

# MAGNOLIA MINDS: Beauty for ashes

*By Leigh Tanner*

*“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; 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 proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 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.” (Isaiah 61:1-3 KJV)*

Are you all too familiar with this depth of devastation? One moment you are tightly gripping in your heart what is very dear to you. The next moment, it bursts into an inferno.

Now what? All that can be held are undistinguishable ashes and memories too agonizing to recall.

What ignited such an explosion? Was it caused by destructive words spoken in anger? Was it sparked by the loss of a beloved relationship? Did a long-held dream shatter? Did you lose all that was dear for reasons beyond your control?

Whatever the reason, you find yourself emotionally slumped to the ground. Life becomes surreal. What can you rebuild with ashes? Nothing.

Darkness begins to settle heavy upon your spirit. You feel as though you are walking inside an invisible wall of concrete. So, what is God doing while the world around you is shattering and depression begins to take root within you?

Let's look back at verse 3.

### **"Beauty for ashes"**

The first action of the Lord mentioned is one of an appointment with a divine purpose. In the midst of your crisis, God declares before His universe His plans, His purpose, and His restoration for you.

Along with this appointment and divine purpose for living, He also gives you Beauty, joy, and praise.

Isn't it interesting that the first exchange is for Beauty? The gift isn't described as strength, power, greatness, or even retribution. His gift is Beauty. God's Beauty is Christ. Breathtaking Beauty.

To fully receive this, you must fully let go of the ashes. Be washed by the Word that you may be presented in pure Beauty before the Groom and His Father, spotless and without blame.

### **"The oil of joy for mourning"**

Why *oil*? Why is it *of joy*? Why not describe it as peace? Or calmness? Or restoration? Let's look at this exchange from a shepherd's viewpoint.

The Shepherd knows the season of pain is surrounding His precious lamb. He draws ever closer to the one He loves. Your Shepherd is prepared. You are assured of His care.

Please keep in mind that you are on this side of Heaven, so catastrophes are not always prevented. Polishing in the image of His Beloved Son may be best for you at this season of your life. So, make it a habit to ask for His fresh anointing each day. It is His gift that He loves to pour generously over you. God spared no expense for your restoration.

After clearing the ashes from your head and crowning you with His Beauty, He tenderly anoints your head with oil. Its

purpose is to heal and protect.

The oil soothes. Peace settles in. Wounds become healed by His anointing.

**“The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”**

*Spirit of heaviness.* It makes you feel like you are wrapped in a scratchy wool blanket on a hot summer day. To make matters worse, it stays completely soaked by your constant tears.

Hate that blanket. God does too.

This is why He doesn't stop with cleansing you, crowning you with Beauty, and pouring a pure sweet fragrant oil over you. He gives you a completely new wardrobe. Designed especially for one of Holy royal birth to wear for a very special occasion. He gives you a garment of praise and a robe of Righteousness.

He wants everyone to know that you are not a mere servant in the household. You are His child. The one He favors.

He gives you praise because God understands that it changes your focus from you and your circumstances to His wonderful grace, mercy, and constant provisions. Only during praising Him do you come to realize that the shackles that kept you captive are laying broken around you because you have been set truly, eternally free.

**“That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified”**

Picture this with me. A field filled with beautiful wildflowers and butterflies. The trees are strong, tall, and fruitful.

Oh, look there you are! You are so beautiful. Breathtakingly Beautiful. His righteousness fits you well. I feel the wind blowing gently. You begin to sing “How Great Is Our God.” I

join you.

Yes, indeed, to God be the glory! Great things He has done!  
Great things indeed! No wonder we sing.

There isn't a time period given for all these exchanges to be accomplished. Some healings can occur immediately. Some ashes take a lifetime to let go.

Be at peace. Stop condemning yourself for not being further along in the process than you think you need to be. Instead, choose to rest in Him. Choose to declare His Word whether you can see Him working or feel Him moving. Choose to ask Him and receive a fresh anointing daily. Choose to praise Him.

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