

Title Beauty For Ashes

Text Isaiah 61:3

Preached Trinity - 9/20/51

Preached Emma Willard High - 6/2/55

Preached Amherst - C.E. Emerson, Bramhall - 7/10/58

Additional Notes Lowville 4th. Service at funeral. Jan. 1960.

Amherst 5/18/60

Trinity WTC - with "Where Goodness Turns Down"

CHURCH MANAGEMENT
SERMON FILE

MADE IN U. S. A.

Beauty for Ashes
... to give unto them beauty for
ashes." Isa. 61:3

I. Introduction

A. About ashes

B. The setting

1. A message of hope in the midst of national calamity
2. They are to have garlands on their heads instead of ashes.

II. There are two facts in this message

A. That they will be given beauty for ashes.

B. That this hope and assurance comes for a great purpose and not for any selfish reason
"... and they shall build the old wastes."

III. The world today needs a message of salvation

A. The religion of Jesus offered a salvation that was to free men from the corruption of the Roman world, and

B. We need a salvation that will free us from the corruption of the modern world.

1. We have come to the place where we recognize that our present life - although not an end in itself - is exceedingly important and has its own vital relationship to eternal life.

2. Our religion must help us to overcome evildoing in our present life. This is just what Jesus-Isaiah was promising his people.

-3-

My point is that the way of life shown to us by Jesus may give unto us today "beauty for ashes" because he removes the cause of pessimism -

1. He shows us that life can be made significant
2. He not only gives us a hope, he gives us also a method of attainment
3. He has a far vision and at the same time shows us that we must look for the kingdom of God here as well as hereafter

(If you cannot light your life into the kingdom of God here - I do not think you will build it hereafter)

4. He gives us a dynamic religion -

"He called men to take up a cross like his not to look passively to

to his cross for redemption.
"He challenges men to continuously develop his nature, his society and his experience of God."

5. He gives us God -
"to give unto them beauty for ashes."

"He is the Truth in a little creed, enough for all the roads we go. In love is all the law we need. In Christ is all the God we know."
- Edwin Markham.

EMMA WILLARD SCHOOL Troy, N. Y.

Order of Service

Organ Prelude PROCESSIONAL
Hymn

Invocation and Lord's Prayer

Versicles:

Minister: O Lord, open Thou our lips
School: And our mouth shall show forth
thy praise

Minister: Glory be to the Father, and to
the Son, and to the Holy Ghost
School: As it was in the beginning, is
now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen.

Minister: Praise ye the Lord
School: The Lord's name be praised

Canticle

Responsive Reading

Gloria

Scripture

Antiphon or Hymn

Prayer

Response

Hymn

Sermon

Benediction

Hymn RECESSIONAL

Organ Postlude

BEAUTY FOR ASHES

"...to give unto them beauty
for ashes." Isa. 61:3

I. The story of Bud--"What our
country needs is more patriots,
more public spirited citizens,
more--more--more pedestrians!"

A. There is a perfect
Babel of voices.

B. Describe walking down
the street and hearing
snatches of conversa-
tion.

C. Describe turning the
radio from station to
station.

D. Describe going into the
library and being be-
wildered by the mass
of books.

"There was once an old sailor
my grandfather knew
Who had so many things which
he wanted to do

That whenever he thought it
was time to begin,
He couldn't because of the
state he was in.

He was shipwrecked, and lived
on an island for weeks,

And he wanted a hat, and he
wanted some breaks;
And he wanted some nets or
a line and some hooks
For the turtles and things
which you read of in
books.

He was making the hat with
some leaves from a tree,
Then he thought, 'I'm as hot
as a body can be,
And I've nothing to take for
my terrible thirst;

So I'll look for a spring,
and I'll look for it first.

Then he thought as he started,
Oh, dear and oh, dear!
I'll be lonely to-morrow
With nobody here!

So he made in his note-book a
couple of notes:
I must first find some chickens
and, No, I mean goats.

So he thought of his hut. . .
and he thought of his boat.
And his hat and his breaks,
and his chickens and goats,
And the hooks (for his food)
and the spring (for his thirst)

But he never could think which
he ought to do first.

And so in the end he did
nothing at all,
But basked on the shingle
wrapped up in a shawl.
And I think it was dreadful
the way he behaved--
He did nothing but basking
until he was saved!"

II. Many centuries ago there
was a man who thought that he
had a message of hope for
people who were confused. We
do not know his name, but in
the sixty-first chapter of the
Book of Isaiah we have some of
his words. The thing that
interests me is the way he
describes what he is trying to
do--

"The spirit of the
Lord Jehovah is upon me; because
Jehovah hath anointed me to
preach good tidings to the poor..
to give unto them beauty for
for ashes."

Now I know that this
really means garlands. This
fellow has something that will
make it possible for people to
change from robes of mourning
to robes of joy--but never mind
that--I want you to remember
those words--

BEAUTY FOR ASHES!
BEAUTY FOR ASHES!

Here is something else--
When Jesus spoke in the syn-
agogue for the first time
he took this same scripture
for his text: They haven't
given it all to us in the gos-
pels--they left this part
out--BEAUTY FOR ASHES

Religionists have left
that out consistently.
Today in our attempt
to build a better world we
are prone to leave it out too.
But life will never be better
until all people have BEAUTY
FOR ASHES.

That was the big
difference between Judas and
Jesus. Judas was not a bad
man--he was a very eager man--
he had no time for beauty,
he wanted simply revolution.

Plenty of people mis-
understood Jesus in the same
way and could not discover
that elusive element in the
life of Jesus that made him
different.

The spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the poor; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

to speak with him day by day,
But never to catch the vision
which glorified his clay."

III. No one is more eager for
specific social reform than
I, but we must remember--you
upon whom the burden will
fall must remember--that social
reform is not an end in itself.

Social reform is a tool
to make it possible to have
BEAUTY FOR ASHES.

IV. I hope that religion will
give you BEAUTY FOR ASHES.
A. That it will give you
hope and faith for despair and
doubt.

B. That it will give you
the power to achieve the beauty
of justice for the ashes of
selfishness.

C. That it will help
achieve a world in which
every person will have his
chance to find beauty.

D. That it will open your
eyes to the latent loveliness
of life.

*I Close with
"No Garbage Man"*

Josie, the brother of Jesus,
plodded from day to day
With never a vision within him
to glorify his clay;
Josie, the brother of Jesus,
was one with the heavy cloud,
But Christ was the soul of
rapture, and soared, like a
lark, with God.

Josie, the brother of Jesus,
was only a worker in wood,
And he never could see the
glory that Jesus, his brother,
could.

Why stays he not in the work-
shop? he often used to com-
plain.

Sawing the Lebanon cedar, im-
parting to woods their stain?
Why must he go thus roaming,
forsaking my father's trade,
While hammers are busily sound-
ing, and there's gain to be
made?

Thus ran the mind of Josie,
apt with plummet and rule,
And deeming whoever surpassed
him either a knave or a fool--
For he never walked with the
prophets in God's great
garden of bliss--

And of all mistakes of the
ages, the saddest, methinks
was this

To have such a brother as Josie,

THE GARBAGE MAN

by Jean Mitchell Boyd

"He had never rung the back
door bell before. He stood
rather apologetically on the
top step. He had left his
brimming pail at the foot of
the steps, but he held a dis-
gusting looking paddle in his
hand.

Lady, said the garbage man,
You gotta read bird in a white
tree.

A what?
You gotta read bird in a white
tree.

He turned and spat splashily
at the lilac bush. He was,
of course, drunk and seeing
things.

A red bird in a white tree,
I repeated. That's nice.
You come'n see him.

I haven't time.
It's right there. He waved
his paddle vaguely turned and
spat again.

Do you have to keep doing
that?
What, ma'am?

Do you HAVE to keep--keep
spitting?
Yes, ma'am, he answered
simply, I chew.

A low form of life--the
variety of mortal who shakes
one's belief in immortality.
Is there anything in such a
creature worth saving forever?
I doubted it.

He backed down the steps.
He's there.

I went reluctantly down the
steps and looked at our cherry
tree. The tree was in blossom
and there in one of the upper
branches perched a scarlet
tanager.

Purty, aint it? said the
garbage man.

It's lovely! I'm glad you
told me about it.

Purty things are nice. The
sky is nice.

You like pretty things?
Yes, ma'am, I like trees
and the sky. I think--

He stopped and looked up-
ward. He liked trees and
the sky! He wanted to say
something about their loveli-
ness, but he didn't know how.

There were generations of
peasants back of him, but
somewhere, perhaps, there had
been a gypsy grandmother with
red berries in her hair,
dreams in her eyes and songs
in her heart.

Well, the birds going and I
gotta go. I'll like to think

about the red bird in the
white tree.

I shall think about the red
bird in the white tree, too,
and I thank you for showing
it to me. And I wanted to
thank him for a glimpse of an
upward groping soul, but I
couldn't. Goody bye--Mr.--
Keats!

Name's Sweeney, ma'am.
Good day.

"Spend all you have for
loveliness
But it and never count the
cost;
For one white singing hour of
peace

Count many a year of strife
well lost.
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been or
could be.

BEAUTY FOR ASHES!

INVOCATION

Almighty God, unto whom all
hearts be open, all desires
known, and from whom no
secrets are hid, cleanse the
thoughts of our hearts by the
inspiration of thy Holy spirit
that we may perfectly love
thee, and worthily magnify
thy holy name; through Christ
our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 9:28-35.

And it came to pass about
an eight days after these
sayings, he took Peter and
John and James, and went up
into a mountain to pray.

And as he prayed, the fashion
of his countenance was altered,
and his raiment was white and
glistening.

And, behold, there talked with
him two men, which were Moses,
and Elias;

Who appeared in glory and
spoke of his decease which he
should accomplish at Jerusa-
lem.

But Peter and they that were
with him were heavy with sleep;
and when they were awake, they
saw his glory and the two men
that stood with him.

And it came to pass, as they
departed from him, Peter said
unto Jesus, Master, it is good
for us to be here; and let us
make three tabernacles; one for
thee, and one for Moses, and
one for Elias; not knowing
what he said.

While he thus spake, there
came a cloud, and overshadowed
them; and they feared as they
entered into the cloud;

(c) Regarding Salvation

"It follows from Jesus' assumptions concerning the nature of man and of God that the salvation made available by his religion consists in ethical development cooperatively pursued and realized."

In the beginning Christianity derived much of its power through its offer of salvation. That appeal has lost its power because of the selfish note that crept in.

For Jesus salvation is not a gift but a search.

It is something "achieved by God and man together."

"It develops the creative not the possessive faculties."

"It is progressively realized."

"Historically the salvation Christianity proclaims for man is forgiveness from his sins and assurance of fellowship with God."

Ward does not think this is what the

religion of Jesus really teaches.

"With the apostles, salvation was not, any more than it was with Jesus, a magical exemption from the arbitrary commands of an offended deity; it was a way of overcoming concrete evils in human life." (Power to free themselves from the corruptions of the Roman world.)

"The religion of Jesus requires the active overcoming of evil. It gives men no refuge from the struggle of life... but a place arising in the midst of the conflict out of a realization of its meaning and a sense of being allied with the eternal."

"He called men to take up a cross like his, not to look passively to his cross for redemption. Therefore his religion is dynamic."

"Its (salvation) supreme ethical quality is its challenge to man to continuously develop his nature, his society and his experience of God. In this respect it is much more congenial to the spirit of science than to that of some theologies."

ISAIAH FOR ASHES

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations!"
Isaiah 61:3-4.

See Ward - "Which Way Religion" P. 149 ff

(They are to leave garlands on their heads instead of ashes.)

The trees were cedars, which were evergreen an emblem of the life of the righteous.)

"The true function of religion, according to Deutscher-Israeli, was to help and to sustain men." - Rosenbaum