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**Rev. Lynda Hepler,
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Good morning. Thank you for taking a few minutes of your day to join me for a short time of devotion. I always like to begin my devotion time with a prayer. It's the same one I use each week, so the words will become familiar to you. Will you please join me:

*Father, you created us and put us on earth for a purpose.
Jesus, you died for us and called us to complete your work.
Holy Spirit, you help us to carry out the work for which we were created and called.
In your presence and name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we begin our reflection.
May all our thoughts and inspirations have their origin in you and be directed to your glory. Amen.*

Rodney mentioned on Friday how everything had turned green outside over the last two weeks. Yesterday, I was in the woods with Philip for a little field target therapy when I noticed how everything had changed. The familiar dead woods had exploded into a new creation of sights, sounds, and smells. I needed some outdoor therapy time after my adventure from last week. Let me tell you about it.

This past week Payton had Spring Break from school, and I promised her we would have a mini vacation in our front yard. She loves to camp, so we pulled the pop-up camper out on Monday afternoon and set it up. Once we were able to open it up and get inside what I found was inconceivable! You know the movie from the '80s called, "A Christmas Story" — the story about a boy named Ralphie who wants a Red Rider BB gun for Christmas? It's one of my favorites, and Monday afternoon I could totally relate to Ralphie's mom who, on Christmas Day, finds that the neighbor's dogs have ransacked her kitchen and gobbled up her Christmas turkey. All she could do was stand there and cry, left to clean up the mess.

That's how I felt on Monday evening. You see in last few winter months my camper was the luxurious living space to a bunch of mice—a hotel and baby ward! The mice had made such a mess. They chewed through my curtains and left stinky, nasty stains of God knows what everywhere. On the curtains, on the canvas, mice poop was everywhere. They laughed at Philip's attempts at rodent control by even pooping on the uneaten rat poison.

I did my best not to cry. You see just a few years ago we had completely remodeled the camper to give it a fresh updated look. Those of you who know me know that I "glamp" when camping. I like the tent option that pop-up camping provides but with better sleeping arrangements than the hard ground. So Philip took down all the curtains; I disposed the ones that were not salvageable and went to clean and mend what was.

Tuesday, I went out to try and clean the rest of the mess. As I was cleaning, I was listening to music on my phone and found myself singing and crying to God. Yes, I was upset about the camper, but I think my tears were coming from the fact that I realized none of this is in my control. I can't control mice; I can't control anything right now during this epidemic. I'm staying home as much as possible. I wear a facemask when I do go into town. I wipe down shopping carts and door handles and gas pumps to try and control an uncontrollable situation. I do everything I can to keep everything on an even keel for Payton because she worries so much about school and seeing her friends before they go their separate ways into different high schools. I try to stay positive and look at the good things that have resulted from this quarantine. But it feels like something is lost, something is broken. All of my summer plans with the children's ministry are on hold and may not come to fruition at all. I think of our youth who graduate this year. It's certainly not what they had planned. No prom, award ceremonies, graduation celebrations; it's a lot of unknowns. Maybe you've been feeling the same. Broken.

Maybe this brokenness has less to do with a virus and more to do with the heart and our relationship with God. Our very human condition is one of brokenness. We are always seeking to fill within us the God-shaped hole in our hearts. Sometimes we try to fill it with other feel-good things, those treasures that moths and mice can get into. Sometimes we fill it with other relationships that falter with time. Sometimes we fill it with our own agendas and to-do lists to keep us busy so we don't think about it. However, it is in our brokenness that God seeks us.

Ann Voscamp says in her book, *Be the Gift*: "There is a cross that makes us safe. Jesus is drawn to the broken parts of us we would never want to draw attention to. Jesus is the most attracted to the busted and sees the broken as the most beautiful. And our God wants the most unwanted parts of us the most." She cites Psalm 51:17, "Heart-shattered lives ready for love don't for a moment escape God's notice... The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit."

It is in our brokenness that we are the most vulnerable. It is our brokenness that we can hand over to God and let God transform. Our repentance is how we receive God's abundant grace. It is God's amazing love for us that makes us into beautiful things. Ephesians 3:20 says, "His power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of." We are Easter people, people of the resurrection, and Jesus is constantly helping us, renewing us, making us into his image through the work of the Holy Spirit. We need to simply be patient in our brokenness and with God so that we can receive the full blessings that He has in store for us.

This epidemic is only a season, much like watching the tide go in and out. The waves come and go, but God is eternal. There will soon come a time when we will look at this season as the past. This moment will be gone and other heartaches will come and go. But through it all God makes beautiful things out of our brokenness. Offer your brokenness to God, and be patient and let God do the work of transformation.

For our closing I want to share with you the chorus from a song called "Beautiful Things" by Gungor:

*You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us
Oh, you make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us*

God makes beautiful things out of our brokenness. We just have to give it over to the One who loves us. Go in Peace.

