

## Beautiful Words

Today I went to a church that seemed far different than my own. There I heard beautiful words:

*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory. (Isaiah 6:3, NIV)*

*Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!  
(John 1:29, NASB)*

*“The Lord is with us every day in a profound and perfect way.”*

But as spoken by the people, the words seemed like seashells – exquisitely lovely, but empty and dead for so long that no one seemed to think of them as created out of life, and for life. Mouths murmured the truths, but did any hearts hear their music? Did any souls join the singing?

Why were the people there – thirtyish, middle-aged, and older; executives, housewives, and workers; whites and Hispanics? Why did they come at 7:00 a.m. on a busy Tuesday, amid demanding, concern-filled lives? Were they drawn by a sense of “oughtness”? Were they taking refuge in the familiar? Did they think that coming would keep them in good standing with God? How many were driven by anticipation, and how many cruised in on automatic pilot? Was it habit, or hope?

I saw hungry faces, needy people reaching out. But when they ate the bread and drank the wine, how many truly feasted on Christ? How many received life and strength from His dying love and living presence? How many met Him, heard Him, trusted in Him, and went away rejoicing, “I saw the Lord!” How many hearts could hear and heed the benediction, “Go in peace”?

For years I have attended church every Sunday, and I hear beautiful words.

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.  
Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who  
looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and  
immediately forgets what he looks like. (James 1:22-24, NIV)*