

Philippians 4:8

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true,
whatever is honorable, whatever is just,
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,
whatever is commendable,
if there is any excellence,
if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things.*



Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, part 2

Truth, beauty and goodness are called the three great realities, three great foundations on which everything else is built, the three great fountains from which everything else flows. When these are found lacking life becomes a cesspool of lies, ugliness, evil, sin, darkness and death. The events of the last week and year make glaringly obvious how much we need a return to truth, beauty and goodness. God is the source, Jesus is the perfect embodiment and the Church is the guardian of truth, beauty and goodness. This week's devotionals will help us think on these things as the verse above calls us to do.

Scripture

Scriptures reflecting on beauty, beautiful, glorious.

God is not just beautiful, He is Beauty. All that is beautiful reflects Him and points to Him. At the incarnation Beauty appeared in the flesh, the Beauty of God embodied. When we see something beautiful it's cause to worship the Creator of beauty and the Beauty of the Creator.

Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Psalm 27:4 One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

Psalm 50:1-2 The Mighty One, God the Lord, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.

Psalm 84:1-2 How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

Psalm 90:17 Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,
And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.

Psalm 96:5-7 For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens.
Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!

Psalm 104:1-2 Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you are very great!
You are clothed with splendor and majesty,
covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent.

Psalm 145:5, 11-13 On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power,
to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time.

Isaiah 4:2 In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.

Isaiah 28:5-6 In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of glory,
and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people,
and a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment,
and strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

Isaiah 60:1-3 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.
And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Romans 10:15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

II Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

1 Peter 3:3-4 Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

Revelation 21 [read the whole chapter to get a glimpse of the glory, beauty and splendor of the new heaven, new earth and new Jerusalem.

Song

Psalm 59:16 But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

[You can Google the hymn to hear it if you would like to sing along.]

For The Beauty of The Earth

For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies.

Refrain: Christ, our Lord, to you we raise
this, our hymn of grateful praise.

For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light, [Refrain]

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild, [Refrain]

For yourself, best gift divine,
to the world so freely given,
agent of God's grand design:
peace on earth and joy in heaven. [Refrain]

("For the Beauty of the earth" text Follitt Sandford Pierpoint (1864), Public Domain, CCLI #358926)

Prayer

II Chronicles 7:14 If my people, who are called by my Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Holy Father in heaven, it is only by the Gospel of your grace that we have come to see the glory of your beauty in the face of Jesus. Before then, the splendor of your beauty was veiled by the darkness of our sin and unbelief. But because of the ugliness of the cross, we can now see your splendor that outshines ten thousand suns, your excellences that stagger our wildest imaginations, your covenant kindness that melts our hearts.

We see your beauty all around us in all the things you have made. Open our eyes even wider to see the jaw-dropping wonder that is all around us, but we are so often blind to. It is obvious that you had profound joy and delight in creating all the rich variety in our world which declares your glory. The rich variety of Your fingerprints are on everything.

You created eight million species of living creatures, ten million colors, and two trillion galaxies. And if we take time to look we can see your beauty in every person, all seven billion. And though each of us is broken, each of us is an image bearer, each revealing a glimmer and glimpse of your beauty. Forgive us when we only notice the brokenness and not your image.

Father, thank you for all those you have gifted and enabled to capture some small reflection of your beauty and share it with us in words, poetry, music, painting, design, architecture, and every other form of creativity and imagination.

Holy Father, most of all enable us to see your beauty and glory and splendor and majesty more fully in Jesus. No one has ever seen you, but to see Him is to see the radiance of your beauty, the fullness of your glory. In Jesus, we see the magnificence of your mercies, the grandeur of your grace, and the wonders of your love. Show us even more, take us further up and further in, more than we can ask or imagine.

Jesus, we long for your appearing, we long for that day when we will see the unveiled beauty of your face, when you bring to completion your promise to make all things beautiful in their time. Until then there is one thing we ask, one thing we seek after:

that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple (Psalm 27:4).