

Series: 2 Thess 2024

Title: The Good Pleasure of God's Goodness

Text: 2 Thess 1: 11-12

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Place: SGBC, NJ

**2 Thessalonians 1: 11: Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Subject:** The Good Pleasure of God's Goodness

**Proposition:** The way God counts his saints worthy of calling is by God fulfilling all the good pleasure of his goodness in you, the work of faith in power.

There is none good but God. God *is* goodness--the good pleasure of *goodness* is the good pleasure of *God*. God is good, of himself, independent of any other. There is nothing in God but goodness and nothing but goodness comes from God. No iniquity in his nature, no unrighteousness in his ways, no evil comes from God. All the things God declared of himself to Moses is God's goodness. When Moses asked to see God's glory, God said,

Exodus 33: 19:...I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy....

Exodus 34: 6: And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7: Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.

Most men speak of their own goodness; but faithful men speak of God's goodness.

Proverbs 20: 6: Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

The rich, young, ruler came speaking of man's goodness--his own and, thinking Christ was just another man, he called him good. The Lord Jesus is God and he is THE Faithful Man. So Christ corrected him,

Matthew 19:17...Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God*...

Christ is good; he is God. But whatever goodness is in any of God's creation, it is of God. The goodness of the elect angels is of God. The goodness in Adam before the fall was of God. Any goodness in God's saints is of God by his grace

James 1: 17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

God says of sinful man,

Hosea 6:4...your goodness *is* as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

But God never changes. He is always, continually goodness itself. He is always working only goodness. He is always working only the good pleasure of his goodness in his people and for his people. So we are going to see what scripture says about the goodness of God.

**TOWARD THE ELECT**

**Psalm 73: 1: Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart.**

The goodness of God is particularly toward his elect Israel. Paul is writing to God's elect. It is God's goodness to create in his fallen elect a clean heart.

Now, God's goodness is upon all his creation. It is upon those who love him and those who hate him benefit from God's goodness.

Psalm 33: 5: 5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

Psalm 145: 9 The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works.

God gives the sun and the rain for the just and the unjust (Mt 5: 45). Go home and read Psalm 104. It declares God's goodness in providing and preserving all his creation, including man, beast, trees and fish in the seas.

Psalm 104: 13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. 14: He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

But the triune God's saving goodness is particularly upon his elect alone--"*Truly God is good to Israel.*" Ephesians 1 says *God the Father* chose whom he would in Christ before the foundation of the world and predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus "according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph 1:5).

The Son of God, Christ Jesus is the GOOD SHEPHERD who laid down his life for the sheep--for God's elect alone. In Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, "according to the riches of his grace" (Eph 1: 7).

He sent the gospel and the Spirit of God created in us a clean heart--spiritual life, spiritual understanding,

Ephesians 1:9: Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

*"Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart."* He did not behold a clean heart in us, therefore God was good to his elect. No, the goodness of God chose us and redeemed us and created in us a clean heart. And God never ceases being good to us.

The only reason we repented and continue to repent from self--confessing our need of continual mercy and grace--is the goodness of God.

Romans 2: 4: [by]...the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering;...the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Is there any who see themselves sinners in need of God's mercy and free forgiveness in Christ? If God has created a clean heart in us we do. Well, God is good. Therefore he shows mercy and forgives all who call upon him.

Psalm 86: 5 For thou, Lord, *art* good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Psalm 107: 8: Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men! 9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

## **WORTHY OF THIS CALLING**

It is the goodness of God working in us in power and grace that makes his saints worthy of this calling. That is why Paul prayed to God for this work to be done in his brethren. Only God can work it.

**2 Thess 1: 11: Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12 That the**

**name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

It is only by the goodness of God that we continue under the sound of the gospel. God has made us satisfied with Christ alone, preached in his house!

Psalm 65: 4: Blessed *is the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee, that* he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.

God blesses us to know he chose us, not we him. God blesses us to know he caused us to approach unto God--it was not of us. God blesses us by planting us in the house of the Lord so that we dwell in God's courts.

We dwell in God's house because God has made us satisfied with the goodness of God's house: satisfied with Christ our All, satisfied to hear the gospel that gives our triune God all the glory in Christ and him crucified, satisfied with the preacher God provided, satisfied with our brethren because Christ dwells in them and they are the closest thing we have to Christ himself.

God's house must go through much trouble. But the Christ keeps satiating our inward man with the goodness he works in those he has made priests unto God

Jeremiah 31: 14: And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

It is Christ satiating our soul with fatness that we learn to submit to Christ in the face of trouble. In the early 90's I did not understand why my pastor, Marvin, was doing something a certain way. I should have looked to Christ and prayed his will be done and waited on him. But I wrote to three faithful pastors asking them to help me. Without corresponding with each other, they each wrote basically the same thing to me.

"Do you believe Christ is Head of the church? Do you believe He fills all in all his people? Do you believe he is sovereign to work his will in his church? Then stop murmuring, stop trying to correct your pastor. Submit to Christ and trust him to work by submitting to your pastor. Submit to your brethren. If need be, Christ will correct your pastor's errors, your brethren's errors, your errors and he will teach all of you in the process."

Christ satiated my soul with that word! Christ made that word come in power. So I heeded that good council. And I found it to be so. I have had much peace ever since.

The satisfaction God gives is to know Christ is Head of his church. He fills all in all! He overrules the troubles. Christ keeps his preacher and his people. When Christ makes us submit to him then we submit to one another--we are casting all our care on Christ, knowing he careth for his people.

That is the only way we resist the devil, by steadfastly looking to Christ to save. We do so knowing Christ is accomplishing the same affliction in our brethren. We pray to Christ our Head as Paul is doing in our text. It is not us, it is the goodness of God that keeps his saints protected when enemies of the cross oppose us.

Psalm 31: 19: *Oh* how great *is* thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! 20: Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

When we try to usurp Christ's throne and behold the splinter in another's eye, we have a beam in our own. But it is God's goodness that continues to show us mercy and forgiveness and save us from our own sins. We have a new man but we also have a sin-nature. We do not glory in our new man--our confidence is Christ--not our new man. But the Spirit of God does make a distinction from our old man of Adam and the new man created of God.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

All good is in our new man--the goodness of God created our inward man--and Christ is the goodness of the new man. Our new man is born of incorruptible seed therefore our new man is uncorruptible. The new man is created in the righteousness and true holiness of Christ. We cannot produce fruit. It is the fruit of the Spirit in the inward man. It is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." It is our new will to always walk in the Spirit. But when trouble comes we often find we still have an old man of flesh in which dwells no good thing. By the Spirit of goodness working in us, our faithful Father chastens us and keeps us crying out from the new man,

Psalm 25: 7: Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD. 8: Good and upright *is* the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. 9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. 10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. 11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it *is* great. 12 What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

This is what Paul prays for the Thessalonians. This is what we pray God will do for one another. That God will "*fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:*"

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Paul is declaring by that that Christ is in your brethren, in you who are his and in the midst of his church working in you both to will and do of his good pleasure. So do all things "without murmuring an disputing." Speak the gospel of Christ knowing Christ is in his saints. He said,

Jeremiah 31: 14: And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

Psalm 119:68: [so we pray to God] Thou *art* good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

## TO GOD BE THE GLORY

By continually working the good pleasure of his goodness in us, God keeps his saints full of joy, giving God and our Savior all the glory.

**2 Thessalonians 1: 12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

God makes us glorify Christ by trusting him alone to work in the heart of his people through the gospel. Then when he does, he makes us praise him alone for working it. Christ fulfills every covenant promise of God. This is what God promised that Christ will work in his house.

Jeremiah 33:11: The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD *is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever: *and* of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD.

Christ delivered us from the captivity of the curse, from the captivity of the devil, from the captivity of our sin-nature and Christ continues to deliver us from the captivity of every trouble we face. The result is Christ is glorified in us. We praise him alone. We glory in Christ alone. It is all by *the grace of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ*

God has left us in this body of death in this sin-cursed world--fitly joined together with sinners saved by grace. Why? So that as God *fulfills the good pleasure of his goodness in us and the work of faith in power*, he keeps his saints speaking only of God's goodness.

Psalm 145: 7: They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

That is literally what we sing in our hymns: of God's great goodness and his righteousness.

Isaiah 63:7: I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, *and* the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

For any of God's saints who are captive in whatever way, I say with the Psalmist

Psalm 34:8: O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him.

Nahum 1:7: The LORD *is* good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

Since Christ is our good Shepherd,

Psalm 23: 6: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

One day Christ will bring us to appear in glory with him *in the land of the living*. Then we shall see *the goodness of the Lord* in perfection.

Psalm 27: 13: *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

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**Amen!**