

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – September 1, 2020

The lord be with you.

Think about a beautiful sunrise you've seen. Kind of fun to think about isn't it. Or think about a beautiful view of the mountains. Or a beautiful view of the sea that you might have driven miles and miles to get there. And sometimes, you know, you see something that is just so beautiful that you wanna cry and you wanna tell others... You just wish that they could see the beauty that you're seeing, it's a beauty that you never want to end as beauty captivates us.

Now we all need beauty in our lives. Beauty lifts us up. Beauty makes us feel good. Beauty fills us with wonder. Why? Beauty changes us. Beauty never leaves us the same... Now, I once had the most wonderful beagle dog that I named Bernie the Beagle, he was a great dog, and boy was he smart, but you know, I never, ever once saw Bernie enjoying the beauty of a sunset, I never saw him enjoying the beauty of a Rembrandt painting. Because a love for beauty is something God gives to creatures who are made in His image, God is beautiful, and he created us to respond to His beauty.

Now, you know the year 2020, it's been a rough year. It's been an ugly year, and I figure we could all use some beauty, and so I'm coming back today to one of my favorite verses in all the Bible, it's from a Psalm of David, Psalm 27. I read, one thing I asked to the Lord, that will I seek after. To live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

One of the things that so strikes me about this verse is that David is in a mess. David is not on some retreat in the mountains, David is not on vacation, he's not even on a staycation, David here is literally fighting for his life, but David is single-minded, he is un-distracted in wanting to behold more and more of the beauty of God. Now, in the verses immediately proceeding in verses 1 through 3, David speaks of evil doers assail him to eat up his flesh. David speaks of adversaries and foes, David says an army is encamped against him. And what is it that David wants? He wants to behold the beauty of God. Here is David weighed down by the storms of the life, and his one desire is not to get out of the mess, but his overwriting desire is to be whole. Just how beautiful God is, that's what David wants more than anything else. David knows that's what he needs. When life gets ugly, we talk a lot about the power of God, the wisdom of God, the justice of God, but David here is taken by... He is smitten by the beauty of God, it is the beauty of God that entralls David, that stuns him, that keeps them coming back for more.

Now, we oftentimes hear people say, stop and smell the roses, not David. David says, Stop and behold, God's beauty. Now, you and I, you and I, we live in a what's being called a post-Christian culture that doesn't believe in truth, that doesn't believe in goodness, and that's part of the ugliness of evil... And so you and I, as part of this post-Christian culture, we need to be charmed by the beauty of God and introduce people to the beauty of God, people who no longer believe in truth and goodness, that they can't just walk away from beauty. They can be charmed, there can be won over. By the beauty of God. Now, there's a great verse, in fact, I'm gonna call it a beautiful verse over in Isaiah 33 verse 17, where we see the people of God at the time of Jesus return to earth in the midst

Water from Rock

of one of the darkest times in human history. Verse 17 says, Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty. When you and I see Jesus, we're not just gonna be struck by His power, by His overwhelming might, but we will be struck by how beautiful he is, we will be done, we will be enthralled, wanting more. So if you are a lover of the beauty, then you gotta love Jesus. You think that sunrise was beautiful. Well fix your eyes on Jesus.

Now, David is a busy man, he's got a lot on his plate, and you probably do too, but I'm gonna give a couple of suggestions for beholding more and more of the beauty of a God. You know, some people never stop long enough to behold the beauty of a sunrise, well, some people never stop long enough to behold the beauty God. So just a couple of suggestions.

Number one, ask God to help you. 1 Corinthians 2 says, What no eye has seen nor ear heard. Or the human heart conceived, these things God has revealed to us through the spirit. So ask the spirit of God, to open your eyes to see more and more of God's beauty, and he will.

Number two, look for God's beauty. Read your Bible, looking for God's beauty. Open your eyes to the world around you, the creation, looking for those signs and symbols. The point to the beauty of God.

Number three, praise God put into words your delight in what you see of God's beauty. And as you do that, you will see more and more of the beauty of God.

I guarantee you, God will amaze you.

St. Augustine, in his spiritual autobiography Confessions, we see him as he is reflecting back on his life about how long it had taken him to open his eyes to the beauty of God. And Augustine wrote, too late I have loved you. Oh, beauty. So ancient and new. Too late. have I loved you.

If you wanna fall more and more in love with God, like a Augustine did, like David did then behold God's beauty.

I close with lines from the old hymn, Beautiful Savior, fairest the sunshine. Fairest still the moonlight. And all the twinkling, starry host. Jesus shines brighter. Jesus shines purer than all the angels. Heaven can boast.

Stop and smell the roses. No, no. Stop. And behold, the beauty of God.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way. Thanks for listening, until next time.

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