

MARY - LOVING GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART TEN SECRETS FOR ETERNAL UNFADING BEAUTY

God is very interested in your beauty this morning. Did you check to see if you were beautiful before you came? Beautiful to God is what I mean!

Listen to these verses:

1. BEAUTY WAS REQUIRED IN THOSE WHO WERE REGULARS IN GOD'S PRESENCE! Exodus 28:2 "And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. 40 For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty. (NKJV)
2. BEAUTY WAS EXPECTED IN CORPORATE (GROUP) WORSHIP! 1 Chronicles 16:29 Give to the LORD the glory [due] His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! (NKJV)
3. BEAUTY WAS HOW GOD DESCRIBES THE PRAISE HE DESIRES! 2 Chronicles 20:21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy [endures] forever." (NKJV)
4. BEAUTY IS A MARK OF PLEASING PERSONAL WORSHIP TIMES! Psalm 27:4 One [thing] I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple. (NKJV)
5. BEAUTY IS HOW GOD DESCRIBES THE HOLINESS HE DESIRES FOR US! Psalm 29:2 Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. (NKJV) Psalm 96:9 Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. (NKJV)
6. GOD IS BEAUTIFUL! Psalm 50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth. (NKJV) Isaiah 33:17 Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; They will see the land that is very far off. (NKJV)
7. GOD WANTS TO MAKE US BEAUTIFUL EVERYDAY! Psalm 90:17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands. (NKJV)

Well, we are studying a beautiful woman in God's sight. We need to emulate her! Her beauty marks are:

- I. MARY LISTENED TO GOD. (Luke 1:26-28)
- II. MARY HUMBLERD HERSELF BEFORE GOD SAID YES TO GOD'S GRACE. (Luke 1:29)
- III. MARY SURRENDERED TO GOD'S WILL (Luke 1:31-33)
- IV. MARY EXPERIENCED GOD (Luke 1:34-37)
- V. MARY SERVED GOD JOYFULLY (Luke 1:38-45)
- VI. MARY IMMERSERD HERSELF IN THE SCRIPTURES. (Luke 1:46-55) She Sought God. Whatever the means Mary SOUGHT GOD!
 - A. How did Mary cultivate godliness? She discovered the TEN SECRETS FOR ETERNAL BEAUTY! First Mary would have applied herself to avoid the portrait of the Foolish Woman in Proverbs and to emulate the godly woman's portrait:

1. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED TO AVOID BEING IMMODEST AND ALLURING IN HER DRESS. Proverbs 7: 10 Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. (NIV).
 - Her clothing points to her not to her Father in Heaven and His holiness.
 - Remember the words of Paul in the New Testament Gallery of beautiful women? God emphasizes a beauty of the unseen character, the flesh flaunts the body, God beautifies the spirit!
 - 1 Timothy 2:9 I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, (NIV)
2. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED TO HATE AND AVOID SIN AND NEVER PLAY WITH GOD'S MERCY. Proverbs 7: 13-14 She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said: 14 "I have fellowship offerings at home; today I fulfilled my vows. (NIV).
 - There is no fear of God, the future consequence or the present destructiveness of her actions.
 - 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (NIV)
3. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED TO AVOID BEING DECEITFUL AND MANIPULATIVE IN HER GOALS. Proverbs 7: 21-23 With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, With her flattering lips she seduced him. 22 Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, 23 Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, He did not know it [would cost] his life. (NKJV)
 - An ugly woman is self driven and wants her way. A beautiful woman wears heavenly beauty Psalm 90: 17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands. (NKJV)
 - 1 Peter 3: 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. (NIV)
4. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED TO AVOID BEING LOUD AND ASSERTIVE IN HER COMMUNICATION. Proverbs 9: 13 The woman Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge. (NIV) Proverbs 7: 11 (She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home; (NIV)
 - This includes disrespect, hostility, aggressiveness and cunningness. All in all bad news.
 - James 3: 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. (NIV)
5. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED TO AVOID BEING A FIGHTER, QUARRELING TO GET HER WAY. Proverbs 20: 3 [It is] honorable for a man to stop striving, Since any fool can start a quarrel. (NKJV)
 - Selfish ambition is that way of life that isn't from God. It is as James said, earthly sensual and devilish.
 - 2 Timothy 2: 24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. (NIV)
 - MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED TO AVOID BEING THESE UNGODLY IN THESE AREAS. Moms and dads, what are you raising? A wise woman or a foolish one? Bring your daughters up to the X-Rays of God's Word and see what He finds.
 - (1) Is she loud, assertive, boisterous, whiney or the center of attention? Or is she quiet, submissive, gentle and humble?
 - (2) Does she dress in a way that draws a young man to think about her body and its enticements or her spirit and its beauty?
 - (3) Does she have a holy hatred of sin or does she have a desire to watch sinners [TV and Movies] as they live out their fleshly fantasies?

- (4) Does she use all her powers to get her own way? Does she manipulate by tears, looks and whatever it takes to accomplish her ends?
- (5) Is she argumentative, easily quarreling and fighting with you or her brothers and sisters? Or is she peaceable, gentle and easily intreated?
- (6) If these symptoms are present in any degree or amount the prognosis for the future bleak. One gifted expositor in writing about these verses said, " ...we may say with a surgeon's frankness, her home will be like Scarlett's - troubled, torn down, and literally Gone with the Wind.

- 6. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED TO LOVE BEING A HOMEMAKER Proverbs 31: 13 She seeks wool and flax, And willingly works with her hands. (NKJV) As Paul said, she is a worker at home in Titus 2:5. She loves to tangibly serve others with food and skills, she has a home that is open and hospitable, she is given to ministry to the sick and needy and less fortunate.
- 7. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE LEARNED TO SERVE OTHERS! Proverbs 31:15, 20 She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maidservants. 20 She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. (NKJV) She has learned the love of Christ for others.
- 8. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE LEARNED PRUDENCE IN FINANCIAL MATTERS. Proverbs 31:16, 24 She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard. 24 She makes linen garments and sells [them,] And supplies sashes for the merchants. (NKJV) She is a saver not a spender. She can see beyond today alone.
- 9. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED THE GREAT VALUE OF HARD WORK. Proverbs 31:17,19 She girds herself with strength, And strengthens her arms. 19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hand holds the spindle. (NKJV) God puts a premium on hard work and so she moves toward it not away. There is no slothfulness, indolence or lack of motivation.
- 10. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED HOW TO INTERNALIZE BIBLICAL WISDOM Proverbs 31:26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue [is] the law of kindness. (NKJV). The Word is in her heart and life and so it comes out of her mouth. And when it does it is dressed in the clothes of the Spirit, gentle and kind.
- 11. MARY WAS BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE SHE HAD LEARNED THESE SECRETS OF GODLY WOMANHOOD. Is there any comparison. This kind of woman and daughter is a blessing to all. A Builder of the home and family. And, as Solomon said Proverbs 31:25,28 Strength and honor [are] her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband [also,] and he praises her: (NKJV) the future smiles at her and her children bless her. This is our goal as parents.

VII. MARY NEVER STOPPED GROWING SPIRITUALLY. She was Sensitive to God. (Luke 2:19) But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. (NIV). Where did Luke get all this material he recorded in his two volume work on the first century event that changed everything? Yes, some of it came right out of the air from heaven. The Holy Spirit just told him what do say (inspiration). But the rest came from hard work, interviewing the witnesses. Yes, every word of God's Word is inspired (inerrant, infallible, pure and divine) but each one came from somewhere. I think these words were from Mary after a long time of pondering (lit. 'to put together') all that God had done.

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- 2. MARY HUMBLED HERSELF BEFORE GOD SAID YES TO GOD'S GRACE.
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- 7. MARY NEVER STOPPED GROWING SPIRITUALLY

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GROWING DADS #5

Are you beautiful this morning? Have you been thinking about whether or not you're beautiful coming into God's presence? America thinks a lot about beauty. We spend an awful lot of billions of dollars on beauty treatments, cosmetics, finery.

I have a friend that started a high fashion jewelry company ten years ago and they're doing in the hundreds of millions of dollars every year. And it was just a side business and now it's just sweeping the country.

Beauty is important to us. But more than that, beauty is important to God. And God says, especially as He's invited us to a banquet, a celebration, His table, He says, I want you to come and I want you to come before me and I want you to be beautiful. You say, what do you mean by that? Well, let me show you as I introduce the secrets of unfading beauty.

If you want to turn and follow with me, I'm going to start in Exodus 28:2. Now we're headed to Luke one, to Mary. And we're looking at Mary, one of the most beautiful women in the world because God picked her to be the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But before we get to Mary and see the secrets of unfading beauty in her life, let's look at what God means by being beautiful. Exodus, that's Genesis, Exodus, second book of the Bible, chapter 28, verse two and 40. Because 1) listen, beauty was required in those who were regularly in God's presence. Now in the Old Testament we have an interesting study. In the Old Testament before the new covenant, before the cross, before Christ, God had a select group of people representing the common people coming into His presence. They were called priests. There were normal priests, there were high priests. There were levitical workers working with the priests. Those people represented the common people before God. Now we don't have that anymore, and any church that maintains that you can't come directly to God you have to have a priest, is following the old covenant and they've forgotten what the cross did.

But, it's interesting to study how the old covenant operated. If you look at 28:2 it says, and you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, this is God talking to Moses, for glory and for what? Beauty. The authorized version says splendor. Others say, but the idea is something beautiful. Aaron the high priest who was continually in God's presence was to be beautiful. Look at verse 40 of the same chapter. For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics, you shall make sashes for them, you shall make hats for them. And it tells all about them. What? For glory and for beauty. Now listen, beauty was a requirement for people who regularly came into God's presence.

Now think for just a minute, this morning are you wearing the most beautiful clothes that you could wear to God? What was beautiful to Him?

Well, we covered this many months ago in another setting. But what the absolute perfection of the beauty, was these were white garments and they were extremely modest. Now, they were never to wear immodest clothes, but to work in, they wore regular clothes. But when they came into God's presence, these priests wore extremely beautiful but extremely modest clothing. You say, you mean there's modest and immodest clothing for men? Yes, for anybody. And in God's presence, those who regularly came into his presence, those who were regulars had to be wearing the most beautiful and the most modest clothing.

Now when you came in this morning, is that what you planned on wearing? Did you plan on wearing absolutely the most beautiful and the most modest thing you could wear because you were coming into God's presence? Did you think about this is one of the highlights of the week? I mean, more than the tea party in the rose garden at the White House, more than going to the Governor's Mansion, more than being invited to the Fortune 500 retreat up somewhere in Utah in the mountains. Have you thought that what you wore here this morning is utterly important to God? And God says those who regularly come before me should come into my presence beautiful.

Keep going to 1 Chronicles. Now that's Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles. There it is. And 1 Chronicles 16:29 is the second aspect. Because first of all, we saw in Exodus beauty was required in those who were regularly in God's presence. Secondly, beauty was expected in corporate or group worship. First Chronicles 16:29, "Give to the Lord the glory due His name. Bring an offering, come before Him." Oh, worship the Lord, what? In the beauty of holiness. Beauty was expected in corporate worship. All of us coming beautifully arrayed are to offer beautiful praise to God.

Now, I meet people. They say, well, I don't sing. Or other people say, you know, I don't, I just come to listen. I don't participate at all. Well, what God wants is this: beauty is expected from each of us in corporate worship.

How do we do it? Verse 29 starts, give the Lord glory due His name. I mean, in your heart and from your inner being, just say, God you're worthy of glory. What does glory mean? It means focus, it means admiration, it means kind of an overwhelming sense of who God is. You give that to God. Secondly, it says, bring an offering.

I mean, it was wonderful the coin offering this morning. I mean, anybody can bring an offering. You can press a penny or a nickel into your childrens' hands so that they can bring an offering to God, and what a joy to let them give that to God. God doesn't measure offerings by the amount or by the denomination. He measures it by the cost to us. And we should bring an offering to God, and we should come before Him.

And that starts in our family, it starts on Saturday night. I mean, we focus everything, our Bible story, the bathtime, the getting the clothes up, we're saying, we have a big meeting tomorrow. It's the most important one of the whole week. That's how we start our week in God's presence. And we just, everything just winds down and gets a

singular focus. Why? Because we're coming before Him and we worship Him with that preparation as a group in the beauty of holiness.

Now look at 2 Chronicles. That's the next book over, chapter 20. Because in Exodus 28 we saw beauty was required for those who were regulars in God's presence. Secondly, we saw in the last passage, beauty was expected in corporate or group worship. Thirdly, beauty was how God described the praise that He desires. Second Chronicles 20 in verse 21. And when he consulted, this was in a battle scene and the king was inviting God to help them win, and when he consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord and who should praise the beauty of holiness, and they went out before the army and were saying, praise the Lord for His mercy endures forever. Now what does God expect in our offering of praises to Him? Well, beauty is how God describes the praise He desires. And what was it? Well, you notice, what's at the end of verse 21? They're quoting scriptures. They're quoting from the Psalms. They're quoting God's word. God loves to hear his word. He loves to hear God's people saying His word corporately. And if you know anything about this situation, the army is behind this group of worshipers, and they're going out to face an immense host and these people don't have any armaments. They don't have any shields or spears. They just go out quoting scripture. What a picture of how to be triumphant in the Christian life. And God says beauty is how I describe praise that I desire. And that praise that I desire involves people that sing and people that praise Him and people that are speaking His word. What a wonderful thing! That's why we memorize, that's why we bring our Bibles with us. That's why we underline and mark up our Bibles. We find good sections... This morning I found another good section in my Bible. Another one that I hardly remember finding before, and we underline and mark them, we have 'em on our heart, and we speak 'em back to God. Beauty is how God describes the praise that He desires.

Now, turn to Psalm 27, Psalm 27, please with me. Again the book of Psalm is a whole theology of worship and it's a good book to get to know. I know that it's very dear to most believers' hearts. But Psalm 27 verse four is the fourth aspect of this beauty that God wants from us and the fourth aspect is this. Psalm 27:4, beauty is a mark of pleasing, personal worship times. Now, what do I mean by that? I mean if your personal worship times to the Lord are pleasing to Him, they will be marked by beauty. Do I mean a little perfume or a little extra... No, no. I'm talking about our heart's attitude toward God. Listen as I read Psalms 27:4. "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple." Oh, what... Now that's worthy of a whole morning spent on that verse. Did you catch that? One thing that I desire...

Do you know what characterizes true, personal worship? It's not... Oh, come on, I've got to get my time of reading and praying, got to get it over with. I've got so much business, you know, to do. I've got to read the paper, I've got to watch the news. I don't want to miss the weather, you know. Come on, God. I've got to get my chapter read, you know. Oh, there's nothing that will be beautiful then. It's a singular, heart focus. One thing I have desired of the Lord.

You know the Lord knows when we come into His presence whether we're really seeking Him or not. And he says, why don't you rend??? your hearts instead of your garments? Don't do the outward show, He says, do something on the inside. And just say, God, I have five minutes this morning. I have ten, I have an hour, I have 15 minutes, but you've got all of them. You've got all of me. You've got my entire focus. God, I lay aside everything else and I'm going to focus on you. And once you get into that heart attitude, that I will seek that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Now, there was no temple at this time. There's just a tent and David isn't talking about hanging around the temple all the time. He's talking by this house of the Lord deal. He's talking about he wanted to be in God's presence and he equated that with the tabernacle.

You know, this is not the house of the Lord. This could be a basketball court throughout the week. I mean, they could do anything in here they want. It's only sanctified and hallowed when we get here. And you know what? One of us alone constitutes an assembly of worship before the infinite God. So what you want to desire is not to be a church all the days of your life, in this building, but to be focusing on the Lord.

Look at the next phrase, "to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple." And to inquire in His temple, the temple of God, we are, 'cause the spirit of God lives within us, and there's a temple in heaven. And for a while there was a little temple on earth. And there's another one coming in the future, but what He's talking about is being caught up and communing with God in His presence. And beauty is a mark of pleasing, personal worship times.

And you can do this as I have. I mean, I've worshipped the Lord waiting in airports and waiting in bus stations, waiting in train stations, riding on boats, riding in planes. I've worshipped the Lord driving in my car. I've worshipped the Lord at rest areas. I've worshipped Him often at the kitchen table early in the morning, late at night. I mean, you can worship the Lord anywhere. All it takes is tuning everything else out by conscious choice and tuning only Him in. Can't have the split screen TV. You know nowadays you can watch more than one show at once. God says I don't like that. One show, me, He says. Focus on me. And beauty is a mark of pleasing worship, because when we have that focus, we behold His beauty.

Keep turning to Psalm 29, just two psalms over. 'Cause fifthly, beauty is how God describes the holiness he desires for us. He wants us to be beautiful in His holiness. "Give to the Lord," verse two of 29, "give to the Lord the glory due His name. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." What's the best way we can come dressed before God this morning? Not with some expensive clothing, but to wear the most priceless clothing, His holiness, be arrayed in God's holiness.

The last verse of 1 Corinthians says this, it says, but put you on the Lord Jesus Christ of God as Christ ??? unto us wisdom and knowledge and sanctification and redemption put Him on.

Romans 13:14, put you on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. Wear Jesus Christ. You want to know what the best thing is to wear? Put on Jesus Christ and then look in the mirror and say, would Jesus wear what I'm wearing? Because I'm wearing Christ. Am I the most beautiful and the most modest and the most holy I could possibly be coming into His presence? Now, corporately, we only do this a few times, but personally is what we do every time we come into worship.

Another verse, Psalm 96, if you want to turn over about 67 chapters. Psalm 96 in verse nine. Same thing repeated. "Oh worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Tremble before Him all the earth." Holiness is acknowledging His utter sinlessness, His utter separation from all that is fleshly and all that is tainted and all that is touched with corruption. And when you see Him in the perfections of His holiness, it makes us tremble because He is so awesome. Remember, He is the consuming fire? And He is so powerful. And God is so utterly unlike us, and yet He's revealed Himself to us. Well, beauty is how God describes the holiness He desires for us. He wants us to give Him the glory due His name by worshipping the beauty of His holiness. And as that verse we see, we need to worship the Lord clothed in the beauty of holiness.

Just for a minute, back to Psalm 50 in verse two, Psalm 50 verse two. Because the sixth aspect this morning of God's beauty treatment He wants us to be involved in is that He is beautiful. I mean, have you ever thought of God as beautiful? He says, I want you to think of me as beautiful. Psalm 50 in verse two, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth." He says, I'm the perfection of beauty.

Now, I hear people all the time, they say, oh, wow! She's beautiful. Or, oh, what a beautiful car! Well, you know what God says? You think that's beautiful? I'm the perfection of beauty. He says, I am the ultimate. I am the most beautiful. You know, most of us know more about beautiful cars and beautiful other things than we know about beautiful God. And God says, I want you to linger in my presence, Psalm 50 in verse two, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth."

Now, don't turn there 'cause you can start turning to Psalm 90, okay? Let me read Isaiah 33:17 to you. Okay? While you're turning to Psalm 90, the last verse, let me read to you Isaiah 33:17. Because this is what God promises to you and me every day when we get into His word. "Your eyes will see the King in His beauty. They'll see the land that's far off." That's a great verse. You ought to have that one underlined. When you and I get alone with God and this book, we get to see the King in His beauty and through this book, we see that land that's far off. His presence, heaven, the glory of eternity with Him, we see that through this book.

You know, I meet people they have a real struggle. They say, I don't get anything out of this. Well, I think they have their eyes closed, because I have never opened the pages of this book that I didn't see some facet of the King and His beauty. Now, sometimes I had to fight off sleep, sometimes I had to fight off anxiety, sometimes I had to fight off distraction, and a million things on my mind. But as soon as you tune out all the other screens and just look at one channel, God, you can start... I mean, it reminds me of some of these files that come in are so big that it takes them a while to come in on the screen, you know? They just kind of slowly come on, on the computer. And they

just slowly fill the screen. Now that's how I feel sometimes. You know I don't see God in His beauty right away. Sometimes, you know, I have to get my mind focused. But all of a sudden, you start seeing Him in His word, and then when you see the King in His beauty, you see the land that's far off and we're going to be with Him forever. No more sickness, no more sadness, no more sleeping, no more night, no more separation, no more tears. But we see the King in His beauty 'cause God's beautiful. And that's how He describes Himself.

But now, the last verse of Psalm 90, and then we're going to conclude our study of Mary. But I wanted you to see this last verse of Psalm 90. And let me give you a running start. 1) Beauty was required of those who were regularly in God's presence. Remember the priests? Secondly, beauty was expected in corporate worship. They were to be focusing on God's beauty. Thirdly, beauty is how God describes praise that we're to offer Him. Fourthly, beauty is a mark of personal worship times that please God. Fifthly, beauty is how God describes holiness that we're supposed to wear. Sixthly, God is beautiful. Now, here's the last point. Psalm 90 in verse 17. God wants to make us beautiful today. Did you know that? Have you stopped for your beauty treatment?

We were on our way to meet a group of people at a Don Crane luncheon, and our family was getting ready. And I said, honey, what can I do? And she handed me a washcloth and said, wipe so and so's face, you know? Chocolate, you know? It gets everywhere except in their mouth, and this one little tyke loves chocolate and it was all over. And so I said, Jeremiah, look at Daddy. And that little moonbeam face went just like this, covered with chocolate. I said, hold still, honey. I took the washcloth and I started and I just, I said, wow, who is that under there? Who is that, Harry the dirty dog? I said, it's you. And he smiled real big. All the chocolate was gone. Did you know I couldn't have done that if he hadn't done what Psalms 90 in verse 17 says? Look at this, let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. Literally, hold still, stop, wait, let me do this. Look up at me, turn your little face up to me, God says. Let me take the washcloth of the word, let me take the sanctifying power of the blood of Jesus Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered Himself without spot to God, let me purge you so that you can be beautiful. God wants to make us beautiful today.

We're coming before His table. Have you turned your face up to Him? You said, I've got the chocolate of sin, God. I've got the chocolate of neglect, God. I've got the stains of not being everything I want to be for you, but God, there's nothing I can do to make you love me any more or any less. But I know that this is distracting. Will you please wash me? Will you get me ready to come into your presence so I can be beautiful? That's what God wants from us. How does that look in a human body? Just listen.

This is how it looked in Mary. Mary was beautiful because she listened to God, we saw over the last three weeks. She humbled herself before God. She surrendered to His will. She learned to experience Him. That's what we've been talking about this morning. She saw His beauty in His word. She served God joyfully. You know when you experience God, you can do anything for Him with joy. Something wonderful about that. She immersed herself in the scriptures. And finally, she kept on growing to the end of her life. That's what a beautiful person looks like. Someone that's clothed in

God's, His holiness, they're immersed in the word, they're serving God joyfully, they're experiencing God every day, they're surrendered to his will, they're humble and they're listening to Him and they never stop. They do that for the rest of their life.

You know, I don't ever plan on retiring. I want to serve God my whole life. I don't want to stop serving God, retire. I hope that you see that your primary calling is worshipping God. You never retire from that. You never retire from seeking and serving Him joyfully. Now, your source of income might change, lessen, but your purpose in life doesn't.

This morning as we come to the Lord's table, do you want to be beautiful? God wants you beautiful. He wants me beautiful. We're going to pause right now and at the prayer time we have before communion, what it's to do is, in your heart, and you can even put your face up if you want, some people it helps them to actually do it, just say God, would you wash me? Would you wash me? Would you clean me up so that I can be beautiful in your sight? Would you clothe me with Jesus Christ? Would you let the beauty of the Lord my God be upon me? And when I sing those choruses in just a moment, I want them to be beautiful to you. It doesn't matter your vocal quality. That's why everyone can sing those choruses even if you're like, one of my children has perfect no pitch. And all they do is they just say the words. Jesus loves me this I know. The Bible tells me so. But do you know what? That's beautiful to God. And they're unashamed because they're singing for God. I hope that you will participate, if you're born again, that you'll participate in worshipping God at this Lord's table this morning. I hope that you'll start by letting God wash your face but you'll continue by letting him fill your words from your voice with beautiful praise to Him. Let's bow before the Lord as we prepare for the Lord's table this morning.

Oh, Savior, may the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. We all have failed you, we all have sinned this week. We all have sought you with all of our heart now and then, but this morning, corporately, we want to together worship you. We want to, through this celebration feast, to scribe to the Lord the glory due your name. We pray that you will inhabit our praises, and as we prepare our hearts before you in the next few moments, as we lift our faces toward you, as we ask you to cleanse us and to impress deeply the beauty, the image of our Lord Jesus upon us, may it transform this communion into the most powerful offering of worship that we've ever given to you. For Christ's sake. And with heads whichever way bowed or looking up, worship the Lord. Be cleansed as the men come and prepare the table as we're going to celebrate in just a few moments. Wash us, oh Savior, wash us of pride this morning. Wash us of self-sufficiency, trying to live the Christian life in our own strength. Wash us of loving anything more than you. Wash us of letting our jobs and our preoccupations and occupations kind of squeeze you out. We make choices everyday. Wash us of making choices that excluded and left you out. Wash us of not preparing for this morning. If we stayed up too late last night, if we did too much that we we're tired, we're distracted, we're not beautiful coming into your presence, but you want to make us that way, as we let the beauty of the Lord our God rest upon us. It's a conscious choice. Right now, we together are making that choice and with your word we want to give to you the glory that's due your name. And as your word says, we want to worship you in the beauty of holiness. And we from our hearts want to say the one thing we desire from you, oh

Lord, and we're going to seek that today and the days ahead. We want to dwell in your presence all of our days, not let any day go by without being in your presence. Lord, we want to behold your beauty. We want to inquire in your presence. We want to praise you because of your mercy. We want to praise you this morning in the beauty of holiness. We want to, oh Lord, to worship you in the beauty of holiness. We want to tremble before you. God, you're beautiful. You're the perfection of beauty. We want you to cleanse us of anything we think is more beautiful than you are. It's so easy but you are able, right now, you are willing. This very moment, cleansing and absolute beauty is available to each of us. We take it, oh Lord, by faith we embrace and pause before you to let your beauty be upon us. Establish the work of our hearts this morning. May the elements that we hold, may the bread be as though we were sitting at that table with you and that your hand handed that bread to us. May we in wonder look at you thinking of the sacrifice that you accomplished in our place and the cup to follow. May we with eyes riveted upon the cross think of how your blood freely flowed for our cleansing. Make this a true, beautiful worship experience. We thank you for the bread. Bless us as we remember what you did and what you're doing for us. In your precious name we pray, Lord Jesus, Amen.

As the men pass the bread among you, we're going to sing about the wonder of what Christ did. A lot of times we don't think about the fact that we're all here this morning, diverse though we are, because we are one because of what Christ did. And the people you're sitting next to, if they are truly, if they have truly had a born again experience, you share an eternal family bond with them. Let's sing about that as we sing We are One in the Bond of Love.

And in our oneness, we are adoring all the members of the infinite triune God. And I hope that as much as you would say to a loved one at a special moment in their life, I love you, or to a child, I just admire, I love you, I see what wonderful things God's doing in your life, use that heartfelt expression as we sing to God, Father I Adore You.

Well, the bread that you hold in your hand this morning is just a continuation of something great that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself began. He began it actually earlier than we think because He was the angel of the Lord that went before the Jews and began that first Passover celebration which was ??? to Him all those years. He was the Passover lamb like at our ??? a few months ago. We celebrated Jesus Christ, our Passover. But he took the Passover and as He held the bread that night, He said, this bread is a picture of me. It's without leaven, which is a picture of my sinlessness. It's individually broken from one loaf to remind you that you are all from one family. And it's something you personally partake of to remind you that you must individually receive me for life everlasting. And He said, I want you to regularly partake of this to remember that apart from me, you can't do anything. And so on that night after instructing them, our Lord Jesus Christ broke the bread, gave it to the disciples and said, take, eat, this is my body. Let's do that together this morning.

We worship you, oh mighty God. There is none like you. Oh Lord, you're beautiful. Your face is all we seek. And we pray that this morning in a very real way we will let the beauty of you, oh Lord our God, be upon us. Thank you for the cup which we commemorate the ??? the five bleeding wounds Christ bore that strongly plead for us.

Thank you for your blood poured out for your life given. For the life of the flesh is in the blood. And you have given it to us through the eternal spirit to purge our conscience from those works, those sins, those deeds, those commissions and omissions and blatant sins that we commit to cleanse and fill us and to let us come in with confidence in your presence. Thank you that through your blood we can all be equally pure, cleansed and holy before your presence. We can be beautiful. We don't have to wait ten years, five years, we don't have to do penance. Just by faith, right now, by opening our hearts, we can let your beauty, your perfection be upon us. We worship you, we thank you for the cup. Bless us as we continue to commune with you for Christ's sake, Amen.

As the men pass the cup among you, we're going to sing about how God did all of this. It's because of His amazing grace that saved a wretch like we were, but now we're beautiful in his sight. Let's sing that to the Lord this morning.

You know I can't help but sing those songs thinking about the ones that wrote 'em. And it's amazing that John Newton, his wife died of bone cancer, and he really went through it with her. He couldn't believe God could do that until he was aware of God's amazing grace. One last song that we'll sing just before we partake. Oh how He loves you and me. Oh how He loves you and me. He gave His life. That's what we're celebrating this morning. Let's sing that to the Lord this morning.

And that's what we're celebrating with this cup. This is the spilled expression of his love. A cup that reminds us He gave his life's blood to be the covering, the erasure, the payment permanent of our sin. God doesn't hold 'em anymore. You're never going to be condemned for your sins. I'm not either. What a liberating thought, but what a sobering thought, too. We don't want to sin willfully because Jesus Christ paid such a high price for our sin. We don't want to trod underfoot His blood. That's why we're regularly supposed to hold this cup and remember Him. The scriptures tell us that on that night, Jesus took a cup and gave thanks and gave it to them and said, for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Drink from it, all of you. Let's do that together this morning.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying in my place in our place and for making us beautiful. Help us to try to keep before us at all times your desire that we come into your presence beautifully arrayed in holiness, that we sing to you beautifully, that we speak and share your word in a beautiful way, and that we pause before you regularly to let you impress into our image the beauty of Christ. Help us to linger, if we haven't yet today, sometime today, before the mirror of your word and ask you to let your beauty be upon us. Thank you for Jesus' sake, Amen.