

Session 3 The Beauty of God: Transformed by Seeing Who God Is

I. OUR LONGING TO BE FASCINATED

- A. One distinctive use of the Song of Solomon is to see, enjoy, and be fascinated with God’s beauty.
- B. God created us with a longing to be fascinated and awestruck, filled with marvel and wonder. We cannot remove our longing for fascination by repenting of it. It is a significant part of our creative design. We will either satisfy it in God or in darkness. The secular entertainment industry has identified, targeted, and exploited this God-ordained longing to their profit and our ruin.
- C. God created us to live fascinated—this happens most in our relationship with God. The redeemed can experience this *in a measure* in this life and will experience its *fullest measure* for all eternity.
- D. Isaiah prophesied that the Spirit would emphasize Jesus’ beauty in the generation of His return.
¹⁷Your eyes will see the King in His beauty. (Isa. 33:17)
- E. King David was called “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14). One of his lifelong goals was to encounter the beauty of God regularly. He was the “sweet psalmist” of Israel (2 Sam. 23:1).
⁴One thing I have desired...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. (Ps. 27:4)
- F. The Spirit is described as searching (discerning) the deep things of God’s being that He may reveal them to us. We have the privilege of searching out and discovering an infinitely beautiful God.
¹⁰The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God...¹²We have received...the Spirit... that we might know the things that have been freely given to us. (1 Cor. 2:10-12)
- G. The Spirit escorts us on a divine treasure hunt into the beauty of Jesus. He takes the things Jesus is thinking and feeling and reveals them to us. This is divine entertainment at its highest.
¹³“He [the Holy Spirit] will guide you into all truth...¹⁴He will glorify Me [Jesus], for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (Jn. 16:13-14)
- H. We have a beautiful God beckoning us to encounter His beauty. However, it will not happen automatically. The Holy Spirit will not force-feed us. We must be intentional about it. It will take our time and energy to go on a lifelong journey to know the deep things of God’s heart.
- I. Paul gave up everything as he saw the beauty of Jesus! If we can see what Paul saw about Jesus, then we can live like he lived. It is right to be grateful for God’s blessings on our circumstances, but we should view them as accessories to the privilege of beholding the excellency of Jesus’ beauty.
⁸I count all things loss for the excellence [beauty] of the knowledge of Christ. (Phil. 3:8)
- J. Without a sense of awe in our relationship with God we will live spiritually bored. A spiritually bored believer is weak and more vulnerable to Satan’s tactics. A fascinated believer who is preoccupied with the beauty of God is spiritually strong and therefore better equipped to withstand Satan’s schemes.

II. THE FRAGRANCE OF JESUS (SONG 1:3)

- A. The fragrance of a rose comes from its internal qualities. In a similar way, the King’s perfume in the Song speaks of His internal life—what He thinks and feels. As the Father “pours forth” (reveals) the beauty of Jesus’ name, it causes believers (the virgins) to love Jesus.

³*Because of the fragrance of Your good ointments [perfumes, NIV], Your Name is ointment [perfume, NIV] poured forth; therefore the virgins love You. ⁴*Draw me away!* (Song 1:3-4)*

- B. Because of the fragrance of Jesus’ perfumes—His internal qualities—two things will occur.

1. First, God will *pour Jesus’ name forth*—He will exalt, promote, and reveal it to the nations. The Father “pours forth” His name like fragrance until it fills the earth. A prophetic token of this occurred when Mary anointed Jesus with perfume and it filled the whole house (Jn. 12:3).

⁹*God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name.* (Phil. 2:9)

¹⁴*“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.”* (Hab. 2:14)

2. Second, because Jesus’ beauty is accessible (poured forth by the Spirit), many will love Him. The knowledge of God awakens love for Him in our heart. Jesus is zealous to declare God’s name, His personality, knowing it will awaken love in our heart for God (Jn. 17:26). We have access to the beauty of God, which has enthralled the angels in heaven from eternity past.

²⁶*“And I [Jesus] have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You [the Father] loved Me may be in them.”* (Jn. 17:26)

III. THE BRIDE FEASTS AT THE KING’S TABLE (1:12-14)

- A. The Bride sees Jesus as one who so values her that He went to the cross (embraced myrrh, 1:13) to win her, and as the one who is as delightful to her as fragrant flowers (henna blooms, 1:14).

¹³*A bundle of myrrh [burial spice] is my Beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts.*

¹⁴*My Beloved is to me [as delightful as] a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi.* (Song 1:13-14)

1. **Myrrh:** This was a gum resin taken from a shrub-like tree to make a fragrant perfume. It was used to prepare a body for burial (Jn. 19:39-40). Jesus was given myrrh at His birth as a prophetic symbol of His death, and myrrh was offered to Him on the cross (Mt. 2:11; Mk. 15:23). It can speak of death and trials. Jesus’ death was a fragrance to God (Eph. 5:2).
2. **Henna blooms:** Henna was known for its beautiful flowers and for its delightful fragrance used as a perfume. The Bride saw the beauty and delightfulness of Jesus (1:14). She compared Him to beautiful, fragrant henna flowers in full bloom. He is delightful to all who see the truth about Him. He is not the boring God that religion falsely proclaims Him to be.

- B. **Beautiful:** When we see Jesus as beautiful and delightful, then obedience seems reasonable.

¹⁶*Behold, You are beautiful, my Beloved, truly delightful.* (Song 1:16, ESV)

IV. MEDITATING ON THE BEAUTY OF GOD

- A. God's beauty is everything that is attractive about Him. It includes how He thinks and feels, the power and knowledge that He possesses, what He does, how He looks, and much more. His beauty is magnified when we see it in the context of His responses to our sinfulness (Ex. 34:6-8).
- B. **Personality of God:** How He thinks and feels includes how *God loves God* (the Father's affection for Jesus—His exaltation, redemption); how God feels about *His people* (their partnership and obedient love), *creation* (earth, animals, sky, angels, New Jerusalem, etc.), and *His eternal kingdom* (the administration of Jesus' rule, including the progressive triumph of His kingdom on earth).
1. **God's power:** He is sovereign, possessing all authority and infinite power (omnipotence).
 2. **God's knowledge:** He possesses all knowledge and perfect wisdom (omniscience).
 3. **God's leadership:** He acts decisively and redemptively as He rules and directs history.
 4. **God's appearance:** His majestic appearance (eyes like fire, face like the sun, etc.)
 5. **God's being:** His omnipresence (His self-existence, self-sufficiency, immutability, etc.)
- C. In his book *The Evidential Power of Beauty* Thomas Dubay traces the signature of God through the physical world. Ranging from the cosmic rotation of planets to the make-up of earth's atmosphere, through the wonders of biology on the molecular level and down to the behavior of atomic particles, Dubay sees the revelation of the beauty of God. Reading this book will help you to marvel at the intentionality of God and His commitment to beauty.
- D. Simply put, the Lord makes things beautiful because He *is* beauty. Since God's creation reflects His glory, when we see beauty in its many wonders, we catch a glance of the beautiful God (Ps. 19:1-6).
- E. "God Himself is the absolutely original pattern of all other beauty...*Beauty is what God is.* His wisdom is beautiful wisdom, His power is beautiful power, His justice is beautiful justice, and His love is beautiful love. But what makes each of these attributes beautiful is not merely that they are infinite and eternal...The attributes of God derive their beauty from their relationship to each other. It is the peculiar proportionality and interplay and harmony of all God's attributes...that constitutes God's beauty, and makes Him the foundation of all the beauty in the world."
(**John Piper**)
- F. "Every experience of beauty points to infinity." "The criterion of truth is beauty." (**Balthasar**)
- G. Song 5:10-16 gives us the greatest poetic description of Jesus' beauty in Scripture. It focuses on His *leadership* (power and plans) and *personality* (mind and emotions). The Spirit combined metaphors of the *human body* (His head, hair, eyes, cheeks, lips, hands, body, countenance, legs, and mouth) and the *Jerusalem temple* (gold, precious stones, ivory, cedars of Lebanon, spices, myrrh, and pillars of marble) to convey ten attributes of Jesus through images that were familiar at that time.
- ¹⁰"**My Beloved is...chief among ten thousand.** ¹¹**His head [leadership] is like the finest gold...**
¹³**His cheeks [emotions] are like...banks of scented herbs...** ¹⁴**His hands [works of power] are rods of gold...** ¹⁵**His legs are pillars of marble...** ¹⁶**Yes, He is altogether lovely.** (Song 5:10-16)
- H. Jesus' leadership is compared to finest gold (5:11), His works of power to hands like gold and legs like marble 5:14-15), and His personality with beautiful emotions to beds of spices (5:13).

- I. Revelation 4 is one of the greatest passages on God’s beauty. What God put around His glorious throne expresses His beauty. I refer to Revelation 4 as the “beauty realm of God.”

³*He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne...like an emerald. ⁴*Around the throne were twenty-four thrones...I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their head.**

⁵*From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶*Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal...around the throne, were four living creatures. (Rev. 4:3-6)**

- J. In God’s court, I identify four categories, each having three themes (totaling twelve themes)

1. The beauty of **God’s person**: how God looks, feels, and acts (Rev. 4:3)
2. The beauty of **God’s people**: the Church enthroned, robed, and crowned (Rev. 4:4)
3. The beauty of **God’s power**: manifestations of power in lightning, thunder, voices (Rev. 4:5a)
4. The beauty of **God’s presence**: His fire on lamps, seraphim, and the sea (Rev. 4:5b-7; 15:2)

V. THE END-TIME CHURCH WILL BE FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

- A. Isaiah prophesied that the Spirit would emphasize Jesus’ beauty in the generation in which He returns. Jesus is called the Branch of the Lord (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; 60:21; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). His name is called *Wonderful* because He fill the hearts of people with great wonder (Isa. 9:6). The Holy Spirit will fill the earth with songs of God’s love and beauty at the end of the age.

¹⁷*“Your eyes will see the King in His beauty.” (Isa. 33:7)*

²*In that day the Branch of the LORD [Jesus] shall be beautiful and glorious. (Isa. 4:2)*

⁶*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given...His name will be called Wonderful... (Isa. 9:6)*

- B. The Spirit is raising up those who will proclaim the riches of Jesus. Although the subjects most taught about are good topics, such as leadership, economic principles, relationship skills, ministry skills, how to be happier, etc., the most neglected subject in the kingdom of God is *God Himself*.

⁸*To me...grace was given, that I should preach...the unsearchable riches of Christ. (Eph. 3:8)*

- C. The knowledge of God’s beauty is the highest and yet most difficult reality to lay hold of. It is the most powerful and enjoyable reality and what Satan attacks most. *It is the Mt. Everest of the kingdom of God*. God gives more based on hunger. The Spirit will give more insight into God’s beauty to those who are hungry for more. We are to be diligent in our pursuit of God, willing to pay any price in seeking for more of God. There is a deep correlation between the amount of time we spend with Jesus and the measure of understanding and insight that we receive about Him.

⁴*If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures... (Prov. 2:4)*

- D. One of Paul’s primary prayers for the Church was to receive greater insight into God’s beauty.

¹⁷*“...that the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened.” (Eph. 1:17-18)**