

EXCERPT



### **The Nazarene**

Forty Devotions on the Lyrical Life of Jesus

November 24, 2020 | \$16, 176 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4801-0

Over the course of his career, singer-songwriter Michael Card has explored the depths of Scripture by bringing together biblical study and the power of the imagination. Now he sheds light on the life of Jesus through forty lyrical reflections on the four Gospels, leading us to a place where Jesus becomes real and we can hear him with both hearts and minds.

## New from Teacher and Songwriter Michael Card

*The Nazarene had come to live  
The life of everyman  
And He felt the fascination  
Of the stars  
And as He wandered thru this weary world  
He wondered and He wept  
For there were so few  
Who'd listen to His call?  
He came He saw He surrendered all  
So that we might be born again  
And the fact of His humanity  
Was there for all to see  
For He was unlike any other man  
And yet so much like me  
The Nazarene could hunger  
And the Nazarene could cry  
And He could laugh with all  
The fullness of His heart  
And those who hardly knew Him  
And those who knew Him well  
Could feel the contradiction  
From the start  
—"The Nazarene"*

If you listen, really listen to the life of Jesus, you will hear a subtle resonance. Yes, it rings true, but there is infinitely more to it than that. His life pulsates with an unspoken poetry; it vibrates in time with his life situation and those who found themselves within his reach. You might say his life was even a song in itself, or at least you could make a strong case for its being lyrical. It often rhymed beautifully. Sometimes it reverberated with a discord that in the end was still a meaningful resonance.

The lyricism and tone and color of the life of Jesus is one reason why so many of us write songs to him or paint pictures of him or seek to portray his remarkable life in any of a thousand other ways. In one sense if you really

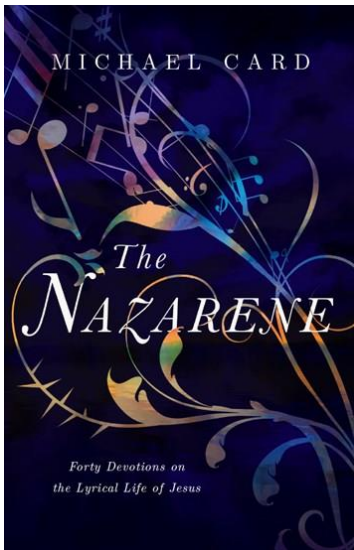


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listen, it is easy. There is so much depth. So many endlessly interesting scenes that no one could ever hope to squeeze dry. And in quite another sense, it is impossibly difficult because words fall so short and notes can only ring for a certain length of time. They are all clumsy bricks. Words can only resonate within their range of meaning. And melodies, even the vast, soaring ones, are finite, limited to a key signature and a single time frame.

Nonetheless, easy or hard, we are left with his life. His beautiful, mysterious, frustrating, scandalous life. We are left with his words—comforting, challenging, enigmatic, dazzlingly, inescapably clear. His words resonate across time, through centuries. They fall on our listening ears and something pretuned in our hearts resonates with fresh melodies and lyrics, words and notes in honor of that lyrical life of his.

What follows is the result of a lifetime of fragmented attempts to listen to the lyrical life of the Nazarene. They are resonances I heard in my own heart and mind and shared along with the many cowriters whose names I will, with great gratitude, indicate. They were a result of trying to see Jesus' life from a different perspective, from a fresh point of view. Sometimes I almost got it right; more often I missed something vital. But even the songs that don't hit dead center are invitations for you to listen, maybe to listen better and more clearly, more biblically than I listened at first. Even the poorer ones are opportunities for you to pull his image into a sharper focus in your own heart and mind.

After all, isn't Jesus' life so worth listening to? Millions, even billions of us have given ear to it, charged by his Spirit who allows us to listen to his Word in a way we listen to nothing else in this world. Could it be that it also makes us, invites us, to resonate in a way in which we resonate to nothing else in this world? The Spirit strikes or hammers or plucks an interior place, and we resonate, we harmonize, something sings the way the morning stars first sang (Job 38:7).

There are still a million questions that have yet to be asked of Jesus' life. Many, most are unanswerable, but that does not mean they are not worth asking. Even the unanswerable ones leave us with a sense of wonder, and that wonder just might enable us to keep asking better questions still. There are perhaps as many songs left to be written about his luminous life as have been written. If this book provides the encouragement for just one new song to even find the beginning it will have served its purpose.

—Taken from chapter one, "The Lyrical Life of the Nazarene"

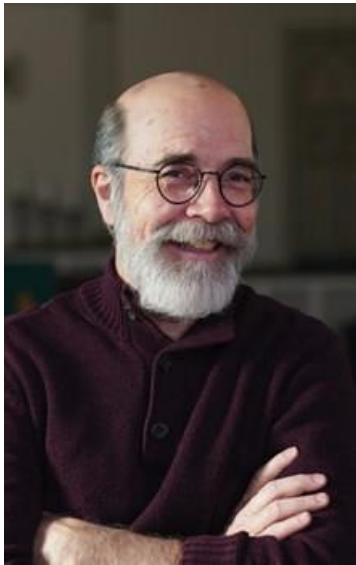


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BIO



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“Every encounter I’ve had with Michael Card has brought me closer to Jesus.”

—Max Lucado

## **Michael Card: Musician, Author, Teacher, Student**

In a career that spans over thirty years, Michael Card has recorded over thirty-seven albums, authored or coauthored over twenty-four books, hosted a radio program, and written for a wide range of magazines. An award-winning musician and performing artist, he has penned such favorites as “El Shaddai,” “Immanuel,” and many other songs.

Card has expanded his ministry beyond music and written numerous books, including

- *Inexpressible*
- *Scribbling in the Sand*
- *A Sacred Sorrow*
- *A Violent Grace*
- *The Parable of Joy*
- *Sleep Sound in Jesus* (a children’s book)
- Biblical Imagination Series, with a book and accompanying music CD for each of the four gospels

A graduate of Western Kentucky University with a bachelor’s and master’s degree in biblical studies, Card also serves as mentor to many younger artists and musicians, teaching courses on the creative process and calling the Christian recording industry into deeper discipleship.

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