

“Beauty” / Sent (Advent 2017)

What we see as beautiful (*above all*) – moves us to declare it as great (*est above all*.)

1) **I remember seeing and engaging Fran for the first time** – who is now my wife. There were things about her appearance and who she was – that moved and stunned me and still do. So much so – I went back to my apartment – told my roommates and then I proceeded to end things with a girl I had just barely started to date but who was really cute because on any level – beauty moves us.

2) **A THOUSAND YEARS AGO Prince Vladimir the Great**, the monarch of Kiev, was looking for a new religion to unify the Russian people because they had lived thru years of chaos, death, and overwhelming darkness. Vladimir sent out envoys to investigate the great faiths from the neighboring realms. When the delegations returned, they gave their reports. Some had discovered religions that were serious and austere. Others encountered faiths that were abstract and theoretical. But the envoys who had investigated Christianity in the Byzantine capital of Constantinople, reported this: **“Then we went to Constantinople and they led us to the place where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or earth, for on earth there is no such vision nor beauty, and we do not know how to describe it; we only know that God dwells among men. We cannot forget that beauty.”** Upon receiving this report – Vladimir adopted Christianity as their new religion. We know a king’s adoption of a religion doesn’t bring true life and heart change to a nation. That is not how Christianity works. But we can say – the message of Jesus – that we can be with God by Jesus’ work – first came to Russia because of beauty. What impressed the envoys and persuaded Vladimir to embrace Christianity was not its apologetics or ethics, but its aesthetics—its beauty.

What we see as beautiful (*above all*) – moves us to declare it as great(*est above all*.)

I believe the nations – people are still looking for something that is bigger than the chaos and overwhelming darkness of this world. Maybe the question is this – Is there something greater than the brokenness of this world? Our answers – **Escape** and **Comfort** are good, but the brokenness of this world is always there no matter how well we escape or comfortable we get. **Relationships** are powerful – but they often leave us aching and hopeless when they end – and unfortunately all relationships end. **Religion:** rules and morals give us structure but no real hope against the darkest moments. **Is this your religion?** If so, hear God today, please. There is something more about Jesus – when we see him not just as a truth or an answer – but when we see His Beauty – His overwhelming stunning, glorious beauty. He gives us real hope – a real tangible living God that is greater than the ugliness & brokenness of this world.

When we see (*engage*) Jesus as the Beautiful One – we will declare (*embrace*) Him as the Greatest One.

01. How does Jesus reveal God as the Beautiful One?

02. How do we declare (*reveal*) Jesus as the Beautiful One – as we are sent to the nations? 5:15

During this Advent season – we celebrate that Jesus was sent to us but we also are realizing that he now sends us with Him. Each week we are looking at the different ways God calls us to be sent. Last week Brian talked about how we are corporately sent as the body to our community. Today we talk about how we are sent to the nations.

Isaiah 49:3 (ESV) And he said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” (*display my beauty*)

This was to be Israel’s (God’s people’s) role. But - they only displayed their own glory – and displayed an ugly distorted god. So God the Father – sent a better perfect Israel – Jesus his son to display God’s glory – His ultimate beauty.

01. How does Jesus reveal God as the Beautiful One? *God help me see Jesus’ beauty today?*

1) by Putting on Flesh

Not because he was beautiful or stunning in appearance as a man. *He wasn’t Chris Hemsworth (Thor).*

Isaiah 53:3 (ESV) he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

How did putting on flesh reveal the beauty of God?

*Why does the Christmas story move you ... and so many people? **God with us – as an infant, so vulnerable, so precious, so needy – so human. There is something about God coming as an infant that is – beautiful.***

Past the manger: We see Jesus making right – things that were wrong. He heals the sick, loves the outcast, cares for the poor, restores families, and raises the dead. And, He loved those who were not usually cared for by leaders – the widow, the orphan, the criminal, the immoral, the hurting, the weak.

John 8:10-11 (ESV) 10 Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

By putting on flesh – Jesus revealed God as the Beautiful One. Can you see Him, Jesus the beautiful one?

2) by Putting on Death (*I say “putting on” because just like putting on flesh, it was a choice*)

- Jesus death didn’t reveal God’s beauty because **IT** was a beautiful act. No, **IT** was the ugliest and most vile act of butchery ever committed on this earth. *SinFULL men took holy God and brutally killed him. No beautiful act*
- Rather, **IN** the ugliest act of history, evil unknowingly ripped the veil, the cover off the ultimate beauty in Jesus.

How did Jesus - the Beautiful One - reveal God's Beauty in putting on death? 10:30

Jesus displayed the ultimate beauty of God by allowing himself to be humiliated. Look at this with me!

Don't turn away - and I believe you will see beauty that is stunning, overwhelming, and greater than the brokenness of this world.

Jesus is God. And ...

God is all-powerful & unbound by time & space, & to be **captured and bound**, he had to let it happen.

God is all-powerful, & to be **accused and mocked as evil** for pretending to be God, he had to let it happen.

God is all-powerful, & to **beat by men - the men he created**, he had to let it happen.

God is all-powerful and holy, and to have the **weight of all our sin, your sin, my sin** - placed on him and to be judged as guilty, he who had only know perfect innocence and holiness, he had to let it happen.

God is all-powerful & eternal, & to **die by the hands of men - he was dying for**, he had to let it happen.

God is all-powerful, and **yet he was humiliated for us**. He was condemned to remove our condemnation. He was broken, to conquer the brokenness of this world. He took all sin and evil to crush it in his death and rez!

Do you see His Beauty? We use our accomplishments to promote our greatness and yet ... in this ultimate act of humility - we don't just see a beautiful moment - we see the Beautiful One - above all others!

By putting on death - Jesus revealed God as the Beautiful One. Can you see Him as the Beautiful One?

When you see Jesus as the Beautiful One - you will embrace Him (trust your soul to Him to make you right with God, to forgive and heal all your brokenness) & you will declare Him as the Greatest One.

The woman with the stones - Jesus didn't just let her go - he would be condemned for her - me and you?

Have you embraced Him as the beautiful - your Lord, your Savior - who was condemned for you? 14:00

02. How do we declare (reveal) Jesus as the Beautiful One - as we are sent to the nations?

On November 13, 2010, the eighty-voice Chorus of Niagara from Niagara Falls, Ontario, gave a performance of the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah. This would not be particularly noteworthy except that it was done as a surprise performance in the food court of the Seaway Mall. The unsuspecting shoppers didn't see it coming. It was just another busy lunch hour in the food court at the mall. Then a young woman with a cell phone pressed to her ear stood up and began to sing hallelujah. While people were trying to figure out what is going on, the first singer is joined by a man who, moments earlier, had been eating his Arby's lunch. Then what appears to be a mall custodian joins the chorus. Eventually all eighty voices of the choir are performing a stunning rendition of Handel's masterpiece. The shoppers in the food court are stunned. They realize something special has happened. Some capture the performance on their cell phones. Others rise to join in the time-honored tradition of standing for the "Hallelujah Chorus." Some simply sit with faces full of wonder, while others wipe away tears. All are witnesses to a miracle - an ordinary lifeless shopping mall food court had been transformed into a cathedral of astonishing beauty. A local photography company recorded the surprise performance in the Seaway Mall and posted it online. They hoped it might be viewed by as many as fifty thousand people. But within weeks it had been viewed tens of millions of times! Why the interest in this "stunt"? Perhaps the thing that makes the video somewhat amusing is also what makes it deeply moving—its odd contrast. High art and a shopping mall are so opposite, the surprise of sacred music in a food court seems to have a strange effect upon us. Why? We all long for beauty - but see so little of it in our world. We have technology, convenience, security, and a measure of prosperity, but where is the beauty? Where is the beauty that we know we cannot really live without? When a choir appears out of nowhere and performs sacred beautiful music in a shopping mall - it is a beautiful surprise that moves our souls - not unlike the surprise performance the Gospel of Luke reports as occurring at the birth of Christ: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

This "random act of culture" in Ontario is a wonderful picture for how the church should engage the nations Instead of cynical senders who hoard our treasure of people and money - let's become extravagant senders and givers who realize the greatest treasure we have is not our friends or money - but the life of Jesus in us by his very death. How do we reveal the beauty of Jesus to the nations?

We reveal Jesus as beautiful to the nations just as Jesus reveals his beauty: 1) putting on flesh; 2) putting on death.

1) by Putting on Flesh (incarnational living) **Jesus came to rescue us - to be with Him. This reveals the beauty of God above all other beauties. This happened because he came and lived among us - God with us. We are called to live amongst people to reveal the beauty of God. Because God is in us - he will reveal Himself thru us as we live up close, in relationship. Life together, not just making drive bys. How do we do this as we are sent to the nations?**

- Raising up local disciple makers among a people group

Daniel, Brandi McIntyre are doing this in the mountains of Guatemala as they help equip and encourage local pastors. They work with over 40 pastors - regularly teaching, encouraging, serving, - so they can reach the people they live amongst. They are also equipping women and youth to be disciple makers as well in their towns and villages.

ONE8 Fund: Will we give a portion of this fund to internat. church planting. We are praying about a partnership with Jeff Neville (Redtree Church, Plant St Louis, Bapt) who is moving to Mumbai to lead a CP Center raising up local planters

Will you help us go to the nations by giving to our ONE8 Fund which will help support these ministries?

- Moving to live among a people group

- **McIntyres and Nevilles** have done this as well.

- **Stacy (Akers) Rodriguez**

- **Jillian Stockdale** has done this as she has moved to N Africa to live, work amongst predominantly muslim people.

Prayer request for the confusion and tension our govts announcement caused in her friends and in the Muslim world.

- **Ashley and Phillip Nelson** moved to Swaziland in S Africa to live and work with orphans.

Not everyone is called to this – but God is calling some. **Is this you? Are you open? We are praying God sends.**

- Going together as team – to work alongside locals

We are praying about India in 2018 and beyond. But, We regularly go to Guatemala to work alongside the McIntyres & these pastors & women & students that are discipling. We have a trip planned for **June 30-July 7.**

Contact tanja@thesummitstl.com or come tonight to the open house at the Cohrans at 7 pm to meet the McIntyres and hear more. **Will you go with us? It makes a difference in the Kingdom when we go to the nations together.**

This is the 1st way Jesus showed us to reveal the beauty of God – incarnational living – putting on flesh and living with and serving alongside a people. The 2nd way – is putting on death. **How do we do this and why?**

2) by Putting on Death (dying to self) 22:00

First year we went to Guate 2006 – was not an overt success. Lost luggage, 10 hr bus ride, no sleep, mountains, concussion, little sleep on floor because of snoring, slept with a chicken, crazy mixed up schedule. The group wore down quickly, got frustrated and wondered what in the world – did we get us into – did you (my idea kind of).

Being Sent to the nations – is hard, tiring, & grueling on the body, mind, & soul; **even more for those who move.**

- **2000 World Evang Alliance:** 80% of missionaries don't finish their term; 87% diagnosed with depression.

- **In 2014 David Platt laid off over 40%** of the Southern Baptist missionaries because - Highly ineffective for over 10 years.

Getting discouraged as we are sent to the nations is not news to God. It would happen to Jesus as well.

Isaiah 49:3-4 (ESV) 3 "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified. 4 "But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity This is a prophecy that declares Jesus would be discouraged in his work in being sent to the nations – to us. *He was tempted to believe his labor was in vain (empty- like herding cats). He was tempted to believe his labor was ... vanity (vapor, light, nothing – the opposite of glory – beautiful beyond description). He was tempted to believe the brokenness of this world was too much. When? Jesus came off a high – transformed into glory before the 3 – Beautiful ONE. Coming down, a boy was brought to him, with demons who was having seizures that the other 9 disciples could not heal. Those boys father begs and Jesus says, **Matt 17:17 (ESV) "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?"***

His response? **Isaiah 49:4 (ESV) ... "yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God."**

*God – would reward his work. Although, he could not see it, he believed the cross would bring beauty that would overwhelm the ugliness in us and in this world. **Cross > brokenness** – though he had no eyes on this.*

What will move us to keep going – being sent – even when it seems vanity – not glorious or beautiful work?

Fix your eyes on the beauty of Jesus – and let it move us to hide our life completely in the Beauty of Christ. Another way to say this – die to self – as you engage the beauty of Jesus. What does this mean?

Die to self – doesn't mean ignore failure, or loneliness, or hurt – we must allow God to heal and bring life to us if we are going to be sent to others with a real hope in Christ.

Die to self – does mean – laying down all my rights and privileges of my old life – going and living in the identity of Jesus. **Our team in Guate not only survived but thrived because we slowly together died to self on that trip**

- My pride must be laid down – because this is not my work for my name – but his for his name.
- My pride must be consumed in Christ – so I will rest, equip others, seek healing, and let others lead. **Beauty**
- My will must be consumed in His will – so I will I be listen, pray, and follow God's voice alone. **Beauty**
- My money is His – and I must let go of the ugliness of possessing it. Giving generously reveals **His Beauty.**

- My hope going forward even when I cannot see anything beautiful happening – is dying to self – being consumed in Jesus’ life will move me to declare and reveal Jesus as the Beautiful One – *and God will bear fruit. Why do we believe this – because Jesus did show Cross > brokenness. What we have been given in Christ – is not a beautiful thing – but the Beautiful ONE in us who is greater than this world. 30:00*

*****Daniel’s Story of Beauty in Guatemala*****

Close

Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar: *"The first thing that must strike a non-Christian about the Christian's faith is that . . . it is obviously too good to be true: the mystery of God, revealed as absolute love, condescending to wash his creatures' feet, and even their souls, taking upon himself all the confusion of guilt, all the God-directed hatred, all the accusations showered upon him with beatings . . . all the mocking hostility . . . in order to forgive and embrace his creature. . . . This is truly too much."*

Is your Jesus beautiful – **most beautiful above all others?** Because the true Jesus is and every encounter with this overwhelming glory or beauty dropped people on their knees face down. (The 3 on the mountain and here the prophet - Ezekiel 1:26-28 (ESV) 26 And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. 27 And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. 28 Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, . . . **Jesus is the Beautiful ONE!**

And we, as God's people get the great privilege to declare the great beauty of God. Isaiah 49:3 (ESV) And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Israel, God's people could not do this. So God sent a better, perfect Israel – Jesus, to reveal or display the ultimate beauty of God.

When we see (*engage*) Jesus as the Beautiful One – we will (*embrace*) declare Him as the Greatest One.

Church – let's be stunned and moved by the beauty of Christ to go to the nations together. Let's go!

Commissioning

Matthew 28:18-19 (ESV) And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,