

The Pleasure of God in His Son

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[0:00] Well, do you enjoy your job? You would say, well, not every day.! No job's perfect. Every job has its moments.

But you know, God enjoys His job of being God! and doing what God does. He delights in being God.

It's not a chore to Him. It's not a grind. It's not a mere necessity like our jobs may be to us. But it is a thing of greatest happiness and supreme pleasure to Him.

The Bible's portrait of God is that He is holy. But it is also the portrait of God that He is happy.

Indeed, Paul speaks of the gospel of the blessed God.

The glorious gospel of the happy God in 1 Timothy 1.11. And God is happy beyond our wildest imaginations. There are no limits to His joy.

[1:09] And He has been happy from all eternity. Contrary to what some professing Christians think, His joy did not begin with us. Some have written that God was lonely and sad before He made us.

And so He made us to fulfill some ache in His heart, some loneliness in God. But think how long God lived without man.

How long did He live before He made man? Anyone? Anyone? That blows your mind, doesn't it?

That's long enough to know that His happiness is not dependent upon anything in the creature.

Forever and ever He has been God. And He has been the blessed, the happy God.

The God full of joy. He was supremely happy in the eternal fellowship of the Trinity. The Father with the Son and the Son with the Father and both with the Spirit.

[2:16] And so God finds in Himself the source of infinite joy. Acts 17.25, Paul says, He is not served by human hands as though He needed anything. He didn't need anything since He Himself gives to everyone life and breath and all things.

So He didn't need us to be happy. He didn't need us to give Him pleasure. In His presence is fullness of joy. It always has been in His presence.

And at His right hand are pleasures forevermore. They always have been at His right hand. And heaven for us is described as entering into the joy of our Lord.

Remember that Matthew 25, or I think it's Matthew 25, where our Lord, yes, speaks that word of welcome to His people.

And He says, Enter into the joy of your Lord, the NIV. Come and share your Master's happiness.

What is heaven but sharing in His happiness? So today we're beginning a study of a new study in this class on John Piper's book called The Pleasures of God, Meditations on God's Delight in Being God.

[3:35] If you'd like one of these books, I'm sure you could see Ed and Ed Withrow, and he'll order one for you. But the governing principle behind this book, The Pleasures of God, Meditations on God's Delight in Being God, the whole governing principle behind the book is this, that if you want to really get to know someone, find out what he or she delights in.

What gives them joy? What do they take pleasure in? And in that you'll have a readout of the person. It's a more reliable guide even than what a person says and does, because sometimes we can say and do things that don't really reflect who we are.

Jesus says, you can see a man praying and think that, oh, he likes to pray, when in reality all he really likes is for you to think that he likes to pray. So, our acts and our words can lie, but our pleasures never lie.

Our delights, what delights us and what gives us joy, always points to the reality of the man, the woman that we are. So if you want to get to know someone, follow the trail of their joys.

Now, the same holds true of God. By finding out what he takes pleasure in, we can come to know him better. And so that's the aim of this study, to know him better, by coming to know what he takes pleasure in.

[5:06] So it's a continuation of the study we've just finished on knowing God. Indeed, are we ever finished with that study? The object of that study is so infinite and glorious that will never be done, getting to know him better.

But our aim is also to be more and more becoming like him. And according to the Apostle Paul, beholding him is the way that we become more like him.

2 Corinthians 3.18, And we who with unveiled faces all behold the Lord's glory are being transformed into his likeness. from one stage of glory to another, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

So our aim is to get to know God better by studying his pleasures and to become more like him. Now, Piper's method here, then, is to study his pleasures.

That's what he says, quote, one way to meditate on the excellency of God is to meditate on his pleasures. One way to see the glory of God is to see his joy.

[6:18] And so as a diamond, each turn of the diamond reveals more glory, so it is with our God. Each pleasure of God reveals more and more of the glorious person that he is.

So Piper has poured over those passages in Scripture that speak of God's joy, his delight, his loves, his pleasures, and he's on a hunt to discover in what does God find the most ravishing pleasures, the most solid and substantial delights.

What are the pleasures of God? Now, he begins with six chapters on God's delight in himself and his own work.

And then at chapter 7, the book shifts to God's delight in his people and their works and what they do and are. And he says, this order of God's delight in himself first and then his delight in his people is intentional.

Piper warns, quote, unless we begin with God in this way, when the gospel comes to us, we will inevitably put ourselves at the center of it. We will feel that our value rather than God's value is the driving force in the gospel.

[7:36] We will trace the gospel back to God's need for us instead of tracing it back to the sovereign grace that rescues sinners who need God. So he begins with the pleasures of God in himself.

Chapter 1, then, is entitled The Pleasure of God in His Son. The Pleasure of God in His Son. The point of this first chapter is to show that God's pleasure is first and foremost a pleasure that he has in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We'll consider five different points if we have time to get to them. The first is God's pleasure in his Son's meekness. Turn with me to Matthew 3 and verse 13 is where we'll pick up the account.

A 30-year-old Jesus of Nazareth is ready to begin his public ministry as God's Messiah. And John the Baptist has been saying that there's one coming who is going to baptize you with the Spirit and with fire.

And he's before me and he's preferred before me. And I'm not worthy to loosen his sandals. And so now John's baptizing in the Jordan River and they're coming to him to be baptized and to repent and to prepare for the Lord's coming.

[8:59] And one after another they come and he baptizes them. Next. Next. And then there he is. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And John immediately objects. verse 14. I need to be baptized by you. And do you come to me? I need to be baptized with the Spirit and fire. And do you come to me to be baptized with water?

And Jesus replies let it be so now.

It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness. And then John consented. As soon as Jesus went up out of the water verse 16 heaven was opened and the Spirit of God descended like a dove and lighted on him and a voice from heaven said this is my son whom I love with him I am well pleased.

So we are at this critical moment in the life of our Lord Jesus. He is ready to begin his public ministry the work of Messiah.

[10:14] It is about to begin. And after 30 years of relative obscurity in Israel where we don't really have much in scripture that we know about him he suddenly appears on the scene the public

scene.

Who is he? Why is he the Messiah? What are his credentials? Who gives him authority to be Messiah? And so the Spirit descends from heaven like a dove and lands on him.

And then a voice from heaven speaks and says this is my son whom I love with him I am well pleased.

So the one before whom all things are uncovered and laid bare looks him over and says I am well pleased with this one. This is where my desire and my pleasure is.

And so for every moment of his 30 years in obscurity he has been observed by his Father in heaven. His infancy his obedience to his parents his interaction with sinful brothers and sisters and neighbors his teenage years his early manhood his work in the carpenter shop his thoughts his words his actions his very motivations his desires all observed by the Father.

[11:48] And the Father says I am well pleased with this one. I am pleased by him. I find delight in him. But not just those 30 years from all eternity he has known him fully he's been with him always and God the Father now weighs in on his son this is the one I love with him I'm well pleased he's been the apple of his eye from all eternity.

So these words of God are something of an echo of God's word spoken through his prophet Isaiah some 700 years ago and rather than turn to the passage in Isaiah 42 let's just turn over to it as it's found in Matthew 12 since we're in Matthew's gospel Matthew 12 Matthew quotes this prophecy of Isaiah 42 as if it were and says that it is fulfilled in Jesus' ministry and I want you to notice how similar this prophecy in Isaiah 42 is to the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism especially verse 1 of Isaiah 42 we're in Matthew 12 verse 17 this was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah and here it is here is my servant whom I have chosen the one I love in whom I delight can you hear the echo of that passage in God the Father's voice from heaven this is my son whom I love with him

I am well pleased well the passage in Isaiah goes on to say I will put my spirit on him isn't that interesting what was it that descended on him before the voice the voice spoke the spirit in the form of a dove descended on him and then the voice says my son in whom I am well pleased who is all my delight and he goes on and says and he will proclaim justice to the nations verse 19 he will not quarrel or cry out no one will hear his voice in the streets a bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out till he leads justice to victory in his name the nations will put their hope the father finds pleasure in everything about his son but what is especially highlighted in this passage is perhaps his meekness if any attribute is highlighted it is his meekness the father's pleasure is in his son's meek submission to obey all that the father had given him to do indeed he's just said

Jesus has just said to John John it's proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness righteousness that's why that's why I'm here not to do my own will but to do the will of my father and so this is proper for us to have you baptize me to fulfill all righteousness that's when the voice says ah I delight in this one he delights in him notice as his servant the Isaiah 42 1 passage here is my servant in whom whom I have chosen the one in whom I delight the one I love and in whom I delight my servant it's one of the servant of the Lord passages that's a title for Messiah but let's not lose the fact of he's a servant he's the Lord servant what does a servant do he doesn't do his own will he does the will of the master and so here is Jesus as he approaches his messianic work and he stands before his father as this servant of the

Lord I'm your servant and the father takes such delight in this meek submission to do his will here's the one who by his service will fulfill!

[16:02] plans and Isaiah 53 10 tells us that the pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hands so how the father delighted in this this servant and his coming to do the father's will and how he delighted in his tender ministry which is highlighted in this passage that he'll not quarrel or cry out he won't hear his voice in the street he'll not be a loud mouth!

quarreling arguing sort of man but he'll be tender with the bruised reeds people who are like a reed that has already been bent he'll not break it all the way how tender tender he'll be tender! He'll be out to go out he'll not put it out but he will fan that little flicker into a flame so tender is he and he'll not falter or be discouraged until he's brought justice to victory this is the one in whom his soul delights he's the meek servant of the Lord he's here not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many and in his service to God he was told to go to the cross and die for his people and he was obedient unto death even the death of the cross now would you know the

father's pleasure in his meek servant!

to the highest place he raised him from the dead and exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name that's above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God to father do you feel anything of the pleasure of God in his son the servant that does all his will and so he takes great delight in him well that's God's pleasure in his son but especially highlighting his meekness there was another time in the second place when the voice of God was heard speaking of the pleasure of his son over to Matthew chapter 17 Jesus is alone with his closest three friends on earth Peter James and John and he takes them up on a!

mountain and there God suddenly pulls back the curtain that has been veiling the glory of his son verse two says he was transfigured before them that word transfigured means his form was changed from what it was to something else and so right in front of them they see this transformation the Jesus they had known and been close and intimate with suddenly is changed and his glory is seen for what it is and it says his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light as if his clothes were unable to hold the glory in they too shine as translucent with the light streaming from the Lord Jesus so bright that you can't look directly at him like you can't look directly at the sun lest you go blind remember

[19:35] Paul on the road to Damascus saw that light brighter than the sun at noonday and fell to the ground blind the glory of the resurrected Christ John sees Christ in his glory in revelation one and his face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance and when I saw him I fell at his feet as though dead that was in vision but here they see it in the flesh Jesus the veil pulled back and the glory shining out now Peter James and John are stunned!

but what! knocked them to the ground terrified was the voice that spoke from the cloud that enveloped the mountain you see it's not every day that a voice from heaven speaks and if you know people who claim that that's the case you need to tell them otherwise but God spoke in a way that men audibly heard his words there was another mountain over a thousand years earlier where the Israelites were gathered around and God spoke ten words to his people and now here on this mountain he speaks again and he declares once again his delight in his son you see it in verse five I'm sorry yes verse five this is my son whom

I love with him I'm well pleased listen to him Peter later says in his second book we ourselves heard the voice from heaven from the majestic glory his glory was revealed in the blinding light and then when God said he is my delight so he is we have before us here the son's glory his majesty that is highlighted whereas before it was his meekness to undertake the servant task of the work of Messiah here it's the glory of his son that shines out brightly and the father says oh he is my pleasure he is my delight now who can look at the son shining in full strength in all its brilliance God God can who can look upon the son of God shining in the full glory and majesty

God so the radiant glory of the son shines first and foremost for the enjoyment of his father this is my son whom I love he's my pleasure and he looks him over and he constantly draws pleasure from him he's altogether lovely that's his conclusion he's well pleasing now you must fall on your face and hide your eyes from his glory but I behold my son face to face and I enjoy what I see of his glory with never fading delight and that's the way it was for all eternity it's kind of like who enjoys that flower in the desert that blooms and shines and dies and no human eye ever sees it but God sees it doesn't he he takes delight in it or down under the earth miles below the sea surface some exotic fish comes into life born spawned whatever and lives and dies and no eye ever sees it but God's these things exist first and foremost for their creator God and so in a similar way the glory of the Lord Jesus exists first and foremost for the happiness and pleasure of God his father not that he is created he is the uncreated eternal son it's not without significance that on this rare occasion when God audibly speaks from heaven it's to declare his pleasure in his son so we if anything is highlighted here it would be more his glory his majesty and so we have both don't we God's delight in his son's meekness and his son's majesty and what's unusual is that these two things should be found in the same person meekness and majesty those are things that usually aren't found together and they're found perfectly in

[24:29] Christ majestic sweetness sits enthroned upon the Savior's brow the father says isn't he lovely in him is all my delight and so you have that passage in revelation five where Jesus is presented as the lion of the tribe of Judah and when you go to look and see who is that lion of the tribe of Judah who's worthy to unwrap the scrolls John saw a lamb looking like he had been slain

but which is he a meek lamb or a majestic lion God says he's both and I delight in him as the majestic meek son of God so Jonathan Edwards in the great awakening preached from that text in revelation a sermon entitled the excellency of

Christ and he showed the glory of Christ by quote describing the admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Christ different excellencies brought together in the same person Christ glory is the combining of attributes that would seem to be utterly incompatible in one person the lion the lamb and so Edwards says in Jesus Christ meets infinite highness and infinite condescension infinite justice and infinite grace infinite glory and lowest humility infinite majesty and transcendent meekness and all that Jesus is is cause for the father's delight the third point not only the father's delight in his son's meekness his majesty but thirdly

God's pleasure in his son's wisdom there's a proverb Proverbs 10 1 that says a wise son makes a glad father and every father here knows immediately what that means you know the swell in your heart when you see your son make a wise decision make a wise move because wisdom is more than just something in the head it's living in the best way and when we see our son doing things that are wise that are wise in God's sight oh we find great pleasure a wise son makes a glad father maybe it was some stand that he took a wise stand a wise decision maybe applied himself with wisdom to his school his job his family his church his God son but we find that a wise son makes a glad father well God the father has the perfect son and so he has perfect gladness in his perfectly wise son he's continually a glad father because his son is a continually and perfectly wise son it's not like his son acts wise once in a while and gives him a little pleasure like your son and my son but no it's not occasional joy he's always wise and so his gladness in his son is always continual as well

Jesus says I always do what pleases my father so whenever Jesus lifted a finger whenever he thought a thought whenever he desired desire whenever he did an act a deed spoke a word he did what his father delighted in so a wise son makes a glad father and Piper mentioned something of the wisdom of Jesus in creation nothing was made that has been made except through him and the father delights in his son's wisdom in creation his son's wisdom in preaching and healing of the multitudes what wisdom is needed to speak and to have a sick person made whole his wisdom in training his apostles his wisdom in answering his critics and his enemies such that they no longer asked any questions of him his wisdom in ruling over the universe and in all of this is a father who's taking great delight in his wise son fourthly we think of

God's pleasure in his son because he knows him intimately our ability to enjoy another person grows with our knowledge of them and between the father and the son there's this infinite intimacy no one knows the father except the son that's what Jesus says in Matthew 11 27 no one knows the son except the father and no one knows the father except the son and those to whom the son chooses to reveal him so there is this intimacy between God the father and God the son and so the father knows his son intimately and the more he knows of him the more he enjoys what he sees well there is no increase in his knowing of his son he knows everything about him and so because of that intimate knowledge his joy in his son is also infinite the infinite intimacy that the father has with his son gives him infinite pleasure in his son and that's what makes

[30 : 16] Paul amazed that he would give his son up to the cross for us because Paul knows a little bit of what pleasure the father has in his son and so he's dumb struck that that for eternity the father has been so pleased with his son and yet he gave him for us and it's that pleasure that the father has in the son that makes the whole dynamic of Romans 8 32 work where Paul says that he did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all how shall he not therefore along with him freely give us all things the reason that verse works and gives us encouragement that we'll not be left in the lurch in life that God will supply all that we need to get us safely home to heaven is because the father who perfectly delights in his son has given him on our behalf and then in Colossians 1 13 when the apostle speaks of the kingdom of

God or the kingdom of Christ he says for he rescued us God the father rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the son he loves you know he could have just said he brought us into the kingdom of Christ that worked but Paul is struck with the fact that the father loves the son he takes delight in his son and so he says he delivered us out of the dominion of darkness and he brought us into the kingdom of Christ yes no of the son he loves this one in whom is all his delight and he's brought us into his kingdom so Edward says the infinite happiness of the father consists in the enjoyment of his son no father ever loved a son like God

loves his own son because he infinitely knows him and he takes infinite delight in all he knows about him and then lastly fifthly

God's pleasure in his full deity joined to full humanity Colossians 1:19 says for God was pleased God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him in his son to have all the fullness of the deity to dwell in the body that he prepared for his son gave the father great pleasure and so in Hebrews 10 when Christ came into the world he said sacrifice and offering you did not desire but a body you prepared for me with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased and then then said here I am it's written about me in the scroll I have come to do your will O God and so the father was pleased in the incarnation to have all his deity dwell in fullness in his son the God man fully God fully man well

Piper concludes this chapter with God's delight in being God he says we may conclude that the pleasure of God in his son is pleasure in himself since the son is the image of God and the radiance of God and the form of God equal with God and indeed is God therefore God's delight in the son is delight in himself the deepest foundational joy of God is the joy he has in his own perfections as he sees them reflected glory of God in the face of Christ what do you see when you look at Christ you see the glory of God and so Jesus becomes as God becomes a mirror to us of the glory of God he came to exegete God because he is God and in seeing him we have seen the father and so God's delight in his son is delight in himself

As the! father looks at his son what he sees is his own image the same character the same attributes exactly like you looking into a mirror you see your own image there the father's own glory is seen in the mirror of his son so Piper says from all eternity God had beheld the panorama of his own perfections in the face of his son all that he is he sees reflected fully and perfectly in the face of his son and in this he rejoices with infinite joy now that might sound like vanity to us to take delight in yourself in Greek mythology Narcissus was a very handsome son of a river god who one day saw his reflection in a spring and fell in love with his own reflection and that's a bad term today when you talk of narcissism it's someone who's in love with himself but someone tell me how this can be wrong for us and yet be right for

[35:31] God to take pleasure in ourselves to be in love with ourselves why how can that be wrong for us and yet right for God Jim yeah so it's wrong for us isn't it we'd be worshipping ourselves why is it right for God Mark okay the difference is that we're not worthy of ultimate delight are we but God is for yourself if you put your delight in your ultimate delight and supreme delight in anything other than God it's an idol it's sin it's wickedness!

Because he alone is worthy he alone has such splendor and glory to to be worshipped and adored and delighted in forever and ever so to lower that to a creature is a sinful degrading thing now what's God supposed to delight in then what's the highest being in the universe what is the greatest glory in the universe it's himself it would be wrong for God to delight in anything else!

than that glory that he is and that is reflected perfectly in his son well you can read in the book further how he teases that out but I had to think in way of application what does it take what do I delight in this is what God delights in his son what do I delight in you know the more developed and sophisticated a being is the more it takes to give them delight you stick a cow out in an acre of clover and it will just chew the cud for hours upon end with great delight or you take a six month baby and you lie on her back in bed and you start up a musical mobile over her eyes and she'll sit there entranced with delight for hours on end perhaps and but don't try that one with your teenage son he'd set before him an

Xbox 3 and he'll be delighted and find pleasure all day long all night long but don't try that on a 60 year old Nobel prize winner in the area of medicine he'll soon be bored with that Xbox 3 but give him a scientific journal and he'll salivate with desire and pleasure and now we make the jump from the creature to the creator and you give that scientific journal to God and he's saying they haven't even got to the ABCs of my creation that's a bit boring actually you ought to know the full story the higher the being the more it takes to delight him but you set before this glorious God not a scientific journal but his own son and he'll say ah now this is glory this is my son whom

I love in whom I am well pleased I find a light in him and I say to myself John do you mean to tell me that almighty God finds enough glory in Jesus Christ to take pleasure in him every second of his existence what about your pleasures what do you find pleasure in John look again there's more glory in Jesus than what I've yet seen open my eyes Lord to behold the glory of God in the face of Christ so Piper finishes let us then stand in awe of this great God and let us turn from all the trivial

resentments and fleeting pleasures and petty pursuits of materialism and merely human spirituality and let us be caught up into the gladness that God has in the glory of his son who is the radiance and image of his father well that's where we're headed enter into the joy of your
[39 : 54] Lord we're dismissed