

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LOVE OF

Betty Jean Preston

March 17, 1933 - April 1, 2025



Betty Preston was a woman of incredible strength, unwavering determination, and love. She was a devoted mother and wife, known for her extraordinary character. Growing up in a small, close-knit town, she developed a profound appreciation for family values and traditions, which deeply shaped her life. Above all, Betty had a deep love for the Lord and dedicated her life to serving Him.

Betty's journey began on March 17, 1933, in the quaint town of Hawesville, Kentucky, where everyone knew their neighbors by name. The simplicity of her surroundings, with its sprawling green fields and views of the Ohio River, played a significant role in shaping her spirit. A self-proclaimed "Daddy's girl," Betty adored her father, Henry, who owned a print shop, and her mother, Lillian, a dedicated homemaker. They instilled in her the values of perseverance and kindness. She looked up to her brothers, Raymond and Harlan, and wanted to do everything they did. Her grandparents, lovingly referred to as "Grandad" and "Mammy," were also instrumental in her childhood, and she always reflected on time spent with them with fondness. Holidays at Mammy's house were especially joyful, and Betty cherished every moment spent with her parents, brothers, and grandparents.

At the age of 12, Betty followed in the footsteps of her brothers and began selling newspapers, a job she thoroughly enjoyed. When she was 14 a representative from the paper came down from Louisville and found out that she was delivering papers and told her parents she couldn't have the job because she was a girl. Her Father stood up for her and insisted the representative go out to customers and find out what they thought about her work. She received so much approval from customers that he never tried to take her job away again and even gave her additional routes. At the age of 16, she decided to change jobs due to needing more rest and began working at a Drug Store.

As she entered high school, Betty's interests blossomed. She became involved in various clubs and made lifelong friends along the way. She always loved to learn, and school came very easy to her. She counted it a privilege to attend a school where she completed first – twelfth grade with the same peers.



Upon graduating high school, Betty had planned to go to a state school in Western Ky but at the last minute, chose to attend Campbellsville, a Christian College in the heart of Kentucky, to pursue a degree in education—this path resonated with her true calling. This pivotal decision would transform her life forever. It was at a talent show where she met Jimmy Preston, and despite their initial intentions to marry others, their connection was undeniable. It was a perfect moment of “love at first sight,” with Jimmy confiding to a friend that he intended to marry Betty upon their first meeting. After three months of serving together at church, he gathered the courage to propose. Initially, Betty thought he was joking, but she soon realized the depth of his sincerity. In May 1952, she proudly graduated with her Associate’s Degree in education, and just a few months later, on September 6, surrounded by loved ones, they exchanged vows, pledging their lives to one another. Their union flourished for over 55 extraordinary years.

As their love story unfolded, Betty and Jim welcomed five children into the world: David, Melody, Sam, Diane, and Ray. Betty embraced motherhood wholeheartedly as she balanced work, church activities, family dinners and time with her husband.

Betty was a dedicated woman, always willing to do whatever it took to support her family. She worked at Gruber’s Sewing Factory and later at General Electric (Honeywell), committed to contributing financially to meet her family’s needs alongside her husband. Over the 54 years they lived in Arizona, the family moved several times. With each relocation, Betty’s focus was on helping her children thrive.

As the years passed, challenges inevitably arose for Betty. The most significant moment came when she faced a serious health condition after the birth of her last child. During her recovery, her children had to live with other family members, which was a difficult period that cast a shadow over her usually vibrant spirit. However, Betty approached the situation with resilience and was determined not to let it defeat her. Jimmy and the children rallied around her, providing unwavering support. Throughout this challenging time, Betty learned the importance of vulnerability and the strength that comes from community. They built a network of support, with her family stepping in to help wherever needed. After six months, Betty fully recovered, and the family was able to reunite once again.

At the age of 12, Betty accepted the Lord into her heart, sparking a profound faith and a passionate desire to serve Him. Being a pastor’s wife came with its challenges, yet the rewards were immense, filling her with a sense of fulfillment like no other. Throughout the years, she and her husband served in various churches, witnessing God’s transformative work in the lives of many. Betty was a longtime pianist and vocalist at the churches, where she shared her faith and love of music with those around her. In 1986, they launched a counseling center at their church, with Jimmy and two other men as counselors. Recognizing the crucial need for a female counselor, Betty took a significant step and enrolled in Covington Theological Seminary, earning her Master’s Degree in Ministry a year later.



A true lifelong learner, her love for helping others propelled her to pursue a Ph.D., which she completed four years later. Her unwavering commitment to her career led her to serve as a substance abuse counselor at the 44th St. Drug Abuse Program, a Methadone Treatment Center, where she made a difference for seven inspiring years before semi-retiring in 1997.

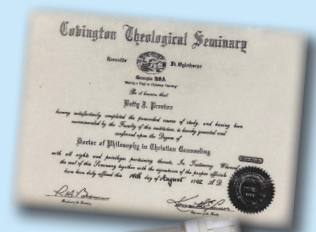
In 1999, Betty's father faced significant health challenges that required immediate attention and support. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, Betty and her husband, Jimmy, made the heartfelt decision to relocate back to Kentucky. During this period, Betty and Jimmy dedicated themselves to serving at a few congregations, fulfilling their roles as church leaders and nurturing their faith alongside the community. This chapter of their lives spanned until August 2004, during which they forged lasting relationships and left a positive impact on the congregations they attended.

Tragically, after several years of battling health issues, Jimmy passed away in 2008. His loss was profoundly felt, leaving a void in both Betty's life and the lives of those who knew him. Through this journey, Betty demonstrated immense strength and resilience in the face of adversity.

Betty was not only a loving wife to Jimmy and a devoted mother to her five children but also a cherished grandmother to her 13 grandchildren and a proud great-grandmother to 25 great-grandchildren. Her warm spirit and unwavering support made her the heart of the family, a true matriarch who brought everyone together. With her grace and remarkable organizational skills, Betty expertly managed family gatherings and celebrations, ensuring that each member felt valued and loved. Her nurturing presence and wisdom have left an enduring impact on her family.

On April 1, 2025, Betty was reunited with her beloved husband and embraced by the Lord in heaven, whom they cherished dearly. Her memory will live on in the hearts of her family and friends, reminding us to celebrate life with the same joy, grace, and resilience that she demonstrated every day. Betty will be deeply missed by all who knew her, leaving behind a legacy of faith, love and kindness that touched countless lives.

*"This is the day the Lord has made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it."
Psalm 118:24*



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