



Dear Friends,

Words that I most associate with the Christian life include faith and obedience, hope and perseverance, love and grace. What about beautiful? Is the Christian life beautiful?

Before we consider the beauty of the Christian life, let's begin with God. God is beautiful!

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of his holiness. Ps 29:2 (KJV)

Notice that God's beauty is associated with his holiness. To be holy, we are told, is to be set apart. God is holy because there is no other like him. God is utterly unique. That begs the question. What is God's holiness, other than him being totally different from all else that exists?

The answer lies in this verse. God's holiness is his beauty. Whatever it is about God that sets him apart is attractive, compelling, alluring. In truth, there is too much beauty for mere finite beings to take in. That's why when God revealed his glory to Moses, he did not show his face.

It's no surprise then that a holy God creates a beautiful world. Kathryn and I were recently in the South Island of New Zealand. We were blown away by its snow-capped alps, enormous lakes and thunderous waterfalls. But what is most beautiful in God's creation is you and me. You are God's masterpiece because we have been made in the image of our beautiful God.

Tragically, sin corrupts, spoils and ruins God's creation. We make beautiful things ugly, including ourselves, our world and our lives.

The good news of the gospel is that God's goal in saving us in Christ is to make his people beautiful. That is why God describes the church as Christ's bride. Not just in the New Testament. But in the Old Testament, too! In Psalm 45, God's people are likened to a queen on her wedding day. Hear how she is described in Psalm 45:11:

Let the king be enthralled by your beauty; honour him for he is your lord.

What is crazy about this verse is that the king is God, and yet it is he who is spellbound by his bride's loveliness! That same idea is expanded on in Ephesians 5:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. Eph 5:25-27

Frederick Buechner, a Presbyterian minister and writer described his mother as a physically beautiful woman. He says that the challenge for beautiful-looking people like his mother is that:

... if you are beautiful enough you don't really have to be anything much else to make people love you and want to be near you. You don't have to be particularly kind or unselfish or generous or compassionate because people will flock around you anyway simply for the sake of your beaux yeux.

Christ makes his bride beautiful by making her holy. Beauty in God's people is to be kind, unselfish, generous and compassionate. Beauty in God's people is to forgive someone who has wronged you, to be patient with your kids when they're acting out, to call a friend who is doing it tough, to make time to help a person in need, and to sit with a loved one who has dementia.

God calls you to a beautiful life – to reflect his holy character by making you more like Christ!

God Bless,
Mark Adams