

November 13th, 2016 Sermon Discussion Guide

Rev. Lenny Luchetti

"A Thing of Beauty"

Group Objective:

We will be able to identify ways in which we can serve one another in faithfulness and peacefulness as we aim to see "soul-beauty."

Gathering

"Lord, may this scripture guide our discussion as well as our lives. May the beauty of Christ inspire our thoughts. May we see You and be changed by the encounter."

Psalm 27

¹ *The Lord is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?*

*The Lord is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?*

² *When the wicked advance against me
to devour me,*

*it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.*

³ *Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.*

⁴ *One thing I ask from the Lord,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.*

⁵ *For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.*

⁶ *Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the Lord.*

⁷ *Hear my voice when I call, Lord;
be merciful to me and answer me.*

⁸ *My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, Lord, I will seek.*

⁹ *Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;*

*you have been my helper.
Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Savior.*

¹⁰*Though my father and mother forsake me,
the Lord will receive me.*

¹¹*Teach me your way, Lord;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.*

¹²*Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.*

¹³*I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.*

¹⁴*Wait for the Lord;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the Lord.*

Prayer

For those around the world who suffer in the face of apparent ugliness without hope, give new eyes to see your grace. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For the direction of our nation following a tumultuous campaign season, give us wisdom, unity, and courage. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those within College Wesleyan Church who might be jaded by the ugliness of life, give rejuvenation and joy. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For the needs that we have shared together on a personal level,... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Summary of the Sermon

- As a group, recall the key points of Pastor Lenny's sermon.
- How did God stir you during the service? How were you challenged or changed?

Scripture

Take the time to read aloud the scripture that was preached. Isaiah 53

*Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

²*He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.*

*He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*

³*He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.*

*Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.*

*⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.*

*⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*

*⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

*⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

*⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.*

*⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.*

*¹⁰ Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.*

*¹¹ After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.*

*¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Major Sermon Discussion Points

- Pastor Lenny invited us to identify beauty in our lives and in the lives of those around us. In particular, he asked us to look for “soul-beauty” rather than “sensory-beauty.” Think, then, of Christ, who was perfect in beauty, and what aspect of the life of Christ, of his teaching and actions, that appeal most to you. *What about Christ fills you with awe and wonder?*
- Next, think of those who have influenced you—mentors, friends, present figures or historical ones—who have lived beauty through peacefulness and faithfulness. *Identify these people and what about their lives demonstrated “soul-beauty.”*

Next Steps/Moving Forward

- Like those who we recognize have lived a life of beauty, we are to do the same. How are you pursuing and living the beauty to which God is calling you?
 - How are you displaying faithfulness?
 - How are you displaying peacefulness?
- In the coming week, how will you seek to find beauty in your life and in the lives of others amid the ugliness.

Closing Prayer

Pray as you feel led as a group following your discussion or confess one of the following prayers individually or together.

*Father God, you are the highest beauty.
You are too beautiful for us to comprehend in full,
And, yet, you reveal to us your beauty in part.
We are awestruck by the beauty of the cross,
On which your Son bore our ugliness in full.
We sit with wonder at the beauty of the Spirit,
Who reveals to us glory of your creation
Through the majesty of the natural world,
Through the joy of living in community,
And through the remembrance of Jesus Christ, Our Lord.
Teach us, Holy Spirit, to look for beauty among the ugliness.
Guide us into the lives you have called us towards—
Lives of faithfulness and of peacefulness.
In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.*