

Hungering for God
Hungering for Beauty
2 Chronicles 9:1-12, Psalm 96:9
Sermon Outline

Introduction: We are hungry by nature, not just for food but for many things. One of them is beauty.

I) What in beauty?

A) Definition:

- “That quality of any object of sense or thought whereby it excites an admiring pleasure; the qualification of a high order for delighting the eye or the aesthetic, intellectual, or moral sense” (American College Dictionary, ‘beauty’)
- “Impressing with charm the intellectual or moral sense, through inherent fitness or grace, or exact adaptation to a purpose...” (OED, ‘beautiful’)

- High, evoking delight, finding expression in different spheres of experience.
- Works and fits into the sphere it inhabits

B) Sometimes so full and rich that it overwhelms us

- *When the Queen of Sheba had seen...there was no more breath in her (v. 4)*
- *Galadriel stood before Frodo seeming now tall beyond measurement, and beautiful beyond enduring, terrible and worshipful.*

II) Is it wrong to want beauty in our lives?

A) No.

- *Blessed be the LORD your God who has delighted in you and set you on his throne as king for the LORD your God (v.8)*
- *Ps 96.9: Worship the LORD in the splendor [beauty] of holiness, tremble before him all the earth.*
- God’s holiness contains both his goodness and his splendor
- *James 1.17: Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change*

B) Why is it important to know that God is beautiful?

- Beauty draws us
- The Queen of Sheba *wanted* to honor Solomon’s God
- *When I survey the wondrous cross...*
- Jonathan Edwards: Our ‘affections’ drive us

III) How do we engage beauty in a healthy way?

Slow down long enough to recognize and enjoy it
Let it go

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Read the definitions of 'beauty' and 'beautiful' in the outline. Noting that beauty can find expression in virtually any sphere of experience (thought, sports, aesthetics, ethics, medicine, business...), identify 3 or 4 experiences or things that have delighted you with their beauty.
- 2) Note and itemize the reaction of the Queen of Sheba (the end of 2 Chronicles 9.4, see also vv. 7-9). To what is she reacting (see v 3)?
- 3) When Psalm 96.9 and reflect on the following: "We discover that God's holiness contains his beauty, and not simply his goodness. This is so important to see because it protects us from becoming like Javere, from being good just for the sake of being good, from dutiful lives that are stifling and oppressive to us and to others. Ethics tells us how to live; but beauty makes us want to live that way."
- 4) The crucifixion of Jesus is both the ugliest and the most beautiful moment in human history. What makes it so ugly? What makes it so beautiful? (Look at the OED definition of 'beautiful' in the sermon outline).
- 5) Beauty is a great gift from God—a reflection of his being and an invitation to enjoy him. List at least two things you can do to enjoy God more fully in the beautiful things of life.
- 6) God is beautiful, but beauty is not God. Identify at least 2 ways that you have made beauty, experiencing it, or holding on to it, too important. Ask God to help you let go of your obsession.