



GOD LOVES BEAUTY

Taps

*Day is done, gone the sun,
From the lake, from the hills, from the sky;
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.*

*Fading light, dims the sight,
And a star gems the sky, gleaming bright.
From afar, drawing nigh, falls the night.*



Dear Opal,

It takes only for man to view his surroundings and observe the magnificence of nature in all its splendor to get a glimpse into the true character of God. In doing so, we will not only have our spirits lifted, but discover how new and beautiful the familiar that surrounds us every day of our lives can truly be if we seek out the unusual, the grandiose, and far away.

One example of this is truly how peculiarly pleasant the earliest spring days can be when we experience a combination of delicious air that can be raw and blustering or that of gently stirring breezes beneath a cloudless blue sky; a time when the rebirth of the landscape is still yawning after a long winter's sleep.

Then, in just what seems to be a blink of the eye, the blossom laden fruit trees whose aromatic fragrances that have floated softly on the gentle breezes have been replaced with the tantalizing plumpness of shiny ripe multicolored fruit that prompts the images of pies cooling on window sills and jars of jam standing at attention like soldiers on the basement shelves that line the walls; all happenings that remind one that God's plans for the world never fail. Given the changing landscape displayed by each season, isn't it obvious from this spectacular drama how very much our Father loves beauty?

Furthermore, added to the charm that each season exudes is for whom it has been created; that being the entire human race designated to be the caretakers. Then, when one interacts with mankind, the Creator's personality can be examined further upon hearing the gurgling laughter of a baby, or looking into the eyes of a wise old sage that has fully enjoyed life with all its uncertainties and is present to tell about it; all miracles from our marvelous Father.

Opal, just last week, a 13-year-old Life Boy Scout from New Jersey that wanted to offer a tribute as well as hope for the residents of a veteran's healthcare facility where a great loss of life had occurred, took the definition of how God views beauty to an entirely new level; that being deep within the heart of mankind. Without fanfare, quietly appearing in front of the facility dressed in full uniform carrying only his bugle, those working and residing inside began hearing the sorrowful strains of Taps; a selfless act of compassion that rocked the world and brought tears to the eyes of even the toughest of the tough. This humble child's desire to console his fellowman that originated from within his soul was a visible

sign of what God means to love your neighbor as yourself, and expanded further the definition of the Scripture from Galatians 6: 2 that reads, **“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.”**

Certainly, as the world has been dealing with loss of life and suffering on an enormous scale caused by a vicious virus, stories of how God’s children have been reaching out to one another have surfaced everywhere. Cameras have shown teachers driving by their students’ homes waving as a way of placing closure on a school year, people holding handmade signs of gratitude to healthcare workers that have fought the virus on the frontlines of battle, workers in factories and fields doing their jobs in the face of danger just so vital products can be supplied to the population, caring neighbors making phone calls and penning letters of encouragement to those sheltering in place, and prayer chains formed by warriors seeking God’s help, just to name a few.

Opal, all it takes to know how God defines beauty is a review of the specific directions he gave the Israelites throughout the Old Testament regarding, not only how to worship him in spirit and truth, but also from his carefully designed instructions on the treatment of foreigners and aliens. Given all the rules of conduct that have been recorded, it is easy to surmise that even justice in God’s eyes is a thing that is pleasing to him.

Given this background, one can certainly ascertain that truth and beauty are not in opposition, but complement each other, instead. Our Lord does not make a difference between the poor and rich, young and old, or citizen and alien. All are the same in his eyes. Thus, when we worship live or work together as a united body caring for all his children, to him, is a thing of beauty. The old adage that actions speak louder than words say it all. It addresses the fact that the most beautiful things to our Creator come from inside out, not from outside in.

Given the fact that God sent his only Son as a sacrifice for our sin to dwell among us in a human form that was not especially comely adds even greater depth as to what determines beauty to him. Isaiah 53: 2 states, **“For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”** So, what message does this send? Read on in Matthew 11: 28-30 the words, **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you**

rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light,” and you will understand in great depth the character of our Lord.

In short, he loves the sounds radiating from the bugles of his children's' souls that are filled with strains of compassion, respect, actions, and love for all his people, no matter what color race or economic class from hence they hail. When this happens, the notes that float toward heaven are joined by the heavenly hosts as praises that float all around the throne of God in the form of blessings and thanksgiving.

In fact, he encourages us in Philippians 4: 8 with the words, *“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable---if anything is excellent or praiseworthy---think about such things.”*

As a volunteer at Glendale Gardens Nursing Home, I have listened to bugle notes of the soul being played by both staff and residents alike through acts of kindness that go above and beyond. Tim and Melody, your activity directors provide not only interesting pursuits for everyone, but go beyond by showering thoughtful acts of kindness on an individual basis for residents; not on just special occasions, but each and every day. Staff members hang in there when the waves are high and the tide is fast approaching a resident's life with encouragement and healing hands. Residents comfort one another, placing thoughts toward others ahead of their own concerns, in spite of their immense physical pain and suffering.

Just last week, I was sent a photograph of a gorgeous, handmade purple dress made by staff member Melody for a resident that had never before worn such beauty because of a childhood health condition. Resting in her wheelchair while wearing a huge smile, no doubt, sounded the heavenly bugles in unison as a show of delight.

Furthermore, my friend, it is a well-known fact that you have blown the bugle of kindness not only in the past to your family and neighbors, but continue now in what can be labeled as the winter season of your life.

Opal, my prayer is that we all join you in making music for the Lord as long as we have breath. Oh, how our Creator loves the deep rich notes of this kind of beauty!

In closing, imagine my hands on your forehead as the words from this poem are used as our prayer for all those trying to get their lives back on track from the tragic and shocking virus that halted the world.

COURAGE TO LIVE

*To those who have tried and seemingly have failed,
Reach out, dear Lord, and comfort them today;
For those whose hope has dimmed, whose faith has paled,
Lift up some lighted heavenly torch, I pray.
They are so hurt and helpless; be their friend.
Baffled and blind, they do not understand---
They think this dark and tangled road the end.*

*Oh, touch to flame their hope that has burned low,
And strike with fire faith's ashes that are dead.
Let them walk proudly once again, and go
Seeking the sure and steadfast light ahead.
Help them to move among their fellow men
With courage to live, courage to try again.*

Grace Noll Crowell



*Love,
Colene*