

Beauty of Holiness
Sermon delivered on May 24th, 2015

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Text: *Psalm 27:1-6*

Introduction

Psalm 27:4 One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, **to behold the beauty of the LORD**, and to enquire in his temple.

My prayer is, as we contemplate on the beauty of the LORD, we will all be like David, desiring one thing, and that one thing is to behold the beauty of the LORD. **This has been my prayer** in our "Behold Your God!" series. As we contemplate on the glory and beauty of God we would **desire nothing else but God**. I believe with all my heart, that the more we see the beauty of the LORD, the more we will desire Him.

Church Drop Outs

A survey was taken few years ago here in the US, asking church drop outs, people who were actively involved in the life of the church but then stopped going to church. In this survey, they were asked why they stopped going to church. And the number one reason that these church drop outs gave was the church was **boring**. The second most frequent reason for dropping out was that they regarded church as **irrelevant**.

Now, if people are bored in church on Sunday morning, there are **two possible reasons**, namely, it's either the glory of God is not made manifest there or they are blind to the glory of God.

Because in the Bible, when God shows up, and people had an encounter with God, the reaction is not boredom nor regard God as irrelevant. Godly men like, **Isaiah** barely survived the vision. The prophet **Daniel** who could stare down lions, but when the heavens opened, he passed out. **Ezekiel**, too, was overwhelmed by his vision of God, after witnessing the Lord's overwhelming power, fell face-first to the ground. When Solomon dedicated the temple, the glory of the Lord was so filled the Temple that, **the priests** could not perform their service.

1 Kings 8:10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11: So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

In the New Testament, when **John**, the disciple whom Jesus loved, had revelations of Christ, he fell at Jesus' feet like a dead man.

Revelation 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

The reaction to the glory and beauty of God is not boredom. Those who are not moved by the glory of God, only shows that they are spiritually dead.

Preachers Must Wake Up!

Now I recognize that not all the blame goes to the church dropouts. Some of the blame must also go to the leaders. It could be, that the reason why many are bored and think church is irrelevant, is because preachers are not setting forth the glory and the beauty of our LORD.

I have asked you before, I will ask you again, please pray that whenever I preached, I will lead you into the presence of God. That as I preach, **God would graciously and powerfully manifest Himself in this place.** I want us to go home after the preaching service, that **our hearts will be so stirred** that we would say with David ...

Psalm 63:1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2: To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

That's what we want, a hungering and thirsting for God and His power and glory.

Psalm 42:1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. 2: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

A thirst and a hunger that only God could satisfy. O, to have this kind of desire, **this is a sure evidence that God is working a mighty work of grace in the heart.** That we will not only have a desire for religiosity, form, rituals, ordinances, programs and activities, but "for God, for the living God."

What is the beauty of the Lord?

Scripture speaks much of the beauty of God.

When Christ came to earth, sinners were attracted to Him not because of His physical stature or appearance. In fact, we read in ...

Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2: For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: **he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.**

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about His appearance, nothing to attract us to Him.

As someone has said, *"This doesn't mean that Jesus was ugly, but it does mean that He did not have the "advantage" of extraordinary good looks."*

Most likely, He looked like just an average Jewish man.

What then is the beauty of the Lord?

Holiness is His Beauty

The beauty of the Lord is not in His physical appearance but in His holiness. The beauty of the Lord is His holy character. The beauty of the Lord lies in God possessing everything in His character that is desirable.

Holiness is His beauty. Holiness is His glory. Holiness, glory, and beauty are inseparable. That is why you will read in ...

[Isaiah 6:3](#) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Love is beautiful; mercy is beautiful; truth is beautiful. But, over and above, there is a beauty in holiness. So when you hear us preachers say "God is loving, but He is also holy" please don't misunderstand us. We are not saying that holiness is a negative thing. We are not saying that because God is holy, He is no longer loving.

[2 Chronicles 20:21](#) And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should **praise the beauty of holiness**, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever.

There is beauty in holiness.

Listen to what Jonathan Edwards said about holiness ...

Holiness is a most beautiful, lovely thing. Men are apt to drink in strange notions of holiness from their childhood, as if it were a melancholy, morose, sour, and unpleasant thing; but there is nothing in it but what is sweet and ravishingly (attractively) lovely. 'Tis the highest beauty and amiableness, vastly above all other beauties; 'tis a divine beauty. -

As we have learned last Sunday, holiness means "to be set apart", "to be separate". God is different, distinct, none like Him. The problem is not with God, the problem is with us.

*"God's holiness and His nature are not two things, they are but one. God's holiness is His nature, and God's nature is His holiness. Holiness in angels and saints is but a quality, but in God it is **His essence**."* Thomas Brooks

"Power is God's hand or arm, omniscience is his eye, mercy his bowels, eternity his duration, but holiness is his beauty." Stephen Charnock

The Ugliness of Sin

Holiness is the direct opposite of sin. Holiness is beautiful. Sin is ugly. Sin is repulsive. Sin is hideous. Sin is extremely unpleasant to the infinitely pure and righteous God. Sin is so repellant that God chose, the most horrible of all diseases - **leprosy**, to picture it. Throughout the Scriptures, God used leprosy as a picture of sin.

In the book of Isaiah, the Prophet Isaiah, by divine inspiration, to depict the condition of rebellious Israel, used the following words ...

Isaiah 1:6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Sin is a leprosy. Sin is a deformity. Sin is unclean. Sin defiles. Sin multiplies. Sin traps. Sin harms. Sin is an epidemic. Sin is devastating. Sin separates. Sin kills. There is no such thing as a small sin. Sin will always cause problems. Sin will never solve a problem without creating a worse one.

Sin will always take you where you don't want to go and cost you something you don't want to pay. - J. Vernon McGee

There is no beauty, glory, nor honor when we engaged sin. Sin is saying that God is not enough, that there is much more satisfying than God and obedience to God.

What makes you and me ugly is our sin

Unholiness, unholy ways, unholy words, unholy attitudes, unholy thoughts, unholy reactions, it leaves us looking ugly.

Isaiah 64:6 But **we are all as an unclean thing**, and all our righteousnesses are as **filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

But if you will notice this verse is saying is, not only is our sin ugly, we are ugly.

Beauty, however, is not something in ones outward appearance. **There are beautiful men and women who are absolutely ugly** because their lives are **controlled by sin**. Hollywood is full of them. Hollywood is full of men and women who are outwardly attractive but are ugly because of their lifestyle of sin.

But there are many of God's people who would never win a beauty contest who have true beauty. In God's eyes, they are beautiful. And what makes them beautiful? They are beautiful because God's holiness is upon them. They are beautiful, because the beauty of the Lord upon them. The beauty of the Lord is to be reflected in our lives. The beauty of God upon us, is His holiness in us. That's what makes us beautiful.

Where is the ugliness of sin and the beauty of the Lord seen?

1. At the cross we see the ugliness of sin

What sin has done to our Lord ...

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The first and only separation between God the Father and the Lord Jesus from all eternity past took place when our sin were placed on Jesus. He suffered death and separation from God the

Father on our behalf. The separation happened because God could not look upon our evil when it was placed on Jesus on the cross.

Isaiah 52:14 As many were astonished (horrified) at thee; his visage (face, appearance) was so marred (disfigured) more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

Those that saw Him on the cross were horrified. His face, His appearance was so disfigured that He no longer looked like a man.

Another horrible thing about sin is that it separates us from God.

Isaiah 59:1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

2. At the cross we see the beauty of the Lord

Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them**; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

We see the beauty of our Lord in His holy reaction and response to His enemies. Forgiveness is not only liberating but it is also beautiful.

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Though sin had done a number on us, our LORD still, invites us to Himself.

Closing Thoughts

1. The beauty of holiness is satisfying .

Man is more than a material being, and therefore it requires something else than material things. No matter how beautiful your brand new car is, or your house is, it will not completely satisfy. It will not meet our needs. It is the things of God, the things of the Spirit, which alone can truly satisfy.

1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

The closer we walk with God, and the more we reflect His holiness, the more we enjoy real contentment and rest.

Psalms 17:15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

2. Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness

1 Chronicles 16:29 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: **worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**

This is repeated twice in the Psalms...

Psalms 29:2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Psalms 96:9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

3. The world's beauty is only "skin deep" and temporary

Matthew 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed **appear beautiful outward**, but are **within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness**.

James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. **For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.**

Physical beauty is not abiding. This life is like the morning fog; it is here a little while, then it is gone.

Proverbs 31:30 Favour is deceitful, and **beauty is vain**: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

4. Seek the beauty that is abiding

We are called to display the beauty of the Lord in our lives.

Psalms 90:17 And **let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us**: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

When believers act according to the commandments of the Lord, they reflect his beauty.

5. Hunger and Thirst for God

4: One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

Hunger thirst for God will come as we behold God's beauty. The more we behold, the more we will hunger and thirst for Him.

Beholding not the outward beauty of the sanctuary, but the beauty of the LORD Himself we are after. There's no greater desire than to desire God.

May we all see the glory and the beauty of God.

Amen!