

Behold, the Beauty of the Lord!

Erie, Pennsylvania Ladies' Retreat
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*"One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall 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 meditate in His temple."
Psalm 27:4 (emphasis added)*

Lesson One: This One Thing I Seek!

Introduction

Charles William Eliot (1834–1926), former president of Harvard University, had a birthmark on his face that bothered him greatly. As a young man, he was told that surgeons could do nothing to remove it. Someone described that moment as *"the dark hour of his soul."* Eliot's mother gave him this helpful advice: *"My son, it is not possible for you to get rid of that hardship ... But it is possible for you, with God's help, to grow a mind and soul so big that people will forget to look at your face."*

In Psalm 27:1, David says: *"The Lord is my light and my salvation."* David's men called him *"the light of Israel."* Yet David declares that the Lord is his light. Any light that shone in his life was merely borrowed and reflected light from the God of Heaven and Earth. Like the moon reflects the light of the sun, David reflected the light of God.

This is also true of beauty. Any real beauty that we hope to have in this life can only be a beauty of soul—reflected from the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ living in and through us. To God be the glory!

Read Psalm 27

1. An Overview of the Psalm

In this psalm, David juxtaposes the threats and trials of his life with the beauty of the Lord.

Words that describe what he faces in the world:

Evildoers, dread, devouring of flesh, adversaries, enemies, fear, war, forsaken, foes, false witnesses, violence, despair

Words that describe what he finds in the Lord:

Light, salvation, deliverance, peace, confidence, prayer, beauty, meditation, concealment, protection, safety, exaltation, joy, song, praise, grace, help, family love, guidance, goodness, strength, and courage

David's deep desire is to live in the tabernacle where he could behold the beauty of the Lord and meditate on it. David was a warrior and a king. He was not serving daily in the temple—

but on the battlefield and in the throne room. David dealt with war, threat, the problems of a people and a nation, and a dysfunctional family. He longed for the peace, serenity, and safety of the house of the Lord. But David finds that peace and safety, not as a place secluded from all the trials of life, but as a condition of his soul amid the trials of life.

The same is true for us. If we are beholding the beauty of the Lord, it will be right where we sit, stand, walk, live, and breathe. It will be sleeping in that same bed, washing those same dishes, looking at that same face in the mirror every morning. Jesus likes to work in our heart right where we are—present tense, present geography, present situations.

These verses and word pictures give us a setting and context for David's passionate prayer.

2. The Heart of the Psalm is Found in Verse 4

"One thing." Obviously, David asked the Lord for more than one thing in life. It is used here for priority, as Paul uses it in the New Testament. David asks this as the *"one thing"* that is most important to him. (See also Psalm 16:11; 23:6.)

Jesus commands that we have this *"one thing"* attitude in each of us (Mark 10:21; see also verses 17–31)..

In verse four, David's seeking has a three-fold intent:

- *"dwell,"* to sit down, to remain, to stay: This would be the Old Testament equivalent of abiding found in John 15.
- *"behold,"* to gaze at, to contemplate His beauty
- *"meditate,"* to consider and reflect

3. Intense Seeking-after-God is a Characteristic of:

a. David—the greatest of the kings

- A man after God's own heart, 1 Samuel 13:14
- Seeking to fellowship with the Lord as the #1 priority of his life, Psalm 27:4
- Seeking His face, Psalm 27:8
- Consider David, who was king and ruler over the whole of Israel, with the spiritual and physical weight of a nation on his back.

b. Moses—the greatest of the prophets

- Moses chose ill treatment with God's people, over the passing pleasure of sin; endured the reproach of Christ, looking to the reward; saw the unseen, by faith; and led others in that faith (Hebrews 11:23–29).
- With Moses, God spoke face-to-face (Exodus 33:11; 34:30; Deuteronomy 34:10).
- God showed Moses His ways, the children of Israel His acts (Psalm 103:7).
- Consider Moses, who was saddled with the job of leading and delivering a nation out of slavery and into the Promised Land.

c. Paul—the greatest of the apostles

- “This one thing I do,” Philippians 3:7–15
- “*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*” Philippians 1:21
- Consider Paul, who carried the burden for an infant church, struggling to pull away from the traditions of Judaism and walk a new path of grace and faith.

The greatest of the kings—David; the greatest of the prophets—Moses; the greatest of the apostles—Paul: These were outstanding, famous individuals, obviously empowered by God for great ministry and impact in their generation.

Often, we make excuses: If only I wasn’t so busy with the kids; if only, I didn’t have to work a full-time job; if only my marriage didn’t put so much stress on my life and soul ...

Could common people like you and me ever hope to reach such a level of spiritual focus and productivity in our life? God’s Word assures us that we can!

4. Compare and Contrast

a. Mary of Bethany, Luke 10:38–42

- Seated at His feet, a place of fellowship and worship—place of intimacy
- In contrast, Martha—worried, bothered
- Jesus says, “*only one thing is necessary ... Mary has chosen the good part [best dish!]*”
- Compare 2 Corinthians 11:3: “*But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray [to corrupt, to wither or shrivel] from the simplicity [singleness, the virtue of one who is free from pretense and hypocrisy, not self-seeking] and purity [cleanness] of devotion to Christ.*”
- What leads you astray?

b. Isaiah 32:9–11, “*Rise up, you women who are at ease, and hear my voice; give ear to my word, you complacent daughters. Within a year and a few days you will be troubled, O complacent daughters; for the vintage is ended, and the fruit gathering will not come ...*”

Contrast this intense seeking of the faithful ones with the complacent women of Isaiah 32.

- Seeking is a verb—an intense action
- The word *batach*, used for “*complacent*” is one of the Hebrew words for faith/trust and is used three times. These ladies of Israel were trusting in themselves, their own beauty and capabilities. Because of their self-satisfied nature, they were not seeking after God. They are promised discipline.
- This shows that faith always has an object. If the object of our faith and trust is in anything or anyone other than God, we are living in a spiritually dangerous place.

5. Tabernacle (House) of the Lord

David's desire was to dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord. Consider these verses that help us understand the beauty of the house of the Lord:

- a. **Psalm 5:7**, *“But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, at Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for you.”*
- b. **Psalm 26:8**, *“O LORD, I love the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells.”*
- c. **Psalm 65:4**, *“How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You to dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your Holy Temple.”*
- d. **Psalm 84:4**, *“How blessed are those who dwell in Your house! They are ever praising You.”*
- e. **Psalm 84:10**, *“For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.”*
- f. **Psalm 96:6**, *“Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.”*

The tabernacle was filled with articles of beauty and craftsmanship—all used to speak of the nature and glory of Jesus Christ. Exodus tells us that it all was built *“for glory and for beauty”* (Exodus 28:2, 40).

6. Questions to Ask

- a. **What do these verses tell us about the tabernacle of God?**
 - A place of beauty, strength, glory, goodness, and holiness
 - A place of safety and refuge
 - A place to come with reverence and awe
 - A place to meditate and behold the beauty of the Lord

The cry of David's heart was to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life. He wanted his soul to be filled up with all the tabernacle had to offer. But this is Old Testament stuff.

- b. **Where is the tabernacle of God now?**
 - **John 14:23**, *“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.”*

Ephesians 3:14–21, *“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”*

This passage is the New Testament equivalent of David’s prayer in Psalm 27.

As it was David’s prayer to dwell in the house of the Lord, it is Paul’s prayer for us to behold the beauty of Christ’s love dwelling inside of us.

The love of Christ—the most powerful force in the Universe; the very love that compelled God to send forth His only Son; the very love that compelled Jesus to hang on that cross with or without the nails—that is the Person and Love that dwells inside you and me!

As David longed every day to behold and meditate on the Person of Christ in the tabernacle of old, Paul prays that we may know—in a very experiential way—the up, down, left, and right expansiveness of the love of Christ. He has made His home in your heart to fill you up with Him: His splendor, His strength, beauty, glory, and goodness—His love.

**He is there to create a mind and soul in you so big,
that people forget to look at your face!**

Lesson Two: Seeking the Face of God

Psalm 27:7–8, *“Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, And be gracious to me and answer me. When you said, ‘Seek My face,’ my heart said to You, ‘Thy face, O LORD, I shall seek.’”*

1. Seeking the Face of God

To seek the face of God is a biblical term for wanting to know God more personally and intimately, and a biblical term for finding favor with God.

2. “Seek”

The Hebrew word for “seek,” *baqash*, means “to search out, especially in worship, to strive after.” This is not a passive thing. Those who truly want to see the face of God will **seek** after it with all diligence.

3. David and the Face of God

- David was a prophet and a king, a man after God’s own heart. We don’t know when God said to him, “*Seek My face*” or how that command was communicated to him. But at some point, in the struggles of David’s life, he must have sought after God’s help, wisdom, or counsel, and God said to him, “*Seek My face.*”
- Psalm 132 indicates this may have been quite early in David’s life, while he was still a shepherd youth, for it was out in those lonely fields that David swore to the Lord that he would find a resting place for the ark of God.
- When the ark of God was brought back into Jerusalem and into the tent that David had prepared for it, he blessed the people and distributed to them tasty foods. Then, he sang a song of thanks, praise, and worship to God in the presence of the priests and the people. In 1 Chronicles 16:10–11, and 36, David said:

*“Glory in His holy name; let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.
Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually.
Then all the people said, ‘Amen.’”*

- David shared with the people the command that God had given to him. No doubt, he knew the benefit of following the command and the blessing of seeking the face of God.

4. Moses and the Face of God

- God instructed Moses to have Aaron and the priests bless the people with these words:
Numbers 6:24–26, “*The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.*”

When we were in Israel, our guide, Ezer, kept saying to us, “*the more we dig out of the ground, the more we see the Bible is true.*” Numbers 6:24–25 is the oldest Bible verse that has been uncovered in Israel. It was found written on a small, silver scroll wrapped up and hung around the skeletal neck of a young Jewish man, as a piece of jewelry. Our guide suggested it was likely given to him by his father at his coming of age.

To a devoted Jew, to have the face of God shine upon him was his deepest desire.

Psalm 67:1, “*God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us.*”

Psalm 80:3, “*O God, restore us and cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.*”

Exodus 33:11, “... *the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.*”

Then Moses’ face would shine with the reflected glory of God (Exodus 34:10, 35; Deuteronomy 5:4).

5. **Jacob and the Face of God**

- Jacob’s very name means “one who supplants.” His life was characterized by deception and manipulation—a failure to seek God and trust in His promises. Jacob’s way was Jacob’s way.
- In Genesis 25, He bargained for Esau’s birthright and bought it with a pot of stew and some bread.
- In cahoots with his mother Rachel, he used lies and deception to steal Esau’s blessing from his father Jacob (Genesis 27).
- God’s Word says, “*Whatever a man sows, this will he also reap*” (Galatians 6:7). Jacob sowed deception and treachery, and Laban, in turn, dealt with him treacherously. Leah—not Rachel—was brought to his tent for marriage.
- In the story of Jacob’s ladder, rather than seeking God, Jacob bargained with God. Again, Jacob’s way was his own way. He called the shots in his life!
- Finally, amid a lonely, fearful, and uncomfortable night, God sought out Jacob to change His soul. The Lord came and wrestled the pride and self-seeking spirit out of Jacob. Once that had happened, Jacob “saw the face of God.”
- The Lord is ready to depart. Now the ball is in Jacob’s court. He says, “*I will not let you go unless [until] you bless me*” (Genesis 32:22–26). This is a turning point in Jacob’s life. He ceases to wrestle, and he starts to cling to God. Jacob surrenders his self-will and truly seeks to know God in a more personal and intimate way.
- Now Jacob’s life can be changed to bring glory and honor to God (Genesis 32:27–31).
- Jacob limped away, broken in body but made whole in spirit!

Application. If we are not actively seeking the face of God, He will seek us out through trial and suffering, until we are ready to surrender to Him. He may rightly demolish our life, so that He can rebuild our life according to His plan.

6. **New Testament Seeking**

Colossians 3:1–4, “*Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking** the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.*” (emphasis added)

John 14:21, “*He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.*”

Note, “*disclose*,” means “to make known, to make manifest, to appear and come into view.”

2 Corinthians 5:8, “*We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.*”

To be “face-to-face” with Jesus is the eternal destiny of every soul that believes in Him.

7. When God Turns His Face Away

Psalm 27: 9, “*Do not hide Your face from me, do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation.*”

We have promises in Scripture of God’s nearness, faithfulness, and presence:

Hebrews 13:5, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*” (NKJV)

Psalm 73:28, “*But as for me, the nearness of God is my good ...*”

Joshua 1:9, “*Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*”

Yet, we find in other passages that God “*hides His face*” (Job 34:39). Let’s compare passages to get insight on this apparent contradiction, because we know there are no contradictions in the mind of God or the Word of God:

Isaiah 45:15, “*Truly, You are a God who hides Himself, O God of Israel, Savior.*”

Job 13:24, “*Why do You hide your face, and consider me Your enemy?*”

Psalm 42:9, “*I will say to God my rock, ‘Why have You forgotten Me?’*”

Psalm 44:23–24, “*Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever. Why do You hide Your face, and forget our affliction and our oppression?*”

Psalm 88:13–14, “*But I, O LORD, have cried out to You for help, and in the morning my prayer comes before You. O LORD, why do You reject my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me?*”

Psalm 89:46, “*How long, O LORD? Will You hide Yourself forever?*”

It’s okay to ask God these questions!

8. Why Does God Hide His Face?

- a. To create a greater hunger in our soul to know Him (Psalm 13:3–4)
- b. As a form of discipline because of our own evil deeds
 - Leviticus 20:3, 6—God turns His face away from the idolater.
 - (2 Chronicles 7:13–14; Micah 3:4; Deuteronomy 31:17–18; 32:20; Ezekiel 39:21–29)

- c. To examine our hearts (2 Chronicles 32:31, see also vv. 20–33)

Psalm 13:1–2, *“How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?”*

- Have you ever felt the way that David feels in this psalm? Or the way the Sons of Korah felt?
- At times, our Christian experience feels as if His favor is withheld, our prayers go unanswered, and His guidance is not given.
- We concur with David that this happens.
- If you have, or do in the future, remember this: **It’s okay—like David, Job, and others—to ask God why.**
 - If He is desiring to create a greater hunger in your soul, submit to that desire.
 - If He is disciplining you to bring you to repentance and correction, be corrected!
 - If He is testing your soul, stand firm in that test!

Psalm 13:3–4, *“Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death.”*

This condition creates a hunger in David’s soul, a desperation for God’s guidance and undertaking in his life.

Psalm 13:5–6, *“But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness ... because He has dealt bountifully with me.”*

David’s faith stands firm in a time when he feels God has turned his face away. And so should our faith.

**We all want Heaven on Earth—we can only find it to the degree
that we seek the face of God in the here and now!**

Lesson Three: Behold, the Beauty of Jesus

Behold, the beauty of His humility!

There was a time long ago, when God created the most beautiful of all His creatures. Every precious stone and gem was his covering and he had upon him the seal of perfection. This creature was with God on the holy mountain; he was chosen and anointed by God to guard His throne, and to lead the throng of angels living in Heaven. Yet this creature’s heart was lifted up because of the very beauty that God had bestowed upon him. Pride overcame and Satan fell.

There was a time long ago, when a man and wife walked together with God in a beautiful Garden of fellowship and joy. For them, every day was pleasant and every moment precious. Never did tempers rise or words cut. Never did discouragement or lack of anything overcome their joy. Never did the trials and temptations of the world steal away their happiness. It was all good. But pride slithered into that Garden, and both the man and the woman chose pride above perfect fellowship with God. Pride overcame and man fell.

There was a time long ago, when God looked down on proud and fallen man with compassion in His heart. They were separated from His holiness by the sin of pride, and He longed to see their precious souls redeemed. He so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son that whoever would believe in Him would never perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). That very Son—the Lord Jesus Christ—was sent by God but came willingly to penetrate a world of pride with the power of humility. In the Person of Jesus Christ, humility was returned to planet Earth.

Humility is not a virtue to be listed among others—humility is the root of all other virtues. Humility frees God to be all and do all in and through us, as He did in and through Jesus Christ. It is in the humility of the Lord Jesus Christ that we see His beauty.

Let's consider and meditate on that humility.

Isaiah 53

The beauty of Jesus found in this passage is not in His physical strength or attractiveness, for as verse 2 tells us:

*“He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him,
nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.”*

His beauty is a beauty of soul, demonstrated in His humble beginning, His teaching ministry, His service and, finally, in His sacrificial death upon a cross.

*“The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of
the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* John 1:14

No person could hope to fully explain this precious chapter of Scripture, but the truths contained in it are played out for us in the earthly life of Jesus Christ. As the Gospel accounts record the earthly life of Jesus for us, we are given understanding of the magnitude of Isaiah 53. We find it explained in the words, teachings, and actions of Jesus.

1. **Isaiah 53:1–3**, *“He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”*

The Man of Sorrows

A tree grows from the root from which it sprang. Jesus' life was rooted in humility, the son of a poor carpenter, born in a stable, and raised as a common man. *“He was despised and forsaken of men,”* and we did not value Him. The world had no place for Jesus, unwelcomed in the very world that He created, uninvited into the very souls of those He loved.

2. **He was the Outcast Savior**

Jeremiah 14:8–9, *“O Hope of Israel, its Savior in time of distress, why are you like a Stranger in the land or like a traveler who has pitched his tent for the night? Why are you like a man dismayed, like a mighty man who cannot save?”*

These words were fulfilled in the earthly life of Jesus.

Luke 2:6–7

The time came for Mary to give birth “*and she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*” His Father in Heaven who sent Him owns the cattle on a thousand hills, but Joseph couldn’t even afford a lamb as a sacrifice for his firstborn son (Luke 2:23–24; Leviticus 5:11).

John 1:11, “*He came to His own and those who were His own did not receive Him.*”

Luke 4:24, 28–29

Jesus entered the synagogue in Nazareth to teach and said, “*No prophet is welcome in his hometown.*” And as He taught, “*all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built in order to throw Him down the cliff.*”

John 7:53–8:1

After the Feast of Tabernacles had ended, “*everyone went to their own homes, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.*”

Matthew 8:20, “*The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.*”

The only place the world did have for Jesus was a tomb!

In the face of rejection, Jesus says:

Matthew 11:28, “*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest.*”

John 7:37

And to the multitudes, He cried out, “*If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.*” His actions compelled people to come:

- The disciples shewed the children away, but Jesus said, “Let them come.”
- Men threw an adulterous woman at Jesus in disgust, yet He got right down to her level and ministered with understanding and forgiveness.
- With compassion, He fed the hungry, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and mobility to the lame.

Application. So, what do you see of the beauty and character of Jesus Christ in these verses? A multitude of things because, as God, His character is multi-faceted. But above all, I hope you see the **grace and humility of Jesus.**

As Christians, we should strive to reflect His character and His beauty. When we encounter times of rejection, these times are a mirror for our soul. Do we reflect the pride of Satan or the humility of Jesus?

- I know grown women whose adult children treat them with disinterest or disrespect. That is a time to display the grace and humility of Jesus Christ.
- I know women whose husbands reject them, either in divorce or daily within a marriage relationship. That is a time to display the grace and humility of Jesus Christ.
- I know women who have been abused, deserted, and betrayed. That is a time to display the grace and humility of Jesus Christ.
- Can you think of a situation or situations in your life where this grace and humility can be applied?

The humble roots of Jesus' birth and life? He *"did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45).

That ransom is spoken of in the following verses of Isaiah 53.

- 3. Isaiah 53:4–9**, *Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted ... He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.*"
The Silent/Smitten Lamb of God

Andrew Murray said, *"Humility is the path to death, because in death it gives the highest proof of its perfection. Humility is the blossom, of which death to self is the perfect fruit. Jesus humbled Himself even unto death and proved His surrender to God to the very uttermost."*

There are many passages we could look at concerning the humble self-sacrifice of Jesus. Perhaps they could best be summed up in these words from the cross:

- **Luke 23:34**, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*

Jesus preached forgiveness. Here, He demonstrates it toward the disciples who betrayed and forsook Him, toward the soldiers who beat and scourged Him, toward the women who spit and mocked Him, toward the crowd that chanted, *"Crucify Him!"*

He went to the cross willingly:

- Jesus did not oppose Judas' kiss.
 - He told the disciples to put away their swords.
 - He had the ability to call legions of angels to deliver Him—but did not!
 - At no point in His arrest and trial, did He open His mouth in His own defense.
 - Jesus said, *"I lay down my life for the sheep"* (John 10:15).
- **Luke 23:43**, *"Truly, I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*
 - **John 19:26–27**, *"Woman, behold, you son ... [Son,] behold, your mother."*
At this time, darkness fell on the face of the Earth as God the Father gathered up the sins of the entire world—past, present and future—and put them onto His perfect Son.

- **Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34**, *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me.”*
Jesus cried out in anguish (the first and only time):
 - **John 19:28** *“I am thirsty.”*
 - **John 19:30**, *“It is finished.”*
 - **Luke 23:46** *“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”*
- 4. Isaiah 53:10–12**, *“But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.”*
The Exalted Servant

Here, we see the propitiation of the Father toward the Son. God was pleased with all that Christ was and did, and so exalted Him to a place of eternal honor and glory, seated at the right hand of God.

- 5. Isaiah 53:11**, *“As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.”*
“My Servant”

Jesus was a **willing and amiable servant**—totally submissive to the Father’s will and totally dependent on the Father’s help. Come through these verses with me and notice how repetition brings weight to His words:

Luke 22:26, *“I am in the midst of you as One who serves.”*

John 5:19, *“The Son can do nothing of Himself.”*

John 5:30, *“I do not seek My own will.”*

John 6:38, *“I have come ... not to do my own will.”*

John 5:41, *“I do not receive glory from men.”*

John 7:16, *“My teaching is not Mine.”*

John 7:28 *“I have not come of Myself.”*

John 8:28, *“I do nothing on My own initiative.”*

John 8:42, *“I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.”*

John 8:50, *“I do not seek not My [own] glory.”*

John 14:10, *“The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative.”*

John 14:24, *“The word which you hear is not Mine.”*

Jesus repeatedly declares His willingness to serve, and His total dependence on the Father.

While the disciples who followed him were constantly bickering over who would be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, the Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven was willing to declare:

“I am nothing, the Father is all!”

Perhaps the greatest display of His humble service is found in the Upper Room of John 13. He rose from supper, girded himself, and washed the feet of His disciples. He said,

*“If I then, the Lord and Teacher, washed your feet,
you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example
that you also should do as I did to you.”* John 13:14–15

The humble service of Jesus is our example. His willingness is our example. His dependence on God the Father is our example.

Hudson Taylor, a pioneer missionary to China and founder of China Inland Missions, said, *“I used to ask God to help me, then I asked if I might help Him. I ended up asking God to do His work through me.”* It took some time—even in Hudson Taylor’s life—but finally, he got it!

6. Isaiah 53:12, *“Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.”*

His Exaltation

He owns and deserves all the glory, all the spoils and riches. Yet, out of His love and humility, He shares it with each of us (as David shared the spoils of the battle of Ziklag, both with those who fought and those who stayed behind).

- His position—seated *“in the heavenly places in Christ,”* Ephesians 1:3; 2:6
- His love, 2 Corinthians 5:14
- His glory, Hebrews 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:14
- His life—eternal life through faith in Him, 1 John 5:11–12; and an eternal dwelling place for that life, John 14:1–3
- His work, Ephesians 2:10; 4:7–8; John 14:12
- The Father’s pleasure

Jesus desires to share with us His beauty and humility!

Lessen Four: He Breathes His Beauty into our Soul

Look at the trees and what do you see?
The beauty of God.
Look at the flowers and what do you see?
The beauty of God.
Look at the sky and what do you see?
The beauty of God.
Now look in the mirror and what do you see?
The beauty of God!

If only we could get our mind around this concept and adopt it into our lives!

We closed last lesson with Isaiah 53 and the “spoils” that Jesus shares with each of us as members of the Body of Christ.

1. The Beauty of Christ

One of the things He shares with us, if we are willing, is His beauty. Beauty can either be a blessing or a curse—depending on what we do with it.

- The beauty of Jesus is found in His humility and all the manifestations of it.
- The beauty of Satan led to pride and rebellion.
- Therefore, Proverbs 4:23 tells us to:

*“Watch over your heart with all diligence,
for from it flow the springs of life.”*

- Psalm 139 reiterates for us the value of our life before God.

2. 1 Samuel 25

Abigail’s beauty displayed in the trials of life.

Just as the beauty of Jesus is not found in His outward appearance, the beauty He shares with us is an inner beauty of soul. Several women in Scripture are spoken of as beautiful (inside and outside): Sarah, Rachel, Bathsheba, Esther, and so forth. One such woman, whose story shows us a rare combination of humility and beauty, is found in 1 Samuel 25—the woman Abigail.

a. 1 Samuel 25:2–8, main characters of the story:

- Nabal—fool
- David—eight chapters after he kills Goliath, one chapter after he spares Saul’s life

In this chapter, we find him in conflict of soul and not acting in a way that was consistent to his prior displays of humility.

- Abigail—beautiful and intelligent
She has the Word of God in her soul.

b. 1 Samuel 25:9–13, conflict arises

- c. **1 Samuel 25:14–17**, Abigail is called.
She is called by the servant because he recognizes her wisdom. She is called by God because she is prepared. Like the wise woman of Proverbs 9, she has something to offer.
- d. **1 Samuel 25:18–25**, the beauty of courage
Strength is a beautiful thing in a woman. The Word of God puts steel in our soul. Abigail displays the courage to face David with counsel. There is nothing as strong as true beauty, and nothing as beautiful as true strength.

Psalm 119:46, *“I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings and shall not be ashamed.”*

- e. **1 Samuel 25:23–28**, the beauty of humility, submission, and respect
Abigail is willing to take the blame for Nabal’s foolish actions. She approaches David with total humility and respect.
(Christ is our example of submission in 1 Peter 2. See also 1 Peter 3:1–6.)
- f. **1 Samuel 25:28–31**, the beauty of wisdom
Notice how Abigail uses phrases that are a paraphrase of David’s own words when he faced Goliath and said, “The battle is the Lord’s.”

Abigail is using great wisdom by bringing David’s thoughts back to a time of victory in his life and encouraging him to overcome this situation with the victory of faith.

Proverbs 4:5–9, *“[Wisdom] will place on your head a garland of grace.”*

Proverbs 31:30, *“Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.”*

Proverbs 11:22, *“As a ring of gold in a swine’s snout so is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.”*

Abigail does not despise or threaten David’s masculinity; on the contrary, she invites him to restore the balance of that masculinity.

- g. **1 Samuel 25:32–38**, the reward of beauty
- Abigail is praised by David and becomes his bride.
 - Application for us—we are the Bride of Christ.
 - **Revelation 19:7–9**
As a bride prepares for her wedding day, this life is preparation for our eternal wedding day.
 - **1 John 2:28”**

Let us prepare in such a way that we do not shrink back at His coming!

Lesson Five: Singing a Song of Praise

John Adams: *“Rejoice evermore!”*

We are going to see that David knows how to “rejoice evermore.” He knows not only how to seek God, but he knows how to praise God, to adore Him and worship Him—even in the darkest of times.

Jewish people were very physical. They related spiritual happenings to physical things: memorials, altars, celebrations, feasts, songs. David sings praises to God as a memorial to his deliverance.

Psalm 27: 6 (emphasis added), *“And now my head will be lifted up **above my enemies** around me; and I will offer in His tent **sacrifices** with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will **sing praises** to the LORD.”*

Psalm 33:1–3 (emphasis added), *“Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; **praise is becoming to the upright**, give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. Sing to Him a **new song**.”*

Psalm 20:5 (emphasis added), *“We will **sing for joy over your victory**, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.”*

It is becoming of us as Christians, as children of the Most High and Holy Lord of lords and King of kings, to have a song of praise, a new song, a song of overcoming, a **victory song!**

1 Corinthians 1:57, *“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory in Christ Jesus.”*

1. Hannah’s Victory Song

a. 1 Samuel 1

This is the greatest test of Hannah’s life, which leads to her greatest victory of faith and surrender. This event defines her life in Scripture.

- Verses 1–11—the conflict
- Verses 12–20—her surrender in faith

b. 1 Samuel 2:1–10

Notice how beautiful these words are and how they compare to Mary’s *Magnificat* in Luke 1:46–55.

c. 1 Samuel 2:1–2, *“Then Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart exults in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD, my mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation. There is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one besides You, nor is there any rock like our God.’”*

Hannah's words have a triumphant and bold tone. She is excited about God and what He has done.

- She praises His character and integrity, which she now knows by experience. The written Word becomes the Living Word in Hannah's life.

Hannah declares God to be the original writer of her song!

- Consider: What if God had said "no" to Hannah's prayer? It's easy to look at Hannah and say, "Great for her, cause it all worked out, but what about me? I am still divorced, I am still poor, I am still lonely ... whatever." But have you seen the face of God in your struggles? Have you known His comforting arms, His present Spirit? It's not about the **gift**, it's about the **Giver**!

- d. **1 Samuel 2:3**, "*Boast no more so very proudly, do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and with Him actions are weighed.*"

Hannah declares the need for humility. Hannah takes her own lyrics off the page. She has surrendered to His song.

- e. **1 Samuel 2:4-5**, "*The bows of the mighty are shattered, but the feeble gird on strength. Those who were full hire themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry cease to hunger. Even the barren gives birth to seven, but she who has many children languishes.*"

Hannah describes the lavish grace of God (see Ephesians 1:8)

1 Samuel 2:6-9, "*The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor; for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and He set the world on them. He keeps the feet of His godly ones, but the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; for not by might shall a man prevail,*"

Here, she declares the need for faith. What overcomes the world? Our faith!

1 Samuel 2:10, "*Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; against them He will thunder in the heavens, the LORD will judge the ends of the earth; and He will give strength to His king, and will exalt the horn of His anointed.*"

Hannah sees her experience in the larger scope of God's plan.

She describes God's dealing with the enemy and His dealing with the faithful. Every song has a low note, every tapestry has a messy side, every movie has a villain, every believer has an enemy. The enemy is part of the story, but God is the Victor!

2. Challenge: Write your own victory song!

Every Scar Has a Story by Kristina M. DeCarlo

Every scar has a story What will mine tell What will come of this When I'm better, when I'm well	I want it to shout About my living Creator Let my scar be evidence That there is a loving Lord Who fought my scary battles And on whose wings I soared
I want my scar to tell Of how I've overcome Of how I made it through Of where I have come from	Let my scar proclaim That all things work for good That by myself I couldn't But with my God I could
I want my scar to whisper About the pain I faced About this very hard time About the marathon I raced	Let them take a look Let the peek and see My scar shows God is great It points to Him, not me.
But mostly I want my scar To speak of something greater	

Lesson Six: Beautiful Feet and the Glory of the Gospel

Mary carried and Anna prayed.
The Samaritan woman testified and Elizabeth glorified.
Joanna and Susanna cooked and cleaned, followed and filled.
The widow gave. Tabitha sewed.
Mary Magdalene witnessed and Mary of Bethany anointed.
Persis worked hard,
Lydia opened her door,
Priscilla risked her neck and Phoebe helped many.

What do these women all have in common? **They all had beautiful feet!**

Romans 10:15, *“Just as it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things.’”*

Paul is quoting from Isaiah 52:7.

These women's stories are given to us in the New Testament, and they all—in some way—lived for the sake of the Gospel. As demonstrated by the ladies mentioned above, there are a variety of ways to live for the sake of the Gospel.

1. **The Goal** of living with beautiful feet is to **evangelize the world**.
 - a. Jesus came to this Earth *“to seek and to save that which was lost,”* Luke 19:10.
 - b. He *“desires all men to be saved!”* (1 Timothy 2:4).

- c. Because we embrace Him as Savior, we should embrace His goal. His goal should be our goal and His burden should be our burden.
- d. This goal defined His life. He was willing to leave the glories of Heaven, to take on flesh and endure the pain and separation of the cross to fulfill this goal.

The goal of evangelizing the world should define our life.

- Wife/Mother/Grandmother/Career/Public

The goal of evangelization of the world both limits and expands the borders of our life.

- Limits—places we don't go, things we don't do, because we have something greater to live for than the world, the flesh, and the devil.
- Expands—the goal of evangelization of the world expands the borders of our life. We can reach out to Jerusalem, Judea, and the utmost parts of the world when we live and pray in support of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

If you are all wrapped up in yourself you are the smallest package on Earth.
If you are all wrapped up in support of the Gospel of Jesus, you are the greatest and most precious package on Earth! We have something to live for that is greater than self.

Our life doesn't just touch our home, it touches the world.
Our life doesn't just influence our own children, but can influence future generations, other races, and other cultures.

When we live with “beautiful feet,” life is an adventure, a sojourn, a journey. The goal gives you a 24/7 here-there-and-everywhere **purpose** for living!

This goal should comfort our life. We live in perilous times (2 Timothy 3:1–7). What a comfort and anchor to know that God does not lose sight of the goal of reaching souls in times of trial, suffering, hurricanes, earthquakes, and wars. In fact, He often uses those disasters as tools to bring souls to faith in Jesus Christ. The goal stands firm when the world whirls around us.

2. **The Call** to live with beautiful feet is both **corporate** and **personal**.

a. **The Corporate Call**, Matthew 28:18–20

Though this charge was given to the 11 disciples, it remains in Scripture as a charge to all believers. Literally, “as you go,” make disciples of all men.

- With this charge comes the promise of both the power and presence of Christ to enable us to fulfill the charge.
- Every believer should be involved in the spread of the Gospel in one or more ways. We all are responsible to give, to pray, to encourage, to mentor others into discipleship, to live out the Gospel in our lives, and to go—whether it be across the street, or across the world. God has a place for each of us to be used to enlarge the borders of His Kingdom.

b. The Personal Call, Luke 1:28–37

God has a personal and unique place he wants to use each one of us. Find your place and fill it!

- Mary’s response should be our response.
“Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.”
- With the personal call came these promises of:
 - 1) God’s presence: *“The Lord is with you.”*
 - 2) God’s grace: *“[Hail], favored one ... for you have found favor with God.”*
 - 3) God’s power: *“Nothing will be impossible with God.”*
 - 4) God’s honor:
Luke 1:45, *“Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.”*
- Mary ponders these things; she treasures them up in her soul. Why? Because the cross was coming. She stood firm in faith. She was at the cross, and she was also part of the early church gatherings after the crucifixion and resurrection. Her faith stood firm.

c. Consider the Nature of the One Calling

1 Corinthians 1:9 (emphasis added), *“God is **faithful**, through whom you were called into fellowship [joint participation] with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

- **What are you afraid of?** Think of the **promises** and assurances we have in God’s Word to walk this path. We, too, are recipients of God’s **grace; His power and presence** are promised to us, and **blessing** can be found in heeding the call. Listen to the call and consider the nature of the One who is calling!

Application

What is the call of God on your life in relation to living with beautiful feet?

- This is a very personal thing. **Isaiah** was in the presence of God when he heard God ask, *“Whom shall I send?”* (Isaiah 6:8).
- When **Paul** was called by God to preach to the Gentiles, he did not confer with *“flesh and blood”* (Galatians 1:16). These men lived in the presence of God. They understood the nature of God and, therefore, they heard, understood, and yielded to the call of God.

How does he want you to live in support of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

3. The Gift of walking through life with beautiful feet is an amazing gift from God.

- a. Gift of Salvation. When we speak of *“the gift,”* we must first reflect on the gift of our own salvation (Ephesians 2:8–9). Paul was indebted to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- b. Gift of Service. This greatest of all gifts brings us to our knees in thankfulness and gratitude for what Christ has done for us. It should bring us to action—to share the Good News with others.
- c. Spiritual Gifts. To each is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. This gift is personal—given by God—and should be used in some way to live in support of the Gospel of Jesus.

God has a unique place, time, and way for you to walk with beautiful feet. Such as:

- **Go-and-Tell Ministry: The Samaritan Woman at the Well**, John 4
“From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all the things that I have done.’” This woman was not biblically educated, trained, or experienced. She simply told others about her encounter with Jesus.
 Tell the story of what Jesus has done for you!
- **Ministry of Compassion**: Matthew 9
 Jesus had compassion on the multitudes because they were distressed and downcast—like sheep without a shepherd. His compassion drove Him to preach the Good News along with healing their diseases.
 For example, Tabitha abounded with deeds of kindness and charity *“and many believed in the Lord”* (Acts 9:42).

They don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care!

- **Your Faith on Display**
 In order to ask a reason for the hope that is in you, they must see that hope:
 - a) Your story—a changed life
 - b) Your love for and obedience to God’s Word
 - c) Your joy in times of suffering
 - d) Possible martyrdom

“You are writing a Gospel,
 A chapter each day,
 By deeds that you do,
 By words that you say.

Men read what you write,
 Whether faithless or true;
 Say, what is the Gospel
 According to you?”

- **Support Roles**
 These are so crucial to missionaries and ministers!
 - a) Prayer (three examples)
 - i. Oswald Chambers, *“Prayer is not preparation for the work, prayer is the work. Prayer is not preparation for the battle, prayer is the battle!”*
 - ii. Hudson Taylor wrote home to his mother asking for prayer.

iii. Jesus said, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest”* (Matthew 9:37–38).

b) Giving

- i. Amy Carmichael, *“You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.”*
- ii. The story of the widow’s mite, Luke 21:1–4

c) Logistics

- i. The women who ministered to Jesus in Luke 8
- ii. The 29 people Paul mentions by name in Romans 16: men and women who in some way ministered to him so he could minister to others.

d) Engage and Encourage:

The Apostle Paul, with all his spiritual maturity and the gifts that came along with his calling, still needed and longed for encouragement from others in the Body of Christ.

- i. Onesiphorus *“refreshed me [my spirit]”* (2 Timothy 1:16).
- ii. Paul longed to visit the Romans *“that I may be encouraged together with you ... each of us by the other’s faith”* (Romans 1:11–12).

If Paul needed encouragement, how much more those who are younger in the faith—perhaps more isolated, struggling in dark areas of the world?

Suggestion. Read missionary newsletters. Respond to them with emails or letters. Thank them for the work they do. Encourage them. Assure them of your prayers.

4. The Cost: There is both cost and gain, sacrifice and benefit to living with beautiful feet—**what an honor!**

- a. Mary surrendered to the Lord’s call on her life and gave birth to the Savior of the world. **That’s honor!**
- b. Anna spent 65 years in fasting and prayer; but at the age of 84, she saw the baby Messiah with her own eyes. **That’s honor!**
- c. Joanna and Susanna, along with Mary Magdalen and others, ministered to the physical needs of Jesus. They were the first ones on that most glorious of all Sunday mornings to know that Jesus had conquered death and lived again. Jesus charged them with the message to tell the disciples. **That’s honor!**
- d. The widow who gave her last little coin is unnamed in Scripture, and yet 2,000 years after dropping a small coin in a basket, her story is still told. **That’s honor!**
- e. Tabitha spent countless hours stitching clothes for old women. How many bloody fingers did she have? How many nights did she go to bed with an aching back? But Peter raised her from the dead and, through this miracle, many believed in Jesus Christ. **That’s honor!**

- f. Mary of Bethany anointed the feet of Jesus with costly oil (Mark 14:3–9; John 12:1–8). **That’s honor!**
- g. **On top of the honor in this life, there is eternal reward that will bring eternal glory to Jesus Christ!**

Mark 8:34–38, *“And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.’”*

John 12:23–28, *“And Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name. Then a voice came out of heaven: ‘I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.’”*”

Let’s do what we can to reach the world with the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ—and discover how beautiful our feet can be!