

Beauty Amidst Brutality

The world is filled with brutality—war, famine, weather disasters, persecution, greed, human evil—but beauty exists, too, and can be found amidst the brutality if we look carefully. Sometime beauty is obvious. Landscapes, humans, great art, stunning craftsmanship, etc. Sometimes it is difficult to focus on these external objects of beauty, but beauty can also be seen in kindness, bravery, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. Our bodies may be fragile and the world treacherous, but if our eyes are focused on things that transcend the physical and temporal, we can observe the beauty of the eternal unseen.

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

-How can the hope found in God and His word shift our very real problems into the category of "light and momentary troubles"?

-What are some examples from real life or from fiction that highlight this perspective shift?

-How can we better fix our eyes on the eternal unseen?

John 15:13—Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Luke 19:10—For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Mark 10:45—The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

1 John 3:16-18—This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters...let us not love merely with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

-No merely human self-sacrifice saves from sin, but can human self-sacrifice inspire or remind us of Christ's sacrifice? What example in real life or from fiction of human self-sacrifice points to the beauty of God even amidst the brutality of this world?

-What acts of self-sacrifice can we make to try to help shift people's perspective?