

# Beauty

Week of February 21

Recently I was on a school playground with a class of kindergarteners. Amidst the running, climbing, swinging, and various other activities—one little girl took my hand and asked me to come with her to church. I soon realized she meant literally—right then, right there—on the playground. So while she stood to “teach” I sat down on the sidewalk. Within moments an energetic five-year-old ran up for half a second. He asked what we were doing? We told him we were at church. He immediately blurted: “Church. God. I’m a bad person. Can you make me better?” And then ran off as quickly as he had approached our little sidewalk gathering.

Why is it that although most of us know we need help, the idea of going to church – for many – is a turnoff? And yet the question in the minds of millions of people is, “Can you help me? Can you make me better?” David Kinnamon says in his book, You Lost Me, there has been a 43% drop in church attendance among teens and twenties. In fact, he likens the absence of young people, or young people who go missing after attending church in their earlier years, to a “black hole.” Christ’s church is intended to be beautiful and yet, often to the watching world, followers-of-Christ (who make up the church) misrepresent the work of beauty it is meant to be.

Read Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31 and Read Revelation 21:1-7

1. What is Myth #1 as described by our Teaching Team in the message outline?

Why are so many young people leaving the church according to the information shared in this weekend’s message? (or you may share from your own personal experience)

The church can and should do a better job communicating more clearly the Good News of Jesus Christ. There’s no question we could do a better job rolling up our sleeves and becoming the hands and feet of Jesus—loving and serving others in the name of Christ. But even then, if we go in our own strength, our efforts will be of little or no avail when you consider a person’s life being changed for eternity. Only Jesus can give us a new heart. Consider Jesus’ last words to His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. Notice the “bookends” of this Great Commission: Jesus says, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth...and I am with you always.”

2. How does (1) the authority of Christ and (2) the abiding presence of His Spirit make the difference as we “go and make disciples of all the nations?”

How would you define an authentic representation of Christ’s church in the world around you?

As part of His Bride, how are you personally becoming a work of beauty? What difference is Christ and His church making in your life?

There are people all around us who innately know they need help. But when they do come into the church looking for answers, too often they leave as restless as they were before. To be honest, many “church people” are still trying to find their way. When we are not clear on the authority of Christ and His Word, when we are not clear on the destructive nature of sin, when we promote cheap grace by ignoring the high price of salvation—we do a poor job at clearly communicating the honest message of who Christ is and what He has done. His work on the cross paid for sin. His descent into hell cancelled our reservation there (we don’t have to be forever separated from God). His third-day resurrection forever proves that He is who He says He is – the only begotten Son of God!

3. Read John 3:16-21. How do Jesus’ words in this passage capsulize His mission in this world?

The beautiful news is this: “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in Him!” But v18 goes on to say, “But anyone who does not believe in Him has already been judged for not believing God’s one and only Son.” So according to John 3:19, what one fact will continue to keep an unrepentant heart in line for judgment?

Sin, death, eternal separation from God is ugly. But Christ came into this world “not to judge the world, but to save the world.” He alone bore the judgment we deserve. No one else has done that or could do that. His redemptive work in the world is a beautiful, glorious thing – and He has given His church the assignment of carrying on His message by carrying out His mission.

4. What makes the true Gospel Message easy for people of all ages to understand and accept?

Why is it important to cultivate intergenerational relationships in the church?

The church is the Bride of Christ. It is important that we don’t tear down or slander Christ’s Bride. We should do everything we can to support her and build her up, and out of our reverence for Christ, to “submit to one another” in love (Ephesians 5:21).

5. That day on the playground when the little fellow in kindergarten said he was a bad person and asked, "Can you make me better?" The little girl quickly responded, "I can't but God can!" How would you respond to such a question?

There's usually not a perfect time and setting to share your faith, but are you willing to talk about your faith (and your struggles) honestly with those who ask? How are you preparing yourself and availing yourself to such honest conversions about your faith? Is Jesus your Source of hope, joy, and beauty?

# BEAUTY

**Text: Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31 & Revelation 21:1-7**

*Today's Myth:*

- 1) Reason #1 – Churches seem overprotective—\_\_\_\_\_.

## The Plain Truth:

*The church is a work of \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.*

1. Clear on \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture
2. Clear on the \_\_\_\_\_ nature of \_\_\_\_\_
3. Clear on \_\_\_\_\_ message
4. Clear on \_\_\_\_\_ grace....
  - A) I have \_\_\_\_\_ saved .
  - B) I'm \_\_\_\_\_ saved.
  - C) I will one day \_\_\_\_\_ saved.

### One Year Bible Reading

Feb. 21: Leviticus 11:1-12:8, Mark 5:21-43, Psalm 38:1-22, Proverbs 10:8-9

Feb. 22: Leviticus 13:1-59, Mark 6:1-29, Psalm 39:1-13, Proverbs 10:10

Feb. 23: Leviticus 14:1-57, Mark 6:30-56, Psalm 40:1-10, Proverbs 10:11-12

Feb. 24: Leviticus 15:1-16:28, Mark 7:1-23, Psalm 40:11-17, Proverbs 10:13-14

Feb. 25: Leviticus 16:29-18:30, Mark 7:24-8:10, Psalm 41:1-13, Proverbs 10:15-16

Feb. 26: Leviticus 19:1-20:21, Mark 8:11-38, Psalm 42:1-11, Proverbs 10:17

Feb. 27: Leviticus 20:22-22:16, Mark 9:1-29, Psalm 43:1-5, Proverbs 10:18

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