



The Sound of Life's Unspeakable Beauty

Martin Schleske

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Eerdmans (Apr 14, 2020)

Hardcover \$24.99 (371pp)

978-0-8028-7614-0

Martin Schleske's powerful *The Sound of Life's Unspeakable Beauty* links the pursuit of beautiful music with that of finding God.

Describing the process of building a violin—picking the perfect piece of wood; shaping the wood; adding varnish; giving it a final polish—the book treats each step as a fascinating metaphor for understanding and connecting to God. Schleske seeks wood that sings when struck with a flat blade and learns how to hear and see the world in a different way. He considers different methods of approaching God—passive following and active seeking—to argue that it is possible to learn to be more receptive to God's grace.

Its text rare and magical, the book incorporates words from the Bible in an organic fashion, its quotes coming to seem both self-explanatory and surprising. It considers the tones that a violin produces and describes a series of seven resonances that are married to concepts of grace and works. The book's explanations of how powerlessness plays against power in Jesus's message are profound, and it plays upon Matthew 11:29 ("take my yoke upon you") to suggest growing past the mistaken perception that faith is an easy road.

Beautiful black-and-white photographs capture elements of the violin production process and of the man behind them. Close-cropped, the images fill their pages, focusing in on small, telling details, like the grain of the wood or the strings of the instrument. Each is paired with a Bible verse that sets the corresponding chapter's tone.

This new translation of Martin Schleske's inspiring *The Sound of Life's Unspeakable Beauty* is a gift to English-speaking audiences.

JEREMIAH ROOD (May / June 2020)

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