

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

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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.

One of the distinctions in the Song of Solomon is the realm of beauty, the subject of beauty. It is the great eight chapter love song where the, Jesus the Bridegroom King is singing to His Bride and she is responding in song. It is called the great song of all of songs, the great song of all the ages. So if you are a singer and musician or if you are a lover of Jesus Song of Solomon is right down your alley. One of the main distinctions of the Song of Solomon, this eight chapter love song is the call to be fascinated with the beauty of God as well as the beauty of the Bride, it is both and.

- B. God created us with a longing to be fascinated or awestruck and filled with marvel and wonder. We cannot repent of our longing for fascination. 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.

Okay Paragraph B., God created us with a longing to be fascinated. Every person in this room was created with a longing in your spirit to be fascinated, to be awestruck. We love being struck with wonder and awe and marvel. The marvelous God simply created us to marvel.

Now we cannot remove that longing to be fascinated by repenting of it. You know in some Eastern religions they try to empty themselves from all feeling and emotion. You cannot empty yourself of the longing to marvel and to be fascinate. It is a significant part of our creative design. God created us that way in order to fascinate us with Himself. Not only with Himself but primarily with Himself. We will either satisfy that longing in God or we will seek to satisfy it in darkness because that longing will not go away.

Now the secular entertainment industry has identified this longing. They have really locked in and focused on it, they have targeted it on it and they have exploited this longing. They may not use that language but they think, hey the human heart wants to be fascinated, let's make some money on this. They have exploited the human race to their profit and to the ruin of many people.

- C. We long to be filled with endless wonder. God placed a sense of wondering in the core of our created design. Such fascination is what humanity was created to behold and enjoy. 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 He returns. The Holy Spirit will fill the earth with the expression of God's love and beauty at the end of the age.

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

Paragraph D., now one of the great prophecies for the generation the Lord returns is found in Isaiah 33. In context this is for the generation the Lord returns. It is a very well-known prophecy, we quote it often here and

sing it. The Lord spoke to Isaiah, your eyes will see the King and His beauty. The Holy Spirit is going to magnify and emphasize the beauty of Jesus, I mean all through history but in the generation the Lord returns in a heightened way, in a way beyond any other time.

The Holy Spirit is going to fill the earth with love songs, songs that magnify the beauty and the love of God. Those songs are already breaking out in the last few decades in a whole new level. The next decades to come we are going to see the Holy Spirit it is going to cause the theme of the beauty of the King loving Him and Him loving His people to fill the earth.

Now the great king of Israel, the man after God's own heart, King David he was called the sweet psalmist of Israel, the great singer of Israel. He was not just a singer he was the great song writer. It is not an accident that the great song writer of redemptive history his life passion all of his days was to encounter beauty, the beauty of God. There is a correlation between his calling as the great psalmist, the sweet singer of Israel, the song writer, the love sick worshiper and the man that was absolutely determined to focus on the beauty of God.

E. One of King David's lifelong goals was to encounter the beauty of God regularly.

4One thing I have desired...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. (Ps. 27:4)

Look at Psalm 27. The key phrase that I want to highlight is all of his days. This was not just a summer at IHOP, this was not just a conference, a worship leader's conference. From his youth to his latter years David was, had this intentional focus to gaze upon the beauty of God. He was a student of God's emotions, a student of God's heart. I mean it is quite a challenge because he was running the government, he was king and he was over the army. More than that he was a man focused all of his days on the beauty of God.

I believe God is going to raise up men and women like David in the generation in which the prophetic word is, your eyes will see the King in His beauty. Your lips will sing of the King and His beauty. I believe there will be all kinds of manifestations in media, in writing, in messages, and songs and dramas just proclaiming and giving expression to the beauty of the Lord.

F. The Spirit is described as searching or 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 infinite 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)

Well Paragraph F., the Holy Spirit is described as searching the deep things of God. I mean imagine the Holy Spirit is described as discerning, I mean the Holy Spirit is fully God so this is unusual language. He is pictured as discerning the deep things of the Father and the Son's heart. What does He do with those deep things of the beauty of God, the Father and Son? He makes them known to the Church. Of course that is His job. That is His job description forever. It is not just till the resurrection.

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 He 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. 16:14)

He will be guiding us into truth and revealing Jesus though we will be face to face there will be a spirit of revelation that will increase and multiply even in the resurrection in our lives. I do not want to wait till then. John 16, He will guide you, He will exhort you, He will take you by the hand and lead you to go as far as your hunger wants to go. He will not force you on this journey, He will not force feed you. He says, I will guide you, I will escort you. I will take the things that belong to Jesus and I will give them to you in this age and the age to come.

He gives them to us according to His hunger. I mean it is remarkable we have the beautiful God beckoning the human race. Come and behold my beauty. He will not give it to us automatically, he will give it to us according to our hunger. That is why David's intentional statement, all my days I will seek the beauty of the Lord. That was not a casual thing. That was something he had to contend for. Because undoubtedly he would lose his way and then resign up and realign his heart again.

Now this subject of the beauty of God is not just a nice subject, it is germane, it is foundational to our safety, to our spiritual life and our spiritual safety. Because without a sense of awe, without a sense of marvel we end up spiritually bored. One of the great problems today in the Body of Christ is so many believers are spiritually bored with the fascinating God. They were created to long to be, they long to be fascinated.

God is fascinating, the Holy Spirit has been given but He will not force feed any of us. He will give us to the degree that we are hungry. He says, come after Me. The Holy Spirit says, I will escort you. I mean I want Him to give me just a whole lot all the time. He goes, no I will just give you a little bit.

It is kind of like vitamins you know you take vitamins you do not feel anything. Like did you take your vitamins today? Yes. My wife gives me vitamins for years. Somebody goes, are they helping you? I go, I do not know I cannot ever tell because the vitamins I took this morning I cannot tell if they are helping me. The smart guys say that over years it really does make a difference. Besides that, I do what my wife tells me in these issues.

The thing is it is little by little. You look back over some years and you can see the difference. I believe this subject of beauty and longing, the, I mean the longing for beauty and for fascination is a battle ground, it is a key battleground in the culture of this generation. Because the longing to behold beauty, this longing to be fascinated it is really coming to the forefront because the media is so sophisticate it is drawing it out to a whole new intensity in the culture. The Holy Spirit is going to use this that which the Devil means for evil God is going to use for good.

- H. We have a beautiful God beckoning us to encounter His beauty. It takes time and energy to begin plumbing the depths of God. It takes time and energy to pray, fast, and study Scripture.
- I. 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 is strong.
- J. Longing for beauty and fascination is the battleground of the Church.
 - 1. A fascinated believer is spiritually strong and lives with a greater measure of protection from Satan's schemes because the believer is preoccupied with the beauty of God.
 - 2. To one not living fascinated with God, the substitutes of money, drugs, alcohol and immorality are far more tempting.

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)**

Top of page two, well let's look now at the Song of Solomon and this subject of beauty. This is a subject we cannot focus on too many times, you cannot focus on this enough. Roman numeral two, we are going to look at this. Oh I love this verse, Song of Solomon 1:3. This is the Bride speaking to the King. Because of the fragrance, she is speaking right to the King, because of the fragrance of your good perfumes your name is like perfume poured forth. Therefore the virgins, the people of God they love You. Draw me after you, draw me away after you.

Let's look at this again. This is a poetic statement but its meaning is pretty straight forward. Because of the fragrance of your good perfumes, your name is like perfume poured forth. Therefore the people of God love you more and they love you more and they love you more. Now the, to understand this poetic description of the King or this adoration that the Bride had before her Bridegroom King the fragrance of a rose comes from its internal qualities obviously. It is the internal qualities that constitutes the quality of the fragrance that comes forth.

In a similar way the King's perfume in this symbolic meaning and this allegorical interpretation speaks of His internal qualities. It is the way that He thinks and the way that He feels, that is the perfume that emanates out of Him that captures those who worship in spirit and truth.

- B. Because of the “fragrance of Jesus' perfumes” or 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 that will spread to many. We have access to the beauty of Jesus which has enthralled the angels in heaven from eternity past.

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

2. Second, because Jesus' beauty is accessible (poured forth by the Spirit), many will love Him. The knowledge of God awakens love in our heart for Him. Jesus is zealous to declare God's name or personality, knowing it will awaken love in our heart for God (Jn. 17:26).

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)*

Now notice in Paragraph B., I have written here that because of His perfumes two things happen. Because of His good perfumes, because of His internal qualities are so excellent the way Jesus thinks, the way Jesus feels, the things He has planned, the way He responds to people is so extraordinary, it is so excellent. That the first

thing I want to highlight is that the Father has determined His name because it is such quality, because it is such a fragrant beautiful perfume, because this internal life has such a unique quality.

God the Father says, I am going to pour it forth in the nations. I am going to exalt one name. I am going to promote the only name that is altogether lovely. Of course the name speaks of the internal character, He is going to reveal it to the nations. God is going to fill the earth, He is going to pour forth the perfume of the name of who Jesus is and His glory will fill the earth. Well that is one thing that is going to happen because of the fragrance of His good perfumes.

The book of Revelation calls it that all the angels and all the nations will sing, worthy is the Lamb. Revelation 5, and that is His name and the fragrance of the truth of who He is filling the entire earth in the age to come. You know there is a prophetic snapshot a little token, a little prophetic picture of this. It is in John 12 when Mary of Bethany went in right before Jesus would go to the cross. She took the costly fragrance, she poured it on Jesus' feet. She anointed His feet with the oil and her hair. It says, and the fragrance that was all over Jesus filled the room. Well that was just a little snapshot, a little prophetic token that the fragrance of that Man is going to fill the earth.

The thing I always love about that word, that episode is that at the cross Jesus was still drenched in the power of that perfume because it was very costly, very rare, very strong beautiful perfume. There was only one person in the crowd that smelled exactly like Jesus on the cross and that was Mary of Bethany standing at the foot of the cross.

Well the point I want to make here is God is going to pour forth His name because He is the only name that is perfect as the fragrance of His good perfumes. Secondly it says that because of Your good perfumes the virgins love you. It is because His beauty is accessible by the Holy Spirit to our hearts that our love grows and grows. You know in ages past His beauty was hidden, it was veiled. The Holy Spirit had not been poured out. Though you could see the glory of God in creation you had to kind of connect the dots together. There must be an invisible God behind this created beauty. He must have a beautiful character and mindset and heart to create this.

Much of the beauty of Jesus was actually hidden and veiled but that He came in the flesh, died on the cross, rose from the dead, the Holy Spirit is poured out. Now His beauty is accessible in a greater measure even as time unfolds. Of course at the resurrection in the second coming it is going to be far more accessible and it is going to fill the earth. The idea is this, it is the premise of the Scripture is that the knowledge of God and we will say the knowledge of His beauty. Because the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His beauty is the same thing. It is powerful that it is the very knowledge of God, it is the knowledge of His beauty that moves us, it awakens us our hearts. It inspires, it wakes us up, wow this is a remarkable, and it causes us to love Him. That is what this great love song says.

Because of the fragrance of your good perfume the virgins they will love you more and more and more. The beauty of God that has enthralled the angels in ages past is now accessible to the human race by the incarnation resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit we have access to that beauty that they did not have even in ages past. Beloved I do not want to wait until the resurrection and the face to face relationship with Jesus to move forward on this. Because the fragrance of His good perfumes I am telling you it will cause the people to love Him.

Most of our spiritual problems are rooted in having wrong ideas about Him. Our view is too low, our vision is too dim, and our spirit is too dull. It is by getting greater glimpse of Him through the Scripture, through creation I mean by the Holy Spirit where the Holy Spirit lets us see that the invisible hand and heart behind that created

beauty is the redeemer. I am not talking about worshipping creation I am talking about creation as a picture book, as the theater of which we see the invisible heart and hand behind that created order, the invisible design. I mean the mind behind this glorious design.

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).

*¹³A bundle of myrrh [burial spice] is my Beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts.
¹⁴My Beloved is to me [as delightful as] a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi.
(Song 1:13-14)*

Let's look at Roman numeral three. We go on a few verses in Song of Solomon from verse 3 the, because of the fragrance of your good ointments God is going to pour your name forth and the people are going to love you, that is verse 3.

Let's go on to verse 13. The Bride she breaks out in another declaration. I want to urge you to see the truth behind this poetic language. You do not have to say this language to God but you want to say the truth represented by this poetry, this poetic love song verse 13-14. A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me. Verse 14, my beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms.

Now these were symbolic, I mean the symbolism was obvious to the people in that day, the people in the ancient world. Myrrh was well known in that culture as a very beautiful and it had a fragrance. Myrrh was also used commonly in preparing a body that had died, I mean for wealthy people of course. The henna blooms were flowers that had tremendous beauty and tremendous fragrance. So what she is saying to him in the love language of this poetry, again you do not need to use this language to God, you can. A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me.

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).

Look at Paragraph one, again myrrh, I will just mention two uses of myrrh that were commonly known that help give meaning to the symbolism. I mean it is obvious symbolism, it is not mystical, it is not hard to understand particularly if you live in that culture. Myrrh was used to make fragrant perfume. Particularly it was used in the anointing oil that God told Moses to make the anointing oil in a certain way.

Also myrrh, I will say it again, was used to prepare a body for burial. Paragraph one, at Jesus' birth the wise men came and offered Him frankincense and myrrh. I mean can you imagine bringing embalming spices to a baby funeral, I mean to a baby shower? I mean myrrh was like, why are you bringing myrrh? It spoke of his death, it was a prophetic statement of His death even when He was born. Then He was offered myrrh on the cross. Then it was prepared, it was involved in his burial as well.

2. **Henna blooms:** A 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.

Paragraph two, the henna blooms, these were beautiful flowers, they had delightful fragrance. The henna blooms of En Gedi which is a beautiful oasis just west of the Dead Sea, a very well-known kind of a resort area so to speak in the ancient world, an oasis of remarkable beauty. The henna blooms were famous in that part of the world.

She is declaring to her king and through the imagery of this love song we proclaim to the Lord Jesus, You are beautiful, You are fragrant. You are altogether lovely. You are delightful to me. Beloved He is delightful. When we see the truth of His beauty then it exposes the lie, the religious lie that God is boring and obeying Him is boring.

God is boring if our spirit is dull and we are not connected to the truth about Him. Again one of the great problems today in the Body of Christ is so many are spiritually bored. The problem with being spiritually bored is we are far more vulnerable to the enemy's attack when we are spiritually bored. When our hearts are invigorated, when we are on pursuit, when the beauty of the Lord even in small measures is unfolding in our life little by little because we are intentional about it. We are not casual about it, we are not, well you know we see it we see it, if we do not we do not.

No we want the intentionality of King David. All the days of my life I am not going to let go of this preoccupation. Yes you might be the king of a nation like David, you might be the head of an army like David but your hands are occupied in a task, in an assignment but your heart is preoccupied with a person. That is a great preacher's statement but this was a reality in David's life. He stumbled and he fell a number of times but he resigned up, he realigned his heart to that reality.

When I think of Jesus being a bundle of myrrh it is the beauty reflected in what He did at the cross. I did not make that point but that is the point being made. She is awestruck in the New Testament language and through the lens of the New Testament. All night I meditate on what the myrrh, the fragrance of what you did in love because of love for me. What you gave yourself for in order to win me to you.

It says that the myrrh would lie all night between my breast. What would happen is they would have just a little pack, a little container of myrrh. They would, a woman would have around her neck and it would just cause, wherever she goes to be perfumed. The imagery of this is all night unceasing I am struck by the beauty of what Jesus is as the one who is like myrrh who gave Himself on the cross for us.

It is not only His death is beautiful, He is not only like a bundle of myrrh hanging upon my heart. He is like the henna blooms as well, the henna blooms. He is fragrant, He is beautiful, He is not boring. I mean the endless possibilities of pursuing Him. What I mean by endless possibilities of new and greater depth of insight. We will never ever exhaust the beauty of this Man.

Like the seraphim around the throne they cry out holy, holy, holy. They cover their eyes and when they cry holy they are not crying, purity, purity, purity. What they mean by holy, they are saying, transcendent beauty, infinitely superior, holy other than is what they mean. Holy meaning completely above and beyond anything that exists, transcendent beauty. They will never ever exhaust the beauty of God.

A billion years from now we will look at the throne and the seraphim will be covering their eyes yet again. The power of that beauty racing through their being is kind of like they come up for air. They glimpse at it again and they cry, holy. They cover their eyes, they bow down again.

Whatever we are doing anywhere in the eternal city, the New Jerusalem and reigning with Jesus on the earth we will look up at the throne and we will see a million years from now the seraphim are bowing yet again. We will say, man they are not even close to exhausting the beauty of God. You say, I guess we got a long way to go we will say to each other. There, we will never ever exhaust it.

- B. ***Beautiful***: The more the Bride sees of His beauty and love, the more she enjoys her relationship with God. When we see Jesus as beautiful and delightful, then obedience seems reasonable.

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

Paragraph B., verse 16, then she gives the summary, the Bride's summary of this whole section. Again we have not done the verse by verse through this. We have done it in the past, I have got that on the internet. Of course there are lots of commentaries on it, the spiritual interpretation of the Song of Solomon is the beauty of the love between the Bridegroom King Jesus and His Bride.

She declares, you are beautiful, you are all together lovely, she says later. You are truly delightful is what she proclaims. Beloved when He is beautiful and delightful because we have stayed, we have gone after Him and the Holy Spirit has given us little by little just little installments, little inspiration of insight. It is like the rich get richer, the more you see the more you long to see. The more that you encounter the bigger your capacity and the greater demand in your heart to encounter more.

As we see the Lord is beautiful and delightful obedience seems reasonable. Obedience does not seem extraordinary or dutiful or odious or why do I have to obey? I mean gee whiz what does He want from me? When we see who He is obedience is very reasonable. We are like Paul when he said, I suffer the loss of all things for the excellency and he could have said, because of the beauty of the Man Christ Jesus. He goes, I consider what I gave up, rubbish or dung. He said, I do not care what I gave up. Do not tell me I gave up a lot. You do not know who it is I am looking at. It does not mean anything what I gave up when I behold Him.

IV. MEDITATING ON THE BEAUTY OF GOD

- A. God's beauty speaks of that which is attractive about Him. It includes Who He is, the power He possesses, how He thinks and feels, what He does, how He looks, and much more.
1. ***God's appearance***: the splendor of His appearance (eyes like fire, face like the sun, etc.)
 2. ***God's knowledge***: His omniscience (infinite knowledge, wisdom, and understanding)
 3. ***God's power***: His omnipotence (infinite power or sovereignty)
 4. ***God's being***: His omnipresence (His self-existence, self-sufficiency, immutability, etc.)

Top of page three, what we are doing in this session is just wanting to strength, give you an initial paradigm or perspective of the kingdom of God through the lens of beauty. Others of you, you have had this paradigm for a while, I just want to strengthen you in it. Because I know my own life that I get a hold of this, then I lose my handle on it, then I resign up, then I lose my grip of it, then I resign up again. So I am just wanting to take this kind of refresher course and remind us of the fundamental reality of the kingdom of God.

Is it working for Him? Yes we are working with Him not for Him. We are working in relationship with a Man we love because the fragrance of His good perfumes. He is so beautiful we love Him. He is so fascinating, He is so enthralling. He is worth everything we give, this is fundamental to the kingdom of God. Yet it is so easy to serve in the kingdom distinct, separated from this very fundamental foundational reality in the Word of God. Well Roman numeral four, top of page three, God's beauty speaks of that which is attractive about Him. I want to just give you a few little practical ways to think about this. Sunday I am going to break down, I am going to stay on this theme the beauty of God not so much from the Song of Solomon but I want to give twelve different ways to pursue the beauty of God in our personal lives in terms of minds, I mean things to think about and things to go after in our dialogue and study with the Lord. I want to talk about twelve distinct ways.

So I am not just calling you to gaze on beauty without giving you a little bit of a road map on some steps to take. Not that I understand it all but I understand a little bit of it. I am going to give you the road map that I am using, some of the pathways to go forward in this. I am going to do that this Sunday.

Here just to stir you up on it, just to get you to say yeah refresher course. This is what it is about. Yeah this is what makes holiness seem joyful. This is what makes the labor and the sacrifice seem worth it. This is divine entertainment at its best where my heart is invigorated and alive interacting with Him who is altogether lovely and altogether worthy.

Just a little introduction before Sunday and we will have the notes on the internet because some of you will not be here and you will say, hey I would like to know those twelve points of how to pursue the beauty of God. Again it is, I do not want to talk about how to, I am going to talk about more, the areas that you are going to bring to the Lord, areas of thought about His beauty that we can break it down and talk to the Lord and meditate on it and give thanks for it and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in it, those kinds of things.

The beauty of God, Paragraph A., speaks of that which is attractive to Him. Who He is, the power He possesses, how He thinks, how He feels, these are just a few of the twelve. What He does, how He looks, I mean how He looks. I mean we have a Man with a resurrected body, His eyes are like fire, His face is brighter than the sun, lightening is coming out of His hands. John the apostle looked at Him in Revelation 1, fell like a dead man because of the splendor and the majesty of a real Man with a physical body. We are talking beautiful, we are talking majesty. Of course He is a reflection of His Father.

- B. ***Personality of God:*** Who He is, how He thinks and feels and what He does. This includes the Father's affection for *Jesus* (His exaltation, redemption), *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 the earth). His beauty is heightened as we see it in context to His responses to our sinfulness (Ex 34:6-8).

Paragraph B., just a little hint, the beauty of God is seen in the Father's affection for Jesus. When we understand the way that Jesus loves the Father and the Father loves Jesus, both ways we capture a dimension of the beauty of what He is like meditating on how God loves God, the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father, and the Spirit etc. The beauty of God is seen in the way that God loves His people. This deep longing for partnership, that is beautiful, it is beautiful to behold, it is beautiful to experience.

The beauty of God in the created order whether it is the earth, the animals, the sky, the angel, the New Jerusalem, the resurrection, all that He creates are tokens of the beauty of His mind. I mean talking about a beautiful mind, this is the core reality of a beautiful mind, the Man Christ Jesus. His eternal kingdom, the way it unfolds, the way it progresses, the nature of His leadership is beautiful.

When we see His leadership and the wisdom behind it and the plans behind it it moves us. It is not just like He is powerful, it is like, who thinks like you think? Who feels like you feel? Who plans the things you plan? Who creates like you create? I mean we look at the created order and it is just awesome. He says, you think the earth is beautiful? You wait until you see the New Jerusalem, you really are going to get touched. You wait till you see the new heavens and the new earth.

I mean He is, He is the great architect, He is the great artist of creation, behind creation. The intelligent design He is not only brilliant, He is an artist in all that He does. Now His beauty is heightened, again we will break down these things a little bit more on Sunday. His beauty is heightened especially when we see His beauty, His mind, His power, His plans the way He feels in context to how He responds to us in our weakness. Like I see my weakness when I sin come up short and yet He responds this way to Me, His beauty is magnified even more in context to when I see my weakness and your weakness and the nations.

Yet I see the beauty, the way He responds to us. I mean who would have people like you and me rule forever with Him in resurrected glory? Beloved we do not deserve this. There is a beautiful heart and a beautiful and a beautiful plan behind this idea of people like you and me having magnificent resurrected bodies ruling with Him face to face forever. There is a beautiful plan behind this.

When I touch this even a little bit it excited my heart. Sin does not, is not near so enticing when our heart is preoccupied in these directions. When we are spiritually bored we are so much more vulnerable to the enemy's lies and attacks.

- 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 makeup 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.

Paragraph C., this book, *The Evidential Power of Beauty*, I highly recommend it by Thomas Dubey. In this book you can read it, it is maybe a couple hundred pages, it is just loaded. He talks about the evidence of God's beauty in creation. Thomas Dubey traces the signature of God through the physical world, very, very brilliant man. He is just some years ago went to be with the Lord. This book is such a gift to the Body of Christ, one of the best books I have ever read, *The Evidential Power of Beauty*.

He traces the signature, the handiwork of God ranging from the cosmic rotation of the planets. I mean there is, he spends a chapter on that and all the beauty not just the brilliance and the power but the beauty of it of what happens out in space. It is remarkable. There is a person behind that and He is a Bridegroom King and you are His eternal companion. He does not just become beautiful when you figure this out in the resurrection that He has all this power, He is beautiful now. It is not something that happens once we figure it out.

Thomas Dubey then he goes to the, talks about the earth's atmosphere and the vegetation and agriculture and then the wonders of biology on the molecular level down the behavior of atomic particles in the smallest. I mean his point is there is as big of a universe, a vast universe within the atom as there is in the sky. He breaks this down and you think, who are You Jesus? What is this? I do not want to miss this part of who He is during this age. I want to engage with beauty in an intentional way.

- D. He makes things beautiful because He *is* beauty. Since His creation speaks of Him, to encounter these tokens of beauty is to catch a glance at the beautiful God.

Paragraph D., simply put the Lord makes things beautiful because He is beauty. We get glimpses of it in creation but we have to have a trained attentive inspired eye. Because we can walk by the flower, we can walk by the tree and not, I mean we all do, and lose the wonder, miss the wonder of what is behind it. I mean think about the sun, the sun is like one of the greatest miracles. We are so used to it, it does not move us in the way it does if we are intentional. Say, Holy Spirit tell us more about all of this. We begin to just go on this treasure hunt in life of discovering the beauty of God. Anyway, *The Evidential Power of Beauty*, I highly recommend that book.

- 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)

Paragraph E., John Piper he has a quote here, that God Himself is the original pattern of beauty, of all other beauty. Beauty is what God is. His wisdom is beautiful wisdom, His power is beautiful power, His justice is beautiful justice, His love is beautiful love. What he goes on to make, you can read the quote later if you want. He says, it is not just that these qualities are infinite and eternal it is the way they interact these qualities with each other. It is their inner play, it is their harmony, that God never suspends one attribute when He exercises another, that all of His attributes are fully engaged in everything He does.

Meaning we look at God's mercy and we go, wow we love Your mercy. Then we look at His judgment and go, oh no. His mercy and judgment are perfectly in harmony, there is no contradiction of one. There is no suspending of one to exercise the other. His power, His long-term planning is in perfect unity with His mercy and with His desire and delight in us.

Sometimes His long-term planning kind of throws us off. Like Lord let's get with it. He says, you will see, I am getting with it because I delight in you that is why I have a long-term plan. There is no contraction in My power or My patience, My judgment, My wrath, My tenderness, My kindness. There is perfect harmony in all that I am about.

- F. “Every experience of beauty points to infinity.” “The criterion of truth is beauty.” *(Balthasar)*

Paragraph F., Balthazar, I love this quote, every experience of beauty points to infinity. Every experience of beauty points to infinity, points to the eternal, to God Himself. The criterion of truth is beauty. What he means by that it is not, it does not mean that if you think something is beautiful therefore it is true. He is saying that in the absolute sense God is the creator beauty. He is the steward of the beauty, He is the defender of beauty, He is the multiplier of beauty. He is the keeper of the flame of beauty. He defines beauty.

So the criterion of truth is what God calls beautiful, that is what truth is. He puts the two together. We say sometimes beauty is the eyes of the beholder. When the beholder is fallen man that definition is beauty is tainted and it is not reliable. There is one who is beauty and He is the creator, the sustainer, the multiplier, the keeper, the steward of beauty itself.

- 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 by images that were familiar in that day.

¹⁰***“My Beloved is...chief among ten thousand. ¹¹His head [leadership] is like the finest gold...¹³His cheeks [emotions] are like...banks of scented herbs...¹⁴His hands [works of power] are rods of gold...¹⁵His legs are pillars of marble...¹⁶Yes, He is altogether lovely. (Song 5:10-16)***

Well Song of Solomon 5 just to stay with the book a little bit. We are not going to develop this but I just want you to know about it, this Song of Solomon 5:10-16. This seven verses is the ultimate statement in poetic language of the beauty of Jesus. What happens is that the Bride is, she is combining metaphors of the physical body and of the Jerusalem temple. She uses these two metaphors to describe the King in poetic language. So there are ten different attributes of the Bridegroom King that are magnified in this poetic way.

Of course when we take Scripture with scripture and we are understanding that there is a poetic love song between a man and a woman, an actual natural interpretation of the Song of Solomon but that is not the interpretation we are using though I believe in that interpretation, that is a Song of Solomon talks about the beauty of married love, that is a good song and a way to interpret it in itself. That is not the complete or the ultimate interpretation of that Song, that we see these attributes of the King.

I have enjoyed like no other, I mean I was going to say like no other passage but that is not true either. I got a bunch of passages I put in that category. I have so enjoyed Song of Solomon 5:10-16. I want to encourage you to put that like note to self, make this chapter, these seven verses something that you spend time in the weeks and months ahead. We will take a whole session in this course on the beauty, on this Song of Solomon this summer. We will take a whole session on this passage.

She focuses on his leadership and his personality. Again she combines the metaphors of the human body with the Jerusalem Temple because these were, she was extolling the beauty of the King through the lens of those two metaphors. I just put a little hint of it here.

She starts off in verse 10, my beloved is chief among ten thousand. So that is her introductory statement. There is no one like him is what she is really saying. She is not saying he is the best of ten thousand but the other millions of the earth are better, no that is not what she is saying. There is none other like him, it is a poetic statement.

His head, his leadership is like fine as gold. It is perfect, it is fully God, Jesus is fully God and His wisdom and reasoning is like pure gold. His cheeks, and cheeks in the Song speak of His emotions because when you look at somebody all the expressions on their face they are giving insight into what is happening in the heart. They are like banks of scented herbs. His hands, His power, His works are like rods of gold. Not only are they strong but they are divine and they are perfect like gold using the poetic language.

His legs are stable. His works, His plans are like marble. Nothing will move what God has determined. Yes He is altogether lovely. Anyway she develops it far more than that. I just wanted to give you a little, kind of a little taste and see on this chapter. This is a fantastic chapter, Song of Solomon 5:10-16, this passage.

- H. Jesus' leadership is compared to finest gold (v. 11), His works of power to hands like gold and legs like marble (v. 14-15), and His personality with beautiful emotions to beds of spices (v. 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."

³He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne...like an emerald. ⁴Around 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. ⁵From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal...around the throne, were four living creatures... (Rev. 4:3-6)

Turn to page four. We will look at a little bit of this on Sunday. Revelation 4, Paragraph I., it is one of the greatest passages on the beauty of God in the Bible, it is the throne room. Beloved what God puts around His throne is an expression of what He calls beauty. If He puts something around His throne He says it is beautiful. Because His throne is the perfection of beauty according to Psalm 119. It is the consummation of beauty His throne.

I call the throne room of God or the throne scene of God, Revelation 4-5 the beauty realm of God. That is where the epicenter of beauty is. Every phrase has many implications. The Holy Spirit is saying, just ask Me to develop these phrases. The word develops the Word. The Holy Spirit will use the Word to interpret the Word so you are not getting out in some crazy idea of your own. This passage was given by the Spirit and in the Word of God for us to use it and to understand the beauty around God's heart, His throne.

- 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)

Paragraph J., that in this passage I identify four categories. God's person, His people, His power, His presence and each of these four categories has three specific themes. So there are twelve themes that are captured in this passage about God's person, how He looks and feels, about God's people. They are enthroned, their robed, their crowned, that is an indication of what God is like that His people would be crowned and robed and enthroned. That the power of God, lightning and thunder and music and voices and fragrance proceeding out of His throne. Then His presence there are lamps of fire and the seraphim, the living creatures are called the burning ones. Then there is the sea of glass like crystal filled with flaming fire. All of these are the, it is where the saints gather around the throne. Let's just read this passage, Revelation 4:3. He who sat there was like a jasper, that is like a brilliant bright diamond, and a sardius stone. He looked like a deep red gem and a bright shining diamond like crystal.

There was a rainbow around His throne. The rainbow had an emerald hue to it, it had a dominant emerald color amidst the other colors. It spoke of the mercy of God around the throne forever. That gives us insight into what God looks like and how He feels, how He thinks. He is a God of mercy under an emerald rainbow forever. All of His works are covered by His mercy.

Verse 4, around the throne are twenty-four thrones. God did not need other thrones around, He wants His people around the throne. He wants to share this, this gives insight to what He is like. There are other kings, they do not

want to share their rule. The Lord is adamant about sharing His rule, He demands to share it with His people. I mean He is always the preeminent one, unique in glory in His own way. He wants His Bride together with Him forever.

He said before He went to the cross in John 17:24, He said, Father I desire them that where I am they, she would be with Me. They will be with Me where I am forever, I demand this, I insist on this. What kind of Man is He? Beautiful beyond description.

Verse 5, from the throne, lightening, thunder, voices, do not think these are just any ole voices. Beautiful music proceeding out of the throne with. Do not picture some little light show, this thing is spectacular beyond anything you could imagine.

Then seven lamps burning, these are not little you know five by five little lamps or little four foot lamp you might have in a living room. These are massive lamps of fire, I mean they could be beyond size beyond anything you could imagine. I do not want to go into that right now but I got some ideas I will share later. Burning before the throne, they are manifestations of the Holy Spirit like what happened in the book of Acts when the fire rested on the 120 in the book of Acts.

Well this fire, this lamp is not just going to rest on 120 in Jerusalem in the book of Acts, I mean on the day of Pentecost. All the saints a billion, two billion, three billion, whatever the number is are all on the sea of glass. The flame of fire is resting on them as a, I mean an eternal New Jerusalem upper room with the fire of God upon all the saints there before the throne. Oh I cannot wait to be on that sea of glass. That is going to be amazing with You. We are going to have a ball; that is going to be fantastic. I do not know if we are going to have a ball, I do not know if that is the right word.

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 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).

⁷*"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)*

Roman numeral five, just the last few moments here just to go back to the prophecy in Isaiah. There is one generation that will see the beauty of God beyond any other generation. Your eyes will see the beauty of the King. The eyes will see the King in His beauty. Isaiah 4, same prophet Isaiah, in that day, it is talking about the generation the Lord returns, the branch of the Lord, that is a term for the Messiah. It is a well-known term in the Old Testament for the Messiah. The Messiah shall be seen in His beauty.

Isaiah 9 we know it well, unto us a child is born, a son is given, His name is the one who fills His people with wonder. Beloved this is more than a Christmas card, this is a reality. The name of the Child and the Son, the Ruler is the one that fills His people with awe and wonder forever; that is His name. That is not an overstatement, He did not oversell Himself on this. He goes, I have enough to fascinate you forever and forever and forever. I am the one who fills His people with wonder. You want to use, think of the word wonderful. Do

not have it, do not have a tame little vanilla definition of what wonderful means. I like those Christmas cards but they are too tame for me.

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

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

Paul said in Ephesians 3, to me grace was given, the anointing was given that I would preach the unsearchable riches. Beloved we need to be people that are locked in to preaching, proclaiming, singing, social media, drama, art, proclaiming the riches of a Man, the unsearchable riches. Paul said, I am anointed to make the riches of that Man known.

The most neglected subject in the kingdom of God today is God. The Holy Spirit is going to correct that. The kingdom of God is not God centric right now. It is bless me centric. God wants to bless His people but I tell you we are far more blessed in a God-centric life focus and a God-centric focus and paradigm of the kingdom of God. The subjects that are taught most in the kingdom of God which are very good subjects by the way and I teach them but we cannot teach these more than our teaching about God.

We teach on leadership, economic principles, leadership skills, relationship skills, how to be happier, how to get more money, now to make life easier. Those are not bad subjects, those are biblical subjects most of them. I am not putting those down at all because I teach them and they are in the Bible. The subject of God is the most neglected subject in the kingdom of God.

- C. 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 encounter that we have with Him. The knowledge of God is the highest and yet most difficult reality in the Spirit to lay hold of. It is the most powerful and enjoyable reality and is what Satan attacks the most. *It is the Mt. Everest of the kingdom of God*. God gives more based on hunger. God will give more revelation of Himself to those who are hungry for Him.

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

Proverbs 2 said if you seek for her as silver, search for her as hidden treasures. It is talking about the knowledge of God. You read Proverbs 2, it is talking about knowing the beauty and the wisdom of what God is like. Search for her. Beloved the knowledge of God is the highest yet the most difficult reality in the spirit to stay with and to grow in. It is the most powerful, the most enjoyable reality but the one that Satan attacks most. I call it the Mount Everest of the kingdom of God is God. This is kind of the unscalable mountain. We need an escort but we need a focus because He will only give to us according to our hunger.

- D. One of Paul's primary prayers for the Church was to receive revelation of God.

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

So I end here with revelation, Ephesians 1. This is the prayer that Paul prayed about the beauty of God. This is the prayer that we have prayed in the seventeen years of IHOP, Ephesians 1 is the prayer that has been prayed the most. It is one of my favorite prayers. When we got a prayer list up there at the prayer microphone and I made that prayer list, I just took all the prayers of Paul and Jesus and put them up there a bunch of them. I put this one first and that is the one that is prayed the most. That is what I wanted.

I want the spirit of revelation of God. That is the prayer I pray most in my life and the prayer I pray most for the people I love and for the nations. That God would be revealed, wake them up because of the fragrance of His good perfumes. God has poured forth His name in the nations and the people will love Him more and more if they see the fragrance of those good perfumes.

Amen and amen, let's stand before the Lord. I want to encourage people this phrase, this Ephesians 3:8. Paul said, I am appointed to preach the riches, the unsearchable riches of a Man. He is fully God but He is fully Man, to sing, to write, to make known, to make disciples around this subject.

I want to call forth people of ministry, people saying, I want to commit my life in a new way, in a new intentionality. Not for a summer, not for a year, I mean for the next decades that I am going to proclaim the riches of a Man, not only that but that is my primary subject. I want to invite you to come if you would like prayer for that.

Your pulpit might be one on one discipleship, it might be social media, it might be the children's ministry out in the neighborhood but you are going to make the riches of a Man known, that is what the anointing is about. I want to invite you to come forward.