

What's God Up To? (Part 3)

Ezekiel 36:22-27

Series: *The Seven Questions of Spiritual Theology*

Theocentric worldview – Life revolves around God. Everything that is happening is all about God bringing ultimate glory to Himself.

Premise: He is glorifying Himself by making people -
_____.

Man's ugliness:

"Remember that you were separated from Christ – you had no hope and you were without God in the world." Ephesians 2:12
"They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart." Ephesians 4:18

Question: How does God deal with man's ugliness?

God's restoration to beauty:

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone...and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you..." Ezekiel 36:25-27; c.f. Jer. 31:31-35

"We have confidence to enter...by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh..." Hebrews 10:19-20

*"...remember that at the time you were separated from Christ...having no hope and without God in the world (ugliness)...for he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility...For through him we...have access in one Spirit to the Father."
Ephesians 2:12,14,18*

What is God up to? He is glorifying Himself by making His children:

- *Righteous* because of Him – Philippians 1:10,11
- *Fruitful* because of Him - John 15:8
- *Happy* because of Him – Isaiah 61:3

With God in the center, I can live in the deepest joy with God as my deepest desire. Therefore, I am so beautiful to God!

Small Group Soul-Care

Opening Thoughts

We are talking these days at SCCC about "*God Centered Living*." God is most glorified when our lives revolve around Him. What might that look like in real life – besides prayer and bible study? Think deeply together about this.

1. Pastor Rich shared that in the U.S. \$12.4 billion dollars per year are spent on Cosmetics. Is there something particular happening in society that is driving this? Do you think that it is reflective of how people feel about themselves? What makes you feel beautiful or ugly? Have some fun with it.
2. Read together and discuss Ephesians 2:1-18 in view of man's state of *ugliness* and God's *beautification*. As you read it, note each reference to the "ugly" state and to God's "restoration." Reading it listening to the Holy Spirit, what is happening inside of you? Is God saying anything?

Going Deeper – Soul Talk

*"...every hard thing we endure can put us in touch with our desire for God, and every trial can strengthen that desire until it becomes the consuming passion of our life. Then comes the experience of God: intoxicated on the Spirit, ravished by the Bridegroom, delighted in by the Father – dancing with the Trinity. It's the source of our deepest joy, the real point of living."
Soul Talk pg. 8*

1. As you read the above statement – do you agree that hard things can put us more in touch with our desire for God? If you have been drawn deeper into God by hard circumstances would you share about it?

With God in the center, I can live in the deepest joy with God as my deepest desire. Is it possible for us, as a small group, to stir each other to a deeper joy and desire for God? How?