



**Westminster**  
**Presbyterian Church**  
NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

## **Beautiful to God**

**John 8:2-11**

<sup>2</sup> At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts; where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. <sup>3</sup> The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group <sup>4</sup> and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup> In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” <sup>6</sup> They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. <sup>7</sup> When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” <sup>8</sup> Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

<sup>9</sup> At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. <sup>10</sup> Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

<sup>11</sup> “No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

I bet that there is not a person here this Christmas Eve who expected to hear this text from John. But in one of those rare moments of inspiration, I was hit again with the wonder of the God’s amazing love.

Last Christmas Eve, I spoke of a video someone sent me of an impromptu performance by a great musician in a crowded subway station. If you have long memories you might remember I used the illustration of Joshua Bell playing Bach with his Stradivarius in a subway station and only one person stopped to listen to music that people paid \$100 a seat to hear in a sold-out theater in Boston. I believe

the purpose of that sermon was to make us sensitive again to the human tendency to get into such a rush that we forget to stop and consider what the wonder of the incarnation of God in Christ was all about. We simply need to stop and reflect on the beauty of an event so amazing that it is life altering.

Wednesday morning, I noticed an email from a friend that, for some reason unbeknownst to me, ended up in my “junk mail.” I opened the note that contained a link to another video of a celebrity playing a violin in a subway station. It is amazing what can happen in a place where people are simply walking by one another fixed on their individual destinations -- tired eyes, blank stares, serious faces of people all trying to get somewhere, with no time to stop and listen.

Then Lindsey Stirling, a name I think I have heard before, but I now understand to be a wonderful entertainer and great musician, took out her violin and started playing Leonard Cohen’s *Hallelujah*. As you watch the video, you want to scream to masses to stop and listen to the beauty of the moment, but no one does.

Following the performance in the subway station, Lindsey Stirling gave a personal message as she spoke about the beauty in every moment and in every person. She said there was a time when she felt that no one could see the beauty in her.

Well, I went to the good ol’ Wikipedia and read a little about Lindsey and found out that she did struggle with anorexia. **Then on the video she with great joy**, there is of course one person who always sees the beauty in us and it is Jesus Christ.

I thought about that for quite some time on Wednesday morning and I began to picture the members of this congregation. I thought about the members of my family, and realized what a wonderful message I had heard: Jesus sees the beauty in everybody I love. He sees the beauty of those I have never met. Jesus sees the beauty in the teenage girl who looks in the mirror and no matter how beautiful she is, in her eyes she falls short, yet Jesus sees her beauty.

As Jesus walked the paths of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem, he saw folks who loved him, he saw people who would desert him, he saw people who blessed him and people who cursed him. He saw people who listened to his message and he saw people who were offended by his words. Jesus saw people who welcomed him into their homes, and people who plotted to kill him. He saw the people who judged him, and he saw and heard the false witnesses. He was

blindfolded on one occasion, yet I am sure he knew who hit him and spat upon him. He saw a Roman governor who did not have the spine to pronounce him innocent. He saw people who cried out for “Barabbas.” And finally he saw his executioners, and as they lifted him on the cross he uttered words of forgiveness, and I think I know why. For in all the ugliness, Jesus could see through it. Jesus could see through the anger, the prejudices, the ignorance, and the hatred and still see the beauty.

And there was a woman caught in the very act of adultery, and Jesus refused to accuse her. Why? Because he could see the beauty.

Jesus sees the beauty within us all. I know you are thinking of that person who is completely selfish, arrogant, mean spirited, violent, hateful, and outwardly there are no redeeming qualities. Yet, Jesus sees something deep within, he sees the pain, he sees the abuse the person may have experienced, he understands the mental imbalances, or whatever makes this person so unbearable to us, and still Jesus was willing to die for him or her. Yes, Jesus can see the beauty within us all.

Do you know why God came to us in Christ? Do you understand why God put on human flesh in what we call the incarnation? Yes, it was to save us from our sin, but why would he do that? It is because he can look at each person, and though sometimes he has to look deep, Jesus can see the beauty that is within us all. The fact of the matter is everyone in this room is beautiful to God.

Amen.