



March 5, 2023

Rev. Dr. Thomas Evans

Isaiah 52:7-10, Romans 10:9-15

The Body of Christ:

The Beauty of Feet



Golden Verse

"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." I Corinthians 12:27

{Today's sermon comes in the form of poetic prose patterned after the style of Joseph Donders, a South African Priest who's deceptively simple sermons unfolded the gospel in powerful ways through plain language, lyrical structure, and repeated phrasing.}

If you were to look at *People* magazine's 50 most beautiful people you might believe,
that beauty comes from
 shiny teeth,
 glistening hair,
 a narrow waist,
 and bronzed skin.

But the Apostle Paul had a different idea.
 He didn't pine over the beauty of Helen of Troy
 whose face started wars.
 He didn't look at the line of a woman's leg
 or gaze at the perfection of her smooth skin.

Paul thought feet were beautiful.
Paul remarked, *"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

The dusty, dirty, smelly, feet of the disciples.
 Those feet which trod from town to town
 over rocky roads,
 through mucky trails.
 those feet cut by brambles,
 those nails gnarled and jagged.

And maybe Paul has a point.
 Think about the soot covered faces of those nine miners so many years ago,
 Those faces hidden from the world for days,
 trapped in a tomb of dirt while water rushed in.
 Imagine how lovely, those haggard, smeared faces looked
 to their wives and children,
 when they first emerged.
Yes, Paul does have a point.

If you were to look at *People* magazine's 50 most beautiful people,
you might think that ugly was what they are not.
a lined face,
gray hair,
and a spreading mid-section.

But ugliness does not lie in being what they are not,
but in trying to be what we are not,
in forgetting to be what God meant us to be.

The church is ugly,
when it buries its head in the sand,
refusing to tell the truth
about its own sins, the sins of its priests.

The church is ugly,
when it reverses its vote,
on the ethics of slavery,
because the cotton gin
brought them nothing but gravy.

The church is ugly,
when it charges the poor money
to buy their way out of purgatory,
to buy another priceless piece of art.

The church is ugly
when it forgets to lose itself for His sake,
forsaking its mission for its own sake.

Beauty shines brightest,
when a part sacrifices its own beauty for another.
*"Ballet dancers have a secret...
It is hidden under satin...
But the truth remains.
Dancers have ugly feet."*
Says one Orthopedist.
*"The years of pounding, [leaping, and twirling]
have created crooked toes,
discolored nails,
and skin rubbed raw.
The wear and tear is endured,
toappear graceful and effortless."*

Beautiful are all those feet,
 who like the feet of dancers ,
 take no credit,
 but take the pain,
 and endure the load.

Beautiful are those grandparents,
 who raise their children's children.

Beautiful are those spouses,
 who care quietly, and unfailingly
 for a loved one who has forgotten to care for themselves.

Beautiful are those children,
 who care for their parents
 who can no longer care for themselves.

Those disciple's feet were beautiful,
 They were washed by the hands of our Lord,
 served by the savior of the world,
 so they would know to be great
 is to be the servant of all.
 Their feet were beautiful.

How beautiful indeed.

Beauty does what it was created to do.
Beauty fulfills its destiny.

How beautiful are the arms that
 prepare food for a friend in need,
 serve communion to a thirsty soul,
 or drive a nail to create a home.

How beautiful are the eyes that,
 see beauty in others
 that refuse to look away
 from that woman on the street,
 whom others avoid.

How beautiful are the lips,
 that proclaim the good news,
 that tell the rejected
 that they will not be put to shame.
 that promise the discriminated,
 that in God's kingdom there is no longer Jew nor Greek
 (that is no longer special favors
 given to the traditional favorites
 of class, race, or gender).

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How beautiful are the people of God,
who *become* good news,
who move into the places of human need,
meeting the needs of the body, mind, and spirit.

How beautiful is the many faceted diamond
of God's good news,
the Son of God.
Which freed Egypt's slaves,
which frees us from death,
which frees us to live beautiful lives.

How beautiful are the feet of our Lord,
which carried Him from town to town
healing the sick
preaching good news to the poor.
That helped Him to stand strong
against those standing against God.

How beautiful are those feet,
which took Him to Calvary,
that climbed Golgotha,
that bore the nails of pain and sin,
that our feet might be free.

How beautiful are our feet
when we get them dirty
pounding the pavement
sharing that part of the good news
God has given us to give.
How beautiful indeed.
Amen.