

The Goodness of God Intro

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn to the book of Psalms, Psalm 135.! That we might, even now, be lost in wonder, love, and praise.

That we could enter into that kind of worship in some small way here. And so we're going to read about God's goodness in Psalm 135. Praise the Lord.

Praise the name of the Lord. Praise Him, you servants of the Lord. You who minister in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good. Sing praise to His name, for that is pleasant. For the Lord has chosen Jacob to be His own.

Israel to be His treasured possession. I know that the Lord is great. That our Lord is greater than all gods. The Lord does whatever pleases Him in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

[1 : 28] He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from His storehouses. He struck down the firstborn of Egypt, the firstborn of men and animals.

He sent His signs and wonders into your midst, O Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants. He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings.

Sihon, king of the Amorites. Og, king of Bashan. And all the kings of Canaan. And He gave their land as an inheritance. An inheritance to His people Israel.

Your name, O Lord, endures forever. Your renown, O Lord, through all generations. For the Lord will vindicate His people and have compassion on His servants.

The idols of the nations are silver and gold made by the hands of men. They have mouths but cannot speak. Eyes but they cannot see. They have ears but cannot hear.

[2 : 36] Nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them. And so will all who trust in them. O house of Israel, praise the Lord.

O house of Aaron, praise the Lord. O house of Levi, praise the Lord. You who fear Him, praise the Lord. Praise be to the Lord from Zion to Him who dwells in Jerusalem.

Praise the Lord. Our recent studies in the providence of God began in this chapter.

It's a chapter that takes us back 3,000 years and just drops us into a worship service of the people of God. And we get to hear what they are praising God for. And we find them praising God for two things.

His goodness and His greatness. Verse 3, praise the Lord for the Lord is good. Verse 5, I know that the Lord is great.

[3 : 40] That our Lord is greater than all gods. And He goes on to tell us how His greatness is expressed. It's seen in His all-ruling providence. By which He does whatever pleases Him in the heavens and on the earth, the seas and all their depths.

Now there's something very precious then about our God not only being great, but also being good. There have been rulers throughout history who have had great power to do whatever pleased them within their kingdoms and realms and even in the world.

But they've not used their greatness for good. When absolute power was in the hands of Hitler or Pol Pot or Mao Zedong or Lenin or Stalin, they used that power for evil ends, not for good ends.

And that's why there's not even comfort in knowing our God of providence. That He has power over all His creatures and all their actions all the time if He's not good.

That's a frightening reality. But this is the glory of our God. That He is as good as He is great.

[4 : 57] And that's why in Psalm 135, the citizens of heaven, of heaven's king, are found singing His praises. Because He is good as good as He is great.

And that guarantees that His great providential rule over all things, us included, will work for our good. That's what He's up to.

Using that power. And that's what's seen in this chapter. We just had it read. What did God use this great power in providence to do for His people? Well, He called them.

He chose them and took them to Himself. He made them His treasured possession. And then He acted for their good when they were down in Egypt to bring them out and to bring them into the promised land.

And it's finding such greatness and goodness united in God our King that makes Him so praiseworthy and lovely in our eyes. And it loosens our tongues then in glad praises.

[6 : 02] So the psalm ends as it begins in a multiplied call to praise the Lord. Praise this Lord who is good as He is great. Tis well for us thou rulest, the hymn writer says.

You are good and great God. So today we're beginning a new series of studies in the goodness of God. Stephen Sharnock, the 17th century English purist, and wrote a large book entitled Discourses Upon the Existence and Attributes of God.

There's a copy in the church library. If you've got a broad hand, you might be able to hold it in one hand. It's 147 pages of pure honey.

I shouldn't say that. No, it's much more than 146 pages. I skipped a line. In that book, the Discourses on the Existence and Attributes of God, he has one chapter or one discourse on the goodness of God.

And that's one that I've read and re-read for three, and I'm just about finished for the third time. And that chapter, I can say, is 146 pages of pure honey. Meditations on one of the most amiable, lovable, attractive attributes of God.

[7 : 23] An attribute that leads its mark on all the other attributes of God, namely his goodness. Sharnock is not the only author that's ever written on the goodness of God, but I've not found better yet.

And I'm sure that much of what I'll be sharing with you then in these coming weeks and months will have been found here first. He's an excellent guide into the Holy Scriptures.

Well, we're going to be answering the question, why study the goodness of God? And the first answer for today is because God is good. And that in itself is reason to study it.

It's one of the big things that God tells us about himself. And knowing God is what we were made for. That's what separates us from the animals, from the deer, the dog, and the donkey.

They don't have a capacity for knowing God, but we do. God made us with a soul that was made to know God, a capacity to know what he is like, but to know him intimately, personally, like you know each other.

[8 : 33] So if God has made us with this capacity to know him and then has revealed himself to us, then it's our responsibility to know this God. And to know him through the revelation that he's made of himself.

He's revealed himself in nature. We need to study it to know him. He's revealed himself in Scripture. We need to study it to know him. And he's revealed himself to us in the most clearest form in his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And we need to study him to know what God is like. Knowing God is our highest privilege and duty. If God is speaking, he expects us to be listening and learning. And so this is a wonderful privilege that is all of ours to know him. It's also a wonderful duty.

That's why in the final judgment, when Jesus returns, he will punish those who do not know God. And have not obeyed the gospel. Because God is to be known.

[9 : 43] He's made you to know him. And you said, I don't want to know him. That is punishable with everlasting punishments.

So it's a duty. We must give ourselves to this study. But it's also the highest privilege. To know God is life eternal. So Jesus says, this is life eternal.

To know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Precious privilege. And in order to know him, we must know what he's like. So turn over to Psalm 119 and verse 68.

This will be our launching off text for our series. Psalm 119, 168.

What a nugget tucked into these, how many verses in Psalm 119? 176 verses.

[10 : 46] And here's this little precious jewel tucked right in the middle. Verse 68. You are good. And what you do is good.

Teach me your decrees. Now, notice we have two different things said about God. What God is and what God does. And those are two different things.

What God is describes his nature. What God does describes his actions. So what is God? And the text tells us God is good.

Again, not describing what he does yet. That's coming. This is telling us something else. It's telling us about his inward essence and nature.

The goodness of God could be said to be an inward disposition to bless and benefit his creatures. An inward disposition.

[11 : 43] An inward disposition. Inclination to bless and to do good to his creatures. It's not a passing mood that he slips into and out of like we do.

It's a permanent fixed disposition to do good to his creatures. A delight in them. And in making them happy. His good will toward men.

And toward all that he has made. His benevolence. His benevolent desire to do them good. God is good. Now, that means several things.

And my, does Sharnak stretch our appreciation for the goodness of God? God is good. It means, first of all, I don't know that the order means anything.

But he is inherently good. By which we mean he's good in and of himself. Nobody made God good. He is good.

[12 : 40] He doesn't receive any goodness from outside of himself. That makes him good. Like other creatures do. All goodness in creatures is derived. It comes from him.

But God receives and borrows no goodness from outside of himself. He is good. He's inherently good. Secondly, he's entirely good.

Goodness fills all that God is. We might say that the devil is bad to the bone. And you know what I mean. It expresses the thoroughness of his moral badness.

He is completely, entirely bad. And so, if you would pardon the expression. I would like to say that God is good to the bone. Good to the bone.

Good through and through. Or we say good to the core. And not like some apples that you buy and they appear good. But a knife cutting it open reveals. That's not so good.

[13 : 41] Look at that bad spot. No, God's good to the core. Through and through. Entirely. In other words, there's nothing in God that is not good. I want to say that again.

Because we can think less of that than that. Less of God than that. There is nothing in God that is not good. And that includes his justice.

His holiness. His punishments. His disciplines. His trial. Every affliction we've ever had. He is entirely good in and of himself. Thirdly, he's perfectly good.

Some of these sound so close together. You might wonder, why multiply synonyms? Well, there's a little bit of difference of nuance. And as we look at it, it just keeps showing us how good God is.

He's perfectly good without any exceptions. Any qualifications or defects. Or even the slightest mixture of anything bad. He's good in the highest degree.

[14 : 43] Inconceivably good. Nothing can be added to his goodness to make him gooder. All right? That's bad English, but good theology. He is so good, he can't be made gooder.

He's the ultimate perfection of goodness. He's unimprovably perfectly good. Fourth, he's infinitely good. Good. This isn't a little bit of admixture that God has.

It's not an itty-bitsy goodness. Psalm 31, 19. How great is your goodness? We celebrate. Psalm 145, 7. They will celebrate your abundant goodness. It's infinite.

That means, kids, without any limits, without any boundary lines to it. It just keeps going forever. Infinitely good. An inexhaustible supply within himself.

A bottomless ocean from within. No wonder our little cup is full and running over. His goodness is infinite.

[15 : 51] When we give away, we have less to give after we've given. But not God. He's been giving and giving and giving. And he has no less to give.

It's infinite goodness. The fifth, he's eternally good. And that looks both ways. You look back in time, from eternity past, he's always been good.

Even before the creation of the world. That's a relatively new thing. There's an eternity before the creation of the world and God was good. And within the Godhead, there was goodness all around.

And then, God cut a new channel in creating. We'll get to creation later.

I'm sorry. We're looking the other direction. So he's good that way. He will be good forever. There's no ending to his goodness. Through eternal ages, he is good.

[16:55] His goodness without beginning, without ending. And that's why infinite goodness will require an eternity of time to express itself.

What a wonderful thing to look forward to an eternity of unending goodness from an eternally good God. Sixth, he's unchangeably good. So since God good is what God is, that's his essential nature. Then to stop being good, even for a second, anywhere in eternity past to eternity. If just for a second he stops being good, he ceases to be God.

He un-gods himself. And he cannot do that. Cannot deny himself. Goodness is inseparable with his nature, with who he is.

He cannot be other than what he is, or he would cease to be God. Sharnak says God is so good that he cannot be bad. It's impossible. So God is good.

[17:59] All the time. And all the time, God is good. Unchangeably good. He's good on your good days, and he's good on your bad days. And as for God, he never has a bad day.

He is good. Unchangeably good. Seven, he's gloriously good. Remember back in Exodus 33 when Moses prayed, Lord, show me your glory.

What was God's response to that prayer? Show me your glory, your majesty, the splendor of your being. The next verse, God answers, I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, my essence, the Lord, in your presence.

I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But when my glory passes by, I will hide you in the cleft of the rock.

So according to God, his glory is his goodness. His goodness is his glory. They're interchangeably.

[19:13] His goodness is the glory of all his attributes. It is the glory of all that God is, and that's why when Moses says, show me your glory, God says, okay, I will. I'll put you in the cleft of the rock when my glory passes by, and I'll declare my goodness to you.

And the next morning, that's exactly what happened. Moses goes up on Mount Sinai. God came down and proclaimed his name, his essence, his goodness, his glory. The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love, or we could say goodness. It's translated either way. And faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished. And that's his goodness and his glory.

So God's glory is his goodness displayed in all of his attributes. God's goodness is called his grace when it's extended to the undeserving. God's goodness is called mercy when judgment is withheld from those who deserve judgment.

God's goodness can be called compassion or pity when it's extended toward those in great need. God's goodness can be called patience or slow to anger toward those who are provoking God's wrath.

[20:36] And God's goodness can be called faithfulness when he's keeping his promises that he's made. All of these attributes are the display of some aspect of God's goodness and glory.

So according to God, his glory is his goodness. His goodness is his glory. Matthew Henry says he would have us know him by his goodness. Charles Bridges agrees that the goodness of God is not so much a single attribute or one feature of God, but is rather the glory of all his perfections.

That at the bottom of it all is this settled, permanent disposition to do good to his creatures. That's why God's whole name is celebrated for being good.

His name comprises all that he is. I will praise your name, O Lord, for it is good. Your name is good. Psalm 52, 9.

Psalm 54, 6. He's gloriously good. And number eight, he alone is good. He alone is good. Now you'll remember the time that that rich young ruler came to meet with Jesus.

[21:50] And he throws, he runs to Jesus, throws himself down at his feet. And he said, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And before Jesus answers his question, he first corrects his address. Why do you call me good? He answered. No one is good except God alone.

And how we need to hear this. No one is good except God alone. That's Jesus. And why is he reproving this rich young ruler?

Because this man was handling this title of good far too loosely, wasn't he? He doesn't believe Jesus is God and yet he's calling him good teacher. He believes he's just a good man or he's just a man.

But he's a good man. In fact, as you go on and read, he thinks he's a good man. I'm good. You're good. We're all good. And Jesus says, time out.

[22 : 52] Before we go any further, you need to know. And you'll never understand how you can make your way to heaven at last until you get this straight.

No one is good except God alone. God alone. Well, he's the only one in the whole category of good. Goodness. He's inherently good. Entirely good.

Perfectly good. Infinitely. Eternally. Unchangeably good. He's gloriously and essentially good.

Goodness is what he is and therefore he alone is good. Many other texts could be quoted that plainly tell us God is good.

There's 600 texts in the scriptures that speak of good, goodness and many of them are given to tell us just this, that God is good.

That's what he is. But we pass on to the next phrase in our text. Not only does our text tell us what God is, it tells us what God does.

[23 : 50] You are good. You are good. Your essence. And what you do is good. So good is not only his nature, goodness also describes his actions.

And the first thing I want you to notice is that God always acts consistently with his nature. Always acts consistently with his nature. There's in God a perfect match between what he is and what he does.

There's not the slightest millimeter of difference. Perfect match between what he is and what he does. He is good and does good. He never acts contrary to his goodness.

It's always perfectly in line with what he is. Now we've heard, I've heard, you probably have two famous people caught in some moral evil who've been quick to excuse themselves by saying something like this.

Well, that's not really who I am. And I've often wanted to ask, well then, who did that if not you? What they're trying to tell us is that they're really better than that.

[25 : 02] I'm really a good person who just slipped and did something out of character with who I am. And God never has to say that. He never slips from what he is.

He is good and he always does good. Always and only good. Now that's transformational. He never does anything that is not good.

Have you been thinking that highly of God lately? When he brings things into your life? Or have you put other names on it? He is good and only and always does good.

So whatever you're finding God doing, you can know it's good. And again, that goes for his judgments, his eternal punishments, his disciplines, his trials, his afflictions, they're all good.

Perhaps we'll have a day to consider that point alone. But to do anything other than God would ungod him. Because it's what he is. It's his essence. He would cease to be what he is.

[26 : 08] And that's one of the things that God cannot do. It's impossible to God. There's a few of them. God cannot lie. God cannot deny himself. He can't act contrary to what he is.

And he is good. And just as a good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, Jesus said, so a good God cannot bring forth bad fruit.

What's inside is what comes out in his actions. And so there's this perfect conformity between what God is and what he does. The second thing I want you to notice here is that God's goodness is active and outgoing.

You are good and you do good. God is good by nature, his inward nature, and this goodness is active.

It's outgoing. Now, you know outgoing people. What's true of these extroverts on the planet? Well, what they are inside just flows right on outside.

[27 : 10] Very freely, doesn't it? Now, some of us who are introverts, we tend to hide something of what we are and we'll need others to draw it out of us, but not an extrovert, not an outgoing person.

What's inside flows outwardly very easily. And I want to say that God's goodness is outgoing. It's active. It cannot be contained.

It's not a stagnant puddle of water inside of God. It's rather a bubbling fountain that can't be contained, that bubbles up in finding expressions and outlets and objects.

It's his inward desire to bless people. And it doesn't just stay inside. It's just always bubbling within God. Finding expression. God's goodness is diffusive.

It's communicative. It can't be stopped and held in. It's like the sun that can't help but shine and spread its warmth and heat upon all around it. It's like the fountain that fills rivers and streams distributing those life-giving waters to all the earth.

[28 : 20] It's like a truly charitable man that cannot be satisfied until he's finding objects for his charity. And so this fountain of goodness that God is cannot be contained but actively bubbles over in goodness of deeds and actions.

And so from all eternity before there was anything else but God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit goodness was bubbling within the Trinity. It was goodness all around.

And then God's goodness cut a new channel when he created the world. Another stage on which the goodness of God could now be distributed and expressed that he might be glorified for his goodness.

Put on display as it overflows and fills the earth. So we find texts like Psalm 33, 5. The earth is full of his goodness. And Psalm 145, 9.

The Lord is good to all. He's got compassion on all he has made. He's good to animals. He's even good to his enemies. But he pours most good upon his people.

[29 : 29] So this overflowing nature of God's goodness is seen most clearly in his Son, the Lord Jesus. In John chapter 1, we're told that Jesus is God made flesh.

God, eternal God dwelling among us. He came down. As we sang, he came down. He took our flesh and dwelled among us. And by his coming down, he made the invisible God visible.

He exegetes God. John 1, 18 says. What I'm trying to do is to exegete Psalm 119, 68 and explain the meaning of it.

Make it clear to you. That's what Jesus does. He exegetes God. He makes him clear to us. He who is invisible now becomes much more visible and knowable because we see God the Son here.

So Philip says, Lord, show us the Father and that will suffice us. And Jesus says, Don't you know me, Philip? Show us the Father. Don't you know me after I've been with you all this time?

[30 : 44] Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Because he's like me or better, I'm like him. Either way. So what did we learn about God the Father by watching Jesus while he dwelt among us here below?

What did we learn about the nature of God from watching Jesus? Peter gives a wonderful summary of it in Cornelius' house.

He says, He was a man who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed. Healing those who were oppressed by the devil. Interesting summary of his life.

He went about doing good. Why is that a summary of Jesus' life? Well, because God is good and God does good as our text tells us.

And Jesus is God. And so goodness oozes out of Jesus. It's not, you can't bottle it up. You can't keep it inside.

[31 : 54] God's goodness is active, it's outgoing, it's outflowing, and you and I have been the recipients. Every day we get new mercies, new goodnesses from God. Surely, goodness and mercy has followed us all the days of our life to be crowned by that everlasting goodness when we dwell in his house forever.

We eat, we breathe, we live, we swim in the goodness of God because that's the characteristic of God's goodness. It is outflowing, outgoing. Third, God's goodness is shared with the greatest pleasure.

There's no reluctance to his, to be overcome here. No one needed to squeeze good gifts from God's hands because it's his nature to give, his heart to give.

He's never more at home than when he is giving, which is always, which simply means he's always himself. He's just always being God by being always good and delighting to do good.

He does it with the greatest pleasure. It was Jesus again who told us it is more blessed to give than to receive.

[33 : 16] Acts 20, 35. Do you know why he can say that? He speaks from experience. It's better to give, more happy.

It's to be in a, in a better situation giving than it is to be receiving. He speaks by experience. There's greater happiness to be found in giving than in receiving.

Nobody ever squeezed good out of Jesus. It was blessed work. It was happy work for Jesus to heal. That's what you see in the scriptures.

Not one that was ever turned away. What does that say? If he, if he has to be squeezed to do a miracle, we'd find those that were shoved away, but not Jesus.

Every last one who came to him went away whole. He's good and he delights to share his goodness, to do good.

[34 : 18] Sharnak, he's most delighted when he is most diffusive and his pleasure in giving is larger than the creatures in receiving. Have you reached that level?

No, that's why only God is good. He alone is like that to that degree of perfection, of pleasure. He's so, so delighting in doing good that he even does good to his enemies.

Isn't that something? That says something about his pleasure. He finds pleasure in seeing others enjoy his goodness. Parents, did you, did you give gifts to children this year and find joy in seeing them enjoying what you gave them?

That's just a hint of what our good God has when he, he gives and sees his people enjoying what he gives. First Timothy 6, 17, he's richly given us all things, why?

For our enjoyment. He wants to put a smile, not just on our face, but right through our heart, through him. He wants to make us happy. He fills our hearts with joy. Acts chapter 14, the pagan world, they eat, they drink, they have husbands, wives, children, things that fill their heart with joy.

[35 : 34] Why? Because God delights to see his creatures joyful in his gifts. That's the goodness of his heart behind his giving hand.

It's seen in the new covenant with his people. Jeremiah 32, God says, I will never stop doing good to them. That's a pretty sweet promise, isn't it?

I will never stop, not for a moment, not for a split second, will I ever stop being good to them. That's why David can say, surely, surely, goodness and mercy will follow me all the days.

Why? Because God has covenanted in blood to never stop doing good to his people. Now that's a pretty sweet promise, but what follows is sweeter still.

I will rejoice in doing them good and will do it with all my heart and soul. Not only will God never stop doing us good, but every time he does us good, it's with joy.

[36 : 43] He's rejoicing to do us good. He's all in, heart and soul into doing us good. Sharing his goodness is his greatest pleasure.

So what God gives of his goodness is given with joy. Do you know why God loves a cheerful giver? Do you know why God doesn't like it if you come in and you drop your offering into the box outside with a grudge?

Well, I guess I'll have to give him something. He is pretty good. Why does that not please God? Why is God pleased with a cheerful giver? Why does he want you giving to him with cheerfulness? Because he is a cheerful giver. He is the most cheerful giver in the universe. He gave us his son and exposed him to the wrath of men and to the wrath of eternity falling upon him.

His goodness bubbled up in blood when he sent Jesus. And Jesus' good heart bubbled up in blood. And he would rather suffer and be damned than to see you suffer it.

[37 : 59] He would be damned that you might be saved, that you might be in heaven where there's fullness of joy and eternal pleasures at his right hand. He's just that good.

It was for joy that he endured the cross. The joy of seeing you in heaven. The joy of seeing you enjoying eternal life with him.

The most cheerful giver in the universe. Sharnock says infinite cheerfulness attends infinite goodness. He would not give if he had not a pleasure that others should enjoy his goodness.

Are you enjoying a Savior given? We're going to see that's one of the chief ends of man is what? To glorify him and enjoy him forever.

Some of you don't know what life's all about because you're not enjoying God's greatest gift. The greatest gift of his son and eternal life in him. And he's leading us.

[39 : 10] Think of the place he's leading us to. If you ever have a doubt about the goodness of God think where he's leading us. We sang about it didn't we? His joy in having us there with him will be greater than our joy in being there.

He will delight over us. He delights over us with singing and he will delight over us to see us enjoying heaven with each moment of surprise that his goodness the joy in his heart will be far greater than ours for being there.

God is good. It's his nature. God does good. It's his actions. God's goodness and there's always perfect match between what God is and does and God's goodness never stays inside in his bottle. It's diffusive. It's overflowing and outgoing and thirdly it's given with pleasure. God never gives grudgingly always cheerfully.

Closing application. It's the last words of our text. Look at it once more. You are good and what you do is good.

[40 : 23] That's point one and two. What's point three? Teach me your decrees. The goodness of God is an alluring motive to pray. David is writing this psalm on the word of God.

Hundreds of verses about the word of God. And even as he writes his heart is saying I want to know more of it. You feel that. If you're a Christian I know that's the way you feel about your Bible.

I know so little teach me Lord. I want to be taught. I want to know you more intimately. I want to be more pleased. I want to find out what pleases you and live that way.

I want to be more like you. You're good. I want to be good. Teach me. And that sense of need leads him to cry teach me. But notice what it grows out of.

What draws that prayer out of David is that God is good and does good. Therefore David says I can ask him for things. I can ask him to teach me.

[41 : 32] And I know I won't be turned away. Why? Because God is good and he does good. So teach me Lord. And that goes for every petition that you could bring to God.

What is the motive to prayer? It's that God is good and does good. good. So let's appeal to God's goodness.

When we pray. Hang your petition upon his goodness because you're good and you do good and nothing but good and always good. Do me good in this way, in that way, in the other way.

Answer me, oh Lord, out of the goodness of your love. We appeal to this goodness. Knowing as we come asking, there is greater joy in him in giving than in us receiving.

So the Lord Jesus invites you to pray. His word commands you to pray. His spirit helps you to pray. Your needs urge you to pray.

[42 : 44] His promises encourage you to pray. But there is nothing like the goodness of God to allure you to pray.

If ever there was a carrot held out in front of a horse to bring him to eat, if ever there was something that would draw our hearts to come and come to the throne of God and ask, it is the goodness of the God who sits on the throne.

He gives. He gives mercy. He gives grace. To those in need, whoever comes, he gives. Let's make better use of God's goodness at the throne of grace.

Let it draw us near more often and once there, let it motivate us to ask big of this good God, to honor him for his goodness. He's not wearied by our prayers.

He's rather pleased with them. You know why? Because it presents an opportunity for him to show off his goodness again. And that's what thrills him. That's what makes God cheerful, if we can put it in. He's a cheerful giver.

[43 : 51] And he looks for opportunities to distribute his goodness. Then ask that you might receive. And ask that he might have the joy of giving.

So what do you need? It's to be found in your good Lord. Do you need grace? He's got it. He's full of grace for you. Do you need forgiveness?

He delights in mercy. In the overcoming strength, he gives strength to the weary. More faith, hope, and love. He says, will you open your mouth wide and I'll fill it.

How wide can you fill it? Remember that widow that had a debt to pay, had nothing to pay, had two boys.

And the prophet said, go throughout the town and borrow all the cur jars that you can find, the canning jars.

[44 : 52] And she gathers all the containers and brings them back into her house. And then the prophet says, start pouring your oil. And so she's over here and bring me a jar, son, pours in the oil, sets it down.

Come on, sons, let's go. Get off your phones. And she just keeps filling jars as they keep bringing them. That little pitcher just keeps pouring. Okay, come on, guys.

You haven't brought me a jar lately. Mommy, that's because there are no more jars. Do you mean that God filled all the jars that we brought to him?

Yes. Do you think if they'd have scrounged around and found one more, maybe an old dog dish that they could clean up and brought, do you think God's pitcher would have filled it? What is God saying?

He says, open your mouth wide and I'll fill it. How wide can you get it? As wide as a baby robin's mouth? He'll fill it. You come into the throne of grace rarely and ask him for a little bit.

[45 : 58] He'll fill it. But your joy will not be what it ought to. And his glory in giving and his joy in giving will not be what it would be.

If you brought more and opened wider that he might give of himself to you in need. And lost sinner, you need saving. You've got sin and guilt that's going to damn you.

You need to be saved from your sin. Jesus Christ has all that you need to make you right with God. So if you're ready to renounce your way and come and throw yourself into the hands of God's mercy in Jesus Christ, trusting only in him, he's not only able to save you, he is willing to save you. He is delighted to save you. He'll give you himself an eternal life thrown in. Though you came as his enemy, he'd love to have you as his friend.

He'd love to see you. no longer weigh down with fears of God's judgment, but set free to be able to serve him without fear all the days of your life and then forever.

[47 : 13] The goodness of God is meant to lead you to repentance today. Today. As we begin a new year, here's two legs to stand on.

God is great and God is good. both exercised for us, his people. Blessed we are. He can't stop being good to you and he rejoices in all of his goodness to you.

We have a song that gathers these two together. Number 561. Let's sing it in celebration of God's goodness. 561.

It brings together like like our song that we had read for us. That song. It brings together God's greatness in providence along with God's goodness.

We we sing of God's providence. Let's find it here first myself. 561. Verse 2.

[48 : 20] While providence supports, let saints securely dwell. That hand that bears all nature up shall guide his children well. But again, that's only comforting if there's goodness in his heart.

And the last verse says his goodness is approved. His goodness stands approved down to this present day. So I'll drop my burden at his feet and bear a song away.

Goodness, greatness for you. Let's stand and sing it. 561. That's our good God.

Lost person, your well-being and good is safer in his hands than it is in your own hands. Do you know, you sometimes do things that aren't for your good.

You would acknowledge that. God never, ever does anything but good to his people. Do you really think you can be better than this God whose goodness stands approved right to this present day?

[49 : 28] Not one person in the court of justice could stand and say he's not been good to me. Do you think you can be better than him? Oh, come and taste and see.

He would like nothing more than for you to taste and see just how good he is. Let's pray. Our good and gracious God, we thank you that you are that to us and you are that in yourself.

And if ever we have found that our thoughts are infinitely lower than your thoughts, it's even at this point. Forgive our low thoughts about your goodness.

And since you are good and only do good, would you come and teach us in this series about your goodness? Would you stretch our hearts and minds to take in your truth?

And to so take it in, not just nodding our heads in assent, but to so take it into our hearts with personal application that we will go out of this place bearing the song away.

[50 : 35] Glad to have God, this good God, is our God. Glad to belong to you, to have all of our days and all of our ways ordered by you.

Oh, teach us, because you are good and do good. We ask in Jesus' good name. Amen. Amen.