

Gratefully at Rest in His Love

Psalm 118:1-9

Halifax: 11 February 2007

Introduction:

As most of you know,

- for several years it has been my custom to break from our regular sermon series in order that I might introduce you to a new Psalm of Focus.
 - The Psalm of Focus is a psalm we sing every week that corresponds to the particular section we are studying in our regular sermon series.
 - Today, I am going to preach from the first nine verses of Psalm 118.
- This will be our Psalm of Focus for Matthew 26:1-46 from which I intend to preach several messages.
 - Matthew 26:1-46 has to do with preparations for our Lord's death...
 - We see how Jesus' enemies prepared for it...
 - We see how the woman who anointed Jesus' feet prepared for it...
 - We see how Jesus prepared His disciples for it...
 - And we see how, in Gethsemane, Jesus prepared Himself for His death.
- Our Lord Jesus was able to face His sufferings because He trusted in the goodness of God the Father...
 - Psalm 118 is a call to us to enter into His confidence in the Father's covenant love in order that we might enter into His victory over all our enemies, even death.
 - The first nine verses call on us to confess the goodness of the LORD and then show us what effect it will have on us when we trust in His goodness.
 - My plan is to take these first nine verses (which are found in Psalm 118-A in our Psalter) as our Psalm of Focus first,
 - Then in a few weeks, we will take up Psalm 118-B as our Psalm of Focus in connection with Matthew 26:47 – 27:31...
 - And then, after a few more weeks, we will take up Psalm 118-C as our Psalm of Focus which will bring us to the end of Matthew's Gospel.
- Perhaps it will wet your appetite if I mention to you that the great reformer, Martin Luther, claimed this Psalm as his own...
 - In his dedication of his translation of this Psalm to Abbot Frederick of Nuremberg, he wrote:
 - "This is my Psalm, my chosen Psalm. I love them all; I love all holy Scripture, which is my consolation and my life. But this Psalm is nearest my heart, and I

have a peculiar right to call it mine. It has saved me from many a pressing danger, from which nor emperor, nor kings, nor sages, nor saints, could have saved me. It is my friend; dearer to me than all the honours and power of the earth.... But it may be objected, that this Psalm is common to all; no one has a right to call it his own. Yes; but Christ is also common to all, and yet Christ is mine. I am not jealous of my property; I would divide it with the whole world.... And would to God that all men would claim the Psalm as especially theirs! It would be the most touching quarrel, the most agreeable to God - a quarrel of union and perfect charity.”

- As we study this Psalm and sing it over the next few months, it is my prayer that you will enter into this most touching quarrel, claiming that this is especially your Psalm.
 - My outline is very simple this morning...
 - First, I want to show you that it is for you to confess the LORD’s goodness.
 - Secondly, I want to show you three effects of trusting in the LORD’s goodness.

First then, learn from the first five verses of this Psalm that:

I. It is for you to confess the LORD’s goodness (vv. 1-5)

A. The Psalm opens with a summons to confess Him...

- It begins with the words:
 - “Oh, give thanks to the LORD”
- 1. Now the word translated “give thanks” or “praise” in our English Bibles is *hdy yaw-daw’* in the original Hebrew.
 - a. This is one of those words that is so full of meaning that it is hard to translate it by any one English word.
 - 1) It properly means “to confess.”
 - It is used in the Old Testament to refer to the confession of sin..
 - of a true declaration both of what we are and of what we have done...
 - And when we confess God, we likewise truly confess both what He is and what He has done.
 - *hdy yaw-daw’* has to do with saying what is true...
 - The Greek word for confess is *omologew* which means “to say the same thing...”
 - In other words, we say the same thing as what is true—the same thing that God would say about something.
 - That is what we do when we confess.

- 2) But whenever *hdy yaw-daw'* is used of confessing God, especially in the Psalms, it is often a summons both to praise and to thank God.
 - This only makes sense because whenever you say what is true about God,
 - you will be describing His excellence—both the excellence of His person and of His acts...
 - To list off the excellent things about His person is to praise Him...
 - To list off the excellent things that He has done it to thank Him...
 - That is precisely what this Psalm is calling you to do.

- b. Although the word *hdy yaw-daw'* only appears in verse 1, it is echoed by the word “say” in verses 2-4...
 - *hdy yaw-daw'* is always something that is spoken...
 - So when verse 2-4 says
 - “Let Israel not **say**,” and
 - “Let Aaron now **say**,” and
 - “Let those who fear the LORD now **say**,”
 - It is calling for each of these groups to confess the LORD with praise and thanksgiving
 - They are to join together with one another to say what is true about Him.

2. But just who is it that is being called to do this,
 - and by whom are they being called?
 - a. Well of course it is “Israel”, “the house of Aaron”, and “all who fear the LORD”, that are expressly mentioned here...
 - And as to the identity of the one who is issuing this call,
 - The commentators debate about whether this Psalm was written by David or by Hezekiah or someone in the time of Ezra...
 - It’s hard to say...and it is but speculation in the end...

 - 1) But as this is a call to worship that is now found in scripture,
 - it doesn’t really matter so much who wrote it...
 - The call to confess the LORD comes from the LORD Himself because it is part of His Word...

- And even when David or whoever first wrote this Psalm, the call to worship did not originate with Him, but with the LORD.
 - David or whoever it was, was speaking for Him.
- a) You need to understand this about our worship as well...
- At the beginning of our worship service, we have a call to worship that I issue to you as a minister...
 - but you should not see that call coming from me—it comes from the LORD.
 - He is the one who calls us to come together as a church each Lord’s day to worship Him in the assembly.
- b) I have shown you before that Jesus is the Worship Leader of all our worship.
- In Hebrews 2:11-12, we are told that we are His brothers whom He has sanctified and to whom He declares God’s name...
 - He says,
 - Heb. 2:12: “In the midst of the assembly (that is, the church) I will sing praise to you.”
 - When the one leading worship calls you to worship, he is speaking for Jesus...
 - It is Jesus that speaks to us in the call and in the proclamation of God’s Word.
 - The minister is only His spokesman.
 - Therefore, we need to receive the call with reverence and readiness to obey.
 - This is why it is not proper to come to worship with a lax, casual attitude...
 - We are coming at the summons of Jesus Christ to confess the name of the LORD!
 - Jesus is in our midst, we are gathered with the angels!
 - It is an awesome gathering, not something to saunter into.
 - We are to come with reverence and awe before our God as those summoned by Jesus Christ.

TRANS> But I have spoken about using this call as a call to worship at the beginning of the service.

- 2) You also need to understand that as the words of this call are found in the Psalms,
 - they are also something we are to sing as a congregation...
 - When you sing these words with your brothers and sisters in the church,
 - you are all adding your voices to the voice of Jesus Christ to encourage your brothers and sisters to worship the LORD.
 - When we sing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
 - our words are not only directed to God,
 - but we also are commanded to admonish one another as it says in Colossians 3:16.
 - We are taking the LORD's word and speaking it to each other.
- b. But as we look at this call as a call to us from our Lord Jesus,
 - what should we make of the various ones that are expressly called here—Israel, Aaron's house, and those who fear the LORD?
 - 1) Generally, the idea here is that the entire congregation is to join in the confession of God's name.
 - Not one of us should be silent.
 - It is an assembly, and we are to unite our voices in confession and praise to God as His people.
 - 2) But there is something to learn from the specific categories that are named here...
 - a) First there is **Israel**...
 - This of course is the name given to God's covenant people
 - It hearkens back to the day when Jacob wrestled with the LORD at Peniel and would not stop until the Lord had blessed him...
 - That was when His name was changed to Israel because,
 - "as a prince with God, he prevailed"
 - The name means "prince with God."
 - The New Testament refers to all believers as the Israel of God, and so we are...
 - We are those who know what it is to struggle with our sin—

- to come to our God in desperation with the body of sin clinging to us and to lay hold of our God and refuse to let Him go until He delivers us.
- We live the life of Israel, wrestling and struggling, until at last, by His grace, we overcome.
- We are the assembly of Israelites are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, made without hands.

TRANS> That's how we should understand that call to Israel to confess God with praise and thanksgiving...

b) Secondly, **the house of Aaron** is summoned to praise...

- This, of course, refers to the priests in the Old Testament who led the people in worship as representatives of the LORD.
 - How important it is for those who lead in worship to themselves be true worshippers who confess the name of the LORD.
 - How sad it is when they depart from the LORD and cause the people to err!
 - They will incur a stricter judgement!
- For us, the house of Aaron refers to those that have been set apart by God to minister God's word and to lead in worship.
 - You are to admonish them to confess God's name in truth.
 - It is to be your desire that they would make a true confession.
 - Paul warned Timothy that there would be many in the Church who would not want sound doctrine and who would provide teachers that would tell them what they want to hear!
 - Truly, false shepherds will be judged, but so will all of those in the congregation who reject true shepherds to follow what is false!
- You, then, are to add your voice to the LORD's to call the house of Aaron—those who lead in worship—to confess the LORD.

c) Finally, **those who fear the LORD** are called to confess Him...

- This very likely refers to those worshippers who were not yet incorporated into the body of Israel...

- It speaks of those who are learning of the LORD but have not yet confessed Him in the assembly so as to be fully incorporated...
- They are summoned to confess Him also!
- We are called to carry the gospel into all the world—
 - We are to bring outsiders to come into the assembly and to hear God’s Word, and we are to call them to confess Him with us.

TRANS> So you see then that we are all summoned in this Psalm to confess the LORD.

- But why are we to do it?

B. Three reasons are set forth as to why we are to confess the LORD...

1. First, we ought to confess the LORD (praise Him and give Him thanks) **because He is good.**

a. What a glorious and simple statement!

- Augustine pointed out that the praise of God cannot be expressed in fewer words than these—“He is good!”
 - Goodness is so much a quality that belongs to God that Jesus would not allow the rich young ruler to use it unless he consciously used it of God.
 - Jesus told Him, “there is none good by God.”

b. He alone is pure good—good and nothing but good—nothing evil, nothing indifferent, only good!

- Never doubt it for a moment!
 - When others are bad, remember that He is only good...
 - When others are good to a degree, remember that He is good beyond measure!
 - It is His nature to be good and He cannot be otherwise...
 - Let us confess it to be so!

2. Secondly, we are called to confess the LORD (praise Him and give Him thanks) **because His mercy endures forever...**

a. The word **mercy** is the word *dox kheh’-sed* that we so often find in the Old Testament.

- It speaks of God’s covenant love, His loyal love that He promises to His people.

- It is the love or grace that nothing, not even our sin, can keep from reaching us.
 - It is the love that is so strong that it took whatever measure was necessary to restore us to our God...
 - even to the point of God sending His only Son to die in our place...
 - It is a love that never fails to bless the one on whom it is set.
- b. But understand, it is not a general love to all, but a special to God's elect people...an exclusive love...
- The Bible says, "Jacob have a I loved but Esau I have hated."
 - dox brings salvation to every single person on whom it is fixed.
 - Every one of them repents and believes and will be found in heaven.
 - It is not based on what they have or have not done, but on God's free and sovereign choice...
 - He says,
 - "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."
- c. And because this love overcomes the sin and rebellion that separated us from Him,
- It is a love that endures forever—a love that can never be overcome but that always overcomes...
 - There is nothing in all of heaven and earth that can separate God's elect people from this love.
 - That is why we are to confess that dox endures forever.
 - You who have been redeemed have experienced this love that lasts forever through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Having experienced it, it is to be the very heart of your confession about God!

TRANS> So you see that our confession is first that God **is good** and then that He has purposed to **do good** to us.

- It is very helpful to know that in the original Hebrew, the word "because" or "for" is actually used not only in verse 1...
 - "Oh give thanks to the LORD for (or because) He is good,"
 - but also in verse 2, 3, and 4...
 - In other words, it says:
 - Let Israel now say "because He is good"
 - Let the house of Aaron now say, "because He is good."

- Let those who fear the LORD not say, “because He is good.”
- You can see why it would have been awkward to translate it this way,
 - but do you see what it’s getting at?
 - Each one of these groups is to say that God is good *because* His mercy endures forever—
 - **because** of this covenanted love that is at the very heart of our relationship to God!
 - It is our salvation in Jesus Christ that is to be central to all our praise.

TRANS> And this leads to the third thing that we are to confess...found in verse 5:

3. Thirdly, we ought to confess the LORD (praise Him and give Him thanks) because He has rescued us when we were in distress...
 - Verse 5 says,
 - Psalm 118:5: “I called on the LORD in distress; The LORD answered me and set me in a broad place.”
 - a. Now brothers and sisters, again, it is not certain whether this is David or some other leader in Israel who wrote these words,
 - But whoever He was, he represents the LORD Jesus who sings this Psalm as the head and mediator of the church!
- 1) Jesus was in great distress when our sins were charged against Him...
 - He bore all the shame and all the wrath that we had provoked by our wickedness—
 - He was in great distress,
 - and in that distress,
 - He cried out to the LORD and the LORD delivered Him.
 - 2) Jesus was offering Himself as a sacrifice for our sins, and He had to suffer until the full penalty had been paid!
 - The word distress means to be confined in a narrow place—He was boxed in by God’s wrath and displeasure against our sin...
 - But then at last, the Father answered and set him in a broad place...
 - He was set free—His work was finished—His sacrifice was fully accepted!

- b. And so you see here, in this Psalm, the LORD Jesus is calling upon us to see and confess the goodness and Heseed of God in answering Him from the cross!
 - 1) We are the beneficiaries of God's answer!
 - When God answered Him, it meant that His sacrifice for **our** sins was accepted!
 - It meant that through faith in Him and this His work,
 - there was complete remission of sin for us.
 - 2) Of course, when you sing this Psalm, it is fitting for you to think of God's rescue of you in all the many times when you have called upon the LORD in your distress and He has answered...
 - but even more, it is for you to think of the deliverance of King Jesus and with Him of the whole church when God answered Him from the cross.
 - Because He was heard, you will never know distress like His distress!
 - Here is the covenant love of God that endures forever!
 - Confess it with gladness!
 - He is good, He has an unchanging purpose of good, and He has done what was good.
- C. This Psalm expresses a deep yearning that this confession would be made...
- When you sing it, you are to yearn for God to be praised...
1. The word "Oh" brings this out:
 - "Oh give thanks to the LORD."
 - Grammatically, this idea is conveyed in the three verses that follow...the idea is...
 - "O let Israel say...
 - "O let the house of Aaron say...
 - "O let those who fear the LORD say..."
 2. If you understand God's goodness and mercy, if you understand what He has done,
 - you will yearn to have Him praised...
 - Such love demands praise and thanksgiving as its due!
 - You will want to smack that brother in the head who is complaining and who is not praising...

- You will want to exhort your own soul to praise and you will reproach yourself for your coldness in this duty!
3. How the yearning of King Jesus for us to praise is the Father is expressed here...
- He has such great love for His dear flock, the chosen ones He has redeemed...
 - He is never satisfied until they are filled with this confession—
 - with the confession of praise and thanksgiving to the Father.
 - He wants us to understand what has been done for us!
 - He did all that He did on the cross in order that God’s goodness might reach to us and be known by us...
 - He and the Father have delighted in each other’s goodness for all eternity...
 - Jesus came that we, who had been ruined by sin, might be restored to see it and delight in it and become those worshippers in Spirit and truth that the Father seeks.

TRANS> King Jesus wants you to grow up into this confession.

- He yearns for you to be able to say with all confidence and verity:
 - “He is good because His mercy endures forever!”
- He knows that until this confession is full and complete in you,
 - that until you truly grasp the goodness of God...
 - you will never be able to have the kind of trust that you ought to have as a child of God...
- This Psalm goes on to show you:

II. Three effects of trusting in the Lord’s goodness (vv. 6-9)

- To these we shall now turn.
- A. Effect #1: When you trust the LORD’s goodness, you realise that you have no reason to fear.
1. Verse 6 begins:
 - “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.”
 - a. If what we have confessed is really true—
 - If He really is good and really does have a love for us that cannot be stopped...

- If this One is on your side, fear is absolutely groundless.
 - If His love spared no expense, but did what was required to break down the barrier of sin that separated you from Him,
 - what could ever happen to destroy that love?
 - What harm could ever reach you when so great a love is surrounding you?
- b. Surely, the LORD Jesus in human flesh would himself have been paralysed with fear...
- if He had not believed in the goodness of His Father in heaven,
 - and in the bond of the Father's covenant love that nothing could destroy, even when He became sin for us.
 - If He had not had this trusting assurance, He would never have gone to the cross!
 - He did it because He knew that in the end, He would be filled with never ending joy together with all those He had redeemed.
 - The assurance of God's love is what made Christ go on to Jerusalem when He knew He would die there,
 - it is what made Him go on and speak what He needed to speak to the Pharisees,
 - it is what made Him stay in the Garden of Gethsemane even though He knew that Judas was leading his enemies to him,
 - it is what made him stay on the cross when he was mocked and might have called down legions to angels by His authority for rescue.
 - He did all this because He believed (and was able to say without reservation), "His mercy endures forever."
 - It was **because** of that.
 - He loved God because He knew how steadfast and constant and rich and full God's love is.
2. Oh brothers and sisters, how your service to God is hindered when you fear instead of trusting in God's goodness!
- a. To serve God with perseverance, you need to have a clear and settled sense that God is ever merciful and only merciful to us...
- that to us who believe, He will never violate His covenant, but will always come through for us...
- 1) You need to know this when you are in Job's shoes—

- you need to know it when you are in the wilderness without food and water...
- you need to know it when you are surrounded by the Egyptian army with mountains on one side and the Red Sea on the other...
- You need to be assured of it when you are sick, in pain, isolated, rejected by friends and family, unsought, unloved, uncared for...
 - God is still with you and He still loves you and He is still working good through it all...
 - You have nothing to fear!
 - Your enemies may kill you, but they cannot harm you—they cannot separate you from God’s love.

2) You also need to know this when you have sinned, as Peter sinned when he denied Christ...

- You need to know it so that you will go to Him for forgiveness every time and know that He cannot break His covenant mercy,
 - know that He will receive you and forgive you and cleanse you.

TRANS> You must say to yourself,

- “I will not fear, what can man do to me? The LORD is on my side!”

b. Now I want you to think about fear and how to deal with it.

1) Why are you afraid?

- You are afraid because you think something awful might happen to you.
- Well, fear is a good thing...
 - if you fear God...
 - Indeed, unless you are reconciled to Him through Christ, something awful will happen to you.
 - You will be cast into the Lake of Fire.
 - You are a stranger to His covenant love...

2) But if you have made peace with Him through Christ, what do you have to fear?

a) Think about it.

- Are you are afraid of man’s rejection, afraid that people won’t like you?
- Are you are afraid of attack and abuse?
- Are you afraid of being unsuccessful?
- Are you are afraid of financial ruin?

b) Okay, so what is all that?

- I always advise those who are struggling with fear to say,
 - Okay, suppose whatever it is I fear did happen...suppose my child dies, suppose I have cancer, suppose I lose everything...
 - Can that separate you from the love of God?
 - Can it keep you from serving God?
 - Can it really, at last, do you any harm at all?
- What are you here for?
 - Is your purpose not to glorify God?
 - Can this thing that you fear, whatever it is, somehow keep you from that?
 - Of course it cannot—your fear is groundless...
 - “The LORD is on my side. I will not fear. What can man do to me?”

B. Effect #2: When you trust the LORD’s goodness, you can be certain that God will “bless those that bless you and curse those that curse you.”

1. Verse 7 says:

- v. 7: The LORD is for me among those who help me; Therefore I shall see my desire on those who hate me.
- a. Once again, we need to see this as Jesus speaking, first and foremost...
 - He has thousands of enemies in this world,
 - they were all out to get Him—gathered together to destroy Him...
 - and they did their best...
 - they through all kinds of temptation at Him and at last they put Him on the cross...
 - but God promised to Him through Abraham that He would bless all those that blessed Him and curse all those that cursed Him...
 - God would deal with these enemies at last!
- b. But you see from this verse that Jesus has many who are with Him to help Him...
 - The LORD Jesus came to establish a kingdom of righteousness in which God would be worshipped and obeyed and loved...
 - And all those who joined His cause are blessed in Him and with Him...

- Having accomplished our redemption and having secured for us the Holy Spirit, He gives us eternal life.
 - All those who oppose Him and try to stop Him and who do not help Him in His great purpose are condemned.
 - They will be consigned to hell forever and ever.
 - Though there are those times,
 - as in the day when Jesus hung from the cross,
 - that it looks as if those who hate our LORD will succeed in abolishing Him,
 - It will never happen!
 - They are the ones who will be brought down
2. If you trust in the LORD's goodness and mercy that never fails,
- a. You will be confident even when God's enemies seem to prevail for a time in this world.
 - His covenant love will not permit the wicked to continue in their rebellion.
 - He will destroy them all and send them to their own place with the Devil.
 - His covenant love will never fail.
 - Covenant love is all love to those who are in Christ and all destruction to those who do not receive the Him.
 - b. You need to understand this aspect of God's hesed because it is an aspect frequently brought out in the scriptures...
 - Psalm 136 repeats the phrase.
 - "His Hesed endures forever" in every verse,
 - and if you look at these verses, many of them speak about the destruction of God's enemies:
 - The Psalm calls us to thanks
 - "to Him who overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, because His mercy endures forever."
 - and "to Him who struck down great kings, for His mercy endures forever."
 - That may not seem like mercy or love when you first look at it...
 - but it is...
 - Heaven would not be heaven with the Devil there...

- Heaven is for those who want to be perfectly restored to God, for those who believe He is good, for those who have come to Christ that they might live forever in His kingdom of righteousness.
- If you have done this,
 - You will be granted your desire...
 - But if you have not come to Him, you will be cast into the outer darkness as one who hates Christ and who would not join Him in His kingdom that restores righteousness...
 - Your destruction is an expression of God's covenant love to His Son and all who are joined with Him in His cause.

C. Effect #3: When you trust the LORD's goodness, you can be assured that what you are doing is far better than trusting man.

1. Verse 8 says,

- v. 8: It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
- Now of course you all know that this is true, don't you?
 - Surely it is better in every conceivable way...
- a. It is better because God is wiser than man, He knows what is best to do.
 - Men can give you bad counsel, they can lead you astray even when they mean well, but God always knows.
- b. It is better because God is more reliable than man—He is faithful to do what He promises.
 - How many times have you been disappointed when you were counting on man and he, though meaning well, has forgotten.
- c. It is better because the LORD is more able than man—
 - Every man has His limitations, but God knows no limitations...
 - Whatever he proposes to do, He can do and will do.
 - He bends the whole universe to bring about His purposes.
- d. It is better because GOD is kinder than man...
 - Man may not help you because he lacks affection for you or is envious of you... or because he is selfish and doesn't care...
 - but the LORD cared enough to send His only Son...
 - There is no love as deep as His love.
 - You can count on His kindness.

- e. It is better because it is morally right to trust in God instead of man...
 - We do not give God His honour when we pass by Him and trust in man.
 - In the end He is the only one who can help us.
 - You dishonour God if you receive help from your neighbour and you do not see that God has helped you...
 - We received gifts from two other churches in our Presbytery. We should be very grateful to our brothers,
 - but we dishonour God if we do not ultimately return thanks to Him.
 - He is the one who gave it to them to give to us.

TRANS> And so you see that it is far better to trust the LORD than in men.

2. Verse 9 goes on to emphasis the point, to take it a step further...it says:

- v. 9: *It is* better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes.
- a. The word **princes** speaks of **noble men**,
 - the best of men, men who are known for their ability, for the kindness and generosity.
 - The Hebrew word carries the idea of one who gives a lot and who also has a lot to give.
 - But yet, how much more does the LORD have to give!
- b. We live in a day when there is a tendency to look to experts for everything...
 - 1) And truly, there *are* a lot of experts!
 - There are doctors who can do heart surgery and who can implant teeth.
 - I heard recently that they now have an ear device that they can hook in directly to your auditory nerve... remarkable!
 - We have people who can build rockets that can safely carry you to the moon.
 - We have specialists in almost everything...
 - God has given us these and we should be thankful...
 - 2) But it is much better to trust the LORD than any of these!
 - They cannot help us when the day of our death comes...
 - They cannot help us when we stand before God in judgement...
 - They cannot pay the penalty of our sin for us...
 - They cannot help us to truly change our hearts to truly live well...

- They cannot any of them give us true and lasting happiness.

TRANS> It is better far to trust the LORD than noble men!

c. But what makes us so reluctant to do this?

- Why is it that we easily look to men instead of God?
 - 1) It goes all the way back to the beginning when we fell—
 - Satan came into the garden in he flattered Adam and Eve, telling them that they would get on much better if they went their own way...
 - if they trusted in themselves instead of following God’s counsel.
 - It is amazing to see how far this lie has gone—it is the most powerful lie in the world...
 - Talk to the world about some issue—
 - No matter which side they are on of a particular issue,
 - they will almost always rely at last on the wisdom of man... or on their own wisdom...
 - For them, it is all about what they think is best.
 - One of the men in our church told me about a big conversation he had about same sex marriage...
 - The people he was talking to said that a person should be allowed to do whatever he wants as long as it doesn’t harm anyone else.
 - What? Where does a philosophy like that come from?
 - Who ever said that you have the right to go against the will of your Creator?
 - 2) The real issue is not what man says or what I think is good or what I want...
 - The real issue is what does God say!
 - If you want to rub people the wrong way, bring that into the discussion.
 - Say, “Really there is no argument about it—the LORD has spoken and we must obey Him.”
 - People will really be upset with you for using your religion—
 - the worst thing a politician could do today is to let his religion influence his decision about an issue!

- Horrors! any thing but that!
- 3) Why is this so? Why do people think that way? Why does it rub them wrong to say, “all that matters is that we obey the will of God”?
- a) I’ll tell you why...
- It’s because Satan taught us in the fall to question the goodness of God.
 - We think that we will be harmed if we do the will of God because we still believe the lie!
 - We do not believe in what Psalm 118 tells us to confess...
 - We do not believe in the infinite goodness of God,
 - so, rather than welcoming His counsel, we reject it!
- b) This is what makes you stumble brothers and sisters!
- Every time you stumble in sin it is because you have wavered in your confession of God’s goodness...
 - You have doubted that doing His will is best.
 - You have trusted in the world’s counsel when it comes to rearing your children...
 - “My children won’t love me unless I do what the experts say.”
 - or when it comes to sexual purity—you have thought—
 - “God is restraining me from something that will make me happy...”
 - or when it comes to worship—
 - “I do not want to worship God the way He has commanded—we will attract more worshippers if we have dialogue instead of preaching...”
 - or when it comes obeying your parents...you think,
 - “to obey them right now would be to miss out on something better...”
 - When you boil it down,
 - you are simply saying that it is better to trust in man—in yourself or some expert—than to trust in God.
 - But if God’s love is really what this Psalm says it is,
 - you can surely see how foolish it is to prefer the counsel of men!

- You can surely see how much **better** it is to trust in the LORD!

Brothers and sisters, let me then exhort you to hold to the confession that God is good because His mercy endures forever without wavering!

- The confession that God is good and that His steadfast love endures forever is the confession that will keep you from stumbling when temptation comes...
 - It is the confession that will cause you to go on and bear your cross the way the LORD Jesus bore His cross...
 - It is the confession that will inspire you to make sacrifices, to bear shame for Jesus, and even to die for Him...
 - It is the confession that will enliven your service and fill you with joyful gratitude to God forever.
 - “Oh give thanks to the LORD for He is good, His mercy endures forever!”