

Title: **THE GREAT GOODNESS OF OUR GOD**

Text: Isaiah 63:7

Date: Sunday Morning — January 21, 2007

Tape # Z-19a

Reading: *Isaiah 62:10-63:9*

Introduction:

Last Sunday night, I tried to preach to you about “the lovingkindnesses of the Lord” and “the multitude of his lovingkindnesses” from Isaiah 63:7. When I started preparing that message, I was fully aware that the subject and text were too big for me. I could never hope to explain, or even know, the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. But I want us to return to the same subject and text this morning.

Having received the revelation given to him by God the Holy Spirit of glorious accomplishment of redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation of all God’s elect in him, Isaiah was overwhelmed with astonishment and gratitude, so overwhelmed that he could hardly find words to express himself.

LOVINGKINDNESSES

“**I will mention.**” He does not say, I will declare, or even I will sing about. He simply says, “I will mention.” The word is really, “remember,” or “call to mind.” Isaiah is saying, “I will mention” to my heart and call you who know my God to remember “**the loving kindnesses of the LORD.**”

The lovingkindness of the Lord is his pity, favor, goodness, mercy and grace toward his elect. Here the prophet speaks of God’s lovingkindness in the plural, “I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord,” because his lovingkindness toward us is a multitude. Our salvation flows to us from the infinite fountain of lovingkindness in the heart of the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And the lovingkindnesses of the triune Jehovah toward us are an incalculable multitude. **So liberal is our God and Savior, so bountiful, that he heaps lovingkindnesses upon sinners who deserve nothing but his wrath!** So great is his lovingkindness that expressing the remembrance of it is in plurals, because all our thoughts and words are utterly inadequate to express the bounty of our Savior.

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HIS PRAISE

Read on: Isaiah says, “I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, **and the praises of the LORD.**” — The praises of the Lord, in this passage are the attributes, the qualities of his character that set him apart from all his creatures. Specifically, Isaiah is, if I am not mistaken, talking about the praise our God deserves from us because of all his bounteous grace bestowed upon us in Christ, as is indicated in the next line of our text.

BESTOWED

“I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, *and* the praises of the LORD, **according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us,** and **the great goodness** towards the house of Israel, **which he hath bestowed** on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.”

O, how I love those words, “which he hath bestowed”! Don’t you? **That which God bestows upon his people in time, he “hath bestowed” upon us from eternity in Christ.** Isaiah’s here language is almost identical to Paul’s in Ephesians 1.

(Ephesians 1:3-7) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

And that which God bestows upon us in time can never be taken away from us, “for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.”

- Love
- Election
- Adoption
- Redemption
- Eternal Life

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- Forgiveness
- Acceptance
- Meetness for Glory

ACCORDING TO

Here are two more words in our text that are thrilling to my soul. Twice in this one sentence Isaiah tells us that all the lovingkindnesses, great goodness, and mercies of our God are things which “he hath bestowed” upon us. And twice he tells us that all the bounteous grace of the triune God “he hath bestowed” upon us is “according to” “his great goodness” and “the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.”

“I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, *and* the praises of the LORD, **according to** all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and **according to** the multitude of his loving kindnesses.”

His praise is according to all that he has bestowed, and all that he has bestowed is according to his great goodness his mercies, and his lovingkindnesses. All the gifts of God’s great, free grace in Christ are bestowed upon chosen, redeemed sinners, not according any worth, merit, or cause in us, but according to his great goodness his mercies, and his lovingkindnesses.

There is no worth or merit in us. The best works of righteousness we can produce are but filthy rags before the thrice holy God. All that we receive from our God flows to us freely, without cause, except in his great goodness. All flow to us as a matter of sovereign mercy, pure grace, and free, unmerited love, abundant, boundless, and infinite in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah piles up words in heaps to express the wonderful kindness of God in the acts of his grace and goodness to his people in Christ. Still, they are inadequate. The praises of God’s saints in endless eternity will not adequately express his goodness. Let us remember and make mention of these things continually in his house and to one another, in public and in private. And when we have told all that can be told of the praises of our

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great God for his great goodness to sinners in Christ, we well confess, “Behold, the half has not been told.”

GREAT GOODNESS

Having said all that, I want to call to your hearts’ memory, as I call to my own, the great goodness of God our Savior. There are three things revealed in our text about the goodness of God.

1. **The goodness of God is saving, redeeming goodness.**

The verses immediately preceding our text tell us that God’s goodness, which he “hath bestowed” is bestowed in the accomplishment of redemption by Christ our Savior.

2. **The goodness of God is distinguishing goodness.**

It is here described as “the great goodness toward the house of Israel.” It is the goodness of God bestowed upon us that puts a difference between Egypt and Israel, separating the precious from the vile.

3. **And the goodness of God bestowed upon us in Christ is great goodness.**

Our God’s goodness is spoken of as his “great goodness” repeatedly. — In **Nehemiah 9:25**, we read that the Lord God caused his people to “eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.’ In **verse 35**, Nehemiah tells us that God established them “in thy great goodness that thou gavest them.” — **Psalms 31:19** reads, “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!” — **Psalms 145:7** says, “They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.” — In **Zechariah 9:17** the prophet of God exclaims, “How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!”

As one transported and in a state of spiritual rapture, Isaiah exclaims, “I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, *and* the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness

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towards the house of Israel which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.”

PHYSICAL THINGS

If we thought only of the physical things we now enjoy in this world, we ought to lift our hearts to God our Savior and say, “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!”

- He gave us life, sustains us in health, and has given us a sound mind.
- It is God our Savior who daily furnishes our tables, clothes our bodies, and refreshes us with rest.
- It is the Lord God who has given us our families and keeps our families in domestic tranquility.
- Our heavenly Father fills our lives with friends, who are his friends.
- By his watchful care we are protected from countless visible and unseen dangers.
- He gives his angels charge over us, to keep us from danger.

More numerous are his mercies than the stars of heaven. There is no section of our lives, —no circumstance of our existence, — no aspect of our daily experience upon which we can we fix our eyes, without seeing “the great goodness of our God.”

REDEMPTION

But when we lift our thoughts to his “great goodness toward the house of Israel,” our hearts are utterly incapable of expressing the praise we owe to “the great goodness” he has bestowed upon us. It is in the redemption of our souls that “the great goodness” of our God is most fully displayed. Redemption was the thing that ravished Isaiah’s heart and mind. — O Spirit of God, cause the redemption of our souls by Christ Jesus, according to “the great goodness toward the house of Israel,” which has been bestowed upon us, to ravish our hearts!

To discover the heights or to fathom the depths of “the great goodness” bestowed upon us in redemption exceeds the capacities of our hearts. Yet, it is this great goodness that we most need, and this great goodness that most effectually ministers to our souls.

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COVENANT GOODNESS

What great goodness is revealed in the triune God purposing and planning the great work of redemption! — The Eternal Three-in-One God was not moved by anything except his own great goodness. No angel made the proposal, interceded, or advised. No man by his prayers or tears stirred pity in Jehovah's heart. Before men or angels had existence, the purpose was fixed and the plan was formed by boundless love, unmoved, unasked, uncaused by anything, except "the great goodness" of God toward his own.

- It was "the great goodness (of God the Father) toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses," that moved him to choose us, to write our names in the Lamb's book of life, and make proposals of grace and redemption for us to his darling Son.
- It was "the great goodness (of God the Son) toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses," that moved him to stand forth as our Surety and assume total responsibility for our souls, agreeing to satisfy every stipulation of the covenant for us.
- It was "the great goodness (of God the Spirit) toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses," that moved him to become for us the Seal of the covenant, the Comforter, by whom all the things of Christ are conveyed to our souls.

Upon the whole covenant of grace, write these words in bold, capital letters, "**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!**" The everlasting love of our God bestowed upon us in Christ from eternity is totally free. It is selfless, completely disinterested love, having no reward in view but the pleasure of doing good. There was and is nothing in us to recompense the triune God for "the great goodness" toward us. We have nothing to give him but what we receive from him.

CONDESCENDING GOODNESS

"The great goodness" of our God is seen in the objects upon which his goodness is bestowed. It is goodness bestowed upon the house of Israel,

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upon us, a sinful, ever rebelling, people. God's infinite love is love for people infinitely beneath him. When love is the most pure, it seeks no recompense. It is free, without cause, undeserved, and bestowed upon objects utterly incapable of making a suitable return of love. — That is “the great goodness” of God's love! — Behold the infinite majesty of the love of God. It reaches down to us, dust and ashes, worthless worms, maggots upon the dung-heap of fallen humanity!

“The great goodness” of our Savior’s redeeming love appears still more wonderful when we remember that it is love poured out upon his enemies, a people who would despise and reject him, who would not to be moved by all his goodness, who would be filled with malice and enmity enough to murder the very Savior who loves them!

SACRIFICIAL GOODNESS

Behold the greatness of “the great goodness” of our God bestowed upon us in the sacrifice of his love (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8; 1 John 3:16; 4:9-10, 19)

(John 3:16) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(Romans 5:6-8) “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

(1 John 3:16) “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

(1 John 4:9-10) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

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(1 John 4:19) “We love him, because he first loved us.”

Infinitely astonishing is the love of God for my soul! He loved me and gave himself for me! God himself, (infinite, eternal, and self-sufficient) took hold of the seed of Abraham, took on himself my nature. He who made the heavens descended from the adorations of angels to be made flesh, to assume the form of a servant and to receive the spit of men. He exchanged the heights of infinite bliss for the agonies of Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha. He who was holy, harmless, undefiled, who knew no sin and did no sin, was made sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in him!

Be astonished, O my soul! To atone for the abuses he has received, and yet receives, from me, the Lord of Glory died as my Substitute upon the cursed tree! Not only did he actually do so in time, his heart was from eternity fixed upon this great work because of “the great goodness” he bestowed upon me from everlasting, and his love, his purpose, his determination never faltered, receded, or diminished. He never considered not loving me! He remained immovable in his purpose. His love is love unconquerable!

“Could we with ink the oceans fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade, —
To write the love of God above
Would drain the oceans dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky!”

(Ephesians 3:14-21) “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (16) That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; (17) That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (19) And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. (20) Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh

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in us, (21) Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

It is this love, the sweet, assuring knowledge of “the great goodness” of the love of God for me in Christ that casts out all fear from my heart (1 John 4:17-19).

(1 John 4:17-19) “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. (18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (19) We love him, because he first loved us.”

GOODNESS BLESSING

Take another look at “the great goodness” of our great God in the exercise of his redeeming mercy, love, and grace. Oh, how great his goodness appears when we consider the magnitude of the blessings it bestows! It stooped to lay hold of a fallen people, — to snatch us from eternal flames, — to transport us to immortal life, — to rescue us from everlasting contempt and make us “kings and priests” forever “unto God!” — It raises us from corruption to purity in the image of Christ, — from the darkest dungeon to the radiance of heaven, — from the society of devils to communion with angels, — from the blasphemies of hell to the songs of paradise, — from utter destitution to inherit all riches of his glory, — from being children of wrath even as others to be sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ! — It is “the great goodness” of our God which “he hath bestowed” upon us that has “made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” and “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:12-14).

(1 Peter 1:3-5) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

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(2 Peter 1:2-4) “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, (3) According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: (4) Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

SUFFICIENT GOODNESS

Again, we see “the great goodness” of God our Savior in his great all-sufficiency as our Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ, our God-man Mediator possesses all the offices needful for our souls. He possesses powers fully adequate to the infinite work, and exerts them when and where they are needed. It is his stated business to break off the chains from wretched prisoners, — to administer balm to those who are wounded to death, — to give food to those who are perishing with hunger, — eyes and light to the blind, — and life to the dead.

He is the “shadow of a great rock in a weary land,” — “a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest.” — As our great Prophet he reveals to us the secrets of his eternal heart. — As our Great High Priest he has taken away the wrath of God by his blood atonement and makes intercession for us continually. — As our Great King he subdues our stubborn wills, marks out the way of life and puts us in the way. He defends us from all our enemies and dangers, and makes all things subservient to our souls’ good. — As the Captain of the Lord’s host he carries us through our warfare and will make us victorious over all things. — As our Great Physician he heals all our spiritual maladies and keeps our souls in immortal health. — Christ is the Friend who sticks closer than a brother, a Brother born for our adversity! “He is altogether lovely!” — Possessing inexhaustible life in himself, he is the source of unfailing life to us, though we were, before he saved us, “dead in trespasses and sins.” — As “Heir of all things” he gives the whole estate of grace and glory to all his people! — O what riches are the infinite riches of his grace!

PATIENT GOODNESS

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“The great goodness” of our God and Savior is heightened even more when we remember the patience and condescending tenderness he exercises towards us. He calls them us his friends, his brethren, his children, his spouse, the members of his body, the apple of his eye. He is not ashamed to own and befriend our poor, unsightly outcast souls and to take us into union with himself. With unconquerable patience he bears with all our provocations. With unflinching faithfulness he remains our Friend in spite of all our perverseness and ingratitude. Though our returns would weary any other love, he is still pardons our sins, subdues our corruptions, and carries us in his bosom, conducting us safe to glory. As a tender shepherd he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom. With overpowering tenderness he speaks to us in grace; and, drawing aside the veil, he shows his smiling face! When we are bowed down with care, he lifts us up. When we are fallen, he restores us. When our hearts are broken, with a mother’s tenderness, he wipes the tears from our eyes and breathes indescribable consolation into our hearts.

You who know his love, bear me witness. Are these things true, or are they not? In Christ love immortal reigns in the greatness of his great goodness, which “he hath bestowed” upon us “according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of hid lovingkindnesses.”

Fresh evidences of “the great goodness” of his mercy, love, and grace spring up at every recollection of his adorable providence. Read verses 8 and 9, of Isaiah 63.

(Isaiah 63:8-9) “For he said, Surely they *are* my people, children *that* will not lie: so he was their Saviour. (9) In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.”

FREE GOODNESS

All that I have been trying to set before you, all “the great goodness,” all “his mercies,” all “the multitude of the lovingkindnesses of the Lord” are freely bestowed upon every sinner who trusts the Lord Jesus Christ! How great is that goodness that is free! The language Holy Scripture, the

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language of “the great goodness” is, — “Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

- **What admiration** should possess our minds as we contemplate “the great goodness” of God our Savior! Nothing in the universe is so amazing. It is infinitely greater than any mortal can ever imagine. It will appear more and more amazing throughout the endless ages of eternity.
- **Great gratitude** ought to fill our hearts. — “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!” Let the great goodness of God lie forever as a blessed weight upon my heart, squeezing out gratitude and praise to him! O my soul, let me ever call to my heart’s remembrance “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!”
- **How we ought to love him** — “O love the LORD, all ye his saints!” — “I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.” — “I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.”
- **How we ought to trust him!** — To the dominion of “the great goodness” and enthroned love of God our Savior, let us gladly submit all things, resigning all our interests to the his disposal.
- **How we ought to rejoice in him!**

Rejoice, believer, in the Lord,
Again, I say, Rejoice!
Rejoice to know that Christ is Lord,
Rejoice in all He does.

Though sin may cause your heart to sigh,
Rejoice in Christ’s shed blood:

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He died that you might never die,
Redeemed you by His blood.

Our joy is not in earthly things,
In things that time may change:
Our joy is in our God and King,
In Him who stays the same.

Always, and in all things, I say,
Children of God, Rejoice!
In everything God has His way:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice!

O sinner, poor, needed sinner, seize “the great goodness,” lay hold on Christ this very moment, believe him, and “though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool.” Can you despise love and astonishing mercy? Can you despise “the great goodness” of God, his tender mercies and the multitude of his lovingkindness? — Indeed, I know you can; and I know you will, unless God does for you what you cannot and will not do for yourself. So I want you to know that I have, this very morning called your name before “the great goodness,” begging him for mercy on your behalf. — O Holy Spirit, will you now graciously, effectually, irresistibly bestow upon chosen, blood bought sinners, loved of God from eternity “the great goodness” that only you can bestow, for Christ’s sake/

Amen.