

H.C.C. PRAYER BULLETIN No. 116
Praise God in beauty and grace

The work of Intercession has many faces. One of them is to learn to glorify in the way God reveals himself to us. That is wonderfully seen in his work of salvation, but it is also seen in the beauty and grace of his person and in his every day provision in our lives.

In Romans 11, the apostle Paul wrote about the fulness of grace in the way God is dealing with the rejection by the Jews of Jesus Messiah, and the Father's great plan for the salvation of Jew and gentile.

As he meditates on the wonder of God's grace, he breaks out in a beautiful doxology of adoration from vs.33-36. We have every reason to use it ourselves as we prayerfully meditate on his mercy, love and Person. In NIV it reads like this:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!

³⁴ Who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been his counselor?

³⁵ Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay them?

³⁶ For from him and through him and for him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Eugene Peterson paraphrases it in The Message:

³³⁻³⁶ Have you ever come on anything quite like this extravagant generosity of God, this deep, deep wisdom? It's way over our heads. We'll never figure it out.

Is there anyone around who can explain God?
Anyone smart enough to tell him what to do?
Anyone who has done him such a huge favour
that God has to ask his advice?

Everything comes from him;
Everything happens through him;
Everything ends up in him.
Always glory! Always praise!
Yes. Yes. Yes.

The Lord is pleased when we enter into such wonder and worship. Isaiah records his saying: "To whom then will you compare me? Who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these?

He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power not one of them is missing."

When we begin to look with adoration in our hearts and minds at the ordinary world around us there is beauty and grace everywhere. They are there in the people around us, neighbours whom we are commanded to love with selfless love even as our Lord loves us.

When our Master is obeyed and the Holy Spirit is welcomed in empowering love in Christ, beauty and love are everywhere. This poem tries to

***"The least we can do is to try to be there,
for beauty and grace are performed,
whether we sense them or not."***

They are visible:

In the mother, bonding with her newborn babe,
in the reverent touching of hands and feet;
the gazing into newly opened eyes;
the loving of a husband's traits seen
in the shape of face, of jaw or of ear.

The beauty of a new creation
given in grace to the just and the unjust,
given by you, Lord, to be sensed with you -
we midwives or gynaes, we husbands or in-laws
God, help us praise you in beauty and grace.

They are performed
in the aged, the frail, the fading;
there in thankful memories,
God's mercy in retrospect;
in growing relinquishment,
the hope of the pilgrim,
the heart getting ready;
in mortality accepted,
immortality grasped.
Lord, help us be there,
lest we fail in our hope,
lest we miss the great purpose
of your beauty and grace.

They are present
In the years in between,
in the child and the youth,
young man and young woman,
the covenant of marriage -
the promise of thee before me.
Each made in your image,
each longing for you Lord,
your beauty and grace.

The least we can try to do is to be there
in fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

express a few of the daily signs of grace and beauty in our lives.

Most of us feel harassed at this time. That is a reason to stop, and wait upon the Lord, asking him to open our eyes to the beauty and grace that is present in our lives and grasp what the Spirit shows us to remember. It helps grow our faith and peace.
Jon Larsen. July 2024