

The greatness of the goodness of God (Quality: Good, Quiet)

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

[0 : 00] Psalm 31, and words that are found in the 19th verse. 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.

And you will remember that this morning, in consideration of this word, we recognized that there were three outstanding features in the body of the verse itself that was worthy of our consideration.

And they were these. First of all, the goodness of the Lord that is laid up for them that fear him.

And secondly, the goodness that has wrought, and what it has wrought for those who trust in the Lord.

And then thirdly, how these things, the goodness of the Lord with all its greatness, preciousness, is before the sons of men.

[1 : 41] Now, in this evening hour, we shall attempt to consider those three things. But in the morning service, you will remember, we devoted our time to the consideration of that glorious subject, the goodness of God.

How great is thy goodness. The psalmist comes from the very depth in his experience.

As we pointed out, and as he says here in the verse, I am forgotten as a dead man.

I am like a broken vessel. Such words as these express the depth and the reality of his condition and his distress.

But he comes from that low condition to this great point. And it seems to my mind that it is a sudden change in his whole life and experience when he suddenly exclaims, Oh, how great is thy goodness.

[3 : 23] And from that point, there's a mighty turning, a change for the better. As indeed we prove in the lives and experiences of God's saints.

As you well remember, that Paul and Silas were in prison at Philippi and having their feet chained to the stocks. But at midnight, they sang praises unto God.

They recognized his goodness, even in their miserable plight and position. And as soon as they recognized and expressed their hearty gratitude to God for his goodness, the prison doors were opened and they were set free.

And so it is here with the psalmist that as soon as he came to this point in his experience of recognizing and acknowledging the goodness of the Lord, the whole course of his experience was changed.

And changed in a moment from one of utter desolation and darkness and fear and distress to one of sweet confidence and hope and satisfaction.

[4 : 55] Now, we come therefore to the first of these three things that he speaks of in the text. That which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.

There are three things about this point that I want to briefly consider with you this evening. And one is this. Where is this goodness of the Lord laid up?

Where is it laid up? And secondly, what is this that is laid up for them that fear the Lord?

And then thirdly, when or for what time is it all laid up for them that fear the Lord?

In consideration of this word or this term in the scriptures laid up, I find in the word of God there are many Hebrew words that are all translated in this one way laid up.

[6 : 11] But they are different words in the Hebrew and they have a different meaning. For instance, there is the word Allah which is in reference to things being laid up and weighed in the balance.

We have it in the 60-second psalm. They are all together, when they are laid up, they are all together vanity. And you remember also how the writing on the wall in the palace of Belshazzar, thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.

Now God lays in his scales everything that belongeth unto men and every work or virtue or fact or deed or doing and it is all laid up in the scales of his sanctuary and weighed in those scales to see of what real nature they are.

Then again, there is another word in the Hebrew different altogether from the word Elah, Torfan, Torfan, which means something that is laid up as a treasure, a treasure hidden and hidden in a secret place.

there we believe the Lord lays up all his goodness for his people who fear him in the secret place.

[8 : 20] And furthermore, when we come to the teaching of the Lord Jesus, we remember that very solemn parable or matter that he brought before the people on one occasion when he said, speaking of a man who had had a great prosperity in his farm and had found an abundance in his harvest, so much so that he decided in his mind to pull down his present bonds and build greater.

And he said to himself while he was planning to do all this, Soul, thou hast much good laid up in store for thee.

Take thy knees. And so on. the Lord said to him a very solemn word, Thou fool. It's not often we find in the scriptures the Lord calling anyone a fool.

But he said, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, and where will those things be which thou hast laid up.

Man may lay up and lose everything that he lays up. But God, when he lays up for his people, he lays it up in a secret place where none can take away, no moth can corrupt, or thieves break in and steal.

[10 : 14] to give another example of this laid up, we have the great example in the scriptures of Joseph.

God's wonderful dealings in his goodness with Joseph, and indeed with far greater numbers than Joseph himself, lay in the remarkable circumstance of his life, in which he was first of all sold as a slave, and got rid of by his brethren, thinking that he was dismissed forever from their lives and from their thoughts.

and yet he comes eventually, as you know from the book of Genesis, to be lifted up out of prison in one day, and to receive the notice of Pharaoh, and recognition of his worth by Pharaoh, and to be put in charge of the whole of the land of Egypt, and how that Joseph's God-given wisdom enabled him to store up, to lay up food in the cities of Egypt, during the seven years of plenty, so that when the seven years of famine came, there would be sufficient.

And I say this, if it were not for that one fact, raising up by God's goodness of that man Joseph, the world would have starved to death, there would have been a terrible famine for want of bread, bread, and many, if not all nations, would have come to their end.

Then, just one more, before we go further in this matter. The bridegroom in the Song of Solomon, he speaks to the bride in this way, all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up, says he, for thee, all manner of fruits, new and old, which I have laid up to thee.

[12 : 54] It reminds one of that hymn which speaks of the fruits, in paradise within the gate, a nobler entertainment waits, fruits new and old, laid up in store, where we shall feast and want no more.

Now, I come to this point which is one of great importance things. And that is where is God's goodness laid up.

And of course, as I read to you tonight, that beautiful passage in the Colossians, you can see clearly and recognize the truth that God has laid all things up.

in Christ Jesus the Lord. In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And he is the secret place of the Most High, in which all the goodness of God dwells.

[14 : 19] God has laid it up in Christ. worthy and glorious receptacle for all the goodness of God. And my dear friends, if you would have know where this goodness is, where you will have goodness from, you must recognize that it is in Christ.

Not in your works, not in the works of men, but in the work of God, and in the blessed Son of God, the glorious Lord and Redeemer.

That is where it is, and it is safe there. is gloriously safe, the goodness of God. Now, all other kinds of goodness are passing things.

For instance, the day before yesterday, we had a beautiful day, a sun, bright spring-like atmosphere, and everything looked good, and one was pleased to be alive, and to enjoy such a beautiful experience.

But then the next day comes the gloomy clouds, the rain, and the dimness, and it all together seemed to be totally different.

[15 : 47] Well, you see, that goodness had passed away. It was temporary. But the goodness of the Lord is not.

It is forever and ever. God lays it up, where it does not only retain its glory, safety, but it is there forever in Christ Jesus.

Now, what is it? What is the goodness of God? God's all that God has done, all he has promised to his people, all that he has purposed for their souls' eternal good, all the immensities of his providential goodness, all the vast, intricate dealings of the Lord God with his people.

They're all stored up in Christ, and this is what they are. And Paul says in the 8th of Romans, it's a truth that is consistent with this glorious fact that God's goodness is all stored up in the Lord Jesus Christ.

all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose.

[17 : 27] Yes, the goodness then is all that God doth in his work of salvation, in his preservation of his people, in his guiding of their feet into the way of peace and truth, and finally, into glory itself.

But then, thirdly, when or for what time is this goodness laid up? Now, the scriptures are very clear about this one great fact, that God does not intend to give to his people two heavens, one on the earth and one in the world that is to come.

He has reserved for his people all that his heart has prepared, and he will reveal that in the time of heavenly glory.

But I do not say for one moment that the Lord does not let out here and there by the way in each believer's experience a little of the goodness, the heavenly goodness of the Lord in their path, otherwise their pathway would be dreadful indeed.

It would be like David's when he said, I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind. I am like a broken vessel. It would be totally unacceptable. But now and then, here and there, in ways that are extremely great and wonderful, the Lord drops a portion, lets a little out of the storehouse, as it were, of his goodness, and gives them a little foretaste of the glories and wonders of heaven itself.

[19 : 44] But that is when it is stored, laid up for that time, when the Lord shall come, as we have it in the Thessalonians, in that great day when the Lord will come to be admired of all his saints, to be dreaded by all those who are in opposition to him, but who will come to rectify all that is wrong, and to be revealed in all his full glory, and his triumphs, for he shall come without sin unto salvation.

that wonderful time, do we anticipate it? Do we expect the day will come when Christ will be revealed, when we shall see him, every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him shall look upon him, that he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to magnify the truth of his holy promise and his word.

Well, now then, we must pass on to the second point in our consideration of this verse this evening, and that is what thou hast brought for them that trust in thee.

Thou hast wrought. We find God's great truth, the great work of his grace, is a work that he hath wrought out in a vast, unfathomably and incomprehensibly wonderful way and manner for every vessel of mercy.

He hath wrought out. The salvation of every true believer is a salvation that is wrought out by God's goodness.

[22 : 19] And what is wrought out is wrought into their hearts and into their lives. But it first must be wrought out by God.

It's a great thing to trace what we are, what we believe, what we have experienced, to the goodness of God.

That takes away all self-glorification and it is ascribing to the rightful source of all that is good, the honor and glory of those works that God himself hath performed.

He hath wrought out. we read of the queen's daughter, the king's daughter in the 45th psalm as coming into the king in certain garments and it says this about those garments, they shall be of wrought gold, wrought out in gold, that is material, the nature of the garments that are bestowed upon to adorn the bride of the king.

King's daughter shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework, but in garments of wrought gold.

[23 : 59] Then strengthen, says the psalmist in the 61st psalm, strengthen thou that which thou hast wrought for us.

It is the concern of every believer to see what God has wrought for them. Their prayers, their prayer life is largely taken up with this.

O Lord, do work in us and for us, and work out thy wonderful salvation. Let thy goodness do and accomplish in us and for us the mighty things thou hast prepared for them that love thee.

The goodness of God is that which is wrought out for all who trust in him.

And my friends, what wonderful things God has wrought. What hath God wrought is a question that we have constantly to ask in amazement.

[25 : 15] God when we see the tangled affairs of our own lives straightened by his goodness. When we see things that we lament in us and recognize to be unfit and unworthy, when we see them and feel indeed in our own hearts that they are removed or cleansed and the Lord is pardoned, we see what the goodness of the Lord has wrought out for us personally in our lives, in our experience.

and if there's no acknowledgement of what God's goodness has wrought out, then we have to come to this conclusion, we have no knowledge of God's goodness.

As I said this morning, one of the great facts that stare us in the face today, among even the professing people of God, is this tremendous fact that the goodness of God is one of the unrecognized facts about God.

And why? Because there's no repentance, because God's goodness leads to repentance, and where there is a lack of repentance, there's also a lack of recognition of the goodness of God.

That I must hasten, let us come to the final point tonight, and that is this, which thou hast wrought out for them that trust in thee before the sons of men.

[27 : 15] Now, there may be more than one way of interpreting this word, God's God's God's God's God's goodness, that it has two main interpretations that are worthy of our consideration.

God's God's God's goodness, what it does, what it accomplishes, and what God's people recognize in it and realize by it, gives them something that enables them to put first before anything else in the world, before the sons of men, or all the interests, or considerations of the sons of men, the goodness of God.

Yes, it must be first, and will be, the first in thought, the first in every respect, because it is before the sons of men.

That means to say, as I interpret it now, it is something that is above all creature, worth, or merit, or goodness, God's goodness, is above, supremely above, all such things, and cannot be compared with these things, and therefore it is before sons of men.

It stands first in rank, and in all considerations, the goodness of God. And indeed, there is no other consideration worthwhile.

[29 : 19] I think we can see the value, and the reality of our religion, if we come along these lines, and weigh them up, and test our own lives and consciences by these truths, do we put first before all men, and all the affairs of men, and all the claims of men, do we put first before these things the goodness of God?

It's a great question. question that comes very close and very strikingly home to our hearts, that which is before the sons of men.

How we see in the lives of the apostles, that they put first of all God's goodness, the claims of their heart upon that goodness, was the first consideration of the great apostle Paul and others in the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Christ would ever have us, always taught us, to put his kingdom, his goodness, and the things of God first in our lives.

Now that's one interpretation of this word, but there is another. The display of God's goodness is or will be before the sons of men.

[31 : 08] That is to say, God will see that his glory, the glory of his goodness, the goodness of his works, of his grace, the goodness of his glorious gospel, are before the sons of men, as set forth before them.

The great purpose of God is to send forth his truth, to shed light upon his word, to show forth his gospel, if the Lord hath made bare, the Lord hath made bare, his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations.

And although men may not see it, they will see it. Every eye shall see, every tongue shall confess that he is the Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Yes, it will be before men. The gospel of our present time is ignored and disregarded by a great majority of our fellow creatures, ignored as to its message, and its import, and its significance.

but there will be a time when they shall see. It will be before them when it is too late. But God will make his goodness pass before all his people in their way, like he did with Moses.

[32 : 57] When Moses cried to him and called upon him, he says, I will make all my goodness pass before thee in the way.

Yes, it will be before the sons of men, before their way, before their interest, before their hopes and ambitions, and their claims.

God's goodness, the goodness of his gospel, the goodness of Christ and all that he has performed, the goodness of his faithfulness and of his truth.

These things shall be according to God's word and promise before the eyes of all men. Well, now, those are the things, my friends, that we consider have considered today.

let us therefore come back to this great exclamation of David, the psalmist, when he rises up with this tremendous confidence and desire to express his praises gratitude and gratitude for the goodness of God.

[34 : 28] Oh, how great is thy goodness. You can feel in the very expression of the words themselves that this dear man of God could see the goodness of God as such an immensity that it was beyond all powers of calculation.

it was too great for him to measure. It was immeasurable, immutable, incomparable, and glorious indeed.

And my friends, may we be given grace in our souls to know, to value, to appreciate, to express in our lives as well as by our lips the greatness of the goodness of the Lord.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[36 : 13] Amen. Amen. Amen.