

SALT CO
4/14/24
On the Path of Becoming Beauty

“And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror; are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.”

II Corinthians 3:18

WELCOME TO THE SALT CO!

When we say “Seasoned Adults” we mean this in two ways:

SEASONED AS IN...

Chronologically-- we’ve lived a lot of seasons of life

BUT more importantly-

Spiritually--- ...like when sodium and chlorine combined make SALT... by the grace of God, when we receive Christ into our lives we become like THIS [gesture: one hand—two hands—joined together]

We become something beautiful, a *new creation*...transformed and *transforming* for the rest of our lives.

JESUS CALLS US THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

It’s a kind of calling, isn’t it?

So, we call this the SALT CO—situated alongside Route 60+ where we pull over to share some stories of our journeys—to refresh, retool and REFUEL...

We are exploring the theme:

Putting Ourselves in the Path of Oncoming Beauty

Today, we’ll explore what it means to be on the path to becoming beauty!

Yesterday we hosted a “Beautiful YOU” event in our MSM room for young ladies in (or who have aged out of) the foster system. They receive help, with make-up, doing up their hair, and getting dressed up in elegant gowns in preparation for their upcoming proms. Here’s a video clip from last year’s gathering:

<https://vimeo.com/813645414/b0531faf63>

This year we added a red carpet.

So, this is not primarily about the makeup and the gowns...but in the midst of the fun of “dressing up” the people who have come alongside these young women at this milestone in their life are loving them in practical ways...to help them *see themselves* as God sees them. Remember that Genesis 1:31 could well be translated, “*God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very beautiful.*”

So does Psalm 139:13-18

***“For it was you who formed my inward parts;
You knit me together in my mother’s womb.
I praise you that I am fearfully and wonderfully made
Wonderful are you works;
That I know very well.”***

The first thing God’s word says about these young women is that no matter what they’re wearing, they are all works of art!

Jesus agrees. He said of the lilies of the field, “***even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these!***” (Matt. 6:29).

This is a message many of these young women may not have heard—or experienced-- very often. The beauty of the whole person—goes heart and soul deep.

And given the social media environment young people are steeped in—the anxiety of young women especially who are comparing themselves to airbrushed

curated images defining what's "beautiful" is skyrocketing. They desperately need to be reminded of God's delight in the beauty of who they are and who He intends for them to become.

We understand this. Just ask yourself, what makes for a beautiful person? Not a "pretty" person! Not a "well-put-together" person. Not even a "good looking" person, but what makes for a "beautiful person"? How would you answer? Who comes to mind that you would consider a beautiful person? How do you suppose they became that way?

We, seasoned adults also know this because we are human, and many of us have also been through traumas, felt rejection, seen things, done things that have made it difficult for us to see ourselves as "beautiful". Right?

God knows this about us. It's why He came. It's the Story of Good Friday that puts us on the path to the beauty of Easter! So we can share in His life, a life that begins the moment we receive Him, a life unfolding, in more and more amazing beauty.

God came to put us on the path of oncoming beauty WHICH INCLUDES US...becoming more and more the beautiful people He created us to be.

Yes, but how?

I see three moves.

First, to remind us that we have been made beautiful!

Second, God knows how to take our brokenness and sin and make us *new*. Beautiful!

Third, God intends what makes us beautiful to draw others to Himself.

Because what is beautiful is "attractive", it draws us.

First move, remember that God sees you and me, and us as He created us, as beautiful!

Let's read this famous psalm that is often quoted in our New Testament:

***"When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
The moon and the stars that you have established;
What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
Mortals that you care for them?"***

***Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
And crowned them with glory and honor.
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
You have put all things under their feet,
All sheep and oxen,
And also the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
Whatever passes along the paths of the sea.***

***O Lord, our Sovereign,
How majestic is your name in all the earth!***

Psalm 8:3-9

Observe that "glory" and beauty are intertwined. "Glory" is like beauty in that it defies close translation. It has about it the sense of splendor, radiance, shining, "weight" (authority, responsibility, power).

Observe that Psalm 8 directly follows Psalms 3-7 that lament suffering at hands of enemies, illness, persecution. Psalm 8 is a reminder of our dignity in the face of experiences that would say to us otherwise. As if to say, "NO! THIS is who you are!!" Like what Beautiful YOU is trying to get across to those young women.

This brings us to the second move: God knows how to take our brokenness and sin and make us new. Beautiful!

There are passages all over our bibles like these:

Isaiah. 53:5, ***“he [the Servant of the Lord] was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed”.***

John 17:22, ***“The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”***

Christian and artist Makoto Fujimura helps us visualize God’s second move, taking the broken pieces of our lives to put them together to create something beautiful. Check out his book ART+FAITH. His book is in our bookstore.

He introduces us to a Japanese art form called Kintsugi. Here’s a short video introduction:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zabQFbChhGM>

Fujimura writes, *“The Christian gospel, or the Good News, begins with the awareness of our brokenness. The Fall created a schism between humanity and God caused by our desire to become like gods. Christ came not to ‘fix’ us, not just to restore, but to make us a new creation.”* (45).

“The biblical vision of the new world accompanies the reminders of the wounds of Christ. The resurrected Christ still bears the wounds of crucifixion.” (45)
Christ bears nail marks in His body now. Our wounds matter to God. (104)

He continues,

“Through the Eucharist, through Christ’s body broken for us and his blood shed for us, we enter into resurrected reality. To extend the metaphor of Kintsugi, Christ sees in our wounds value, to the extent that our struggles are invaluable. What we cannot see in our struggles, in our journey into suffering, God sees, and the Spirit upholds as precious to who we will become.”

What if we saw ourselves as (beautiful) Kintsugi art?

I observe as I get older, and many around me, that we are becoming “humanized”, made -kicking and screaming- more in touch with our humanity, what I consider “wisdom”, what it means, how to be genuinely human. Maybe we’re becoming more approachable, willingness increasing to “spend time”, practicing noticing beauty. More open to sharing my failed attempts, mistakes, where I blew it, how I blow it, more able to weep, and laugh raucously. I notice in my journey that the places where I have felt most broken are also the places where I have experienced grace, mercy, and wisdom. It’s in my vulnerability that I become more connected to others and sense my own true humanity.

Another translation of Isaiah 53 reads, “***By His stripes we are healed.***”

What if we are Kintsugi works of art?

Here is what happens: I can begin to see Kintsugi art projects all around me!

Which leads to the third move in our becoming beauty:

God intends what makes us beautiful, including, perhaps especially our frail, vulnerable humanity to draw others to Himself.

The apostle liked to use the metaphor of mirrors- reflecting God’s beauty and glory.

“And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror; are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.”

II Corinthians 3:18

Jesus may have had this image in mind in Matthew 5 where he said, “***let your light shine before others and give glory to our Father in heaven***”, where the “glory”- the beauty if you will- sources in God’s glory and beauty.

We “angle our mirrors” just so, so that others can see His glory and beauty. How we do this of course is in the smallest, simplest of ways. Maybe helping a young lady into her gown...

Let's talk about this,

TABLE TALK (25-30 minutes)

1. Share name and how long at Calvary.
2. What makes for a beautiful person?
3. Talk about "beautiful people" you have known. Why do consider them this way?
4. Looking at examples of Kintsugi art, talk about a vein of gold in your life (how you have been changed by something difficult, hard, where you experienced brokenness- what you have learned, that you find you share with others)

TAKE AWAY'S

+We need to keep beauty in our lives to remind us of God's glory. Put yourself on the path of oncoming beauty on a daily basis (in encounters with creation, in making, in practicing setting things right)

+Practice "sabbathing", taking time to imagine new creation. Let God's word fire your imagination. ALL THINGS MADE NEW! The kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven!

+Practice Christ Reconciliation Theory. Paul casts a vision for the Corinthians, and for all us who are followers of Jesus:

"... and he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view...So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new. All this is from God..." II Corinthians 5:14-18a,

The art of eldering is seeing ourselves, and inviting others onto the path of oncoming beauty!

Amen.