

Mercy = Beauty
Mercy Equals Series, Part 5

I would like to thank Rabbi Jonathan for filling in the pulpit and giving us a great word on how the believer should wrestle. I want to also thank you all for your prayers as my family and I traveled last weekend to Georgia to celebrate Nikki's great grandma's 100th birthday. We drove 24 hours round trip to spend a day and a half with family we hadn't seen in years. Because family was coming from all over the country, we couldn't stay with my in-laws. Many of our family were booking from the same hotel but as always, I move to fast and booked a hotel I thought was where everyone was booking. Many of you know my story and at one point my family and I were homeless living out of a motel 6. So, I have an issue staying in motels, I stay now in Hilton's or good Best Western's. But in my mother in law's tiny little town of Donalsonville, there are no hotels. I booked an Econolodge and it was more econo than lodge.

Like always I told the family to wait in the car while I checked us in and grabbed a luggage cart. However, there was no lobby...it was full of broken furniture and closed to the public. You had to check in through a bullet proof glass window from outside. I rang the bell and a mom and her little child walked up. They were the only ones working. I got my key and saw that there were no luggage carts or even an elevator and our room was upstairs. Please note, I am not complaining, I am sharing a hysterical story. On our way to our room, we passed by several broken AC units on the walkways and a lady in pajamas cooking on a small charcoal grill outside her room. The railing in front of our room had towels drying over them, one of them with blood on it. We got inside the room, and it was filthy. Stains where there shouldn't be stains and the kind of dirty that makes you feel uneasy about sitting on the bed. Nikki was so cute. She said, "Well, this is not too bad. We have been in worse; it is only for the weekend we will be fine...but I am not showering here." She could barely finish her motivational speech before I butted in saying, "Nope I booked a Hilton 30 minutes away in the next city over.

Here's the interesting part of the story. I know that you have to cancel a room 24 hours before your stay. By walking away, I knew I was going to lose money on the first night. I walked back up to the bullet proof window and rang the bell. I told the lady, "I am sorry, but these rooms are very unacceptable." She nodded and said, "I understand, you'll get a FULL refund." That doesn't happen. But the reason I got a full refund is because there was no denying these rooms were horribly unacceptable.

I share this story for a reason. In this life there are beautiful things and ugly things. Our purpose on this earth is to keep our eyes heavenward and focus on the Beautiful One. Today I want to continue our series on God's Mercy with a message titled, "Mercy equals beauty." For the last five weeks we have been exploring all the wonderful things we receive because of the mercy of God. I am not sure when this series will end but I am thoroughly enjoying the journey of discovering the benefits and blessings of God's mercy. As I have mentioned every week of this series, God's mercy is not an Old Testament thing. We need God's mercy today as much as Adam and Eve needed it after the fall.

So, what exactly is beauty? It is a broad and widely defined word much like the word “love.” Obviously, God is beautiful, but many guys will also say the same thing about BBQ. The world defines beauty as this:

“Beauty (noun) The quality or group of qualities in a person or thing that gives pleasure to the senses or the mind.” – Webster’s Dictionary

The world’s understanding of beauty is something pleasurable that benefits them. In my time of study, I discovered a more Biblically accurate view of beauty. Take a look at Ecclesiastes 3:

11 He has made everything APPROPRIATE in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end. – Ecclesiastes 3:11 NASB1995

Most translations say, “He has made everything *beautiful* in its time.” But for whatever reason the NASB says “appropriate.” I really like that. To me, beauty means all things holy and good are in alignment. Beauty to me means there is no flaw or evil thing present. So of course, God is beautiful because He is perfect. Therefore, I love the word “appropriate” because it is appropriate that in this world, we see the beauty of God everywhere. The Scriptures say, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” The reality of God’s beauty should be realized here on earth.

Normally I don’t do what I am about to do, and that is preach from one single verse. This morning our main Scripture is one verse from Psalm 27:

One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple. – Psalm 27:4 NASB1995

This is why we are alive. To dwell in the house of the Lord and to behold His beauty. For thousands of years people have been lost wondering “what is the meaning of life.” Be encouraged family, I have found the answer! The meaning of life is to dwell in the house of the Lord and to behold His beauty. You will have succeeded in life if you can do these two things. But this verse is so special for a number of reasons. The first is that King David is being hunted. There are assassins trying to actively kill him. He is facing wars, battles, leading thousands of people and in the middle of all of this he says “*one thing* I have asked...” That’s like being held up by an armed robber at an ATM and stopping to say, “Wow isn’t that a beautiful sunset.” It is interesting to me that David says to “meditate in His temple.” The temple wasn’t built yet. The house of God was the Tabernacle and the Temple, but it is almost as if David is prophesying about a coming house of God that is the body of the New Testament believer. The other fascinating aspects of this verse are the two words, “behold” and “beauty.” I want to break these two words down in the Hebrew to set up my main point here this morning.

Behold:

חָזַן châzâh, khaw-zaw'; a primitive root; to gaze at; mentally to perceive, contemplate (with pleasure); specifically, to have a vision of:—behold, look, prophesy, provide, see.

Beauty:

נָאֵם nô'am, no'-am; from [H5276](#); agreeableness, i.e. delight, suitableness, splendor or grace:—beauty, pleasant(-ness).

What caught me was the part of the definition that said the beauty of God is suitableness. That word means “the quality of having the properties that are *right* for a specific purpose.” What I deduced is that the beauty of God is right. When we position ourselves to daily seek the Lord and gaze upon His beauty, we are in the correct position in life. There is so much ugly in the world, we need a foundation of the beauty of God to stand on. To be immoveable in a world of ugly because of the mercy of God. Here is what I am trying to communicate this morning, **God is beautiful because God is perfect...there is no flaw or evil in Him. To behold His beauty, is to meditate on His love and nature until we look just like it.**

Beauty is not talked about a lot in churches. The reason is that everyone is obsessed over the outer appearance...even churches. Here is an example. I have a picture here for you of food, but it is not really food. These are pictures of foods that were in TV commercials. Notice they are using weird things to make the “food” look good. Instead of syrup over the pancakes, it’s motor oil. Instead of ice cream in the bowl, it is mash potatoes. Instead of ice cream in the cup, it is shaving cream. They want the food to look amazing even though it’s not what it is really supposed to be. We have all experienced this going to a drive thru, looking at the picture on the menu and then wondering what food we got because it looks nothing like the picture. In this world, we post on social media and the outside looks good, the selfies are so cute, but inside we are lacking beauty. We want the world to see only the outside. We are not willing to work on the inside to match the beauty of God. Look at what the Word says in 1 Samuel:

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” – 1 Samuel 16:7 NASB1995

The beautiful thing about God is that He makes all things beautiful. On my 12-hour drive home last Sunday I could not stop thinking about the beauty of God. I kept playing this one song over and over again. It is called *Mercy* by Bethel Music. The chorus says, “You delight in showing mercy, and mercy triumphs over judgment.” I have the bridge to the song on the screen for you. This is so poetic and so clearly explains what I trying to say:

***So I will wake, and spend my days
Loving the One who has raised me up
From death to life, from wrong to right
You're making all things beautiful***

-Mercy by Bethel Music

When we behold God's beauty, He makes things beautiful in our lives. The key is not to focus on all the ugly or evil things that are going on around us, but to behold His beauty. He turns things around and when we reflect His beauty, we have a proper response to the hurt in our world. Here are a couple things to help us live as beholders of His beauty:

POINT #1 – An Uncalloused heart.

I challenge you to study all the places in the book of Mark that speak of hardness of the heart. In Mark 3:5, Jesus was grieved over the hard hearts of the religious leaders. In Mark 6:5 Jesus was astonished that the disciples gained *no insight* from seeing the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Then in Mark 8:17 when Jesus said, "*do you not understand?*" to His disciples, He then followed up with "do you have a hardened heart?" Do you see how important having an uncalloused heart is? When our heart is hard it actually grieves God. And look how much we miss out when we have a calloused heart. We miss out on insight and understanding from the Lord. So if you want to behold the beauty of the Lord, you need to ensure your heart is not hardened.

When you go through a lot of ugly in life, it is easy to become cynical. When you suffer abuse from the church, you can grow cold or resentful at the church. The problem is that if you get cynical at all, towards anything, your heart will become calloused, and you put yourself in a position of missing the beauty of God.

How do you heal your calloused heart? I would encourage you to do two things. The first is to ask God a lot of questions. The second thing is to ask your trusted Christian friend a lot of questions. If your heart is hard ask God, why. Ask Him how you got to this place and what the root of it all is. Ask God what can be done. You may need to repent, or maybe there is a revelation God has been waiting to give you. Then I would ask a trusted friend a lot of questions. There is something about real fellowship that brings freedom. Fake fellowship is just Christians getting together to complain and gossip. That doesn't do anything. Real fellowship is iron sharpening iron. A spiritual outside perspective can help so much.

POINT #2 – An Unwavering devotion.

Another way I have heard "beholding the beauty of God" is "the secret place." Psalm 31:20 says that God hides us in the secret place of His presence. Beholding God's beauty is not going to happen on its own. We are the ones that are to pursue His presence. So, I encourage you have a special place in your home, park, etc. where you meet with God. A distraction free zone where you can behold His beauty. Once you have a secret place to meet with God, make sure it is a regular place. That you go there often. Jesus often withdrew to lonely places to pray and be with God. Finally, in your secret place, make it all about Him. Make it about knowing Him more, focused on encountering His presence. Consistency in a given thing will produce fruit...good or bad.

POINT #3 – An Undivided mind.

An undivided mind means you are focusing on God's beauty and not trying to focus a little on God and a little on the world. You may have seen those videos online of people who crash into things. The crash right into poles and walls because they are walking and staring directly at their phones. One lady had a bus graze her hair as she was crossing the street looking down on her phone. We do the same thing when we give God a little of our attention but split it up somewhere else.

James 1:8 says a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

They rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers and His warnings with which He warned them. And they followed vanity and became vain, and went after the nations which surrounded them, concerning which the Lord had commanded them not to do like them. – 2 Kings 17:15 NASB1995

Let me close with this: Yesterday I received this Facebook memory from 7 years ago. I had planted a church in Southern California that we called *Tribe Church*. I was trying to find a full-time day job to support the family while we launched the church. I said in the post:

Your memories on Facebook

Rudy, we care about you and the memories you share here. We thought you'd like to look back on this post from 7 years ago.



Rudy Topete

Sep 28, 2017 · 🌐

This week I was a little discouraged trying to juggle a new job and put quality time into the church. Last night I was resting and icing my ankles due to the pain of working a non desk job haha. I was really sad that a job was taking 40 hours of my time...time I could spend with church peeps but then I get a call from a Tribe member and had an hour conversation. She was an answer to prayer. Then today at work one of my co-workers said "You're a pastor right?" And proceeded to ask advice on a situation. I got to minister today in the market place.

God knows what you need before you ask and He provides.

P.S. pray for my ankles

The point of sharing that picture was to demonstrate that in the middle of something ugly, you can find the beauty of God. You can find what He is working on. You can find His blessing in the middle of what seems impossible.