

Opening Convocation

Dr. Allen Ross

“The Beauty of God”



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY.

Andrew Gerow Hodges Chapel
Tuesday, January 25, 2022
11:00 a.m.



THE WORSHIP OF GOD
ART AND BEAUTY IN THE BIBLE
“THE BEAUTY OF GOD”
Beeson Divinity School
January 25, 2022

Prelude

Dianne Norton
Organist Emerita
Dawson Memorial Baptist Church

*Processional Hymn No. 317

Crown Him with Many Crowns

Joseph Hopkins
Dean
School of the Arts, Samford University

*Call to Worship

Beck A. Taylor
President, Samford University

Ascribe to the LORD you sons of the Mighty,
Ascribe to the LORD glory and honor,
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name,
Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

- Psalm 29:1-3

*Invocation

Welcome

Greetings and Introductions

Douglas A. Sweeney
Dean
Beeson Divinity School

First Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 40:12-15, 21-31

Joshua Hedrick
M. Div. Student

*Affirmation of Faith

J. Michael Hardin
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Let us rise and confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy
Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified,
dead, and buried.**

*Please rise in body or in spirit.

He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Second Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 44:6-8, 21-23

Cooper Froehlich
M.Div. Student

Confession of Sin

Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,
we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,
we have offended against thy holy laws,
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
spare thou those who confess their faults,
restore thou those who are penitent,
according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord;
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

Third Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 55:6-8

Josiah Trombley
M.Div. Student

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

*Please rise in body or in spirit.

*Hymn

The God of Abraham Praise

Joseph Hopkins

The God of Abraham praise
Who reigns enthroned above,
Ancient of Everlasting days,
And God of love;
To Him uplift your voice,
At whose supreme command
From earth we rise, and seek the joys
At His right hand.

There dwells the Lord our King,
The Lord our Righteousness,
Triumphant o'er the world and sin,
The Prince of Peace;
On Sion's sacred height
His kingdom He maintains,
And glorious with His Saints in light
For ever reigns.

The God who reigns on high
The great Archangels sing,
And 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' cry;
'Almighty King!
Who was, and is, the same,
And evermore shall be;
Eternal Father, great I AM,
We worship Thee.'

Before the Saviour's Face
The ransomed nations bow,
O'erwhelmed at His almighty grace
For ever new;
He shows His prints of love, --
They kindle to a flame
And sound through all the worlds above
The slaughtered Lamb.

The whole triumphant host
Give thanks to God on high,
'Hail! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost',
They ever cry;
Hail! Abraham's God, and mine!
(I join the heavenly lays)
All might and majesty are thine,
And endless praise, Amen.

*Please rise in body or in spirit.

Sermon

**“The Beauty of God”
Isaiah 48**

Allen Ross
*Professor of Divinity
Beeson Divinity School*

*Renewal of the Inaugural Covenant

Rachel Wood
*President, Student Government Association
Beeson Divinity School*

Leader: Having been led, as we believe, by the providence of God to be a member of this community of faith and learning, and in acknowledgement of the stewardship of this new beginning, we make the following solemn covenant with one another in the presence of the angels and the living God.

People: We are here because the call of God has come to us from beyond ourselves. We desire to be faithful ministers in the church of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to diligence in study, devotion in prayer, and holiness of life that we might better serve the body of Christ.

Leader: We pledge to love one another and encourage one another in the disciplines of the Christian life. We confess that we are all learners together in the school of faith. We will be cautious in criticism and prompt in forgiveness.

People: We believe that personal faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation for all who were, are now, or ever shall be. Therefore, we will seek in word and deed to bear witness of his love and grace to all persons everywhere.

ALL: Having in good faith made our covenantal commitments, and with God’s help and grace, we therefore pledge to be faithful stewards of time, talents, and opportunities in order that we, in this semester at Beeson Divinity School, might model a lifestyle of service and devotion to the end that God will be glorified in ever increasing measure.

*Hymn No. 123

Fairest Lord Jesus

Joseph Hopkins

*Benediction

Eli Newcomb
M.Div. Student

Postlude

Dianne Norton

*Please rise in body or in spirit.

Worship Notes

Music Leader: Joseph Hopkins, Dean, School of the Arts, Samford University

Organist: Dianne Norton, Organist Emerita, Dawson Memorial Baptist Church

Banner Carriers: Rachel Wood, Caleb Craft

Crucifer: Teal Cuellar

The Confession of Sin is from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1979).

The Inaugural Covenant was drafted by the first incoming class at Beeson Divinity School and is renewed by the community each academic year.

“The God of Abraham Praise” (Public Domain)

Words: Hebrew *Yigdal* attributed to Daniel ben Judah (ca. 1400); tr. Newton Mann (1836-1926) and Max Landsberg (1845-1928)

Music: Hebrew melody; adapt. Thomas Olivers (1725-1799) and Meyer Lyon (1751-1797)

Art and Beauty in the Bible
Beeson Divinity School Chapel Series
Spring 2022

“One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.” *Psalm 27:4*

As King David testified here and elsewhere in the psalter, God himself and all his works are truly beautiful, or glorious.

Most of us would agree--and would stand in good company. Augustine of Hippo, John of Damascus, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and many other saints have for centuries commemorated the beauty, excellency, and glory of the Lord as found in Scripture and the world that it portrays. During the 1960s, a Swiss Roman Catholic priest named Hans Urs von Balthasar, one of the most important theologians of the twentieth century, published seven major volumes on *The Glory of the Lord* (*Herrlichkeit* in German). And in the twenty-first century, Christian artists like Makoto Fujimura have asked believers to reflect upon and imitate the artistry of God.

Jonathan Edwards, a founding father of our evangelical movement, went so far as to suggest that inasmuch as “God is infinitely the greatest Being, so he is allowed to be infinitely the most beautiful and excellent: and all the beauty to be found throughout the whole creation is but the reflection of the diffused beams of that Being who hath an infinite fullness of brightness and glory.” The Lord, in other words, “is the foundation and fountain of all being and all beauty.” Makoto Fujimura adds “from the vantage point of an artist” that God is the prime and ultimate artist, the source of creativity, who calls us to “reclaim creativity and imagination as essential, central, and necessary parts of our faith journey.”

Yet beauty remains today the least studied of the trio of so-called “transcendentals” (the most basic commonalities of things that have being: truth, goodness, and beauty). And the beauty of the Lord is rarely mentioned in our churches. So in chapel this term, we will explore some of the things that God has shown us in his Word about his beauty, or glory, the beauty of the cosmos, and the ways in which he wants us to reflect and cultivate divine beauty in our lives.

Our prayer is that the Lord will help us all to grow more beautiful by dwelling on his beauty--more ready, willing, and able to reflect, and thus magnify, his glory in the world.