean her gift wasn't purpose-ful.

She gave what seemed *good for nothing* and Jesus made it *good for everything*. She gave beauty and Jesus gave it meaning, more meaning than she could have possibly perceived, and yet she conceived. He said, "She has anointed me for my burial." She anointed the High Priest, the King of kings, the Sacrifice, the Fragrant Offering... the Messiah, the One who redeems all things and makes all things new.

She is the bride of Christ and mother church—mother of the Christ, mother of meaning, mother of the living, the new Eve. She's you who do the Father's will (Matthew 12:19). Jesus said, "This is my sister, mother, and brother, those who do the will of my father."

Give yourself to Jesus,
and He'll give your gift meaning.
He'll impregnate it with His life.

When you give your offering,
don't give it to some purpose like to fix the church budget.
Give it to Jesus, to anoint Him with praise.

Go on a mission trip,

but not for a cause like to end world poverty.
 Go to anoint the body of Christ with love.
 Use water.
 Use electricity.
 Use seminaries.
 Use World Vision.
 But all to anoint Him with love.

Join Stephen Ministers or the prayer team,
 but not to fix problems,
 but to anoint a person with mercy.
 Give yourself to Jesus,
 not as a purpose,
 but a person.

He'll make your life purpose-ful beyond belief,
 and even better, beautiful beyond description.

In his book Something Beautiful for God Malcolm Muggeridge writes, "Mother Teresa is fond of saying that welfare is for a purpose. . . Christian love is for a person."

He goes on to say he once asked her if perhaps there were too many persons in India, and if it was purposeful to hold a few dying babies. He writes,

It was a point, as I was to discover subsequently, so remote from her whole way of looking at life that she had difficulty in grasping it. The notion that there could in any circumstances be too many children was, to her, as inconceivable as suggesting that there are too many bluebells in the woods or stars in the sky.

Yesterday I got a call from my friend I've told you about who was raised in a coven and so horribly abused. Time and time again, she's given her self, her wounds, her emptiness, her poverty to Jesus, and then He reveals His presence in her poverty. He shines like the bright morning star, and He gives her entire life His meaning, His purpose, His life.

Well, she called because she was on her way to a meeting about going on a mission trip to an orphanage in Africa. She said, "Peter, pray for me for who am I to go on a thing like this after all I've seen and the things I've done."

I said, "My dear, would you consider holding a dying AIDS baby a gift?"

She said, "Oh, yes. I would consider that baby the greatest gift in all the world!"

I said, "Well, few people in all the world can say that, and that's why you should go. It's a gift to you, so you are a gift to Him. It's a communion of mercy, and you are the mother of the living."

Well, she's a strange woman. She's the mother of the Living One for she knows when she holds that baby she's holding the bright morning star, ministering to Him His own mercy.

You can hold Him, too, even here, even now. Like Mother Teresa said, "The Eucharist and the poor are but one lover for me."

And so on the night that Jesus was betrayed, He took bread and He broke it saying, "This is my body given to you. Take and eat. Do this in remembrance of me." And in the same manner

after supper He took the cup and He said, “This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me.”

So if you want Him, we invite you to come forward, tear off a piece of the bread, dip it in the cup. Purple cups are juice; black cups are wine. They’re both blood. But as you come forward worship Him. That is, give yourself to Him.

You see the strange woman gave herself to Him for she saw that He had already given Himself to her, a fragrant offering. May you come to the table and smell like Him. In Jesus’ name, amen.



She gave...

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) What she had. | 7) Beautifully. |
| 2) All she had. | 8) Extravagantly. |
| 3) Painfully. | 9) Fragrantly. |
| 4) Joyfully. | 10) To a person. |
| 5) Sacrificially. | 11) To the person of Jesus. |
| 6) Naturally. | |

And Jesus gave her gift meaning.
For she saw He had already given her Himself.



[The worship band plays...]

“Beautiful One”

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Wonderful, so wonderful,
is Your unfailing love
Your cross has spoken mercy over me
No eye has seen, no ear has heard
No heart could fully know
How glorious, how beautiful You are

Beautiful One I love
Beautiful One I adore
Beautiful One my soul must sing

Powerful, so powerful, Your glory fills the skies
Your mighty works displayed for all to see
The beauty of Your majesty awakes my heart to sing
How marvelous, how wonderful You are

You opened my eyes to Your wonders anew
You captured my heart with this love
'Cause nothing on earth is as beautiful as You
“Oh Lord, You’re Beautiful”
by Keith Green

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Oh Lord, You're beautiful
Your face is all I seek.
For when Your eyes are on this child,
Your grace abounds to me.

I want to take Your Word and shine it all around
First help me just to live it, Lord
And when I'm doing well
Help me to never seek a crown
For my reward is giving glory to You.

Oh Lord, please light the fire,
That once burned bright and clear.
Replace the lamp of my first love,
That burns with holy fear.

Oh Lord, You're beautiful
Your face is all I seek.
For when Your eyes are on this child,
Your grace abounds to me.
"Jesus, Holy And Anointed One"
Jesus, Jesus
holy and anointed one, Jesus
Jesus, Jesus
holy and anointed one, Jesus

Your name is like honey on my lips
Your Spirit's like water to my soul
Your word is a lamp unto my feet
Jesus, I love You, I love You

Jesus, Jesus
Risen and exalted one, Jesus
Jesus, Jesus
Risen and exalted one, Jesus

Your name is like honey on my lips
Your Spirit's like water to my soul
Your word is a lamp unto my feet
Jesus, I love You, I love You

Jesus, Jesus
holy and anointed one, Jesus
Jesus, Jesus
holy and anointed one, Jesus

"Agnus Dei"

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Alleluia! Alleluia!

For our Lord, God Almighty reigns!
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 For our Lord God Almighty reigns!
 Alleluia!

Holy, Holy are You, Lord God Almighty.
 Worthy is the Lamb.
 Worthy is the Lamb.
 You are holy, holy are You, Lord God Almighty.
 Worthy is the Lamb,
 Worthy is the Lamb.
 You are holy.

Alleluia! Alleluia!
 For our Lord, God Almighty reigns!
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 For our Lord God Almighty reigns!
 Alleluia!

Holy, You are holy
 King of kings, Lord of lords
 You are holy;
 Holy, You are holy
 King of kings, Lord of lords
 I worship You.

If you would, close your eyes. You can sit down if you'd like, but kneel. If you can't do it in body, would you just try to quietly do it in your heart? Wherever you are, just kneel.

Don't worry about what the other disciples think. Don't let any religious institution judge your worship, but He's here. Can you see Him? Can you imagine Him? He's reclining at a low table, the kind of table that they used to have in the Middle East.

It's a banquet. And this is strange but around the table are lepers and prostitutes and disciples. And there's Judas. On the table there's broken bread and red wine.

Now look at Him. See the wounds? Crimson wounds in His hands and His feet, around His head and on His back, and it's like a river. It flows from Him. We don't even know how far it flows.

And then He looks at you. Do you see His face? Just imagine Him because He's looking at you. He knows you.

Around your neck on a string there's a flask of very expensive anointment. It's like everything to you. It lies over your heart. You can feel it; it's, like, beginning to burn.

And He looks at you. He says to you, "Who do you say, who do you say I am?"
 What's your answer? What do you do?

[The worship band softly plays...]

Holy, You are holy
 King of kings, Lord of lords
 You are holy;
 Holy, You are holy
 King of kings, Lord of lords
 I worship You.

He's calling you, compelling you to live from this spot, sing from this spot, work from this spot, live from this spot.

Next week we're handing in those giving cards. I know that you ought to give everything to Jesus. I don't know what you are to give to Jesus at Lookout Mountain Community Church, and I think I've been, like, beat up long enough to where I'm actually beginning to believe this, actually beginning to feel this, and that is that I don't care what you write on that card as long as it comes from this spot because then it will be beautiful.

In Jesus' name, may you be beautiful.

If you'd like to stay and just pray for a few minutes or just worship, we invite you to do that. So if you'd like to talk loudly, we encourage you to go out back and do that. But live your life from this spot, in Jesus' name.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:38 (ESV)

And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

Luke 7:37 (ESV)

Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

Luke 8:1-3 (ESV)

Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"

John 12:3-5 (ESV)

And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her.

Mark 14:3-5 (ESV)

Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Luke 21:1-4 (ESV)

I asked for three graces of God's gift. The first was vivid perception of Christ's Passion, the second was bodily sickness and the third was for God to give me three wounds. . . . I thought how I wished I had been there at the crucifixion with Mary Magdalene and with others who were Christ's dear friends, that I might have seen in the flesh

the Passion of our Lord which he suffered for me, so that I could have suffered with him as others did who loved him. . . . In spite of all this true faith, I longed to be shown him in the flesh so that I might have more knowledge of our Lord and Saviour's bodily suffering and of our Lady's fellow-suffering and that of all his true friends who have believed in his pain then and since; I wanted to be one of them and suffer with him. . . . Moved by this I conceived a great longing, praying our Lord God that he would grant me three wounds in my lifetime: that is to say, the wound of contrition, the wound of compassion and the wound of an earnest loving for God.

Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love

Without our suffering, our work would just be social work, very good and helpful, but it would not be the work of Jesus Christ, not part of the Redemption. Jesus wanted to help by sharing our life, our loneliness, our agony, our death. Only by being one with us has he redeemed us. We are allowed to do the same; all the desolation of the poor people, not only their material poverty, but their spiritual destitution, must be redeemed, and we must share it, for only by being one with them can we redeem them, that is, by bringing God into their lives and bringing them to God.

Mother Teresa, Something Beautiful for God

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take the following fine spices: 500 shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much (that is, 250 shekels) of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels of fragrant cane, 500 shekels of cassia—all according to the sanctuary shekel—and a hin of olive oil. Make these into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer. It will be the sacred anointing oil. Then use it to anoint the Tent of Meeting, the ark of the Testimony, the table and all its articles, the lampstand and its accessories, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the basin with its stand. You shall consecrate them so they will be most holy, and whatever touches them will be holy. "Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them so they may serve me as priests. . . . Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take fragrant spices—gum resin, onycha and galbanum—and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred. Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

Exodus 30:22-30, 30:34-36 (NIV)

Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs a year old day by day regularly. . . . for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD.

Exodus 29:38, 29:41b (ESV)

When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people." Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at table.

Matthew 26:1-7 (ESV)

And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:2 (ESV)

I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Philippians 4:18 (ESV)

And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor." But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

Matthew 26:8 (ESV)

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:20b (ESV)

In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.” Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?” And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

Matthew 26:12-16 (ESV)

Nothing can atone for the insult of a gift except the love of the person who gives it.

Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

To the disciples’ embarrassment the master once told a bishop that religious people have a natural bent for cruelty. “Why?” demanded the disciples after the bishop had gone. “Because they all too easily sacrifice persons for the advancement of a purpose,” said the master.

Anthony DeMello, Anthony DeMello

If you are preoccupied with people who are talking about the poor, you scarcely have time to talk to the poor. Some people talk about hunger, but they don’t come and say, “Mother, here is five rupees. Buy food for these people.” But they can give a most beautiful lecture on hunger. I had the most extraordinary experience once in Bombay. There was a big conference about hunger. I was supposed to go to that meeting, and I lost the way. Suddenly I came to that place, and right in front of the door to where hundreds of people were talking about food and hunger, I found a dying man. I took him out, and I took him home. He died there. He died of hunger. And the people inside were talking about how in 15 years we will have so much food, so much this, so much that, and that man died. See the difference?

Mother Teresa, Words to Love By

Mother Teresa is fond of saying that welfare is for a purpose—an admirable and a necessary one—whereas Christian love is for a person. . . . I raised the point as to whether in view of the commonly held opinion that there are too many people in India, it was really worth while trying to salvage a few abandoned children who might otherwise be expected to die of neglect, malnutrition, or some related illness. It was a point, as I was to discover subsequently, so remote from her whole way of looking at life that she had difficulty in grasping it. The notion that there could in any circumstances be too many children was, to her, as inconceivable as suggesting that there are too many bluebells in the woods or stars in the sky.

Malcolm Muggeridge, Something Beautiful for God