

INSPIRED WORD
February 27, 2019

Introduction to “Into His Likeness” by Edward Sri – to read and reflect on during Lent.

SHARING / EXHORTATION / PRAYER

Laura gave us several examples of love. If any of you couples have attended a Marriage Encounter weekend, you know that they define love in a different way. They say that love is a decision. You have to decide to love. When God the Father asked Jesus if He would come down to earth to do what He did for us, that kind of love required a decision on Jesus’ part, to come down for our salvation. As we gather here tonight, I’m going to ask you to make a decision right now. Decide to turn over whatever is in your mind, whatever’s going on in the day, whatever you brought with you – be it tiredness, concern for a loved one, job, whatever, decide to let it go and let God act in your life. Make it an active decision. Tell the Lord: “Lord, I want You in my life and I’m deciding to allow that. I surrender what I’m carrying right now because I want to carry what You want to place in my heart. If You ask me to speak tonight, I will do that, Lord. But only because You enable me to. If You ask me to read a scripture, I will do that, Lord, because You’ve asked me to and I’ve decided to follow Your way. Whatever You ask of me tonight, Lord, I will do. If I want to speak but You ask me to be silent, then I will be silent, Lord, because I have decided to follow You and to do what You have asked of me. I have decided, Lord, that I do want to be one of Your disciples, and I will do what You ask me, Lord, but help me to do it always for Your glory, Lord, and not for my recognition. I thank and I praise You, Lord. Thank You, Father.”

SCRIPTURE / PRAYER

I had every intention of staying quiet tonight, believe me, I did. But **Psalm 27:4-5**: *One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret place of his tabernacle. He shall hide me; he shall set me high upon a rock.* Lord Jesus, we just thank You and praise You and exalt Your holy name, for You are the King of kings, the righteous Lamb of God. We do praise You and exalt You and magnify Your name. Lord, we just thank You and praise You and exalt Your holy name, for You alone are worthy, worthy of all honor and worthy of all glory and worthy of all praise.

CONFIRMATION

This next song that we’re doing is confirmation of that scripture – “Better is One Day” – so thank you, Jimmy, and thank You, Holy Spirit, for showing us You’re here. This song is based on Psalm 27 so it’s like straight out of it. And I chose it before he read it.

CONFIRMATION / SCRIPTURE

I have confirmation of that same scripture verse and that song because I was looking at **Psalm 17:8, 6-7** which says: *Hide me in the shadow of thy wings. I call upon thee, for thou wilt answer me, O God; incline thy ear to me, hear my words. Wondrously show thy steadfast love, O savior of those who seek refuge.* And there's another line here that I'll read in just a second but it's really cute. Do people still say, "You're the apple of my eye" or is that kind of like an old...? Yeah, okay. I didn't know if that was just an old-fashioned thing but I've heard that and it's interesting in the footnotes, it says: Apple of your eye; it means the pupil. It's the most precious part. In **Psalm 17:8**, it says, *"Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of thy wings."*

PRAYER / EXHORTATION

O Jesus, we just worship Your name and give You thanks. We recognize You, the Lion and the Lamb, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and End. Holy is Your name, Jesus. Glory to You, O God. Let's just give the Lord praise. He is worthy to be adored. Mighty is Your name, O God. Holy are You, Lord Jesus.

PRAYER / SCRIPTURE

We praise You and adore You, O God. We love You, Lord, even if it's with filial love, You can change that into agape love. We praise and thank You. In **Revelation 7:13-15**, it says: *Then one of the elders addressed me saying, "Who are these robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one who knows." Then he said to me, "They are the ones who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple; and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.* And it goes on with promise but as we said before, we have such a great privilege when we gather here and praise God with our hearts and our minds toward Him. We are joining the angels and the saints that worship Him day and night. We are raising our voices. Lord, we just want to praise Your holy name; we want to praise You, O Adonai; we want to just worship with all the angels and saints, lift our voices to praise You, O Lord.

SHARING / EXHORTATION / SCRIPTURE

.... and come out the other side washed and cleaned and under His protection, under His arms, under His love. And they were able to worship and celebrate, and on that other side, give praise. And there's an honor in going through the hard because it can get you holy. So never think that I'm not... that my life's been too screwed up to be a disciple of Jesus, to experience the love of the Lord. I've done too many things wrong; I've had too many things happen to me; I started with a family of origin that was a mess so there's no way that I could ever truly get to the Lord. My husband went to a meeting down on the southeast side the other day and they're starting a program for guys coming out of prison. And they're going to start a

basketball league because a lot of these guys like to play basketball, and it's a point of common denominator, but they're going to teach them mentoring and how to be fathers and sons and brothers and employees and how to work in the system and how to live in society so they don't have to go back, so they can find a new way. He said this guy behind him was about the biggest dude he'd ever seen, and my husband's six two so that's a pretty big dude to feel like he was huge behind him. And the peace on this man's face... he had obviously come through the prison system, and he was the first to say that, but the peace on his face because he had found God through the love of people who introduced him to Jesus, and it changed his life. And he wanted to give that gift to somebody else. And he's part of this group that's going to start doing this thing. And I guess my point is that love is practical, and helping someone who's gone through hell, only through Christ can you be the new man, a new woman, a new creation. Nothing else in our society truly allows you to be transformed except the Lord. Don't be afraid to give that gift to somebody. Don't be afraid to let yourself experience that gift if you need it. Let Him transform you. And then make that love tangible; make it flesh because that's how God showed us it was done. *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14)*. And that's how we got to know. *He who sees me sees the Father (John 12:45)*. Let's look for the Father this Lent and find Him and cling to Him and hang on for dear life and give Him away.

SCRIPTURE

This is **Romans 5:3-5**: *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character, and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

SCRIPTURE / SHARING

Isaiah 53:1-5: *Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.* The suffering sometimes is the connection. I come from a large family. One of my own brothers... I thought I'd never connect with him, you know. But when life hit him hardest, we found ourselves talking like we were the best of buddies. And I knew that Jesus would not be far behind. Taking Him is one of the last minute, you know, sinners... Praise God, praise God. I don't know, it all fits together because Jesus chose to be the Lamb of God. (Sung) He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; And surely He bore our sorrows, and by His stripes we're healed.

PRAYER

Thank You, Lord, for Your great gift to us.

EXHORTATION

“Jesus, God’s righteousness revealed.” I think that’s what we’ve been praising and looking into His very eyes tonight. And I think that there are a lot of words in our heart but maybe we just can’t speak them right now, but we will. God will bring us to that.