



Course: Awakening Wonder: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty With Dr. Stephen Turley

Lesson 8: Beauty and Theology

Outline:

“The Good, the True, and the Beautiful is a table piece using three stones picked from the Wild Ammonoosuc River west of Kinsman Notch in New Hampshire. I’m interested in the idea that forms evoke or embody abstract concepts, which has a long and persistent tradition in western art, even as it has been disputed by philosophers and critics. I had been discussing the idea of natural law with friends, and was attracted to its adaptation of the Greek triad of goodness, truth, and beauty. Particularly intriguing is the argument that the three belong together, and are diminished in isolation—especially in light of the efforts of many modernists to culture beauty antiseptically, without the infectious presence of truth or goodness.”

Ted Prescott, *The End of My Modernism*

- Beauty, in Classical Christian Theology, is not a principle or an idea but God Himself.
- Theology is “philokalia” (love of beauty) according to the early Church Fathers.
- The early Church Fathers encouraged the mystical and aesthetic interpretation of scripture, wherein Christ could be encountered.
- For the early Church, scripture was liturgy.
- Theology as philokalia awakens the Sacred.
- “Beauty always sanctifies”
- Theology as philokalia encourages the practicing of the spiritual disciplines.