

Matthew 8:16

by Chuck Smith

Jesus came to rescue men from the damning power and consequences of sin, and to give beauty for ashes.

Scripture: Isaiah 61:3, Micah 5:2, John 1:1, John 3:16

Topics: "Hope in Christ", "Transformation"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the purpose of Jesus' coming into the world, which is to transform lives from despair to hope, symbolized by 'beauty for ashes.' He explains that Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, fulfills God's promises and rescues humanity from the destructive power of sin. Through various healings, including that of a leper and a centurion's servant, Jesus demonstrates His authority and compassion, restoring lives that have been ravaged by sin and suffering. Smith illustrates how Jesus brings love to those consumed by hate and freedom to those trapped by addiction, ultimately offering hope to the hopeless. The message is a call to recognize the beauty that Jesus can bring into our lives, replacing our ashes with His grace.

Transcript

The Purpose of His Coming To Give Beauty for Ashes

Intro. We have once again come to that time of the year when we celebrate

the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. The season of the

year that is marked by love, joy, and giving. We remember the

Love of God so great that He gave His only begotten Son that we

might know the joy of living in fellowship with Him.

I. Fact one, God sent His Son into the world. A. Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a very unique way. 1. He is not a Son of God, as though there were others. 2. He is the only begotten Son of God. 3. He pre-existed with the Father from the beginning. a. When the prophet Micah predicted His birthplace to be Bethlehem He declared that He had existed from old, even from everlasting. b. John said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." c. Paul said, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God and thought it not something to be grasped to be equal with God, humbled Himself and came in the form of a man. d. Again Paul said, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh." B. This was in fulfillment of His promises. 1.

"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel which interpreted means God with us. 2. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." 3. "The Lord has said to Me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. a. Twice in the New Testament this Psalm is declared to be referring to Jesus Christ. 4. God promised to David that from David's house would come a descendant that would build the house of God, and that God would be a Father to Him and He would be His Son, and that He would establish the throne of His Kingdom over Israel forever.

I Chron.22:10 C. The purpose of His coming into the world would be to rescue men from the damning power and consequences of sin. D. Sin destroys as a fire. We can look around and see so many burned out lives. Lives that were once vibrant, and filled with great hope but are now nothing but ashes. He came to give us beauty for ashes. 1. In this eighth chapter we find Jesus doing just that. 2. I believe that sickness is one of the results of sin. a. I believe that Adam and Eve had perfect health until the day they disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit. b.

I believe that there was something in that fruit that caused the cells to begin to mutate and break down. 3. The first story in this chapter is of the healing of a leper. a. By human standards leprosy was an incurable malady. b. It was considered a type of sin, because of the way it destroyed the body by rotting, and it was progressive. It was insidious in as much as it killed the nerve cells so that there was no sense or feeling in the infected parts. Thus the rats would eat off the toes without a person even knowing it. c.

If a man had leprosy, his life would be as ashes. He was ostracized from his family and friends, from society itself. As people would approach him he would have to cry out a warning to them, "Unclean, unclean." Josephus the historian wrote, that if a man had leprosy he was treated as a dead man. d. This man said to Jesus, "If you will, you could make me clean." Jesus put forth His hand and touched him. It was against the law to touch a man who was a leper. This would create a ceremonial uncleanness.

Someone has pointed out that after He touched him, he was no longer a leper. The wonderful words of Jesus to him were, "I will, be clean." e. This incurable blight that had been destroying his life was gone. Jesus gave him beauty for ashes. 4. The next story in the chapter tells us of a Centurion, who had the rank equivalent to that of captain in the Roman army, came to Jesus for his slave who he described as being sick with palsy and being grievously tormented. a. Palsy was a paralysis that caused a contraction of the joints, and was extremely painful. b.

Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." Now according to the law of the Mishnah the house of a Gentile was unclean, and anyone entering the house of a Gentile would be considered unclean. Jesus cared not for the Mishnah. c. Again a person with palsy was incapacitated, with the joints contracted they could not walk, they became as an invalid. In another story we remember how that men brought their friend to Jesus who was sick with palsy, and they were carrying him on a stretcher. d.

In the story here, the slave was healed in that same hour e. Beauty for ashes. 5. We read in verse 16 that that evening they brought to Jesus many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick. a. When a person's body has been invaded by an evil spirit,

nothing can be worse than this condition. That person is no longer in control of his life, or even the motor functions of his body. b. Life becomes a living hell. c. The fires of hell are reducing it to ashes. d. Jesus came to bring to man beauty for ashes.

II. I think of the beauty that Jesus brings into a persons life.

A. For the person whose life is mastered by hate, he has such hatred that he seeks to destroy others even as he has been destroyed.

1. To that person Jesus brings an incredible love.

2. I think of Raul Reis, how his life was being destroyed by hate and the violence that is produced by hatred.

3. I see him now, one of the most loving men I know, radiating that love of Jesus to thousands every week.

4. That is the beautiful quality that attracts the multitudes to his church.

B. For the person whose life is mastered by drugs, or alcohol, Jesus will set them free.

1. Their lives are gradually being burned out by their addiction. They lose their jobs, then their homes, then their families. They end up in filth and rags, begging.

Their lives have become as worthless as ashes. Once beautiful, once promising, now burned out.

2. I think of Mike MacIntosh, when he first came, he kept talking about the back of his skull being blown out, and his brains exposed. He was hallucinating almost constantly.

3. I see the beauty in his life today, as the Lord not only delivered him from the drug and alcohol addictions, but the Lord restored his family to him,

his wife and children. The Lord restored his sanity,
and from being a debit to society he has become a
leader over thousands, and has such a strong influence
and powerful voice not only in San Diego but around
the world.

4. Beauty for ashes.

C. As I look around today, I see so many whose lives have been
reduced to ashes, there is a sense of hopelessness and despair.
I think if only they would come to Jesus, what beauty He would
bring into their lives.

1. He would take away their sin.
2. He would drive away the darkness.
3. He would give to them beauty for ashes.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/matthew-816/>

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