

Betrayal & Beauty

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0 : 00] Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would move deeply in our lives as we spend time reading your Word, pondering it.

And we ask, Lord, that you not only help us to ponder the Word, but we ask that you would do this small but important miracle, a miracle that you delight to do. That you, Father, would make our hearts open and receptive so that your Word would enter into our heart and speak to us at the deepest level of who we are.

And we ask that you would do this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. We're going to talk today about betrayal and beauty.

Beauty. Betrayal and beauty. Probably every, I don't mean to insult you, but probably every single one of us here has betrayed somebody or something.

And probably every single one of us has been betrayed. And if you're like most people, most of us can think of the, are more likely to think of the times that others have betrayed us than of the times that we have betrayed others.

[1 : 16] That's just the way we human beings are. Some of us have betrayed people and it's a big problem. In either case, it can be a great problem in our lives. At the same time, beauty is an interesting thing.

We love beauty when we see it. But I think in particular, and this would be, this would go across social classes. If you were to go to the Tim Hortons, if you were to go to a Starbucks or a Bridgehead, if you were to go to different bars, everything from a more dive bar to a very expensive one.

And you ask people, I think most people would say that they would like to live a beautiful life. They would like to live a beautiful life. Not just a life, but a beautiful life. Well, the Bible text today talks about both of these things.

And so if you would turn with me to Mark chapter 14, because we're preaching through the book of Mark. We're going to look at that. Now, just before we start reading it, and you might have noticed it when I was reading to you.

It sort of seems like a weird, like, you know, they're talking about the chief priest doing this. And all of a sudden, they're talking about something completely different. And then they're talking about something else.

[2 : 22] And it seems like a bit of a whiplash type of thing. So here, just to time out a little tiny bit. I don't normally, I haven't talked about this throughout, I think, so far. It's a bit of a grammar nerd bit, okay?

But one of the literary things that Mark likes to do, which I've not commented on before, is make sandwiches. He regularly writes in a sandwich type of form.

And so, you know, just like you have bread, bread, and in the middle, I don't know, smoked meat, pastrami, you know, cheese, or whatever. Often what Mark does, and I've just not commented on it. It's affected how I've interpreted it, but I've not said it. Is he has one thing, a piece of bread. And then, like, eight or nine or ten or twenty verses later, he has the second piece of bread. And everything in between it is sort of like the meat.

So the two breads are very, very similar, and then there's the meat. It makes a sandwich. And that's actually what's going on here. It begins with him, a very, very classic thing. And often, then, the truth is communicated at a sort of an unconscious level through the story.

[3 : 23] We have a plot to betray Jesus. And then in verses 10 and 11, another, the story continues with the plot to kill Jesus. And in between, well, in between, as they would say at a fancy restaurant, you have a very, what would be the best way to put it?

It's a complex and interesting filling. Not just a slice of American cheese. So let's look. Remember I said we're going to talk about beauty and betrayal, and it begins with betrayal. And we're going to use it, I'm going to today use the thing as if it's a play. Or as if I've written a script for a Netflix special or an Amazon Prime special. So scene one, plotting the murder of an inconvenient Jew.

Scene one, plotting the murder of an inconvenient Jew. And it's verses one and two. Here's what it says. It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. For, they said, not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.

[4 : 40] And the population of Jerusalem at the time, this is one of the three major festivals. People came. It would have been, you know, just like Muslims today. They're sort of obligated that once in their life they would go to Mecca.

Most, many Jewish people in those days, they would travel from the farthest point of the empire because they would want at least once to be in Jerusalem for a feast like this. So the population swole, was very, very, very large.

Now here we see the beginning of the betrayal. The chief priests and the scribes. How to maybe put that? It would be as if you folks discovered that me and Daniel Avitan and Steve Griffin and some of the other local clergy and our council were all plotting the murder of Jason.

It's like it's a shocking thing what they're doing. It's a profound betrayal. You folks would say, one moment, George is the one who's supposed to be able to understand the Bible. He has a very, very specific role.

You know, his role is to lead us, to help us to understand God better, to understand Jesus better, to learn how to live a holy life. How could it would be? I mean, it's sort of funny. If we found out that Biden or Hillary Clinton or Trump had conspired to kill somebody, we'd go, well, politics.

[6 : 02] I mean, we wouldn't do that. We'd be furious, depending on our political leanings about it. And of course, they should go to jail. But it's a very different type of thing.

Or if we found out the mafia was trying to conspire to kill somebody, this is a profound betrayal of the whole reason of their existence and the sacred vows and their training that they would take.

And it's very interesting. They're not concerned with it being immoral. They're not concerned with it being unjust. They aren't seeking a public inquiry. They aren't making sure that justice is done.

The problem is that Jesus is an inconvenient Jew. He's inconvenient to their ambition. He's inconvenient to their pride and their sense of self-importance.

He's an inconvenient Jew. And they don't bother themselves for a moment about anything other than whether the crowd reacts in a bad way. That's all that bothers them.

[7 : 03] It's all that bothers them. It's a profound act of betrayal. And now we see how the story suddenly switches.

And now that you... If you go back and you look... If you go and you look, you'll see that Mark has done this actually quite a few times. He just likes it as a technique. And it's a very subtle type of way of communicating and putting contrasting ideas together.

And all of a sudden it switches. We're now in this complex filling. We come to scene two. Scene two. The unnamed woman's action.

Scene two. The unnamed woman's action. Verse three. And while Jesus was at Bethany... And Bethany is... When we last saw Jesus, he was in the Mount of Olives.

Bethany is on the side of the Mount of Olives, about three kilometers away from Jerusalem. So while, verse three, he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment, of pure nard, very costly.

[8 : 08] And she broke the flask and poured it, the content, the pure nard, all over Jesus's head.

Now, just, you know, recline at table, that's just the way they would have had a meal. So it would be as if, I don't know, somebody from our congregation invited some of us over for a meal.

And we're all around the dining room table or whatever. And then all of a sudden, this unnamed woman comes in and goes up to one of us. And by breaking the jar, it means that she doesn't sort of just pour a little tiny bit on and saves the rest.

She ruins the jar, pours everything over Jesus's head. So you could well imagine the shock of the rest of us. You know, maybe, you know, if you're all coming over to my house, you'd think, what, does this happen to George all the time?

Some unnamed woman comes in off the street and pours stuff all over his head. Like, what's going on? It would be a very surprising type of thing. Now, we need to pause here about one thing which is going to get in the way of us understanding and interpreting the story.

[9 : 16] Because we have a deep cultural yuck about this. We don't like strong smells. If you have a co-worker who puts on way too much cologne or way too much perfume, you all talk about it.

You talk about being in the elevator and how much you hated being in the elevator because this person, I don't know, they'd say, you know, they must have just poured the cologne all over them, poured the perfume all over them. We don't like this culturally.

Now, here's the thing. We have to be careful that our cultural, that we don't become ethnocentric and think that our culture is right about this. The Bible's silent on whether or not you have strong smells.

And especially back then when they wouldn't have had baths very often, they would have all been smelling pretty strong most of the time. And so a different type of strong smell might have been actually very, very welcome.

We can say about other cultures that that culture's wrong because they practice female circumcision and we don't. That's making a very good and important moral distinction.

[10 : 20] We might say that this culture is bad because they oppress their citizens and we don't. And that's a completely valid way, I think, to judge different cultures on moral things. But you can't judge cultures because they like strong smells and we don't.

That's just our taste. And it's not a way to judge them. So we need to put to death for a second that we find this a yuck situation, that we would hate it.

We would be... In fact, actually, I was thinking about it. You know, in some ways... Like, in our culture, if that happened to us, we could charge the person with assault.

Right? So what's going on? How does this fit and how do people react and, like, what happens? So we come to scene three. Scene three, judged tellingly by the guests.

Or better still, judged tellingly by some of the guests. Those are verses four and five. What does it say? Verse four. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, Why was the ointment wasted like that?

[11 : 32] Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor. And they scolded her.

Now, if you're wondering, 300 denarii would probably be... Depends a little bit about how you like to do the math. But probably somewhere between 13 and 14 months of the average working wage of a Canadian.

Denarii was sort of the average wage for an average working person in Israel at the time. So if you took whatever the average working, average income is for a Canadian worker and how much they'd make in 13 or 14 months, that's the value of the ointment that they put, that this woman has put over Jesus.

And the other thing about it is this, that the language communicates their displeasure. But in the original language, indignant is actually mild.

Like you should think of somebody who's really indignant. Like really almost shaking, red-faced, nostrils flaring, indignant. And they speak out of that.

[12 : 40] They're so angry. They're shaking. Their face is red. Their nostrils are flaring. And it's in that context that they scold her and tell her off for what she's done.

And they don't tell her off because he smells too much. They tell her off because, well, she's come in. She's ruined the party. She's interrupted them. As I said, in our culture, she could probably be charged with assault.

And they say it's a waste. The money could have been given to the poor. And actually, if you think about it for a second, other than the fact that, you know, this person in our culture could, in theory, be charged with assault.

Just take that aside. Most of us would agree with them. Like most of us would say, you know, like that really is a waste. Like, you know, like doesn't it make way more sense that she just opened it up a little bit, pour a tiny bit on Jesus' head after asking permission and then giving the rest to the poor?

Like, wouldn't that be a better sacrifice? Like, it is a waste for many of us in our culture. And it would be hard to answer the trump card of it's going to help the poor.

[13 : 46] So the question is, will Jesus, like surely Jesus is going to say, you know, you shouldn't have done that. He's going to side with helping the poor. I mean, you just expect Jesus automatically to be against waste and automatically to be in favor of the poor.

So how does Jesus react? Well, that's scene four, the judgment of Jesus. Scene four, the judgment of Jesus. If you look at it, it's verses six to eight. And here's what Jesus says.

But notice, first of all, but Jesus said. Now, but, if you're a very slow and careful reader, you'll know that but's an important word. And it's even more so in the original language.

It's a contrast word. As soon as you see the word but, you know that Jesus is actually going to go in a very different direction than the guests who are harsh. Very, very different direction. So what does he say?

But Jesus said. Now, listen to this. Leave her alone. Leave her alone. Leave her alone. Even more telling. Why do you trouble her?

[14 : 48] Like, I don't know what was going on with her. But you can, you know, if one of us did something and the people, some of the onlookers react with nostril flaring, red-faced, shaking indignation and harsh language and the other guests are just silent there, we would probably get very deeply red and embarrassed.

Deeply red-faced and embarrassed. And so Jesus says, leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? And then look at this. She has done a beautiful thing to me.

That's his evaluation. She has done a beautiful thing to me. And then he says this thing which has troubled many people when they hear it.

And I'll explain why it shouldn't trouble you. For you always have the poor with you. And whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me.

You will not always have me. What Jesus is doing here, it's not obvious in the English, is if you go back later on and you read Deuteronomy chapter 15, verse 11, Jesus is alluding to or quoting Deuteronomy 15 and 11.

[16 : 13] And Deuteronomy 15, 11 has that very line, the poor you will always have with you. But the context of that is, therefore, we have, it's not that we should work to eradicate poverty.

In a sense, the text would say you'll never eradicate poverty. We should work to try to reduce poverty. But it's in a sense a perennial, ongoing concern that God's people should have to be concerned for the poor.

It's just ongoing. Like, don't think, okay, this year we can, you know, we can collect for St. Joe's and next year we can collect for St. Joe's. But I've had a vision that in 2020, 2025, we won't have to collect for St. Joe's because there'll be no poor people.

No. Until Jesus comes back, they're going to be poor people. And we have an obligation to have a concern for them, a heart for them, to do what we can.

So Jesus here, what he's saying is, in fact, actually, there's a little bit of a dig there. Look at that, look at the words again. For you always have the poor with you whenever you want, whenever you want.

[17 : 22] He's speaking to the indignant people, although he's also speaking to us. You can do good for them, but you will not always have me. You know, one of the things about life, like, if you want to raise more money, go to generous people.

Like, this is counterintuitive. If you want to raise money for a worthy thing, the first people you should approach are the people who already give generously. Why? Because generous people will give money.

Ungenerous people don't. If you think about it for a second, on one level it sort of sounds counterintuitive. You know, you see somebody and you find out they're giving \$10,000 or \$12,000 or \$15,000 a year away to charity.

And you want to raise a bit more money. And you think, well, they're already giving \$12,000 away in charity or \$15,000. I can't really ask them for another \$1,000. But you're much more likely to get that \$1,000 from somebody like that than from somebody who gives Zippo to anything.

So, in a sense, there's a bit of a dig. Like, it's as if Jesus is saying to them, like, I'm sure you're doing lots for the poor. Ha, ha, ha, ha. Ha, ha, ha. You see, ungenerous people will always judge generous people for wasting money.

[18 : 38] I'm not trying to boast, and I know I'm not the most generous person here, but I'm sure that if I was to tell people in coffee shops how much I give away every year, they'd be scandalized.

And they'd actually probably think less of me, not more.

Because an ungenerous heart will always judge generosity harshly. So, Jesus here isn't against waste, and he isn't against helping the poor.

In fact, he's reminding us that we have an obligation to do things to help the poor. But what about this idea of waste? I'm going to tell a story that doesn't show me in a very good light.

This is a, I don't know, just this past summer or spring or something like that, there was a street person who used to come to the church sometimes, and he asked me if I'd take him out for lunch. And I said, yes, I would take him out for lunch. And we was at a time, and I asked him to meet me at the Bible House. And he comes to the Bible House, and I said, well, I thought we'd go to McDonald's.

[19 : 49] And I said, but you know, maybe not McDonald's, maybe Harvey's, which is a bit more expensive than McDonald's. And he said to me, no, I'd like to go to this place.

And it was another place on Elkin Street. He said they have really, I know they have these really, really, really wonderful milkshakes that I love. And they had this other, I can't remember what the other dish was, that I love.

I've only had it once, and I really love it. I'd like to go there. Now, I know that that other place is going to cost me somewhere between two to three times more money. And here's the part that's not very flattering about me.

Inwardly, I said, how dare you? You don't want me. You already have no money. I offer to take you to McDonald's, even Harvey's.

And you want to go somewhere two or three times more expensive? And that shows my hard heart. But then, probably in heaven I'll find out that one of you were praying for me right then.

[20 : 51] Because it was as if God spoke to me, and he said to me, and I'm going to use this as, fine, and Victor, who many of you know, was at the 8 o'clock service. I used him as the example.

If Victor came to meet me, and some of you know Victor, would I suggest, Victor, I'm going to take you out for lunch? Let's go to McDonald's. That just wouldn't happen.

And the more of those of you who know Victor know, he had a big smile when I used him as an example this morning. But I wouldn't even think of inviting Victor to McDonald's.

Like, in fact, actually, I'd even worry that that place that was two or three times more expensive, that I should maybe be inviting Victor to somewhere better than that. And I wouldn't even, I would have just, I'd just automatically, and why is this?

Why is it? Why is it that I wouldn't hesitate about spending three times more money on Victor than I would on the street person? Because I value Victor more than the street person.

[21 : 50] My generosity reflects the value I put on the person. And brothers and sisters, it is an offense to the poor.

To undervalue them. It is not a sin to be poor. And it is not a sign of superiority to be rich.

In the eyes of God. What's going on here? This woman valued Jesus. The ungenerous hearts of the other people, and they didn't, they were ungenerous, and they also didn't value Jesus.

The fact of the matter is, they probably would have been bothered if she'd put a little tiny bit of oil on his head. They might have had some other type of thing, because they didn't. She valued Jesus.

And we see there about everything about how he says he's so special in that, that there's something great about this man that would be hard to believe and understand on the outside of Christ.

But within, just as I realized that I was convicted of sin about how I valued differently, I should value that street person just as much as Victor.

[23 : 10] But Jesus is vastly greater. And he's worth extravagant generosity. Jesus then makes a prophecy.

Jesus then makes a prophecy. Scene 5, the prophecy of Jesus. Verse 9. Sorry, Rebecca, verse 8, just for a second if I didn't read it.

You can always do good for them. She has done what she could. Verse 8. She has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And we'll return to that in a moment. That was the end of that last scene. Scene 4.

She has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for burial. Scene 5. The prophecy of Jesus. And truly, those of you who are familiar with the old King James Version, that would be translated as verily.

Verily I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.

[24 : 21] Now, 2,000 years later, I'm reading it to you. That prophecy has come true. People remember her.

The unnamed woman. Now, some of you might be, throughout this, some of you might be sort of a bit antsy with the whole story. Because you're probably thinking, maybe you've read some Bible commentaries, maybe you've heard some YouTube videos, or seen some TikTok videos. And you're thinking to yourself, George, you haven't actually been straightforward and upfront with us about this story. And because you haven't been upfront with us about this story, you can't go ahead and say that this prophecy is true.

And that's because some of you might know that there's five sort of similar types of stories in the four ancient biographies of Jesus. And there's a story which, in some cases, it's tears and washing the person's feet.

In another case, there's a story of oil on Jesus' feet and wiping them with the hair. And then you have this on the head. And, George, don't you know that most Bible scholars say that, yeah, Luke puts his story, and it's with tears on the feet.

[25 : 41] And John puts his story, you know, and it's on the head, and it's oil. And then Mark and Matthew have this story. And, George, don't you know that most scholars say that there's actually, they don't, you know, that you can't actually figure out what really happened because these biographies, they all differ.

And the fact of the matter is, George, that the biographies don't really care about what happened in history, that these guys are just writing, like, these theological memoirs, and they have these theological concerns, and they're not concerned with history, and you're talking about this as if it all happened.

And, George, you're not being really fair to the congregation because you've hidden that from them. Well, now I haven't, have I? I've told you. Some of you might be familiar with this. Now, I know not all faithful Christians respond to this the same way, but I think to my mind that there's actually a very, very, very important issue here with this.

And it's an important issue which I'm going to talk about when I go with the very last scene, which is going to happen right after that. And the issue is, like, the thing about the Christian faith is the Christian faith is radically different than all of the other faiths that exist in the world, including the bespoke faiths that most people in Canada would have, bits and pieces of things that they've sewn together for themselves.

Like, people can be a Buddhist regardless as to whether or not any of the things in Gautama Buddha's life actually happened. People can be Muslims, and they make no particular claims to history or anything like that, or miracles.

[27 : 19] It's just a series of revelations that came through an angel, ultimately from Allah to Muhammad, the servant of Allah. And it's the same thing with most of the teachings of Hinduism.

They're all ethical principles and ways of life and dietary rules and other types of practices. But Christianity, historic Christianity, asserts that these things actually happened and that they're actually true.

And so when scholars and others say that there must have been one sort of thing that happened, but Luke wanted to put it this way, and it's very, very different than the way that John wanted to tell it.

It's different than the way Mark told it, and we can't really know what happened. So here's the shocking answer to those things. You know what they've just said? You know how much evidence is for what they've said?

Zero. Zero evidence. I'm not making it up. It's just a claim. That's all I've done.

[28 : 26] It's just a claim. You know, it's a tiny little bit like using fantasy football to say that that's more real than what actually happened in the football game.

Now I'm being a bit cutting, I suppose. The fact of the matter is, is if you look at the four biographies, there's a very simple explanation. There were three different events. One of the events involved tears, one of the events involved Jesus' feet with oil, and one of them involved oil on Jesus' head. I mean, there's no contradiction between any of those. It's actually the straightforward, obvious way just to read the text. Something like this happened three different times. But the principle of

defending it is actually very important, and we'll see why when we look at the next thing, which is the last scene, scene six.

The murderous plotting, the success and subversion. Murderous plotting, success and subversion. It's verses 10 and 11. Look what happens in the final scene, scene six. Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the 12, went to the chief priests in order to betray Jesus to them.

[29 : 41] And when they heard it, they were glad. They were filled with joy. And they promised to give Judas money. And Judas sought an opportunity to betray Jesus.

Now, on one hand, there's great success. Judas, an insider, one of the insiders, who knows Jesus' routine, who hangs out with him, he's now going to be able to give information to the chief priests and the scribes so that they can find an appropriate place and time to capture Jesus.

And, you know, this is back before there were photographs and stuff like that. So, you know, it might be that not everybody would recognize Jesus if they saw him. And so, but Judas will recognize Jesus.

Judas would recognize him whether it's late at night and it's dark or whether it's broad daylight. So they have somebody who can guaranteed pick out Jesus and guaranteed get them a time when they're going to be able to come.

And it gives them great joy. And here we want to have a bit of an aside and a pause. Look again at this. It's very interesting. He says, verse 11, And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money.

[30 : 58] When they heard it, they were filled with joy. There's a very, very popular home organization method which flows out of a philosophy of life that says that you pick things on whether or not it gives you joy.

Now, there's obviously some truth to that if it's just to talk about whether it's this sock or that sock, this kid's painting or that. But it's actually connected in a very subtle way to a wider worldview about how you make decisions.

And what we can see here is that if you follow that methodology, you will end up murdering an inconvenient Jew.

It cannot bear the weight of decision-making because it ignores the fact that there is a part within us that values a person like Victor over a street person that doesn't actually work against my self-importance, my rivalry, my aggression, my not caring for others.

They're happy that they found a way to murder an innocent and inconvenient Jew. But there's also a profound subversion in the moment of their high fives, fist pumps, little dances, mic drops, all of that stuff.

[32 : 45] The sovereign God has subverted their plans and his will is being done. What's Judas going to do?

Judas is going to lead them in their arrogance and in their pride to having Jesus captured during the Passover. And they're going to get away without having any type of riot.

But what they, thinking they're so smart and powerful, using all of their evil, they are going to, in effect, work so that the Lord's will, that the true and greater Passover lamb who would save people from every people group from a true and greater doom by his truer and greater sacrifice would be obvious to all.

They end up having Jesus killed at a time not by stealth where it could be just in some little far-off type of place and nobody would even know whatever happened to him and whether he was dead or had gone traveling.

They would end up at a time when the city had swollen to ten times its normal size. When the city was completely and utterly jam-packed, he would be killed at the same time as the Passover feast is going on.

[34 : 02] He would be killed in an unbelievably public way. And because there were so many people, it would be unbelievably public that the grave was empty. God subverted their success and their evil.

His will was done. And they created the association that the early Christians and now us could understand. The Passover lamb, by the way, is a lamb that sacrificed as part of what God did to deliver the people from slavery and bondage in Egypt into freedom.

And they've created the association that Jesus is the truer and greater Passover lamb and he is saving people from every people group from a truer and greater doom by his truer and greater

sacrifice.

The other thing about this, and this is where history is so important, why do you pray?

You know, it's very common. Polls say that even a certain number of percentage of atheists pray, agnostics pray, Hindus pray, Muslims pray, Buddhists pray, people with bespoke spiritualities pray, Christians pray.

[35 : 30] But only prayer makes sense in the Christian context. You see, in prayer, what we're doing is we're talking to God and asking God to do things in our world of time and space.

And whether he manages the safety of the drive through providence or some type of miracle, the intervention of an angel which we don't see, when we pray for a loved one and whether or not that they get better and whether it is through the working of medicine or maybe some type of divine healing which we're not aware of, we pray that God will do things in the real world whether it is through providence or miracle.

And that only makes sense in the Christian worldview. prayer is ridiculous. If nothing in the New Testament happened, prayer is ridiculous.

We should all just learn to meditate and worry about our own soul. Develop mindfulness so that we can be observing our feelings and impressions going by as if we're somehow separate from them. See, that's why it's worth fighting over the historicity of things in the New Testament. But just in closing, we'd all like a beautiful life. The woman is made right with God not because she'd done an act of extravagant devotion.

[37 : 06] Her salvation depends on that Passover lamb, Jesus himself being slain. Her blood covers her and her faith in him is what delivers her from that truer and greater doom by this great salvation.

But she is the model of discipleship. You see, friends, people will always say you're too devout and you're too generous and we need to learn to not listen to them.

There's always pressures to be ungenerous and nobody ever has enough money to be generous.

You need to choose generosity. And there's always good reasons not to have faith in Christ.

And if you were to ask your friends, they'd all give you ten. But the fact of the matter is he is that one who redeems. He did conquer death. And so acts of faith, extravagant faith and extravagant generosity for Christ are always worth it.

And in some very way, in some very profound way, we see here in this story what is the end of the story for those of us who are in Christ. We do what we can for Christ.

[38 : 38] I don't make enough money to give away a million dollars, but I have enough money to give away a lot. And I, my faith is never as good as it should be and I hope that my faith will grow, but I will do what I can and I will pray that I will grow in my faith.

And Jesus will say to me, you did what you could and what you did for me was a beautiful thing. What you did for me was a beautiful thing.

And in Christ, that is the final word about you. A beautiful thing, a beautiful life. I invite you to stand. You know, once again, if you feel pressure in your heart, it's a pressure maybe for those of us who are in Christ to realize, you know, I could be more generous and I need, my faith can grow and thank you, Lord, that you accept me where I am and you call me into greater depths of faith and greater depths of generosity.

And we can all feel challenged to stop listening to those who say, don't be so generous. You know, a \$1.50 top up at the cash is all you need to give to the poor.

[40 : 01] And for those of you who are outside of Christ and you feel that pressure because you desire a beautiful life, there is no more beautiful life than a life lived in knowing Jesus and obeying him.

And you should just follow that pressure right now and say, Jesus, come, I give myself to you. So let's pray. Father, we ask that, we ask that this story, that this word, this gospel word that would go deep within us and it will form us, that it will be the word that we won't listen as much to all of these other things about holding back and doing other things, but that this will be the word that forms us at a very deep level.

We thank you, Lord, that on one hand you put within us a desire to have a beautiful life and that your word provides the way for us to have a life of true beauty. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, your son and our savior.

Amen. Amen. We're going to... And we're Totally and we're in the name of Jesus, and we're in the name of Jesus, our defense website,