

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”,  
Message # 34 – “God’s Goodness to be Praised”, Presented in the Adult  
Sunday School Class, by Pastor Paul Rendall  
on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017.**

**Chapter 2 – Of God and the Holy Trinity, Paragraph 1 –**

The Lord our God is but (a)one only living and true God; whose (b)subsistence is in and of Himself, (c)infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; (d)a most pure spirit, (e) invisible, without body, parts, or passions, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; who is (f)immutable, (g)immense, (h)eternal, incomprehensible, (i)almighty, every way infinite, (k)most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute; (l)working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, (m)for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; (n)the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal most just (o)and terrible in his judgments, (p)hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the (q)guilty.

a 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 8: 4 and 6; Deuteronomy 6: 4; b Jeremiah 10: 10; Isa 48: 12; c Exodus 3: 14; d John 4: 24; e 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1: 17; Deut. 4: 15-16; f Malachi 3:6; g 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8: 27; Jeremiah 23: 23; h Psalm 90: 2; j Genesis 17: 1; k Isa 6: 3; l Psalm 115: 3; Isa 46: 10; m Pro 16: 4; Rom 11: 36; n Exodus 34: 6-7; Hebrews 11:6; o Nehemiah 9: 32-33; p Psalm 5: 5-6; q Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1: 2-3

**Pastor Greg Nichols comments on God’s Goodness** – “In general terms, Scripture defines “goodness” or “being good”, as a disposition and commitment to do good: “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which good; and the evil, out the evil treasure, brings forth that which is evil”. (Luke 6: 45), and “You are good and do good” (Psalm 119: 68).” “Thus, to understand God’s goodness, we must first grasp the biblical meaning of “good.” “The two primary words translated “good” are טוב(tob) in the Old Testament, and αγαθος (agathos) in the New Testament.” “These terms have two basic meanings.” “First, these terms refer to moral propriety.” “When something is “good” in this sense, it is morally as it should be.” “In this sense good is the opposite of moral wrong or evil: “You shall be as God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3: 5), and “Depart from evil, and do good: and dwell forevermore. (Psalm 37: 27).” “Second, these terms refer to beneficiality.” “When something is “good” in this sense, it is useful and beneficial, conducive to health, well-being, or happiness.” “In this sense good is the opposite of harm, of what is unpleasant, destructive, or unprofitable.” “Scripture often uses both tob and agathos to depict beneficiality.” “Thus, in the broadest sense, God’s goodness refers to His disposition to do what is morally right.” “In the narrower sense it depicts His gracious disposition to do what is beneficial (helpful) and kind.” “Scripture thus features God’s benevolence as the core of His goodness.” (*Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, The Doctrine of God, P. 426)

**Psalm 145: 1-9** – “I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever.” “Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.” “One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.” “I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, And on Your wondrous works.” “Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness.” “They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness.” “The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.” “The LORD is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.”

**The Truth that I would bring to Your attention today is this:**

**God’s Goodness should be a matter of praise every day, upon the lips and in the hearts of God’s people, for all that He does for them.**

You can see here from the way that David words this, that it is his greatest desire to bless and praise God's name forevermore. He would engage his heart and his lips to this great work of praise every day and have God be greatly praised for His greatness is unsearchable. He would tell his children and his grandchildren of God's mighty acts, and he himself would meditate on the splendor of God's majesty and on God's wonderful works. Not only would he do this for himself, but he knows that it is right for all people who know the Lord to speak of the might of His awesome acts, and declare God's greatness. And if they are full of the Spirit, and if they have rightly considered who God is, and what He has done for them, they will eagerly utter the memory of God's abundant goodness, and sing of His righteousness. For He is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. He is good to all and His tender mercies are over all of His works.

**Matthew Henry says:** "David would be constant to this work: Every day will I bless thee. Praising God must be our daily work. No day must pass, though ever so busy a day, though ever so sorrowful a day, without praising God. We ought to reckon it the most needful of our daily employments, and the most delightful of our daily comforts. God is every day blessing us, doing well for us; there is therefore reason that we should be every day blessing Him, speaking well of Him. ....Those that make praise their constant work on earth shall have it their everlasting bliss in heaven."

**Albert Barnes says:** "And his tender mercies are over all his works - In all that he has made there is evidence that he is a kind and benevolent God. He has a heart to love, to bless, what he has made; everywhere arrangements are made for happiness; he is not disposed to cast off the feeble, the erring, and the suffering; he is willing to receive back again those who have wandered from him, to pardon the offending, to wipe away the tears of the sorrowful."

#### **Examples of Praising God's Goodness in the Scripture:**

**Psalm 106: 1 and 2** – "Praise the Lord!" "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!" "For His mercy endures forever." "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?" "Or can declare all His praise?"

This intimates that God's mighty acts are more than can be described by man, and they cannot, when they do praise Him, declare all the praise that He is worthy of.

**Psalm 31: 19-22** – "Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the sons of men!" "You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." "Blessed be the Lord, for He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!"

There is great goodness which is laid up for those who fear God. He has prepared this goodness, He has laid it up for them in accordance with His eternal decrees and His providential ordering of all events in the life of the believer. It consists particularly, in this section of verses, of God's hiding His dear people secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. (Those who would maliciously speak against them, and those who would try to harm them) See also 1 Samuel 23: 1-14.

**Psalm 107: 1** – Psalm 107: 1-22 – "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, And gathered out of the lands, From the east and from the west, From the north and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way; They found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, Their soul fainted in them. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, And He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way, That they might go to a city for a dwelling place. Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness. Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, Bound in affliction and irons – because they rebelled against the words of God, And despised the counsel of the Most High, Therefore He brought down their heart with labor; They fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried out to the LORD

in their trouble, And He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, And broke their chains in pieces. Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He has broken the gates of bronze, And cut the bars of iron in two. Fools, because of their transgression, And because of their iniquities, were afflicted. Their soul abhorred all manner of food, And they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, And He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions. Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, And declare His works with rejoicing.” “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!” “For His mercy endures forever.”

You can see here that it is the great longing of the Psalmist which reflects the desire of God Himself; that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men. And if you look over at verse 43 it says: “Whoever is wise will observe these things,” that is all the good things that the Lord has done, “And they will understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.”

**John Gill says:** “O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,.... For his providential goodness, in providing food and drink for them, when fainting; in directing them to their right way, when they had lost it; and in bringing them safe to the place they were bound for: and particularly for his special grace and goodness, in redemption and effectual calling; for bringing out of a wilderness state and condition, and supplying them with all spiritual provisions, and putting them in the right way to eternal glory and happiness.

**And for his wonderful works to the children of men!** – “As all the above things are wonderful ones, both in providence and grace. This verse is repeated at the close of each of the instances produced; in which the goodness of God appears to persons in distress, and who being delivered, ought to acknowledge it, and be thankful for it: or “confess”: that is, declare to God his goodness, and to the children of men his wonderful works; so the Targum.”

**Spurgeon says:** “I have heard that the science of mnemonics, or the strengthening of the memory, for which I have not a very high esteem, lies in the following of certain methods. According to some, you link one idea with another; you recollect a date by associating it with something that you can see. Practice this method in the present case. Remember God’s goodness by the objects around you which are associated with it. For instance, let your bed remind you of God’s mercy in the night watches, and your table of his goodness in supplying your daily needs. My garments when I put them on this morning reminded me of times when my hand was unequal even to that simple task. All around us there are memoranda of God’s love if we choose to read them. The memory of some deed of divine goodness may be connected with every piece of furniture in your room. There is the old armchair where you wrestled with God in great trouble, and received a gracious answer; you cannot forget it; you do not pray so well anywhere else as you do there; you have become attached to that particular chair. That thumbed Bible, that particular one I mean: it is getting rather worn now, and is marked a good deal; but, nevertheless, out of that very copy the promises have gleamed forth like the stars in heaven, and therefore it helps your memory to use it. I remember a poor man giving me what I thought great praise. I visited him in the hospital, and he said, “Ah, you seem to have hung this room round with your texts, for everything reminds me of what I have heard you say, and as I lie there I recollect your stories and your sayings.” In much the same way we should recollect what God has done for us, by looking at all the various places, circumstances, times, and persons which were the surroundings of his mercy. O for a clear remembrance of the goodness of God.”

**Richard Baxter says:** “Labour for the truest and fullest conceptions of the goodness and excellencies of God, which are His amiableness ; and abhor all misrepresentations of Him as unlovely. — That which is apprehended as unlovely cannot be loved: and that which is apprehended as evil, is apprehended as unlovely. Therefore, it is the grand design of Satan to hide God’s goodness, and misrepresent Him as evil: not to deny Him to be good in himself, for in that he hath no hope to be believed; but to persuade

men that He is not good to them, or to make them forget or overlook his goodness. Not to persuade them that God is evil in Himself; but that he is evil to them, by restraining them from their beloved sins, and hating them as sinners, and resolving to damn them if they go on impenitently. This, which is part of the goodness of God, he maketh them believe is evil, by engaging them in a way and interest, which he knoweth that God is engaged against, and enticing them under the strokes of His justice. And he tempteth believers themselves to poor, diminutive, unworthy thoughts of the goodness and mercifulness of God, and to continual apprehensions of his wrath and terrors. And if he can make them believe that God is their enemy, and think of him only as a consuming fire, how little are they like to love him?

If Christians knew how much of the devil's malice against God and them, doth exercise itself in this, to make God appear to man, unlovely, they would more studiously watch against such misrepresentations, and fly from them with greater hatred. Not that we must first, by the advice of arrogant reason, and self-love, as some do, draw a false description of goodness and amiableness in our minds, and make that the measure of our judgment of God, His nature, attributes, and decrees; nor take his goodness to be only his suitableness to our opinions, wills, and interest. But we must take out from the Word and works of God, that true description of His goodness which he hath given of Himself, and expunge out of our conceits whatsoever is contrary to it."

"Think of God's goodness in proportion with his other attributes. O my soul, how unequally hast thou thought of God! Thou easily believest that His power is omnipotence, and that His knowledge is omniscience ; but of his goodness, how narrow and poor are thy conceivings! As if it were nothing to his power and knowledge. How oft hast thou been amazed in the consideration of His greatness, and how seldom affected with the apprehensions of his goodness! Thou gratifiest him that would have thee believe and tremble, as he doth himself, and not Him that would have thee believe and love. How oft hast thou suffered the malicious enemy to accuse God to thee, and make thee believe that He is a hater of man, and hateful to man, or a hater of thee, that he might make thee hate Him! How oft hast thou suffered him to draw in thy thoughts a false representation of thy dearest Lord, and shew Him to thee as in that unlovely shape! How oft have thy conceptions dishonored and blasphemed His love and goodness, while thou hast seemed to magnify His knowledge and his power!

Think of Him now as love itself! As more full of goodness, than the sea of water, or the sun of light! Love freely and boldly, without the stops of suspicions and fears, where thou art sure thou canst never love enough: and if all the love of men and [angels were united in one flame, they could never love too much, or come near the proportion of the glorious goodness which they love! Cast thyself boldly into this ocean of delights. Though the narrowness of thy own capacity confine thee, yet, as there are no bounds in the object of thy love, let not false, unbelieving thoughts confine thee. O that I were all eye, to see the glorious amiableness of my God ! O that I were all love, that I might be filled with his goodness! O that all the passions of my soul were turned into this holy passion ! O that all my fears, and cares, and sorrows, were turned into love! And that all the thoughts that confusedly crowd in upon me and molest me, were turned into this one incessant thought, of the infinite goodness of my God! O that all my tears, and groanings, yea, and all my other mirth and pleasures, were turned into the melodious songs of love ! And that the pulse, and voice, and operations of love, were all the motion of my soul! Surely in heaven it will be so, though it is not to be expected here."