

Colossians 3:16

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another
in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*



While on vacation this week I will be sharing some devotionals written by others. This devotional is from Tabletalk Magazine, published by Ligonier, a ministry started by the late R.C. Sproul. You can find more Tabletalk meditations at: <https://www.ligonier.org> and <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/>.

Remember the three devotionals I wrote the week of January 11 on Truth, Beauty, and Goodness? You can find them on our church website. Here is some further reflections on that theme.

The Triune God: Good, Beautiful, and True

Compare this psalm with the three statements that follow:

Psalm 27: 4, 13 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.
I believe that I shall look upon the
goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!

- (1) I'm not saying that it is bad or evil, it's just not the best choice for you.
- (2) Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.
- (3) You have your truth, and I have my truth.

If one stops and thinks through these three statements, it does not take long to realize they are patently absurd. All three illustrate concepts that dominate the way our culture thinks about goodness, beauty, and truth. As a result, all three are undermined in our culture, often perverted, and at best minimized. This has been accomplished very simply. We are preoccupied with ourselves. Self-actualization and self-esteem have become the highest goods of life, where we give all of our affection and adoration. Each of us is an abettor in the relativization of goodness, beauty, and truth, claiming that there is no true truth, only "my truth," which may or may not be "your truth." "True truth" is not to be expected. There is no objective beauty; all is simply a matter of personal taste. Certainly nothing is intrinsically good — though it may be permissible to assign goodness out of personal preferences — but unless something is politically incorrect, it cannot be identified as good or bad. It can only be declared as preferred.

The Word of God clearly challenges our attempt to relativize truth, beauty, and goodness, first by declaring the Word itself true, beautiful, and good, then by revealing these as attributes of the triune God. Truth is a reality because God is truth and cannot lie. Therefore, what God says does not contain truth or become truth — it is truth: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17).

Beauty does not claim to be a product dependent upon the evaluation of an onlooker. In other words, beauty is not in the eye of the beholder, it is the Lord who is beautiful. He is the God of beauty. In Psalm 27:4, David declares a single prayer — that he “might dwell in the house of the Lord forever,” not simply to be in His presence, but specifically “to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord.” A beholder may or may not have the ability to appreciate beauty, but one thing is clear, the beholder does not make beauty, for God is beauty. It is one of His attributes, and therefore what He says and does is beautiful. The question for us is simple, yet profound in its implication: Do we have the God-given ability to see the beauty of the Lord, affirm that beauty, and then use His beauty to rejoice in the Lord for His own glory?

Concerning goodness, do we long to embrace the goodness of the Lord? This is not the flimsy imposter in our society that is determined by the collective assent of what is permissible behavior in a narcissistic culture, nor what is in vogue as a passing fad. The Lord is good. In the same psalm, David hopes that he will “look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

So here are two wonderful facts for every Christian: First, truth, beauty, and goodness are living realities because they are the attributes of the living and triune God. His Word reveals Him and, therefore, what is true, what is beautiful, and what is good. His Word warns as to the reality and perversity of the lie, the ugly, and the evil. The warning includes the fact that we bring these from our unassisted hearts as we suppress the glory of God and exalt ourselves. Our sinful hearts have destroyed our ability to love truth, to appreciate beauty, and to do good.

But the second wonderful fact is the glorious blessing that God, in His grace and glory, hears us when we call upon Him by faith and repentance in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our Redeemer will deliver us from our sin so that we might not only behold truth, beauty, and goodness, but so that we will love truth, beauty, and goodness because we first love Him, the Lord of truth, beauty, and goodness.

David desired to continually abide “in the house of the Lord” because it is in His sanctuary that we meet the true, the beautiful, and the good. He is the Sanctuary, and now, amazingly, He makes us into His sanctuary. We are the temple of the Lord. So, let’s expand our prayer: O Lord, allow us to behold the One who is true, beautiful, and good. Make us a sanctuary that others may see the truth, beauty, and good of the triune God in Your church. By Your spirit, through Your Son, and for Your glory, may they see You, for there is none like You. True are You, O Lord. Beautiful are You, O Savior. Good are You, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

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