

The Beauty of Holiness – 1 Chronicles 16:29

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Reading

1. The ark of the covenant has been installed in the new tabernacle in Jerusalem.
2. David wrote a song for the occasion & gave it to the worship leaders to sing.
3. It's recounted in vs. 8-36.
4. We'll read just vs. 23-30.

B. Today

1. It's the last half of v. 29 I want to concentrate on this morning; where David says . . .
Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!
2. "The *beauty* of *holiness*" – an intriguing phrase.
3. This last Wednesday as I was preparing for the mid-week study, this leapt off the page at me.
4. It occurs 5 times in Scripture, but I'd never really considered it before.
5. And now I was struck by how incongruous it appeared.
6. You see, we don't usually associate "beauty" with "holiness."
 - a. For many, maybe *most* of us, our idea of beauty is determined by popular culture.
 - b. While holiness is a purely religious word that for many has a negative slant.
 - 1) Holiness equals "holier than thou."
 - 2) It's a list of rules, mostly prohibitions.
 - 3) The word "holy" conjures up a mental image of the inside of an old, dark church with wooden pews, candles, stained glass-windows, & some old guy in a funny robe droning on in a monotone.
7. David, who'd spent many hours meditating on God as a young shepherd, saw holiness very differently from all that.
 - a. There was a *beauty* in holiness that surpassed the world's puny ideas.
 - b. And he knew *worship* was a way he could bless God *with* that beauty.

II. BODY

A. Word Study

1. As we begin, let's dig a bit at the *meaning* of the Hebrew words.
2. **Worship** is shawkaw; it means to bow down; even to lie prostrate.
 - a. It was the posture of a subject before his/her sovereign.
 - b. It was a way to show the utmost respect & honor.
3. **Holiness** is kodesh & means to set something apart as special.
 - a. It *excels* in purity & perfection --
 - b. So you *treat* it as different because it is.
4. **Beauty** is hadawrah; it refers to an adornment, an ornament.
 - a. It's something *attractive* you *add* to yourself.
 - b. This word was often paired with putting on special clothes.
 - c. For that reason, some versions translate v. 29 this way –

Oh worship the Lord in holy array.

5. So when orthodox Jews read this, they think of the high priest in the special garments he wore when he went in to the Holy Place to meet with God.
6. In Exodus 28:2 when God first told Moses to make them He said . . .

You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

- a. The beauty of the tabernacle was beyond description.
 - b. The finest materials were used & the craftsmen who fashioned it were anointed by the Spirit as they worked.
 - c. They made the high priest's clothes as well, because it was only fitting when he entered the tabernacle, the glory of his garments would match his surroundings.
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7. The *basis* of all his garments was *fine linen*.
- a. Linen was the whitest fabric they had in the ancient world & when woven well would nearly *shine*.
 - b. When made of the best thread, it was so supple it *wouldn't wrinkle*.
 - c. Its weave was so compact, it *resisted stains*.
8. In Rev. 19:7-8 we read this –
- ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give [God] glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**
- a. “Saints” is literally “holy ones,” the NT word for *all believers*, not just a small group of the super-spiritual.
 - b. All genuine born-again believers are saints because our faith in Christ has set us apart to God.
 - c. We're no longer people of the world; we're the people of God.
9. In Rev., John sees the Church in heaven. She is the Bride of Christ and the time for the wedding has come.
- a. Her wedding gown is made of the very same material as that which the high priest wore in the tabernacle –
 - b. Because the tabernacle was a model of heaven.
 - c. She wears fine linen, dazzlingly white & pure, without spot or wrinkle because it represents her righteousness,
 - d. A righteousness *given to her* because of her faith in Christ.
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10. We find these interesting words in Eph. 5 where Paul instructs husbands –
- ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might [set her apart as holy] and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**

B. What God Wants Us to See

1. Here's what God wants us to see in all this: There's *beauty* for us in Christ.
 - a. Real beauty, not the cheap, temporary imitation the world knows.
 - b. No, the beauty that's ours in Christ is *eternal*.
 - c. Most importantly, it's a beauty *God enjoys*!
 2. It's a gift He gives us so we can have something to give *back* to Him.
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3. Think about it – *we're all attracted to beauty*.
- a. Some ideas of beauty *change* over time.
 - 1) It's often said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.
 - 2) That's true with some forms of fashion
 - b. But there are also *unchanging ideals* of beauty that transcend fashion.
4. The beauty of *virtue* is timeless. Everyone is drawn to those *inner qualities* of the *noble & heroic*.
- a. That's why we love classic tales like *Braveheart* & *Lord of the Rings*.
 - b. Sam Gamgee wasn't much to look at; he's a hairy & dirty little hobbit.
 - c. But his courage & loyalty in the face of impossible odds are *more* than attractive.

- d. They *appeal* to us on a level beyond words.
 - e. Sam's beauty was not in his appearance, it was in his heart.
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5. Popular culture's idea of beauty is limited to the external, the outward form.
- a. Think about how much of society is devoted to *physical* beauty.
 - b. Browse the news rack next time you're at the bookstore & count the number of magazines devoted to beauty.
 - c. Dozens are about make-up, diet, exercise, clothing & perfume.
 - d. How many people who work out at the gym are there *primarily* so they'll *look* better?
 - e. There is within most people a *longing* to be physically attractive.
 - 1) They're willing to deny themselves food..
 - 2) They spend hours working out & large amounts of money on clothes & cologne.
6. You don't have to watch TV very long to realize *the pursuit of beauty* drives a major part of modern culture.
7. Why? Why is beauty so desirable? Because it's *attractive*.
8. There's something deep inside us that *wants to be wanted*.
- a. It's an echo from Eden calling across the centuries *reminding us* we were created by love & for it.
 - b. We **ARE** wanted—by God.
 - c. That's why He created us in His image; so we could enjoy an intimate relationship with Him.
 - d. As the sum of all perfection, God *is* Beauty.
 - e. *He is* what our hearts yearn for & are attracted toward.
9. But the Fall messed everything up.
- a. It shattered the glorious, gorgeous image of God we were created in.
 - b. Sin has hijacked our desires, turning them from the beauty of God to lesser things.
 - c. That's why they never satisfy & we keep searching for something new – because our hearts were made for God – He's the only beauty that will ever satisfy.
11. What Adam forfeited, Jesus restored.
- a. When we turn from sin back to God through Faith in Him,
 - b. He sends the Holy Spirit to conform us to the beautiful image of Christ.
12. In 2 Cor. 3:18 we read,

At present, all of us see the glory of God as in a dim mirror. But we are being transformed by His Spirit into His image from glory to glory.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *The Beautiful People*

- 1. Each day, as we walk in faith & the Spirit, the image of God is being restored in us.
 - 2. More of His beauty is being bestowed on us.
 - 3. David calls us to worship God in the beauty of holiness – to take the glorious work of transformation God is doing in us & pour it out at His feet.
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4. As I mentioned earlier, holiness isn't considered attractive by world, but it is by God.
- a. That tabernacle Moses built, looking at it from the outside, it wasn't much to look at.
 - b. It was covered by thick tarps of animal skins. It looked rough, utilitarian, common.
 - c. But *under* those wrappings, inside → its glory was beyond words!
5. The world looks at the believer who's growing in grace & sees nothing except someone who's not playing it's game.
6. God looks at that same man/woman & sees beauty.

B. Romans 12:2

Don't let this world squeeze you into its mold. Rather, be transformed by having your mind renewed so that your thoughts become more & more like the Lord.

1. Christian, don't get caught up in the world's idea of beauty.
2. It doesn't last. Fashions change & gravity wins.
3. But the inner beauty of a holy life, one surrendered to God is eternal – you get to take that with you.

1 Peter 3:3-4 - ³ Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— ⁴ rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: