

# "The Beauty Of Holiness" • 1 Chronicles 16:29

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *Grand Canyon*

1. Three people were visiting the Grand Canyon--an artist, a pastor, and a cowboy
2. As they stood on the edge of that massive abyss, each one had a different response, framed by their point of reference
  - a. the artist sighed, "Ah, what a beautiful scene to paint!"
  - b. the minister said, "What a wonderful example of the handiwork of God!"
  - c. the cowboy mused, "What a terrible place to lose a cow!"

### B. *The Eye Of The Beholder*

1. It's been said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder
2. And it's true that one's point of reference is critical in making such judgements
3. Regarding beauty, fashions come and fashions go
4. And often, what we consider *attractive* today may not be so tomorrow
5. But *true beauty* is timeless and not affected by the currents of fashion and culture
6. Is beauty really in the eye of the beholder?
7. YES—if the Beholder we are speaking of is the Supreme Judge of Heaven & Earth
8. You see, the world has it's own idea of what constitutes beauty; but God is the One who KNOWS what beauty is

## II. TEXT

### A. *1 Chronicles 16:29*

Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him.  
Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!

### B. *Set The Scene*

1. This verse is part of the psalm David wrote after the ark had been safely brought to Jerusalem
2. The King's heart was overflowing with thankfulness to God for showing Him such incredible grace and blessing
3. You see, at this point in David's reign, things were going really well
  - a. God had given them safe and secure borders all around
  - b. the nation was prospering and there was peace in the land
  - c. it seemed that whatever David did was favored by the Lord
4. But one of David's chief concerns for the nation was to restore the worship of God to its rightful place of prominence

- a. he wanted the presence of God at the very heart of national life
  - b. that's why he had brought the ark to Jerusalem
  - c. and it's why he had called together the leaders of all the tribes and families of Israel
5. As they were all there now, and the ark has been safely placed in its new home, David breaks forth in a joyous expression of praise and thanksgiving
  6. In verse 29, David invites the rest of the people to join him in worshiping God

### **C. "Give To The Lord The Glory Due His Name"**

1. There is something normal and natural to the life of the spirit without which we languish and grow weak
2. That *something* is the *worship* of God
3. God has created man as three essential elements; body, soul, & spirit
4. If you take one of those away, you no longer have a human being
5. And just as the body needs certain things to be healthy, so do the soul and the spirit
  - a. the body needs food, water, rest, and exercise to be healthy
  - b. in the same way, the spirit needs certain things to be strong
    - 1) it needs spiritual *food* - which is what the *Word of God* is
    - 2) it needs spiritual *rest* - which is what *fellowship* with other believers is
    - 3) it needs spiritual *exercise* - which is what *service* is
    - 4) and it needs spiritual *water* - which is what *prayer* is, or more specifically, what *worship* is
  - c. if you remove food, water, rest or exercise from the body, it will weaken and grow ill,
  - d. so it is with the spirit; if we neglect the Bible, fellowship, service, or prayer, our spirit will languish
- 5a. Gordon Dahl said something interesting, "It seems that most Americans tend to worship their work, work at their play, and play at their worship."
  - a. as a result, our meanings and values are distorted
  - b. and life begins to resemble a cast of characters in search of a plot
6. Here, David sends forth a call to worship God by giving Him the glory due His name
7. He is beckoning the people to not merely listen to him praise God, but to lift their voices in a joyous affirmation of the great God's goodness
8. And just as David invited the people of his own day to worship the Lord, so the Holy Spirit invites us through these words to come to the fountain of living water and drink deep at the fount of all blessing
9. We do this by giving glory to the Lord
10. To give glory to God simply means that we remember and recognize the great things God has done and the great God that He is
11. In the previous verses of the Psalm, David gives glory to the Lord by rehearsing God's goodness to Israel and His power demonstrated on earth
12. This is how we can give glory to God as well

- a. we give Him glory by remembering all the wonderful things He has done for us
  - 1) our salvation
  - 2) the way He protects us
  - 3) His mercy shown to us every day
  - 4) the way He so faithfully leads and guides us
  - 5) there are an infinite number of ways God has loved us and shown us that love
- b. we also give God glory when we look at creation as His handiwork and history as His masterpiece
  - 1) when we take the time to consider the vastness of the heavens
  - 2) or the delicate intricacies of the smallest flower
  - 3) we glorify God when we remember His hand of providence in the affairs of men and nations

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- 13. It has become fashionable in our day to be a "nay-sayer"; someone who is constantly critical and looks down their nose at everyone else
  - 14. This trend can dampen our ability to glorify God if we get in to the mindset of always looking for the flaw, for the error
  - 15. David enjoins us to glorify the Lord; we can't do this if we look at God through the glasses of the critic
  - 16. The Christian must cultivate a mind and heart that recognizes the perfection of God and knows how to verbalize an appropriate response to that perfection
  - 17. How we do that is found in the next phrase . . .

### **C. "Bring An Offering And Come Before Him"**

- 1. It is always and ever our *first* task when studying the bible to understand what the text *means*
- 2. And that means understanding what it meant to the original audience it was addressed to
- 3. When David called upon the people to bring an offering and come before the Lord, he was speaking of something they were familiar with
- 4. It that time, all worship of God was centered on the tabernacle
  - a. a person who wanted to come before the Lord would go out to his or her flocks and fields
  - b. and take the very best sheep, bull, or produce they could find
  - c. then they would come to the tabernacle and give it to one of the Levites
  - d. the Levite would then prepare the offering in a manner proscribed in the law and hand it to a priest
  - e. a priest would then take the offering and place it on the altar of burnt offering
  - f. as the smoke of the sacrifice rose in the air and up in to the heavens, it was a symbol of the offering ascending to God
  - g. in that way, the offering represented the life of the person who made it ascending to God
- 5. People who had given their offering to one of the Levites would stand

- outside the walls of the tabernacle and watch the smoke of the offerings rise
6. As they did so, they would kneel, stand, and bow as they worshiped God
  7. With the death of Christ, the ritual aspects of worshiping God through the giving of animal or grain sacrifices came to an end
    - a. the old order of offerings were meant as mere forerunners to bridge the gap until the Messiah came
    - b. and as it says in Hebrews, now that Jesus has come, there is no more need for the offering of animals
    - c. and yet the need to bring a gift before the Lord still applies
  8. You see, God did not really want a bunch of sheep and bulls and sacks of grain to be burned
  9. What He wanted was the men and women themselves
    - a. when they brought a gift, it was merely a substitute that stood in for them
    - b. they took something of value, something dear to them, and offered it totally to the Lord
    - c. that's why the offerings were burnt - they were forever given to God and could not be reclaimed
    - d. but really, God did not want nor need bulls and goats and sheep and produce
    - e. what He wanted was the people themselves
  10. So, what is the gift the Lord wants from us? What is the gift we should bring?
  11. OURSELVES! All that we have, all that we are!
  12. The gift we bring, the offering we make, is us!
  13. If you are not a Christian, and you've been thinking about giving your life to Christ let me be perfectly straight with you - Count the Cost!
  14. "What is the cost," you ask? EVERYTHING
    - a. God doesn't want just Sunday mornings
    - b. He isn't content with Wednesday nights
    - c. He will not sit quietly in some corner of your life until you are in dire need and then come running to your aid when you rub the magic lamp of prayer
  15. God is God - And you were created FOR Him
    - a. He has given you a will to either receive or reject Him
    - b. but if you will think about it, you will quickly realize that the only rational thing to do with the life you have been given is to give it totally to Him
  16. Even in the days of David, God wanted the people to know the offering He was looking for was more than mere animals and grain
  17. In Psalm 51 we read . . .

**{16} You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*; You do not delight in burnt offering.**

**{17} The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart; These, O God, You will not despise.**

18. One can easily picture a large number of people lining up outside the gate

- to the tabernacle
- a. they have all come with an offering to worship the Lord
  - b. but God looks on each person's heart as they hand their gift to the Levite standing at the gate
  - c. as He looks at one, he sees a true heart;
    - 1) one that is sincere in offering itself completely to God
    - 2) the sheep he holds in his arms is the best of his flock, selected with great care
    - 3) he is excited at the prospect of making this offering because he knows God will accept it
    - 4) indeed, God is well pleased with the sincere devotion of this one
  - d. but the man behind him has a divided heart
    - 1) he is here because he knows as an Israelite, he is *expected* to make an offering
    - 2) he has to keep up appearances, or business back home may suffer
    - 3) he wants to keep his religious wife off his back
    - 4) and he figures that as long as he does the *religious* thing, God will stay off his case
    - 5) the bull he leads is certainly much bigger than the sheep of the man in front of him
    - 6) but it wasn't selected with as much care; in fact, he knows it has a minor flaw in one of it's legs, and unfortunate accident with another bull
    - 7) as God looks at this man's heart, he sees the coldness and indifference there
    - 8) and though his offering will last much longer and produce more smoke than the sheep of the man in front of him, none of it will matter because his offering is insincere
  - e. this is why we read in Genesis that Cain's offering was not accepted by God while his brother Abel's was
    - 1) it was not *what* they offered that made the difference
    - 2) it was *why* they offered that did
19. One day Jesus and the disciples were in the temple, and Jesus had taken up a position to watch people drop their financial offerings in the box designated for them
- a. as they watched, an old woman shuffled up to the box and dropped in two small coins as fast as her age bent fingers could
  - b. the coins are described as "mites"; coins so small that they were worth less than a penny
  - c. other came, wealthy men, rich men, men of great prosperity and religious importance
    - 1) when they came, they made a big show of depositing their gifts in the box
    - 2) some even hired trumpeters to go before them to let everyone know they were coming to make an offering
    - 3) and what an offering they made!
    - 4) they dropped big, thick gold coins into the box

- 5) as they hit the bottom there was a loud "thud"
- 6) and the crowds cheered their demonstrations of pomp and showy generosity
- d. but Jesus turned to his disciples and said that the old widow woman had given more than them all
- e. He explained that they had given out of their abundance, but she had given out of her very sustenance
- f. in other words, they had given money, she had given herself!
- 20. This is the gift we are to bring to God! Ourselves!
- 21. And if we have truly given ourselves utterly to God, then as the burnt offerings, there is nothing left for us to reclaim as our own
- 22. And that means whatever we have is His to be used as He directs

#### **D. "Oh, Worship The Lord In The Beauty of Holiness"**

- 1. This is both a *joyous* and *earnest* invitation to the people of Israel to worship God
  - a. it's *joyous* because David found great comfort and fulfillment in worship
  - b. but it's *earnest* because David knew God was holy and could only be rightly worshiped by those who *desired* holiness
- 2. This word for "beauty" is *hadarah* and is only used 5 times in the bible
  - a. 4 of those 5 times it is in the same phrase as here:
  - b. "the beauty of holiness"
  - c. and each time it is in the context of a call to worship [\[1\]](#)
  - d. the word *hadarah* means "that which attracts due to it's winsomeness"
    - 1) this word does *not* apply to mere decoration
    - 2) this is not the kind of beauty that comes from what one puts on
    - 3) it is the inherent quality of beauty that comes from what one *is*
- 3. So much of the beauty that we see in the world is plastic beauty, it's only quasi-attractiveness
  - a. it's the result of surgery or make up,
  - b. or stylishly wrapped cloth
- 4. But the kind of beauty David speaks of here is the beauty that comes from within
  - a. it is not *put* on, or *painted* on
  - b. it shines forth from the inner person
  - c. and is revealed no matter what we are wearing
- 5. It's amazing how realistic and beautiful they are making silk flowers these days
  - a. I have seen some silk roses which from a distance looked real
  - b. a rose is a beautiful flower, and these silk arrangements are very attractive
  - c. but if you take a petal from one of those silk roses and put it under a microscope and look closely at the surface, you will see the cloth in appearance as coarse as burlap
    - 1) the smooth sheen of the silk will be revealed as a wide lattice of

- rough threads
- 2) and it will be hard to ever look at those silk roses with the same sense of admiration as before
- d. but if you take the petal off a *real* rose and put it under the microscope, you will see the intricate skin of the flower
  - 1) instead of seeing a coarse fabric, you will see a delicate network of life
  - 2) and the awe you sense at seeing the full flower will only grow as you realize there was even more beauty there than first met your eye
- 6. This is the kind of beauty David calls us to worship God in
- 7. Not the beauty that comes from the hand or effort of man
- 8. But the beauty that comes from the touch of God on the human soul bringing life and order

### **E. The Beauty of Holiness**

1. This beauty comes from the work of the *Holy* Spirit making *us* holy
2. You see, God isn't interested just in getting you saved
  - a. He also wants to work in your life and change you
  - b. He wants to take the new person He has put inside you, and bring that new person out, so that your lifestyle reflects the new inward reality
3. If something is holy, it means it is set apart from the mere common, to the special use of God
4. Holiness is that quality of life that sees itself as *belonging* to God, and so *given* to God
5. In Lev 19:2 we read "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall **be holy**, for I the LORD your God *am* holy.'"
  6. Lest we think the call to holiness applied just to the Jews, Peter quotes this verse and applies to it all believers in 1 Peter 1 [\[2\]](#)
  7. As David shows us in 1 Chronicles 16, there is a beauty to holiness that is unlike any and all other beauties
    - a. it is a beauty that is not put on, but shines from within
    - b. it is a beauty that we see manifest in Jesus when He took the Peter, James, and John up on to the Mount Of Transfiguration
    - c. then as they watched, He was transformed in front of their eyes
    - d. for a moment, they were able to see into the realm of the spirit
    - e. for a short time, they were able to see from the divine perspective
    - f. they saw a beautiful and glorious light shining forth from Jesus
    - g. it's intensity was like the sun
  8. Oh that we might see things from the divine perspective! That the veil would be drawn aside and we could see things as they *really* are!
  9. God judges beauty from a completely different criteria than this world
    - a. beauty is not the models in the fashion magazines
    - b. nor is it the sleek new Mazarati cruising down the 101
    - c. beauty is the mark of the Spirit of God as He touches and transforms the life of the believer, conforming him or her to the image of Christ

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### **A. Perspective**

1. The royal portrait of Edward VI looked like a bad joke
  - a. it seemed as if the future King of England had been mocked
  - b. William Scrots, the court painter, appeared to have done a great injustice to Edward
  - c. the skull ballooned in back, the forehead bulged, the nose looked like a beak, and the chin undershot the face
  - d. but Edward's attitude must have changed when Scrots told him the secret
  - e. by looking at the picture through a hole in the side of the frame, a fine representation with no deformities could be seen
  - f. when looked at from this perspective, one could see a true representation of the handsome prince
  - g. this unusual painting was one of many painted at that time called "anamorphosis art."
  - h. it's a specific kind of art that can only be appreciated when viewed from one certain vantage point
2. The right perspective is also necessary if we are to see the divine design brushed into our lives by God
3. If we judge ourselves by the world's standards we may miss the subtle beauty and purpose God has placed within us

#### **B. Worshiping God**

1. Each one of us is a unique reflection of the perfections of God
2. The great potential of every human being is that they can reveal to the rest of creation something about the infinite glory of God
3. Just as the light of the sun shines through a prism and is split up into several colors, so each of us is a prism through which the light of God's truth and grace is reflected in all its glory
4. When we come together to worship God in complete dedication to Him, there is a beauty revealed like the beauty of a fine stained glass window
5. This is why our times of worship can be one of the most effective means of evangelism we have
6. As we lift our gift of praise to God, as we offer ourselves to Him in sweet abandon, those who do not know Him are confronted with the reality of a beauty beyond their experience
7. And because beauty is attractive, they will be attracted to God

#### **C. The Congregation Preaches**

1. In any church service, the congregation preaches more than half the sermon.
2. The congregation brings an atmosphere with it
3. This atmosphere is either a barrier through which the preacher's word cannot penetrate, or else it is such an expectancy that even the poorest



- sermon becomes a living flame
4. I rejoice because the atmosphere you consistently bring on Sunday's and Wednesdays is one of expectancy and joy
  5. You do not know what a difference this makes to my task as a teacher,
  5. And what an environment of grace it sets for those who visit

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[1] Psalm 29:2 96:9, here, 2 Chr. 20:21

[2] 1 Peter 1:15-16