

TUESDAY, MARCH 13

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Beauty Fades but That's Okay

THOUGHT FOR TODAY: For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling. . . . 2 Corinthians 5:2

I used to wonder why some people were born with beautiful skin, symmetrical faces, thin bodies, and straight teeth while others seemingly got the gene pool's leftovers. I thought it was rather unfair. The beautiful people, by pure luck, had one fewer concern in life, but the rest of us were endowed with monumental concern. In elementary school my body was laden with baby fat; my overbite was nine millimeters (an offense that called for two bouts of braces and years of headgear); and my Harry Potter glasses and bowl haircut didn't help.

Then one day I overheard the prettiest girls in school comparing waist sizes and complaining about their complexion. I suddenly realized that many people feel ugly. When we put physical beauty on a pedestal, we all fail to meet the standard. But there's good news: when beauty fades, God is with us and promises to give us glorified bodies that will last forever.

PRAYER: Eternal God, give us strength to walk by faith and not by sight. Amen.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14

John 11:17-44

God Hears Us

THOUGHT FOR TODAY: So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me." John 11:41

God hears everything you say. How do you feel about that? On one hand, I find divine attentiveness to be greatly comforting. God not only hears my words, but values them. What I have to say is important to my Creator. Incredible! On the other hand, I'm a little embarrassed. "Uh-oh! God heard me say that?" I murmur. But God never wants us to be ashamed of our honesty, but rather invites us to share our thoughts and feelings. We can trust that the Almighty handles our heartfelt expressions with unconditional grace, patience, and love.

When Jesus found himself overwhelmed by the stress of his dear friend Lazarus' death (John 11:1-16), his friends' frustrations (11:17-37), and his own impending arrest and execution (11:45-57), the first thing he prayed was, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me. . . ." (11:41-42a). Jesus never tried to hide his negative feelings about tragedies and struggles. Thankfully, we can enjoy that same openness.

PRAYER: Thank you, God, for welcoming our heartfelt expressions. Amen.

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