

Chapter Six

BEAUTY

IN WHICH...

- Elwood wonders about beauty
- We propose a Christocentric theory of beauty
- We see how Christ is present everywhere, always at work

now his *out-in-the-open* girlfriend, to join him and Brewster at the Golden Paintbrush Preserve on Whidbey Island for a day of seedling planting. The data collection project was complete and Elwood had been approved to proceed with his plan to plant new populations on selected prairie tracts along Whidbey

Island's western coast. After a morning of planting, Elwood, Nattie, and Brewster were sitting on a grassy knoll overlooking Perrigo Lagoon eating their sack lunches. Before them stretched out a wide patch of bright yellow Golden Paintbrush embedded among the fresh green spring prairie grass and dancing white daisies. Above them thick billowing white clouds contrasted with the bright blue spring sky, and though there was yet a chill in the air, everything was warmed and brightened by a cheery sun whose light danced like flashing sparklers on the sprawling surface of the great Pacific Ocean. The scene was idyllic, and the tired trio sat in quiet appreciation of the beauty all around them.

"Man, are we lucky or what!" said Elwood after a long while. "Who gets to be surrounded by such beauty in the middle of their work day?"

"No kidding," said Brewster. "You know there are some kids who grow up in the inner city and never get to see this kind of vista, never get to smell this air, or hear the way the wind rustles through a big field of grass?"

"That's heartbreaking," Nattie responded.

"I agree. I think a person needs beauty almost as much as water or food."

"Why do you think that is?" Brewster asked.

"Not sure I can explain it. Just a feeling. I just know how much an experience of something beautiful fills me with hope that there is something good in the world." And at this he looked over at Nattie and smiled, her long brown hair whipping in the afternoon breeze. The pause was not lost on either of them. "It works against my tendency to despair." Elwood spoke after a moment.

"I like that," offered Brewster. "The same thing happens to me. The way I think about it is that

perhaps I am glimpsing a little bit of God through the thick fog of all that's wrong in the world."

"We are back to God again, eh?" Elwood responded matter of factly, with no hint of cynicism in his voice.

"If God exists," Nattie interjected, "and if He made everything, our experience of beauty may just be an apprehension of the 'artist through His art'."

"The treasure at the end of the hunt!" piped in Brewster.

"Or it may simply be a subjective feeling hard-wired into our brains," Elwood countered.

"Not sure we can prove it either way," responded Brewster. "But beauty seems to suggest there is something out there that is really, really good and we can recognize it when it comes around. I find that idea more comforting than if my experience is simply my own random subjective projections upon an otherwise blank canvas."

Nattie nodded.

"Something about your formulation appeals to me as well," conceded Elwood. "If I am honest I find myself wanting for there to be something bigger and greater and more beautiful than my own small world."

They fell back to silently eating their lunch. The barbarous white clouds slowly lumbered overhead and the sound of the surf of the ocean in the distance filled the afternoon with a palpable peace.



A THEORY OF BEAUTY IN NATURE

Jesus as the _____ of creation: John 1:1-4;
Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2-3

Creation _____! Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:20; Job 12:7-12

The experience of the _____ in general, and the
joy of Jesus the _____ in particular:
Proverbs 8:22-31

The _____ problem of beauty

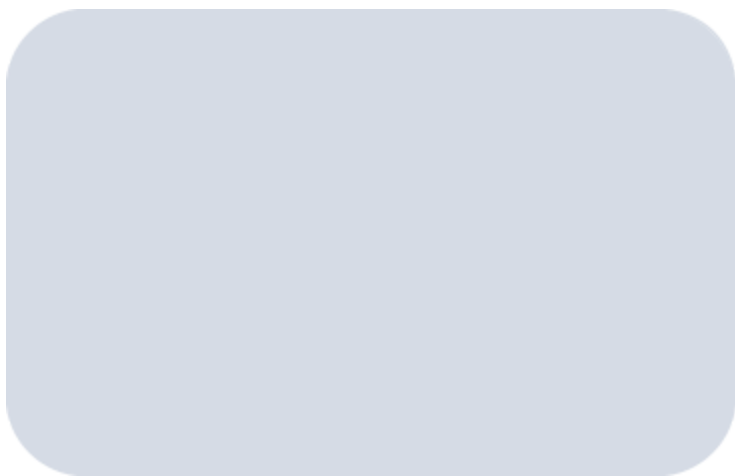
The objectivity of _____ experience. **Describe it:**

The joy of Jesus as _____ that it pervades our
reality as something that can be experienced. Matthew
25:21,23

My thesis: what we call “beauty” is a _____
_____ of Christ, or more specifically,
the joy of Jesus the Creator-Artist lingering in the
cracks and crevices of all that He has made.

In this way, all beauty is _____, including the beauty of art (our creations), and the beauty of persons.

WHERE DO YOU FIND BEAUTY?



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Placing a value on beautiful things: nature, arts and crafts, not as electives of leisure, but as important precursors to an encounter with the living Jesus. Oholiab and Bezalel and the glory of God:
Exodus 31:1-11; 40:34-35; Revelation 24:24-26



Sharing in the experience of beautiful things with others as a priority activity: **Philippians 4:8**



“Beauty encounters” are building an intuitive familiarity with Jesus, so that when He is encountered elsewhere (Bible, Church, Christians) he can be “recognized” (as He was in the breaking of the bread at Emmaus): **Luke 24:31**

***WHAT "BEAUTY ENCOUNTER" MIGHT YOU
INITIATE?***

A large, light blue rounded rectangle with rounded corners, intended for a response or reflection.