

## ***Session 6 Delighting in the Beauty of God (Song 1:16)***

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### **I. REVIEW: 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. God created us with a longing to be fascinated or awestruck and filled with marvel and wonder.

Well one of the distinctives of the Song of Solomon is the reality, the spiritual truth of seeing and being fascinated with the beauty of the Lord. As I just mentioned God created us intentionally. We were designed to have a longing for fascination, to long to delight, to feel pleasure in encountering Him. If we live bored we live spiritually vulnerable.

Many believers are spiritually bored because the mandate of serving and reaching out and bringing the gospel to the others it does not have the same kind of zip when it did, when they first began years ago or they are getting weary through setbacks or delays or disappointments or temptation is proving too intense. They do not have anything to draw on besides just kind of a teeth gritting resolve to try to stay steady. Beloved that is not enough. In this hour of history as offense is increasing in the culture Jesus said that in Matthew 24. He said, in that day that many would hate one another, betray one another, and be offended. We are watching right now today offense in the culture, not just the Western culture, the whole earth is increasing so dramatically that there is not enough ability in our own resolve to get over it. The culture, the temptations of the culture are escalating, the troubles, the fear that is in the culture is growing.

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

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

In the midst of all of that Song of Solomon 1:16 here in the English Standard Version the Bride declares to the Bridegroom King, You are beautiful, You are my Beloved, the one I love. I am not just serving You out of duty. You are beautiful to me and I love You. It awakens love in me. It goes on with the second declaration, you are truly delightful. The other translations say, it is pleasant to behold you. It brings pleasure to my heart to discover who You are in Your grandeur, in Your power, in Your majesty.

Here in this verse Song of Solomon 1:16 the Bride puts together beauty and delight. Those themes need to be joined together in our understanding. The beauty of the Lord and our delight, what we experience on the inside as we encounter the beauty of the Lord and we encounter it little by little just over the months and years it grows and it increases.

- C. 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).

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

***<sup>4</sup>Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." (Ps. 37:4)***

Paragraph C., Psalm 27, David was the one that put together these two themes beauty and delight before anybody else did. David's life vision he states it here in Psalm 27:4, his life-long goal was to encounter the beauty of the Lord. This was not only his goal, this was the paradigm for which he looked at life. It is a very important statement.

You see a lot of people have in a general way their goal, I want to behold Your beauty. That is a, and they mean it but they do not put on a new set of glasses so to speak. Meaning when they look around life and they look at creation and the stars and just what is happening they are not looking for traces of God's beauty. They are just kind of enjoying life or they are just observing it.

David connected the beauty of the Lord with many things that were going on around him. He said, all the days of my life I have set my heart to behold the beauty, to encounter it, to look for it, to have a paradigm. That is my goal tonight to challenge you to have a paradigm, a perspective where you are looking for traces and tokens of God's beauty not just in the created order, not just in remarkably in redemption. The beauty of God is seen best in the face of Jesus. Also in how human life unfolds and interaction, the design of the human heart and the way God made us and how our emotions and our mind and our interaction and how love works that we see traces and echoes of the beauty of the Lord everywhere that we look.

You know it was thirty-three years ago, I have told this story many times but I will just say it real briefly. May 1983 when the Lord spoke this verse Psalm 27:4, He spoke it audibly in terms of the ministry that I was to be focused on. I did not really understand it but He said Psalm 27:4 and it would be related to twenty-four hour prayer with singers and musicians. Thirty-three years ago I could not understand what that meant.

How did beholding beauty and people singing and praying all day how were they connected? The Lord and I do not want to tell the whole story but He showed His zeal in terms of my personal experience saying, I want you locking into this. This was the first time this verse ever struck me. I began to go on a journey in saying, Lord I do not really know what it means to behold Your beauty. I do not know how it relates to singing night and day, that does not, I do not even know. I mean yes we worship You, we worship You, we love You, okay we said that. Now we got twenty-three hours and fifty-eight minutes to go. We got to do this every single day.

I remember when the Lord first spoke that thirty-three years ago, I was not excited about 24/7 prayer. I mean I am glad it happened in heaven and I was happy if it happened somewhere in the earth but I myself I thought, man I do not know. I just saw myself more as an evangelist than somebody being involved in a night and day prayer ministry. Of course I am still, my love is souls to come into the kingdom.

It was twelve years after that in November 1996, twelve years after the 1983 encounter with the Lord when He said Psalm 27, twelve years later I was right in this very auditorium here. We were in an all-night prayer meeting on a Friday night. We would pray Friday night from ten o'clock to five in the morning. I remember I was right over there. It was twelve years after this encounter with Psalm 27. I was just saying it to the Lord. I said, Lord I want to behold your beauty.

I remember I was just pacing because the way I would do it, the only way I could stay awake all night is I paced most of the night. You know I would get tired after an hour and sit down for fifteen minutes and I would pace. Coffee and pacing is what helped me, I know that is not great but that is true. Anyway I made it through the night and I would do that every week. This one night I was there and I said, Lord, I was quoting Psalm 27, I want to see Your beauty. I said, Your Son is beautiful.

When I said that the most unusual thing happened the Holy Spirit rested on me in a observable tangible discernible way like three or four seconds. I went, whoa. Just whew, the power of the Holy Spirit, that was exciting. It was about midnight and then I said, Lord You know, You are beautiful. The Spirit rested on me again

for three or four seconds, He just, whew, like that just came all over my shoulders in a very distinct way. I went, wow.

I said, You are beautiful Jesus, it happened a third time. I have never said something three times in a row and have the Holy Spirit do that every single time in an overt strong way. I said, I think the Lord is talking to me. So I went on and continued. I said, You are beautiful, You are beautiful Jesus. The Holy Spirit, I said this phrase or some version of the phrase many different iterations of the same phrase for five straight hours. Every single time I did it the Holy Spirit came on me.

I mean it was, it was so, I mean it was so cool but it was, I was so intrigued by it that a number of times I would not say I was trying to trick the Lord, that was not what I was doing. I said, Lord release Your power. I did not feel anything although the Lord He is really into that. Lord revive the Church, which is an amazingly important, nothing. You are beautiful, swoosh. I went, oh my goodness. Lord beautiful, swoosh. Heal the sick, nothing. Give me a million dollars for the harvest, of course nothing. Actually I believe that kind of stuff actually to be honest.

For five hours every single time 100 percent of the time it was the strange, I have never had that happen in forty years of ministry that one night. Well 5:00am came and I went to bed. Then I woke up a few hours earlier, later and just kind of woke up excited by that. I came back again at nine in the morning, came back to the same spot. Do not go over there it did not work after I tried it again later, it did not work. I went right back over there, I said, Lord You are beautiful. For two hours every time I said it it happened again. I went, this is the bizarre-est thing. I did not tell anybody but I was so struck by it.

The Lord was saying, Psalm 27. He was not so much saying night and day prayer like He did twelve years earlier when He said Psalm 27. He said, it is beauty, it is the subject of beauty that is going to be your deliverance, that is going to be your salvation, that is going to be your power, that is going to be your victory encountering My beauty. It was becoming clear to me. This is not just a passing cool thing, this is a matter, an issue of life and death in the end-time Church discovering the beauty of the King. Not just serving Him hoping to experience His power and His resources and His finances but actually encountering Him while we are serving Him and discovering His beauty as we are going.

I mean I am really big into experiencing His power and receiving His resources to get the job done but that is not enough. We cannot just work for Him, we got to work with Him in this deep interaction of the heart while our hands are engaged and we are laboring hard. Our heart is growing stronger and richer in the knowledge of God.

Well a week went by, I did not tell anybody this on that night. So a week goes by and I get a letter in the mail. The lady from the north part of the city she said, I had a dream last Saturday night. Saturday night was when I was doing it, it was the whole time. It was a Friday night prayer meeting but all Saturday, you know 1:00am and Saturday night and then the next morning. She goes, last Saturday early in the morning I had a dream and the Lord told me He was going to visit you related to His beauty. She goes, I was a little embarrassed to send a prophetic dream like that to somebody, I mean the beauty of the Lord; that does not seem like that is your big thing. The Lord says He wants you to focus on this and this is a very important thing.

So my goal tonight just as we are looking at some of the themes, this theme in the Song of Solomon and other places in Scripture is that you would make a determination that serving the Lord as important as it is that is not enough. Being blessed with resource is not enough, kingdom relationships is not enough. All of those things are critical part of the kingdom, the gospel of the kingdom but you are going to make a determination, I am going to

behold the beauty of the Lord, I am going to declare it, I am going to communicate it, I am going to delight in it, I am going to be empowered by it in the midst of these other aspects of the grace of God.

Well David the same man who said, I will behold Your beauty in Psalm 27, in Psalm 37 He said, delight yourself in the Lord. I am sure there is a connection. He is exhorting people to find delight in their spiritual relationship with the Lord. This is a new idea in Israel. The reason David was exhorting them to delight in the Lord because he discovered delight when he was encountering or focused on seeing the beauty of the Lord. It is not, this focus is not a one-time deal. Again it is a new paradigm, it is a perspective. We are going to look for it everywhere. There are tokens and hints and echoes of it. I mean it is not like everywhere because there is evil and darkness many places but I mean it is in many parts of creation and life. There is that reflection of the grand ultimate source of beauty, God Himself, the Lord Jesus.

Well David was called at the end of his life the sweet psalmist of Israel. He sang the sweet psalms of God's heart. He brought this sweetness to the Body of Christ. I love to say this about David, David the warrior king of Israel was a lovesick worshipper. We do not want to separate that warrior spirit from that lovesick encounter of the heart. Because beloved lovers will always outwork workers. You get somebody connected with love they will always outwork a worker.

I remember I was, I spent a lot of time in hospitals many years ago in the 1970s and 1980s because I had a brother who was totally paralyzed. He went on to be with the Lord some years ago but he was in and out of hospitals. I was with him. One of the very remarkable things to watch, I watched it several times because again he was totally paralyzed in a high school football game. So he was in this trauma unit for months and months and months. I mean it was just really a very, very challenging life for many years for him.

I was one year older than him so I was with him in many of these years working, I mean being right next to him. In the hospital there was always this strange thing, I mean not always. I discovered it occasionally when the nurse became the wife. The nurse meets the patient and they do not know each other and she is doing the checklist, the nurse checklist.

Every now and then the nurse fell in love with the patient and the nurse became the wife. As the wife she did not need a checklist. Because when you have love you do not need a checklist. A lover will always outwork a worker. David his heart was lovesick. He was moved, he was touched with divine delight. He had delight in his encounter with the Lord.

Now again I do not want to exaggerate this to where you think you know you are just going to live in this state of ecstasy like, oh the Lord is overwhelming. It is, I think, you know when I look at my own life it is just moments, brief moments here and there where I gain understanding, a new perspective of the Lord's glory and His power from the Scripture in creation. Again looking through the lens of the grace of God, through the leadership of Jesus in Scripture. I am not, I do not buy the "you know" some of those false religions where everything in creation is God and all of that kind of stuff, that is not what I am talking about.

I am talking about seeing the handiwork of the Lord Jesus in creation. These momentary glimpses where you see just a little whisper of His beauty and His grandeur in these various areas. Your heart is touched a little bit. Well those add up over time, those begin to have an accumulated effective in your life and it begins to shift the way you feel, the way you look at life and carry yourself. I have a long way to go.

I mean the angels, the seraphim around the throne they are so overwhelmed by the beauty of God. They have to cover their eyes because they are overwhelmed. Then they kind of come up for air again, get another fresh look and they cover their eyes again. It says in Isaiah 6 that with their wings they cover their eyes. They are gazing on the majestic splendor and beauty of God Himself, it is overwhelming, and we will never exhaust it.

I do not want to wait until the resurrection to go deeper in it. I am on a journey and I tell you I think this is, it is the only safe way forward. When I look at the violence that is increasing in the culture, when I look at the perversion that is increasing in the culture just the sexual immorality at every, every turn and where it is going to be in ten and twenty years.

I look at the offense that is increasing in the culture, how easily people are offended in this hour. Like twenty years ago it was not near as intense as this. I mean believers with believers, churches with churches, business leaders, people in the culture, political leaders, I mean everywhere, family members, they are just so hypersensitive and easily offended; the cultures of the earth are. I look at this and I say, Lord that darkness is increasing but there is a light that is increasing as well. That light is the power of God but it has a dimension of beauty in it. It has a dimension of delight that is going to be the very safety and the very strength of the people of God. The book of Isaiah makes that very, very clear.

D. Isaiah prophesied that the Spirit would emphasize Jesus' beauty in the generation He returns.

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

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

Paragraph D., in Isaiah 33:17, now this is a passage, a prophecy about the generation the Lord returns. When you read Isaiah 33 in context it is about the generation the Lord returns. There is a promise that the Holy Spirit is going to emphasize the beauty of Jesus. He said, your eyes will see the King in His beauty not only in His power. I do not want to put power against beauty because part of the beauty of God is the power of God. I mean some people they are just activity oriented disconnected from the person they are doing the activity with, I mean the Lord Himself.

Our inheritance is to see the beauty of the King. The King speaks of His power. So while we are operating in the power of God we are encountering beauty; that is what Isaiah said. You can look at Isaiah 33 later but in verse 6 it says, this will be the stability of your times. This encounter with His beauty and the fear of the Lord, the majesty that will be the stability of the people of God.

Isaiah 4 says it again, this time he refers to the Messiah as the branch of the Lord. That was a well-known term in the Old Testament for the Messiah, the branch of the Lord. They said, in that day, it is talking about the generation the Lord returns. In that day, that phrase almost always in the Scripture is talking about the end times related to the second coming of Christ.

The branch of the Lord, the Messiah, we know now it is the Lord Jesus. He will be seen as beautiful.

Throughout church history the beauty of Jesus has not been the predominate understanding of the people of God. They are glad for salvation, they want to get out of hell and go to heaven. They are really into that. They want to get their life enriched in this age, they want to go to heaven when they die. There is a bigger theme that the Holy Spirit is going to be emphasizing, that is the King that is beautiful and glorious, beautiful and glorious.

E. Without a sense of awe and delight 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 God's beauty will enjoy God, be spiritually strong, and therefore be much better equipped to withstand Satan's schemes—temptation, offense, difficulty, and persecution.

Paragraph E., I already said, that without a sense of this delight and awe in our walk with God we live spiritually bored. That is one of the great problems in part of the Church today there are spiritually bored. Another part of the Church all over the world is becoming spiritually invigorated, spiritually fascinated with the Lord. The Church is moving in two different trends. We want to make sure that we are moving in the pathway of being invigorated and fascinated with this Man and with His Father by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because a bored believer is very vulnerable to Satan. A bored believer that is not preoccupied with God is going to find it far easier to yield to the growing temptations of the culture, the offense of the culture. When persecution arises they will be far more timid and fearful if they do not have something strong on the inside that is more powerful than sin or fear or temptation or offense.

One preacher said, I love this phrase, he goes, I do not want to simply live the Christian life, I want to love living the Christian life. I want to say that again, I do not know who said it but he said, I do not want to just simply live the Christian life, I want to love living the Christian life. I say, Lord that, I want my heart branded with that cry.

F. *“Beauty is the battlefield where God and Satan contend with each other for the hearts of men.”*  
**Fyodor Dostoyevski**

Paragraph F., I have the quote of a famous Russian novelist from the 1800s, he said, beauty is the battlefield where God and Satan contend for the hearts of men. Beauty is the battlefield for where Satan and God fight for the souls of men. They contend for men's heart. Of course this will intensify more and more the closer we get to the Lord's return. That could be some decades down the road, maybe further, maybe sooner, we do not know. We know that we are getting closer and closer to it. I think it is very possible that some of you in this room might see it in your own lifetime, you might not but you really might.

I think that there is evidence in the Scripture that lets us know we are getting closer and closer to that time. If that is true the revelation of His beauty is going to be more, it is going to be magnified. It is going to be more essential, it is going to be life and death issues spiritually speaking because of the temptation and offense in the culture.

## **II. GOD'S BEAUTY**

A. God's beauty speaks of that which 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. God's excellencies, glory, or beauty are displayed in creation, redemption, and His leadership over history. He is glorified by our life when we delight in this manifestation of His beauty.

Well Paragraph two, Roman numeral two, now I am not going to go through this Roman numeral A and B just except for ever so brief. I just want to give you some tracks to run on. Some of you may say, well what do you mean beauty of God like what, in what sense?

Well the beauty Paragraph A., speaks of what is attractive about God. It is how He thinks, it is how He feels, it is what He does, it is how He looks. His beauty is displayed in creation, in redemption, in His leadership over history. In many human dynamics that are motivated by His design of the human heart and His inspiration in human life. The dynamics that happen between humans where genuine love comes forth and the beauty of courageous living and sacrificial giving, those are all expressions of the heart of God.

- B. **Personality of God:** How He thinks and feels—how *God loves God* (Father’s affection for Jesus—His exaltation, role in 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 the 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.)

Paragraph B., I say the same thing but I use a little bit different language. Because I am just wanting to give you some tracks to think on because you think, well beauty that is an abstract idea. Paragraph B., it is His personality, it is His power. The subject of His knowledge, His leadership, His appearance, His very being every one of these are vast subjects and again I am just giving you some tracks to run on. You can think, okay okay I can, I do not have a lot on those you might think but at least I know where I am going to be aiming at. Okay that gives me some tracks to run on.

### III. GLORIFYING GOD BY DELIGHTING IN HIS BEAUTY

- A. We glorify God when what we know of Him awakens in us great delight and enjoyment of Him. So we glorify God by celebrating and proclaiming His beauty to others so they may delight in Him.

<sup>31</sup>“...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Cor. 10:31)

Top of page two, now there is a strong relationship between the beauty of the Lord, delighting in God's beauty, and glorifying God. I mean you talk to a dedicated believer today, you say, what is your life's vision. They will, many of them will have something about: I want to live to glorify God, I want to see the glory of God. Somewhere glorifying God will be in the sentence or the paragraph when they are describing what is important about their life.

What I want to do here is I want to connect an often abstract idea living for His glory. You know I have asked people over the years, what does it mean to live for His glory? They go, you know glorify God you know. I go, well break it down, it is your life's goal. What does that mean to you on Monday morning, on Thursday night, what do you, what does that mean to live for His glory. I just want to connect that glorifying God and delighting in His beauty are dynamically connected realities.

We glorify God, Paragraph A., when what we know about him awakens delight in us about Him. It is not just we know things about Him, it creates delight and desire for Him. It gives us a desire to imitate it, I mean to see it and to just rejoice in it, to savor it, to delight in it. Like: God I love the way You are. That is one aspect of glorifying God and then in wanting to embrace it and then wanting to proclaim it to others through song, through word, through conversation, proclaiming it through acts of kindness, we proclaim it in many ways. So we glorify God when what we know Him creates this savoring, this rejoicing, this delighting in Him and this desire to imitate it and then the desire to proclaim it by our words and deeds to other people. We want to embrace that which we desire that is in God's personality. We want it in our personality.

- B. We glorify God by *delighting in* who He is and what He does and by *giving expression to* these with our words and deeds. It includes *enjoying* our relationship with Him and His people and our partnership with Him in His kingdom—we rejoice in and celebrate the glory that He has displayed.

Paragraph B., I say it again, I just want to give you some different terminology just to look at it. We glorify God by delighting in who He is. We glorify God by delighting, finding joy and delight in what He does. When I look at the stars at night and I think about a real person who created them. I go, I love You, this is amazing. I do not hardly understand anything up there but I like the person behind it. This is cool, this is not just a great night, it is but there is a person. There is an artist and an architect behind the stars up there, a person.

He wants me in His family, He wants me to be His Son's eternal companion, part of His Bride forever. I go, man I got it made, this is awesome. I love being alive, I love this age and the age to come, I just love being with You and understanding You. Beloved that is one of the foundational ways we glorifying God by delighting in who He is. Of course we got to discover it, we got to slow down, we got to look at life and creation and the Word of God slowly through the lens of the beauty of the One behind it and it takes time to do that.

You know you have heard the phrase you know, when you go through life you got to slow down and smell the roses. What they mean is do not be so active, so action oriented, so active you do not see what is around you that is beautiful. Well let's take it up a notch, we want to slow down to behold the beauty of a real person who really loves us and He really gave His life for us. We want to more than smell the roses. We want to be captured by the fragrance of that King. Oh Lord this is beautiful. So I just give a few more phrases on that just so you can look at it later.

- C. *“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” John Piper*
- D. God is beauty itself. He displayed His beauty in creation. All the beauty we see in this world is a mere reflection or token of the source of the ultimate beauty—**God**.
- E. The beauty in creation reflects the excellencies of Christ. It is a **faint echo** and dim foretaste of the perfection of beauty that will openly displayed and seen by all when Jesus returns.

Well tonight I want to look at, look at Paragraph E. We are going to look at the beauty of God just a little bit, just ever so slightly in creation. I mean we can look at the beauty of God in redemption, I mean what a glorious subject. The beauty of God is never so clear as it is seen in the face of Jesus. We can look at the beauty of God in His leadership over history, His leadership over your life, where He is leading the nations by His sovereign power, I mean the big picture.

You know we read the Word of God from Old Testament back with start at the very beginning with Adam and we see God's powerful intervention and wisdom. There is beauty behind His architectural plans of history so to speak. Then we look at His beauty and again the design of the human frame, the human spirit and how we interact when under His inspiration, it is beautiful. Courage, selfish sacrifice, generosity, tenderness, these dimensions of human life that were created and built for and inspired to flow in are tokens of His beauty.

- F. *“The source of our lasting joy is the Beauty of God. In all His gifts and in seeing the natural world we are to let our eyes run up the beam of beauty to the Original...” John Piper*

I like Paragraph F., I like John Piper. Of course John Piper is one my favorite so I quote him a bit in some of my handouts over the years. I love this, Paragraph F. The source of our lasting joy, this is by John Piper, is the beauty of God. Well that the source of our lasting joy or you could say the motivation for our obedience as well, you could add that to that phrase. The motivation for our joy or the motivation for our obedience that is the same thing is the beauty of God. Well John Piper he is hitting it, he is completely right on that.

Here is the phrase I was wanting to focus on tonight. In all of His gifts and in seeing the natural world, the created order, I love this phrase, we are to let our eyes run up the beam of beauty to the original. That when we see the natural world it is like a light beam you know just figuratively speaking leading us, the beam of His glory, the beam of His beauty leading us to the original to the source Himself which is the Lord Jesus.

G. People see God's beauty in many aspects of life and creation

1. ***In sights***—colors, brilliance, hues
2. ***In sounds***—melody, pitch, rhythm, harmony
3. ***In smells***—fragrances of flowers and costly perfumes
4. ***In knowledge***—stimulating the mind with mathematical or scientific breakthroughs
5. ***In stories***—stimulating the heart with biographies, novels, dramas, movies
6. ***In noble character***—acts of courage, generosity, compassion, perseverance, faithfulness
7. ***In physical abilities***—singers, musicians, athletes, appearance
8. ***In society***—when justice prevails and reconciliation occurs between races, nations, families

Paragraph G., I just put some more categories of how life works, human dynamics, there is in creation itself. I mean we could put paragraphs and paragraphs behind each one of these. I just wanted to give you some tracks to run tonight. There are sights, colors, brilliant sounds, smells, knowledge.

Paragraph five, life stories, I mean beautiful stories, life stories of God's handiwork and gifting in people. There is character, physical abilities with such beauty in them. How society whenever justice prevails and reconciliation and love conquers where there was strife and hatred it is beautiful. There are these marks of beauty and in them again if we are intentional about it and that is the paradigm that we are intentionally putting on it. We are not just running through life serving the Lord you know doing our prayer meetings then doing our outreach and then doing our friendship group meetings, you know our fellowship meetings. Then doing this over here and then resting a little bit and go doing it all again. We are actually looking for beauty in every one of these exchanges and encounters in life.

I do not know if you will see it in every one but you will see it more and more if you look for it. Many sincere believers never think to look for it or they do not slow down enough to look for it.

- H. I have been greatly blessed and helped by Sam Storms' book, *Onething: Developing a Passion for the Beauty of God*, and by Thomas Dubay's book, *The Evidential Power of Beauty*. Both books trace the signature of God through the physical world, ranging from the vast wonders of the Milky Way galaxy to the wonders seen in biology at the molecular level down to atomic particles.

Paragraph H., I have to mention two books. I have been greatly blessed by these two books by Sam Storm's book called *One Thing, Developing a Passion for the Beauty of God*. We have it in our bookstore. I tell you I love that book. Some of the things I have in the next couple of pages I took right from that book with this other Thomas Dubay, *The Evidential Power of Beauty*. There is quite, there are several good books out there on the beauty of God but these are the two I recommend highly. We have them both in our bookstore, they are must reading. They will take, again in the next few moments I am going to look at the created, oh we got them right up there, there you go, wow that was, they are pretty books too. Oh it is so beautiful, well anyway.

- I. I recommend as a resource *The Elegant Universe*, by Brian Greene, a world-renowned physicist.

#### IV. GOD'S BEAUTY IS SEEN IN THE HEAVENS

- A. David exhorted us to look up to God's heavenly art gallery (Ps. 19:1).

***<sup>1</sup>"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork." (Ps. 19:1)***

Top of page three, let's look for just a moment, again I have taken some of these facts from Sam's book and Thomas Dubay's book. Sam is a long-term personal friend of mine. I have heard him talk on this subject many times, I mean not many but a number of times. I love it, I took notes on it and they are fantastic. The elegant universe, I mention that by Brian Greene, a world known physicist. It is not from a scriptural point of view but it is just the facts of the universe, the elegant universe. There are so many scientific facts that shout the beauty of God.

Top of page three, God's beauty is seen in the heavens. Psalm 19, here is David again. I mean David is the one that is gazing on beauty. He tells us, hey the heavens declares the beauty of God. Whenever you see glory in this context like this you often can put the word beauty. The heavens declare or you could put the word majesty if you want, it is the same general idea. I am not saying it is the same Hebrew word, it is the same general practical response.

The heavens declare the beauty of God. Now this is David the man who gazed on beauty, the man who knew what it meant to delight in His relationship with the Lord. We are getting clues that, about his inner life. He goes, when I look up, he goes, I see beauty. He says, the firmament, the sky shows the handiwork, the artistry, the beautiful artwork, the great master architect Himself, the master artist, His handiwork, His art work. When we look up, this is what Sam I have heard say before, that we see God's heavenly art gallery up in the sky but if you stop to look at it. I mean we get so use to it, it is the most remarkable art gallery.

You know I was just recently had a tour of the Vatican Art Museum in the Sistine Chapel just recently. I mean the art is unbelievable, I mean it is unbelievable and it goes on and on and on and on this magnificent art. Much of it is even focusing on the Lord and redemption and salvation, it is fantastic art.

Beloved far more beautiful than the Sistine Chapel or the Vatican Art Museum there is an art museum, an art gallery in the sky. Most people are not even, they are oblivious to it. I mean they know it is there and every now over the course of seventy years, maybe a few moments here and there they are caught up. Beloved we want to,

we want to study that art gallery often and not just gazing at it but we want to see the knowledge that God has allowed scientist to capture because that is the handiwork of God too that He framed the human mind to grasp it.

It is in this hour of history where so much information is being grasped. So we study that then we look up. It is like wow. The Lord might say, you do not even begin to understand what you are going to see fully one day.

This is will whet your appetite. I tell you it is exciting.

Well just a few statements about the beauty of God that is around us in creation. This is only to whet your appetite, this is the beginning of the beginning. Those books that I mentioned and there are others they will develop them far beyond this.

- B. Light travels at *186,000 miles per second* or almost 700 million miles per hour or *6 trillion miles per year*. The nearest star to us is *Proxima Centauri*—it is over 4 light years from earth.

Paragraph B., now we all know this, we learned it in elementary school, light travels 186,000 miles per second. That is fast, right? Light goes 186,000 miles a second, that, I have got the stats here; that is six trillion miles a year. In one year light travels six trillion miles, that is a light year, six trillion miles.

Well here we are in our solar system and our star is the sun. Now you know the sun is one of many, many stars in the Milky Way Galaxy and you know in the created, in the universe. It is, the sun is the star in our solar system. Man we love our sun. Did you know that the star closest to us, to earth besides the sun which is 93,000,000 miles away which again you learn in elementary school, the star closest to us is four light years, twenty-four trillion miles, the closest star to earth besides the sun, twenty-four trillion miles.

Now the point of this is like, there is a person, He is a Man, He is human, He is fully God but He became human before the Incarnation back in Genesis 1 before that Man created that second star from us, twenty-four trillion miles from here. There are billions and billions and billions of stars that this Man created. Who is He?

- C. The moon is 240,000 miles from earth; it takes light only two seconds to travel from the moon to us.

Light travels so fast it gets to the moon in less than two seconds. The time it takes a flash of light from here to the moon is less than two seconds until the next star it is twenty-four trillion miles, four light years.

- D. Our solar system is 100,000 light years in diameter. If you travel at the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second, it would take you 100,000 years to cross its span.

Paragraph D., our solar system, I do not mean the Milky Way Galaxy, just our solar system inside of it is 100,000 light years the diameter from one end to the other. That means moving at the speed of light it would take 100,000 years to get from end of our solar system to the other; that is just our solar system in our galaxy. This is mind boggling, I have looked at several sources. Of course I am no scientist, I am just taking what scientist say and they do not all agree with each other but on some of these big facts they are pretty close to each other.

The Milky Way Galaxy again our solar system is part of that and it is 100,000 light years in our solar system. There are, the Milky Way Galaxy is one, there are 100 billion galaxies in the known universe, not 100 million, 100 billion. Now your mind just went on tilt. You said, you know you lost me at the 100 million mark. I mean that number is so big, 100 million, a million galaxies, 1,000 galaxies, one galaxy is too big for my brain. There

are 100 billion in the known universe. They have scientific ways and again scientist in different camps ascribe to that number. Some of them make it the number a little smaller, some a little bit bigger.

There is a person behind this who knows your name. He knows the name of every star but He knows your name and every hair on your head He has it numbered like He has every star numbered. There is a person you are related to that you are serving that the devil is telling you it is not worth it anymore to serve Him. It is better just to go slow down and give in to sin and give in to discouragement and give up and give in and back away. I tell you the devil is a liar because this Creator has 100 billion galaxies, has your name written on the palms of His hands. He loves you and He wants you in His family forever to be His eternal companion with His Son. Beloved this thing called salvation is indescribably glorious.

- E. The *Milky Way* contains over 100 billion stars! There are over 100 billion galaxies that each have billions of stars.

Paragraph E., I already said this one, the Milky Way Galaxy has 100 billion stars but do not mix it with the next fact but there are 100 billion galaxies. So there are 100 billion, I am using it in two different ways, there are 100 billion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy and there are 100 billion galaxies. Some scientists say, 200 but I am stopping at one, I do not care what the facts are. I am just shutting down at 100 billion.

- F. The *Virgo* galaxy has more than 5 trillion stars.

- G. The galaxy closest to the *Milky Way* galaxy is the *Andromeda* galaxy. It is over 2 million light years away (15 quintillion miles—15 with 18 zeros).

Paragraph G., the galaxy closest to us is two million light years, that is fifteen with eighteen zeros behind it, two billion light years away is the next galaxy, our neighboring galaxy. Jesus of Nazareth walked the streets of Jerusalem. The scripture said, He came into His own and they did not know who He was. He looked around, He created the galaxies.

- H. The Hubble Space Telescope reports of a galaxy over 10 billion light years from the earth. That is 78 sextillion miles—78 with 21 zeroes.

- I. Our sun is over 800,000 miles in diameter and is 15 million degrees Celsius at the center.

Paragraph I., the sun is 800 miles in diameter, 800,000 miles, 15,000,000 degrees Celsius at the center. The largest star in our solar system 4,000,000 times brighter than the sun, 4,000,000 times brighter than our sun. Our sun has 15,000,000 degrees Celsius at the center. I will just move on but this is like, I mean to look at how God framed the human mind to be able to grasp this information and then have given technology and science the ability. We can study the power and the beauty of the One that loves us.

David said, the heavens declare His beauty. He goes, if I was you I would start focusing on it. Let's not just go through life and not smell the roses. Let's not go through life and not engage with the fragrance and the beauty of the King Himself. I mean day in and day out. Well I do not have enough money and so and so is mad at me and this thing is not working, and people said mean things to me. I do not like all of that stuff, I do not like when money does not work and I feel bad and people say mean things, I get that. There is a bigger storyline about your life. There is a bigger narrative that you and I are a part of.

- J. The star, *Eta Carinae*, is 4,000,000 times brighter than our sun, is over 400 million miles in diameter, and is over 7,000 light years away from the earth.
- K. In the sun, billions of billions (10 with 38 zeros) of *fusion reactions* take place every second. More than 400,000,000 tons of hydrogen are converted into helium every second in the heart of the sun.
- L. The Hubble Space Telescope identified the Pistol star—it releases over 10 million times the power of our sun. The Pistol star unleashes as much energy in six seconds as our sun does in one year. It is 25,000 light-years away.
- M. The constellation, *Cassiopeia*, is 10,000 light years away from the earth that is 60 quadrillion miles—or 60 with 15 zeros).
- N. The Lord asserted that He creates, brings out, names, and upholds billions of billions of stars.

**25“To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?” says the Holy One. 26Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might...not one is missing.” (Isa. 40:25-26)**

Paragraph N., Isaiah 40, Isaiah says, the Lord says through Isaiah the prophet, to whom will you compare Me? Because in this hour of Israel's history they were being tempted with the gods of the nations. Because the gods of the nations, the idolatry they had this idea that they would get more blessing and more protection if they were friendly to these idols of these foreign nations, these false gods. I mean it sounds insane to us but it was really real. Because there was really demonic power involved in some of these false religions and deities. So they were really circumstances that looked blessed but it was demonic powers of some of these neighboring nations. Israel said, hey we want the power they have. It looks like it is going good for them, the rains are coming and they are, their nation is prospering. Isaiah said, thus says the Lord, you are going to compare Me to them? Verse 26, look, lift up your eyes and look at the sky. Isaiah says what David said, look up see who created all those stars up there. You know by the naked eye on a clear day you can only see less than 5,000 stars. There are 100 billion in the Milky Way Galaxy, you can only see 5,000. It seems like a lot. We are looking at the corner of the corner of the corner of our galaxy. Our galaxy is one of 100 billion galaxies. I mean we are looking at this, such a small fraction of stars.

The Lord says, look up and you will get a glimpse of who I am. He goes, did you know, verse 26, I bring out every one of them, every one of the host, speaking of the stars, all the constellations. I align them and I set them in order and I call them by name. By the greatness of My power not one of them is missing. Everyone is in place and every one of them is sustained by My power, that is who I am. Beloved that is who we just worshipped a few moments ago.

## V. GOD’S BEAUTY SEEN IN THE SUB-ATOMIC WORLD

- A. Jesus is the architect of the entire created order (Col. 1:16-18). He designed, created, and established the purpose for which all things were created.

***16For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions...All things were created through Him and for Him...***  
***17and in Him all things consist. 18...that in all things He may have the preeminence.” (Col. 1:16-18)***

Top of page four, well let's go the other direction. Again these books that I recommended and some other ones as well they will break this down so far beyond this. I just wanted to stir you up a little bit tonight, give you a little taster just to whet your appetite. The subatomic world, first we looked high now we are going to look low, we are going to look real low, the subatomic world.

It says that, Colossians 1:16, that by Jesus all things were created, heaven and earth, in heaven and earth visible and invisible. It is the invisible realm, the subatomic world, the invisible. The invisible world could be the angelic realm. The invisible world is atoms. That is what we are looking at here for a moment. The invisible world our atmosphere. I mean you cannot see a handful of wind or heat. You feel heat but you cannot get a handful of it in the air. A lot of things are invisible that are, that have a powerful effect on us. Emotions, you cannot get a handful of emotions but God created them.

The invisible, there are many dimensions to the invisible world. It is not just angels and atoms, it is more than that. All of these were created by Him, they were created for Him. They were created to magnify His love for us, to magnify His beauty that we would be delighted in them and delighted in the relationship and happy in the relationship with Him. He is happy and we are happy, we are walking together in love. He said, I built all of this so that My people could see and interact with Me in love and with delight forever. We are in this together forever.

In verse 17 it says, in Him all things consist. Now that word consist, other translations say, He holds all things together. He holds the atoms together. The reason He did this that He would have preeminence that when we see this we see His preeminence, there is none like Him, There is no rival to Him. That gives us security and that gives us affection and adoration. Then He says in His preeminence, I want you near Me with Me where I am. When He went to the cross in John 17, right before the cross He goes, Father that they would be with Me where I am. They would be with Me together forever, that is why I am doing this. It is fantastic.

Well just the next two or three minutes but I want you to look at the subatomic world. It is just, it is as small as the galaxies are large. I mean this will blow your mind if you have never gone here. The infinitely small universe of atomic particles is comparable to the vastness of the universe above us, the sky.

- B. Let's consider the sub-atomic world. Each atom has its own nucleus in which are found electrically charged particles—protons and neutrons, around which swirl electrons.

Paragraph B., each atom has a nucleus obviously. In the atom, in the nucleus there are these electrically charged particles protons and neutrons. We will throw in the electrons too, you have it there.

- C. There are approximately 100 million atoms in the space of an inch. There are 100 trillion nuclei (plural for nucleus) in each atom, thus 10 sextillion (10 with 21 zeros) nuclei in an inch of space. If an atom was the size of a football stadium, then a nucleus would be the size of one grain of sand.

Now here in Paragraph C., here is what I want you to see, there are approximately, if you take one inch, just take an inch of matter of wood there are 100,000,000 atoms in that inch if you broke them down, put them side by side, 100,000,000 atoms in an inch, 100,000,000 that is a lot you know in an inch.

There are 100 trillion nuclei in every atom, 100 trillion nuclei in every atom but 100,000,000 atoms in every inch. A nuclei, a nucleus is so small compared to an atom that the analogy that Sam Storms I do not know where he got it, I did not read the footnotes. If the atom was a football stadium a neutron would be a piece of grain sitting on the fifty yard line in the football stadium; that is how small a neutron is to an atom. There are 100,000,000 atoms in an inch. I have got it all written here, how many electrons and protons in an inch. It is like fifty zeros, I mean it is the smallest world. Here is the point, there is a person behind all of this. He is as intricate and wise and detailed in the subatomic as He is in the vastness of the cosmic world.

- D. Physicists believe that inside each proton and neutron are *quarks*. A quark is a tiny string that vibrates—it is 100 billion billion (10 with 19 zeroes) times smaller than a nucleus. A nucleus contains up to 1,000 quarks—10 septillion (10 with 24 zeros) quarks are in the space of one inch.

## **VI. HOW DO WE BEHOLD THIS BEAUTY?**

- A. We encounter God's beauty as we feed on the Scripture concerning who God is and all that He does. We are to behold (meditate on), declare, and proclaim the beauty of God. We must stop to look again at much around us to see hints of God's beauty that so many are completely oblivious to.

***5**"I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works."  
(Ps. 145:5)*

***8**"I have set the Lord always before me... (Ps. 16:8)*

Well Roman numeral six, how do we behold His beauty? How do we encounter it? Well it is not hard. We look at the Word, the Word will tell us about redemption and redemptive truths. The Word will tell us about His leadership in history too. The Word will tell us about the human makeup and the glory of God in the human design and then the impact of the grace of God on that human design, the Word of God will tell us that as well. The Word of God will tell us a bit about creation.

Then we go outside of the Word not contrary to it ever but we take the scientific mathematical breakthroughs that have happened by the gift of God and then we see that and then we look at the natural world. Then again we look at the social dynamics of how the human design is made and under the inspiration of the grace of God how we interact with each other and the nobility.

Psalm 145, David said this, this is David again, I meditate, I am intentional about this, I meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty. You could say, on the splendor of Your beauty, I meditate on it. He goes, on Your works. He goes, I do not just kind of run by it quick, it is not a drive by, you know a quick drive by shooting. You know the one preacher talked about in an analogy I heard once. He says, it is like a drive by shooting the way some people do these horrible things. Some people live life that, they just drive by and encounter all the violence of life.

No we slow down, we meditate. David said, I am intentional, I gaze on beauty, Psalm 27. He goes, I delight in the Lord, I look at the beauty in the heavens. Psalm 145, I love it, I meditate on beauty. Psalm 16, I set the Lord before Me. Not just His promises to help me when my life is hard, yes I have used that verse for that, for years. I set the promises of the Lord before me always. When my life is hard I put His promises in front of me. It is more than His promises, it is His beauty and it is His grandeur and it is who He is.

- B. Beholding God’s beauty is more than just delightful; it is transforming. It has the power to persuade and empower us to embrace radical commitments to the beautiful God. Beauty empowers us to re-align our heart with His heart as it exposes unworthy thoughts, words, and deeds.

***<sup>18</sup>“But we all...beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.” (2 Cor. 3:18)***

Paragraph B., but the beauty of God is more than delightful, the beauty of God is transformative, it transforms. The beauty of God is not just delightful. We go, wow I love the way You are. When we see it, what we behold we become like a little bit now, just little by little. Our inward life is strengthened. Our perspective is changed, we are actually changed by encountering these little moments and encounter these moments of inspiration of insight. I mean the, what God gives when He reveals His beauty is usually very just smallest little new little angles but added up together for the Holy Spirit's grace over time it makes a huge difference.

- C. Delight in God does not occur in an intellectual vacuum. Our joy is the fruit of what we understand about God. Our delight deepens as our understanding increases. We must “see” aspects of God’s beauty to be lost in wonder. We can’t stand in awe of someone of whom we are ignorant.

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

Paragraph C., delighting in God is not something we do in an intellectual vacuum, meaning you cannot stand in awe, you cannot delight in somebody you do not know anything about. The more that we know about His personality the more that we know about His power, His redemption, His leadership. The more we know the more that our delight deepens. The more the transforming impact happens inside of us, the more equipped we are to look at difficulty and setbacks and temptations and challenges and persecutions and we can stay steady. Because we are connected to a different narrative, a bigger storyline, a grander beauty, a grander pleasure, a bigger purpose.

What Proverbs 2 says is you want to know the knowledge of God. It is talking about the knowledge of God, the knowledge of His beauty, the knowledge of His power, His wisdom, seek for it. Do not just let it like fall on you just kind of randomly, search it out. Search for it, study, read the Scripture, read different facets about the beauty of creation. Look at life, look at life as an observer that is eager to see beauty. I have a promise for you, you search for it like silver you will find it. That is what it says in the next verse, Proverbs 2:5, you will discover the knowledge of God. You will find it little by little but it will add up and it will change your life.

Amen let's stand before the Lord. I would like tonight for us to make a new resolve. Maybe you have made it before but to renew it or if you have not it is the first time. I am going to all the days of my life, from now forward Psalm 27:4, I am going to gaze on Your beauty, I am going to go after it, I am going to look for it, I am going to search for it. I am going to open my eyes, I am going to be an eager student of the beauty of God, an observer conscientiously, intentionally. Let's just ask the Holy Spirit to come and touch us. Lord here we are, here we are created for beauty.