

# Exceedingly Beautiful

by Chuck Smith

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*God wants to make our lives beautiful by lavishing his love and gifts upon us, and by transforming us into the image of Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 31:05

**Scripture:** Psalm 45:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Transformation", "Eternal Hope"

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## Description

This sermon focuses on the theme of God's transformative work in our lives, using Psalms 45 as a foundation to illustrate the beauty and glory that God bestows upon His people. It emphasizes how God can turn our ashes into something beautiful, just as He did with Joseph, and how He desires to make us like Jesus, the beautiful bride of Christ. The sermon also highlights the future hope of being presented as the bride of Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb, reflecting on the eternal beauty and union with Jesus.

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## Transcript

Let's turn our Bibles now to Psalm 45 for our scripture reading. I'll read the first and the outnumbered verses, and we ask the congregation to join together reading the even verses as we stand to read the Word of God. My heart is indicting a good matter.

I speak of the things which I have made touching the King. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and with thy majesty.

In thy majesty, my prosperity, thou shalt improve the means, and thy right hand shall teach me. Thy narrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of thy demons for ever.

Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness. Therefore thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. King's daughters were among thy honorable women, and upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in the gold of Ophir.

And so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, worship thou him. The King's daughter is all-glorious within. Her clothing is of rock gold.

And with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, and they shall enter into the King's palace. And I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations. Therefore shall the people praise thee forever and ever.

Let's pray. Father, we're so grateful for that relationship that we have with you, that relationship into which we've been called, that loving relationship of the Bride of Jesus Christ. Lord, how thrilled we are that you have given us your beauty, that you have worked in our hearts by your Spirit as you conform us into the image of Jesus Christ.

Help us, Lord, to come to a fuller, richer understanding and appreciation of what we are in and through him. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. You may be seated.

Well, we continue our journey through Ezekiel, and since chapter 16 is such a long chapter in comparison to the other chapters in Ezekiel, we'll just take two chapters this week, 16 and 17. Pastor Skip will be leading us in our study tonight, and these are blessed studies. Skip is a very gifted and anointed teacher, and we encourage you to join with us on Sunday evenings as we go through the Bible together.

This morning I'd like to draw your attention to the 16th chapter, beginning with verse 13, where we read, And I put a jewel on thy forehead, or verse 12, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. And you were decked with gold and silver, and your raiment was of fine linen and silk, embroidered work. And you did eat fine flour and honey and oil, and you were exceeding beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom.

And your renown went forth among the heathen for your beauty, for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I have put upon thee, saith the Lord. God is speaking here in the 16th chapter of the nation of Israel in an allegory. And he speaks about when he first began his work in that nation.

He likens Israel to a child that had been abandoned in the wilderness. It had been cast out into an open field. The cord is still attached.

The baby had not been washed or salted nor swaddled. It's still covered with blood. No one showed any compassion.

God said, when I passed by thee, and I saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto you, live. And so the early part of the chapter tells how God began his work among the nation of Israel. The things that God did for them, as he nourished them, as he watched over their development, as he saw them grow into something that was beautiful, as he bestowed upon the nation his special gifts, until the time came for the nation to be married unto God and to become the bride of God, which Israel is often referred to.

God tells how he lavished his love upon her and gave her so many expensive gifts. God speaks of how she had become famous, famous among the nations because of her beauty. The Bible tells us that during the time of the reign of Solomon, how that the fame of his reign had gone out far and wide through the world, so that when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with many hard questions.

She came to Jerusalem with a great entourage, with camels that bore spices, with much gold and precious stones. And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all of the things that were in her heart. And Solomon told her all of her questions.

There was not anything hid from the king which was not told her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all of Solomon's wisdom, the house that he had built, the meat of his table. And incidentally, we do read in 1 Kings 4 concerning the meat of his table.

Every day there were 10 prime beef. There were 20 beef of commercial grade. There were a hundred sheep plus the hearts and the roebucks and the fallow deer plus the fowl.

Every day she saw this. She was absolutely overwhelmed. And also she saw the sitting of his servants, the attendance of his servants and their apparel, his cupbears and his assent by which he went up into the house of the Lord.

And there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, it was a true report that I heard in my own land of your acts and of your wisdom. However, I believed not the words until I came.

Now my eyes have seen it and behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceeds the fame, which I heard. Blessed be Jehovah your God, which has delighted in you to set you over the throne of Israel because Jehovah loved Israel forever.

Therefore he made you king to do judgment and justice. And he gave the king, and she gave the king 120 talents of gold and of spices. Very great store, the precious stones.

There came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba had given to Solomon. God had made the nation strong. It was a nation of renown.

All over the world, the stories were going of the glory of the beauty of this nation. We do read in 2 Chronicles 26, concerning the reign of Uzziah the king. It said the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt and he strengthened himself exceedingly.

And he made in Jerusalem engines invented by cunning men to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks to shoot arrows and great stones. And his name spread far abroad for he was marvelously helped until he was strong. So in both passages it speaks about the fame of his reign there in Jerusalem.

How it spread far abroad. Israel had become known throughout the ancient world for its beauty and its prosperity. They had become legendary.

Because God wanted Israel to be a showcase to the world. To show the world what could happen to any nation that would make Jehovah their God. Any nation that would keep the laws of God could be blessed and prospered become beautiful as Israel was beautiful.

For the scripture says that righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people. God's desire for you is the same as it was for Israel. He wants to make your life beautiful.

He wants to lavish his love and his gifts upon you. He wants to mold and shape you until your life becomes a beautiful witness to the world of what God will do for those who truly love him and seek to obey him. Isaiah when he prophesied concerning the coming Messiah declared he would give them beauty for ashes.

The oil of joy for their mourning. The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness that they might be called the trees of righteousness. The planting of the Lord that he might be glorified.

God is able to take the most ugly things in our lives and make something beautiful of them. Beauty for ashes. I think of the story of Joseph.

I look at the ugliness of that story. How that Joseph was the 11th son of Jacob and yet sort of the favorite of his father. So that the other 10 older brothers became extremely jealous of him.

No doubt made his life totally miserable. They made fun of him. And one day as he had come out into the field where they were watching the sheep they said look here comes the dreamer.

Let's get rid of him. Let's kill him. And so as Joseph came to them they threw him into the pit and just intending to leave him there until he died.

But then when there came this caravan heading towards Egypt they struck on another idea. Let's sell him as a slave. We'll get something for him.

And so they sold Joseph as a slave to these traders heading towards Egypt. And as they had bound Joseph and as they were taking him off to Egypt Joseph was crying, weeping and calling on his brothers don't do this, don't do this. But the ugliness of the scene as they rejected his tears and they were so heartless and cruel.

And then of course they took his coat. They killed one of the little lambs and they put the blood on the coat. They took it back to their father Jacob and they said do you recognize this coat? And Jacob looking at it said why yes, that's the coat I gave to Joseph.

Look at the blood. No doubt he has been destroyed by some wild beast. And the ugliness of the scene as the boys watched the grief and the mourning of their father as he thought his son was dead.

And they callously just looked on smirking among themselves at how they cleverly got rid of their brother Joseph. Down in Egypt Joseph was sold to a man by the name of Potiphar. And he was such a honest, reputable servant that Potiphar gained confidence in him and gave him the authority and rule over all of his house.

But then the ugliness of Potiphar's wife becoming infatuated with Joseph seeking to entice him into her bedroom. One day grabbing him by the coat and going to force her intentions but he freed himself, left his coat in her hand fled from the room and she began to cry rape and had Joseph imprisoned in those years that he spent in prison in Egypt. Ugly experiences.

But while there in prison the king's butler also was cast into prison because he was found in disfavor to the pharaoh. He had an interesting dream. Joseph explained the dream gave him the interpretation.

The dream that declared that he was going to be restored in three days to being the butler of the pharaoh once again. And he said when you get into the presence of the pharaoh would you speak for me? Would you tell him about my case? So the butler was restored but he forgot all about Joseph. Until the king also had a dream and no one could interpret the dream for him and the butler said oh my I have sinned.

There's a man in prison, a Hebrew and he can tell you what your dream is all about. So Joseph was called to the pharaoh and the pharaoh explained the dream and Joseph gave him the interpretation. There would be seven bountiful years that would be followed by seven lean years of famine.

The years of famine would be so great that it would override the seven good years. So Joseph suggested you need to appoint a man in your kingdom that will gather during the seven good years into the barns and granaries so that when the seven lean years come you'll be able to distribute to the people and they'll survive the famine that you will be facing. So the pharaoh said well there's no one in the land that is wiser than you.

You were the only one that was able to tell me the dream and so he said I make you second in command over all of the land. People have to obey everything you say. And so Joseph was set over the task of gathering beauty out of ashes from prison to second in command from the ugliness of his brother's jealousy and hatred now reigning over Egypt second man in Egypt.

Oh how God delights to give beauty for ashes. You see God then used this to preserve the family of Joseph back in the Holy Land. You say well couldn't God have done it another way? Well I'm sure that he could.

Well then you say why didn't he? I don't know. But God often allows us to go through hard difficult experiences as he is molding and shaping us as he is preparing us for the task that he would have us to accomplish for his glory and for the kingdom. And so we don't understand the processes of God as he is working in our lives many times allowing us to experience very bitter difficult times but yet all the while God is working working towards that eternal purpose that he has purposed in us and for us.

God said concerning the nation of Israel her beauty had become legendary she had become perfect in beauty and the splendor which the Lord had bestowed upon her. We used to sing beautiful, beautiful Jesus is beautiful and Jesus makes beautiful the things of my life tenderly touching me causing my heart to see for Jesus makes beautiful things of my life. That is so true.

As the Lord works in us his whole purpose is to make us beautiful to make us like him. Do you sometimes feel that your dreams have turned into ashes? The passions that you once had for the things of the Lord have they become dissipated? Have the fires of persecution reduced your zeal? It's wonderful to know how that Jesus can come unto us in those times of fear and discouragement pick up the ashes and make something beautiful of our lives. I can remember how that at one time I became what you might say burned out with the ministry.

We were struggling in a small church that refused to grow no matter how much effort and energy I put into it. I was being offered an excellent opportunity in one of the major markets here in Southern California and I was on the verge of leaving the ministry and pursue another career. The Lord came to me gave me another chance went to another church and there I began to apply the lessons I learned in the hardship of that little church.

God began to bless it. God began to be with us and he took this congregation and began to make really something beautiful of it. A wonderful fellowship and he added to the church and it was a thrill but I was like Israel.

A child that had been cast out. I come to the realization I had no ability to help myself but I developed a great hunger for the word of God and to teach his word. And he began to develop that close and lifelong relationship with me and he's made my life beautiful.

Beautiful beyond anything I could ever dream or hope. And as I understand it is the Holy Spirit that is working in me to make me beautiful like him. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians but we all with an open or unveiled face as we behold in a glass or a mirror the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even by the Spirit of the Lord.

That work of God's Spirit within your life, within my life by which the Lord is conforming us into the image of Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians in chapter 4 that God's place in the church gifted men that through them there might be a perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. The building up of the body of Christ until we all come in the unity of the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God into the complete matured person unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

He's making me beautiful like himself. Again we used to sing let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. All of his wonderful passion and purity.

Oh thou Spirit divine all my nature refine till the beauty of Jesus is seen in me. The psalm that we read this morning was a psalm that was prophetic of the church. The first six verses tell of the bridegroom, our king, our Lord.

But beginning with verse 7 it begins to speak of the bride, the church. You love righteousness and hate wickedness therefore God thy God has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above your companions. All of your garments smell of myrrh and hallows and cassia out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad.

King's daughters were among thy honorable women and upon thy right hand did stand the queen in the gold of warfare. Harken oh daughter consider and incline your ear forget also your own people your father's house and so shall the king greatly desire your beauty for he is your Lord. Worship him and the daughter of fire shall be there with a gift.

Even the rich among the people shall entreat your favor. The king's daughter is all glorious within. Her clothing is of wrought gold.

She has been brought unto the king in raiment of needlework and virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought and they shall enter into the king's palace and instead of thy father shall be thy children whom you may make princes in all the earth. You are being prepared by the Holy Spirit to be the bride of Jesus Christ.

He is taking out the ugliness from your life. Those things that are displeasing unto the Lord and so we are going through changes as we are being transformed into the beauty that God would have us to have as we become the bride of Christ. In Revelation chapter 19 John describes this glorious scene in heaven where he said and the 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne saying Amen Hallelujah and the voice came out of the throne saying praise our God all ye his servants and you that fear him both small and great and I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude the voice of many waters and as the voice of a mighty thunder saying Hallelujah for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Let's be glad and rejoice. Give honor to him for the marriage of the Lamb is come. His wife has made herself ready and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints and he said unto me write blessed are they which are called unto

the marriage supper of the Lamb and he said unto me these are the true sayings of God.

You know when you read the book of Revelation and the things that God has prepared for the future this glorious day when we are presented the church unto Jesus as his bride without spot or blemish and we are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb and we are thus joined with him in this eternal relationship. Oh how blessed and how glorious that is. Now the Holy Spirit is working in my life today and in your life to make you beautiful so that he can present you one day as the beautiful bride.

As David said I will be satisfied when I awake in his likeness. John said beloved now are we the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we're going to be but we know that when he appears we will be like him for we will see him as he is clothed in his beauty likened to our Lord the beautiful bride of Christ to be joined with him world without end.

Father we thank you for that beautiful hope that you've given to us through your word and we know Lord that your word is true. These are true and faithful sayings. Lord we pray that you will continue that work in our lives as you Lord purge out from us the dross and as you purify us until Lord we become beautiful in your eyes through that beauty that you have imparted to us through Jesus Christ.

Lord we pray that even this day there will be those who will submit to you. Maybe Lord their life is like ashes they've been burned out and there doesn't seem to be anything left or any hope left just look at the ashes Lord we thank you that you came to give us beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for our mourning and so let them experience your touch and that work of your spirit in their lives as you Lord wash them and cleanse them as you deck them Lord with beautiful clothes as you Lord give to them the gifts of your spirit and help them Lord as they become the beautiful bride of Christ in his name we pray Amen

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