

The Bulwark

MAY 17, 2026

FROM THE RUBBLE: BEAUTY

It had been a long, hot summer, but things got even hotter when in August of 1965 riots broke out in Watts. Following the tumult that lasted for six days and brought on the death of thirty-four and hundreds of injuries not to mention the widespread destruction; an artist by the name of Noah Purifoy began his unique work. He salvaged things like broken wheels from a bicycle, bowling balls, broken tv sets, things viewed as no longer having any use. Then he took those items and created sculptures that set forth a powerful message about how people are treated as but cast away in modern society.



Mr. Purifoy left behind at his passing sculptures that can be seen at his Noah Purifoy Museum in Joshua Tree, California, but also at LACMA, the Hammer Museum, and the Getty Center in Los Angeles. Equally there has been an exhibition of his work shown at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.. Imagine, using rubble to make something of value.

“The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalms 34:18)

God did not leave mankind as a cast-off to be thrown out as rubble

and left to spoil as a result of sin and alienation on the part of man. *“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked...”* (Ephesians 2:1-2)

But Paul then notes a few verses later the following. *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, Christ Jesus.”* (Ephesians 2:4-6)

However, it is incumbent on the part of each one to recognize that just as God sees worth and value, so must we see value in ourselves. Jesus extended the hand of friendship and love, *“Greater love has no than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do what I command you.”* (John 15:13-14) *“See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”* (1John 3:1)

Upon rendering obedience to the gospel we are added by God to the church, His household (see Ephesians 2:19-22) being fitted together with one another. A beautiful spiritual

mosaic, *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member but many.”* (1Corinthians 12:13-14 see also Galatians 3:27-28)

“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let’s approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need.” (Hebrews 4:15-16 see also Hebrews 2:14-18) The psalmist asks the question, *“What is man that dost take thought of him?”* In Christ the answer is provided. From rubble to beauty; alive in Christ. (wbe)

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