

The artist had arranged a special showing of art along the main street of her village. The purpose of the event was to promote the idea of art to her people and to add life and color to their home. I joined the crowd of those walking along and was very impressed by what I saw. I noticed that though some children and most adults stopped to gaze on the display, there were far too many that ran along oblivious to the view.

It was bothersome, as it showed a complete lack of respect for the artist and her attempt to put meaning into the everyday lives of the people. I know that some were busy with the cares of the world, and I was just disappointed that they could not see the True Beauty of this work.

I saw the artist, who was trying to help a group understand her particular point of view, and I waited to talk to her for a bit to see what her perspective was on this. She was thrilled that there were at least some of the people who were taking a moment to think about her work. She told me that she wanted them to respect her art, for it was a window into her soul, and in “seeing” what she was showing they were respecting her soul as well. But she understood that some people were limited in their ability to see beauty – those who stood in judgment and asked “What is art?”¹ – and she prayed for their enlightenment.

I went on to the crown of the hill that gave a great view of the town, and I thought about the creative expression of God in the same vein. It was art, in a sense, and it should be treated with respect. In my work, I knew that some people did revere it, but that many did not. Adam and Eve, for instance, walked through a beautiful (and I am sure very artistic) Garden, and yet they let their own desires overshadow the glory of it – they did not “get” what the Great Artist was trying to say to them. The awesome nature of the universe, as we bathe ourselves in its nightglow, should be enough to convince us², but this is often not the case. We should be able to see the ultimate beauty of Goodness even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death³, but we get especially confused in this gallery.

We have to realize that there is a dimension of Art that exists beyond the walls. We must see that there is a magnificence behind it that has to flow from a greater world, where we feel the breath of the eternal⁴. God has shown us the story in various ways – especially His Creation and His Loving Presence (as demonstrated sacrificially by the Son). This is what He wants us to see. God is the Supreme Artist, and I sometimes think about Him wondering if we like His work!

We will not usually be blinded by it on the road⁵, but need to search for it. For if we seek, we will find⁶ – we will “get” it. And once we find the Great Pearl⁷, we will embrace the full measure of God’s Goodness with all of our heart and soul⁸.

I feel the same way as my artist friend; that Love is the ultimate Creative Power. Her mission was to use her art to shine the light of the world⁹ onto a universe that, in her mind, was in fact brimming with Goodness¹⁰. The light from it can lead us through the dark valleys, if we trust in Goodness and are comforted in that understanding. In embracing this Goodness, drinking or breathing in tiny droplets of soul-exhilarating joy¹¹, we eventually feel great tidal waves of it washing through our being¹².

In my own work, I also try to tell stories that portray the glory of God and how it uplifts us, but I am not sure anyone gets my message, either. At least I know that God appreciates my efforts.

1. I am reminded of Pilate’s question, “What is Truth”, in John 18:38. Many are just as confused about Art (or Good).
2. “The heavens declare the glory of God,” (Psalm 19:1), and “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse,” (Romans 1:20)
3. see Psalm 23, especially vs 4; we must trust in Goodness and be comforted in that...
4. “What can we say beyond Wow, in the presence of glorious art, in music so magnificent that it can’t have originated solely on this side of things?” and “In art, we feel the breath of the invisible, of the eternal - which Elie Wiesel described in Night as ‘that time when question and answer would become ONE.’” Anne Lamott, from Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers

5. As with Paul, blinded on the road to Damascus (Acts 9).
6. “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” (Luke 11:9) Also, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13)
7. see Matthew 13:44ff
8. see Deuteronomy 6:5, and many similar passages
9. “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.” (Matthew 5:14)
10. “God is near and the universe is brimming with goodness [or artistry, hsl].” Dallas Willard, from The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God
11. “All of the good and beautiful things from which we occasionally drink tiny droplets of soul-exhilarating joy, God continuously experiences in all their breadth and depth and richness.” Dallas Willard, from The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God
12. “Great tidal waves of joy must constantly wash through his being.” Dallas Willard, from The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God

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