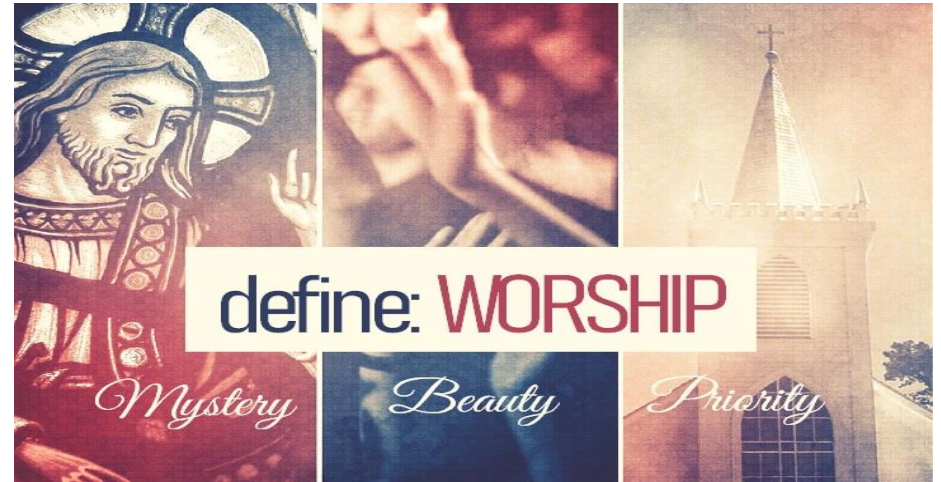




## Doggy Bag: Something to Chew On Throughout the Week

1. What is the most beautiful place on earth that you've experienced? Read Psalm 104, and consider what part of nature interests you most?
2. What three fruits of the earth are mentioned in Psalm 104:15? How have these become enduring religious symbols?
3. What beauty captures your attention on a regular basis and how do you linger with it? What is the ultimate purpose of creation according to Psalm 104 (look at v. 31)?
4. To what places do you go that engage you with beauty in an extra-ordinary way? What is it about such places that speak to your soul?
5. Is there a particular type of music or art that speaks to your soul and gives it flight?
6. Where and when is beauty embraced in our congregational life together?
7. Where and when do you experience beauty beyond your particular culture?
8. What are your responses to beauty that do not appeal to you? This week as you pray, begin to release these responses to God so that you might discover more beauty throughout God's creation.
9. Reread 1 Corinthians 12:12 – 14. Why is verse 12 such a good illustration of verse 13? How do these verses make you feel about your place in the body of Christ? About your need for others in worship and our church community as a beautiful part of God's creation?



Discovering Beauty

Psalm 104; 1 Corinthians 12:13 –14

Rev. Abi Foerster

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1. \_\_\_\_\_ evokes adoration and devotion, awe and wonder of the Source of Life.

*<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD, my soul. LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty...*

*<sup>24</sup>How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures...*

*<sup>33</sup>I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. <sup>34</sup>May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.*

*<sup>35</sup>But may sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Praise the LORD, my soul. Praise the LORD.*

-- Psalm 104:1, 24, 33- 35 (NIV)

*"There must be always remaining in every life some place for the singing of angels -- some place for that which in itself is breathlessly beautiful and by an inherent prerogative, throwing all the rest of life into a new and creative relatedness..."*

-- From "The Inward Journey" by Dr. Howard Thurman (1961)

- **Ponder:** With what filters are you looking at beauty? Where do you go to discover beauty?

2. **Beauty is reality seen through the eyes of \_\_\_\_\_.**

*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. – Psalm 27:4 (NIV)*

*<sup>9</sup> Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. <sup>11</sup> Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. <sup>13</sup> When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.*

-- Romans 12:9 -13 (NLT)

- **Example:** L'arche Communities around the world.

**Ask yourself:** Who are you indifferent to? Who do you dismiss or overlook? How does participating in worship challenge you to love those you might overlook or dismiss?

3. **A vital practice of our spiritual formation is to \_\_\_\_\_ to beauty.**

*<sup>13</sup> For we were **all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body**—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup> Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. – 1 Corinthians 12:13 – 14*

*<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for **you are all one in Christ Jesus**. – Galatians 3:28*



## ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. **Be more attentive and mindful of your surroundings.** Really look at the world around you to see more clearly, to fall in love more deeply.
2. **Linger or tarry with people.** Spend time and rest awhile.
3. **Give and receive hospitality.**
4. **Serve as an advocate when beauty is marred or destroyed.**

### BOTTOM LINE:

When our sense of beauty is polluted by the harshness of life, we worship in order to recalibrate our lives with God's sense of beauty. We **need worship** to help us practice seeing and responding to the beauty of God's creation with love.