

# Attributes of God #3 'The Goodness of God'

by A.W. Tozer

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*God's goodness is the source of everything, including salvation, and is the reason for our faith.*

**Topics:** "The Goodness of God", "Trust in God's Nature"

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## Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the profound goodness of God, explaining that God's nature is infinitely kind-hearted and benevolent towards His creation. He argues that our understanding of God directly influences our faith and the strength of the church, asserting that a diminished view of God leads to a weakened faith. Tozer highlights that God's goodness is the foundation of our existence and salvation, reminding us that no one deserves God's grace, but it is given freely out of His loving-kindness. He encourages believers to trust in God's goodness, which is unwavering and unchanging, and to recognize that God desires to please His people. Ultimately, Tozer calls for a deeper appreciation of God's goodness, urging the congregation to reflect on and rejoice in His loving-kindness.

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## Transcript

"God's Goodness"

Sunday evening, September 28, 1958

Message #3 of #10 in Attributes of God Series

Colossians 3:1-3

I want to talk on God's goodness as it relates to us His redeemed people. And let me read some verses, just almost at random. I've jotted them down here. Not quite at random, almost. Psalm 119:68, "Thou art good and doeth good." Isaiah 63:7, "I will mention the loving kindness of the Lord and the praises of the Lord according to all that the LORD hath bestowed upon 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 loving kindnesses."

And then, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them. For the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good." That's Deuteronomy 39. As He rejoiced over thy father, Psalm 36:7, excellent is thy loving kindness O God, therefore, the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wing. Psalm 34, Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. And remember now, in no instance here, is he talking about morality. This is not saying God is holy, though God is holy, infinitely so.

This is something else. And Jesus said, "If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that asketh? A father gives good gifts to his children out of His good heart. And how much more will the Father.

So tonight, I speak about God's goodness. And I have over thirty years here spoken twice before on the subject; always dealing and treating it differently. But now, it is most important that we know this about God. It's most important that we know what kind of God God is. What is God like is the question that must be answered if we're going to be any kind of Christians at all. What is God like? What kind of God is God? Now, don't take that for granted and say, I already know. No, you don't; and don't say well, we Christians know. Let me remind you my friend, that no tribe or nation has ever risen above its religion.

There are those that say religion is something grafted on a man; and that is the result of man's weaknesses, a superstition or something else. But let me tell you that history will show that no tribe or nation has ever risen morally above its religion. If it had a debased religion, it was a debased people. And if it was anything but a debased people, you will find its religion, though not Christianity nor Judaism, nevertheless was relatively high in the scale of non-revealed religions. And remember that no religion has ever risen above its conception of God. Remember that, that no religion anywhere has ever risen above its conception of God.

If the heathen believe that God is a tricky, sulky, nasty, deceitful God, their religion will build itself around that concept. And they will try to be sneaky with God and act the way God acts. If they believe on the other hand, that God is one God, that He is a high and pure noble God, even though they're not redeemed, their religion will tend to follow their concept of God upward, even though it's a pagan religion and does not carry redemption. But that would be something what I've said up to now for the students to think about.

But we all ought to remember this, that Christianity at any given time, Christianity at any given time is strong or weak depending upon her concept of God. And I insist upon this and I've said it many times. I insist upon it that the basic trouble with the church today is her unworthy conception of God. Now that is at the bottom of it. I talk with the learned men and spiritual men, and evangelists and godly people all over the country, and they're all saying the same thing. And we're at least agreeing to it when I said that the trouble with the church is that our conception of God has been greatly lowered.

The heathen says, take your cowboy God and go home. And we get angry and say, oh, they're vile heathen. No, they're not vile heathen. They may be vile heathen, but that's not why they say that. They can't respect our cowboy God. And since Evangelicalism has gone overboard to cowboy religion, and where it hasn't, even its conception of God is unworthy of Him. And the result is that our religion is little, because our God is little. Our religion is weak, because our God is weak. Our religion is ignoble because the God we serve is ignoble. I mean by that that we do not see Him as He is.

The Psalmist said, Oh, magnify the Lord. Now, magnify may mean one of two things. Magnify may mean, make it look bigger than it is. Or, it may mean, see it as big as it is. And that's what magnify means as the Psalmist used it. If you want to examine, say, a very small amount of matter, you put it under a microscope and you magnify it. That is, you make it look bigger than it is. But it's impossible to make God look bigger than He is.

When we say magnify the Lord, we mean, try to see God somewhere nearly as big as He is. And this is what I want to do in my preaching. This is what by His help I have dedicated myself to do. If I preach to many or few, and I could if I wanted to do it, preach to many. That is, they do come here and there in

conferences and other places where men go, and I'd be no different. But I choose deliberately, I want to instruct a people.

Now, this church will only be as great as its conception of God and you as an individual Christian will be successful or a failure depending upon what you think of God. So, you see, my friends, it's critically important that we have a knowledge of the Holy One. It's critically important that we know what kind of God God is and what God is like; and of course, we can know from the Scriptures. That's where we go to get our information, not all of it. We can know from nature too. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. But while the pen of nature writes rather, without too much clearness, the Word of God is very, very clear. And I shall be preaching, as I trust my previous sermons also were out of the Word of God.

Now, it is very important that we know that God is good. It is critically important that we know this. And when we read here that God is good and doeth good and that His loving kindness is over all His works and all of these passages of Scripture. If you want to do it, you take your concordance, if you've got a good one, and run down the words, "good" or the word "lovingkindness," or such passages, such words as that, and see how much it has to say about it in the Old Testament as well as the New that God is kind-hearted.

Now, let's get this straight. God is kindhearted, and God is gracious, and God is good natured, and that God is benevolent in intention. The intention of God is benevolent. And let us remember that God is cordial. And you'll find that now in Hebrew. You will find that the cordiality of the Great God, you know, we only think we believe really, we only think we're believers. We are in a sense, and I trust we are sufficiently to be saved and justified before His grace. But we don't believe as intensely and as intimately as we should. If we did, we would believe that God is a cordial God, that He is gracious and that His intentions are kind, that they're benevolent. That God never thinks any bad thoughts about anybody. And He never had any bad thought about anybody.

Now all this that I have said, that God is good, that God is kind-hearted, that He is amiable, that He is cordial and gracious and of benevolent intention. All this He is infinitely. Now why do I say that? Because infinitude is an attribute of God, and it's impossible for God to be anything and not be completely, infinitely what it is. It's possible for the sun to be bright, but not infinitely bright. It doesn't have all the light there is. It's possible for the mountain to be large, but not infinitely large. It's possible for an angel to be good, but not infinitely good. Only God can claim infinitude. So, when I say that God is good, that God has a kind heart, I mean, he has a heart infinitely kind. That there is no boundary to it and no limit to it anywhere. When I say that God is good natured, that He is good and kindly in nature, I mean that He's infinitely so.

And not only infinitely, but there is another attribute, and I haven't preached on this one yet. I've been putting it off like a task that you want to do and you're afraid to tackle, but sometime I'm going to jump in and have to get out and announce that I'm going to preach on the perfection of God. My friend, that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. And for a man to talk about the perfection of God is to rise on poor weak wings. My wings aren't very long, but I can flatten fast, and see if I can get off the ground and see what we can say about the perfection of God. But remember this, anything God is, He is perfectly. God is never part-way anything. He is always completely something or else He isn't that thing. And when I say that God is kind-hearted, I mean that He is that perfectly. I do not mean that there are ever times when God isn't feeling good and that He isn't kind.

There are never any times when God won't be cordial. Why even the best Christian doesn't always feel cordial. The best Christian feels sometimes, he didn't sleep well, and he's not mad and he's living like a Christian, but he doesn't feel like talking in the mornings. He doesn't feel cordial. He's not overflowing. He's not enthusiastic. But there's never a time when God isn't, because what God is, He is perfectly.

And then I joyously announce to you that what God is, He is immutably; which means and I've preached on that attribute way back there. It will mean that God never changes. That what God was, God is, and what God is and was, God will be. And there'll never be any change in God.

Then I want to add this and I want you to take this home. Remember that usually you don't hear what I'm preaching tonight. So, don't say this man, this man is a heretic. Don't say that. Check on me. Go to the Word and see if it's right. If you will be a good Berean and go to the Scriptures and see that these things are true, then that's all I ask. I don't ask you to listen to me and take for granted what I have said is being true. You know, there are preachers that if he just clears his throat the audience will believe it. He doesn't have to say anything. All he has to do is just make a noise. But I don't want to be like that. And I don't want you to be that kind of people. And I don't think you are.

And remember that God is enthusiastic about his works. I said last week and I repeat now, God is not an absentee engineer running His world by remote control. They send a rocket up from Cape Canaveral and they guide it by remote control and if it isn't doing what it should, they blow it up so it doesn't hurt somebody. But God never stays off and does His work by remote control. The Scripture says that He upholds everything by the Word of His power. The presence of the invisible Word in the universe makes things run. That's what makes them tick you know. That's what makes them tick.

I heard a talk last night. I listen to it every Saturday night. It's about my bedtime Saturday night, but I won't tell you what time it is because I don't want you to know how early I go to bed Saturday night. But this professor gave a talk on space. And he said he believed there were some of them out in space. He's a professor from one of the universities, so he's no ordinary chap. He said that, how could we get to the farthest star?

Well, he said, there are huge rockets that are going to be made, a mile long and so big, so broad that they would be over several blocks; and that they're going to fix it so that you can live in it for several generations. And this generation can start to beget their kind and raise a family right in that rocket while it's moving at terrific speed toward a star somewhere. And that after the passing of several generations, say 10 generations, a 10th generation will arrive on a star. Well, in the meantime, then they're guiding it. The fellow said that I heard read or heard on the radio, where there's a way they have now of getting energy from the sun. Certain fins stick up and when the sun hits it, it makes it run. And then if you pull a fin down, it puts the brakes on. Well, they're thinking of running things by remote control. But God never runs anything by remote control, never. There are not a half dozen pulleys and chains. God is the perfect creator. And He runs everything by being present in His works.

Now that's the Old Testament teaching. That's all through the prophets, and the Psalms and the book of Job; all through the Old Testament. When we hit the age of science, we forgot that; and we have laws now. The Bible knew nothing about the laws of nature. The Bible knew only God was there. If it rained, it was God watering His chambers, watering his hills out in these chambers. If it lightnined it was God. And if it thundered, it was the voice of the Almighty that made the Hines to calve. God was always there. And they were acutely God conscious.

And so, they were never lonely because God was there. God was in this place and I know it not said the father or the man Jacob from whom Israel got their name. And this idea that God is an absentee engineer, running his universe by remote control is all wrong. He is present in perpetual and continuous eagerness, with all the fervor of rapturous love pressing His holy design. Now you say, but I haven't felt that way about it. Well, it's unbelief that makes you feel otherwise. Its preoccupation with this world. If you would believe God, you would know this to be true.

Now, I'd like to point out to you this, that God can't feel indifferent about anything. People are indifferent, but God isn't indifferent. God either loves with a boundless, unremitting energy, or else He hates with consuming fire. It was said about the Second Person of the Trinity, Thou has loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore, God, thy God has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. The same Lord Jesus that loved with boundless consuming love also hated with terrible consuming fire and will continue to do that while the ages roll because God is God, and the goodness of God requires that God cannot love sin.

Now, the goodness of God is the only valid *raison d'être*. You know, that's not good French, but at least it's, I don't know anything in English equivalent to it, the reason for existence, the reason, the explanation for things, the reason underlying things. And the goodness of God is the only reason for it. Don't you imagine that you deserve to be born and don't you imagine that you deserve to be alive. You know, the unbelieving poet said, "Into this Universe, and Why not knowing Nor Whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing; And out of it, as Wind along the Waste, I know not Whither, willy-nilly blowing." And then he charged God with it all and said, for all that I've done that's wrong, O God, forgive and take my forgiveness. That was Omar Khayyam.

Well, he thought God owed him something. But remember this, sir, that you can answer every question, every question with this expression, God of His goodness willed it. God out of His kindness willed it. Why were we created? Was it that we deserved to be created? How can nothing deserve something? And there was a time when there was no human race. How therefore could a human race that hadn't existed deserve something? How could a man that wasn't yet created, earn anything or pile up any merit? It couldn't be so. God out of His goodness created us. And why, when we sinned were we not destroyed? The only answer to that is, God, of His goodness, spared us. God out of His kind heart spared us. The cordial, kind intention, God spared us.

And why would God the Eternal Son bleed for us? And the answer is: out of His goodness. It was the goodness of God, the loving kindness of God. Therefore, the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. It is the multitude of His loving-kindness. That's the answer! And why will God forgive me when I've sinned and forgive me again and forgive me again? Because, God out of His goodness acts according to that goodness and does what His loving heart dictates that He do. And why does God answer prayer? Now, let's not imagine that it's because somebody was good.

Do you know, we Protestants think we think we don't believe in saints. We believe in saints alright. We don't canonize them twenty-five years after they're dead, but we put an "St" behind them which could mean street or saint. We don't do that, but we do canonize them. And we have St. George Mueller and we have St. Spurgeon and we have St. Moody and we have St. Simpson. We have Protestant saints.

And we get the idea that God answered prayer for them because they were real good. Well, they would deny that fervently if they were here. Every one of them would deny it. Nobody ever got anything yet from

God on the grounds that he deserved it. Remember that. Nobody deserves anything to start with, and then having fallen, he deserves only punishment and death. So, when God answers prayer, it's because God is good. And the answer is, God of His goodness thought of it. God of His goodness, out of his loving kindness, His good-natured benevolence, God does it. So, remember, that's the source of everything.

Now I'd like to throw this in and I'd like to tell you that those are the only grounds upon which anybody has ever been saved since the beginning of the world. There is an idea abroad that in the Old Testament men were saved by Law. In the New Testament we are saved by grace. That is all wrong. The idea that in the Old Testament men were saved by keeping commandments and the New Testament they are saved by believing on Christ, the second is right, but the first is wrong. Nobody has ever been saved from the day that Abel offered his bloody lamb on a homemade stone altar down to the latest convert made tonight. No one has ever been saved except out of the goodness of God.

Out of God's grace, His mercy, His loving kindness, because God was good, and gracious and cordial and approachable and kindly, He saved people. It was all by grace. Don't forget that. We've taken the word grace and made a technical word out of it. And it's become technical. And we've taught of divisions between grace and law and say grace saves us now; they were saved by keeping the Law. Nobody was ever saved by keeping anything, because we deserve hell and if God had acted according to justice alone, He simply would have pulled the stopper out and flushed us all down to hell and had been done with it.

But God, out of His loving-kindness, graciously forgave those who would come according to not laws, but what should I say . . . conditions which God laid down, so that everybody is saved by grace. Abel was saved by grace. Noah was saved by grace and Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Remember that? Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and Moses and all the rest down to the coming of Jesus and His dying on a cross; all were saved by grace out of the goodness of God. And everybody has been saved by grace out of the goodness of God ever since if he's been saved.

Now, you say, but let's not become too syrupy here. Let's not drown in syrup, because God is not only good, God is severe. Yes, Romans 11 tells us about the severity of God. It says, behold the goodness and severity of God. And it says that God, because Israel turned away from God, God was severe with Israel and temporarily broke her off from the good olive tree, and that He grafted in the Gentiles instead. And so, behold the goodness and severity of God.

Remember that God is good toward all that accept His goodness. And those who will not accept His goodness, by rejecting His goodness, then there is nothing that God, even the Almighty God can do if He's going to allow man his free will; and I believe in free will. Don't imagine I don't. I believe in man's free will that was given by God as a gift of God out of God's sovereignty. So, He's given a little provisional sovereignty to us out of His absolute sovereignty, and has said, now, I'll allow you within a little framework to be your own boss and to choose to go to heaven or to hell. So, that if a man will not take God's goodness, then he must have God's severity toward all who continue in moral revolt. In insurrection against the throne of God and in rebellion against the virtuous laws of God, there's nothing God can do.

And so, His justice disposes of all such. But we're not thinking about them tonight. We're thinking about those who have surrendered to His love, those who have surrendered to His love. But somebody says, but what about it Mr. Tozer? God, being holy, as well as good, and being righteous as well as kindly, and we being sinners as we are, aren't we per force lost and must be not perish? Is it not moral logic that we should perish?

Well, let me quote from the little book I told you that I had would be quoting from a little. It says God, of His goodness has ordained means to help us full fair and many. It was written 600 years ago, and it's the old-fashioned English. God has ordained means full fare and many means to help us and the chief being that which He took upon Him the nature of man. And in coming as a man, He came where we were, and coming where we were, He understands us by sympathy and empathy. I don't want to get off into psychological terms. But sympathy is a good old-fashioned country word, "by sympathy," where we use the same word as pathos. It means feeling or suffering often. And a "sym" is the same as our word symphony. So that sympathy then is, God feeling and suffering along with us.

Empathy, of course is a bit different. It means the ability to project yourself into somebody else and feel as they feel. It's a wonderful thing, and every old grandmother on any old farm in Tennessee knows what that means. But it took a good scientist to give it a name. Let me read it for you from the Bible, in Biblical language instead of in the language of psychology. Hebrews 2 and Hebrews 4, wherefore in all things it behooved Him, that is, when He took on Him the seed of Abraham, in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God; to make reconciliation for the sins of His people. The people, for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted; He's able to succur them that are tempted. And then in Hebrews 4, for we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. There's sympathy and empathy. There is not only a feeling alone with us in our wretchedness, but there is an ability to project Himself into us so He knows how we feel and "can" feel with us. There's good theology.

Now God of His goodness has ordained means both fair and many. And that was all of God's goodness, remember. Sometimes we talk about, someday I'll preach on the justice, some night I will preach on the justice of God. And I want to steal my own thunder just long enough to say one thing. We say sometimes the justice of God requires Him to do so and so. Never use that language. Even if you hear me using it, don't use it anyhow. Because it never should thus be spoken. There is never anything that requires God to do anything. Always remember that God does what He does because of what He is. And there's not something standing outside of Him requiring Him to do something. He does what He does out of His own heart; and God being just, acts justly.

So, let's not say justice requires Him, forces Him, compels Him. Let's not say mercy compels God, as though mercy was outside of God and came over to God and said, now God, you listen to me, you forgive that bum. He's on his knees there in the Pacific Garden Mission; and he's got New Testament there and he's weeping, and he wants to be saved. You forgive him because I require it of you. No, no. Mercy is not something that stands outside of God and tells God what to do. Mercy is God. You see, all the attributes of God are simply facets of one God in three persons. Is that clear or is that muddy? I hope it's clear, because it'll help you to think right. And if you think right, you tend to be right; not necessarily so, but at least it'll help you.

Well, what is this then? What are these fair, full, many means that God has made for His people. Why the precious amends that He's made for man's sin; turning all our blame into endless worship, turning all our blame. Sometimes, I say things to God in prayer so terribly bold, almost arrogant, and I have never been rebuked by God yet, never been rebuked. They said about Luther, I'm certainly not drawing any comparison. I would have been glad to have cleaned his shoes and carried them and put them at his bedroom door. But they said of Luther that when they heard him pray, it was an experience in theology.

That when he began to pray, he prayed with such self-abnegation, such humility, such repentance that you pitied him. But as he prayed on, he prayed with such boldness that you feared for him.

And I have sometimes in my private prayers, gone to God with thoughts that I hesitate to mention, but I'm going to mention this one. Only this last Friday. I said this to God in prayer, I'm glad I sinned, God. I'm glad I sinned, for Thou didst come to save sinners and lots of good people. There are a lot of good people. I'm not a good man. You have to use slang to describe me by nature. I come that way. And when I saw it in my boys, I didn't blame them. I paddled them, but I didn't blame them. And now, when I see it now in my grandchildren, I don't blame them.

There's something miserably, nasty about the Tozers and the Jacksons. They married up and I got here, through the Tozers and the Jacksons. My father's name was Jacob S. Tozer and my Mother's name was Prudence Jackson. They married and she had six, caustic, sharp tongued, abusive, all but one. He's a nice guy who lives down in Florida. He never hurt anybody, but the rest of us all had sharp tongues. And so, I haven't anything. I can't go to God and say, God, I didn't do what that fellow did. I've done everything, either in actuality or in thought that could be done. The devil himself couldn't have thought of anything that I haven't thought of in my lifetime.

So, I was praying to God about it. And I said, O God, these good men, these good men, and I began naming good men, these good men, I can name them around here. Good men, and compared with me, they're good men. But I said, God, they can't love you as much as I do. For he that is forgiven much He loves much. And the more God has pardoned and the farther up He's brought us from the deeper depths, the more we'll glorify Him in that Day.

The doctor saves a man who only has a runny nose. He wouldn't write a book about that or a tract. He didn't do much after all. If the fellow would have waited out three days and taken an aspirin he would have gotten well anyhow. But the doctor who takes a man with a tumor on the brain, or with a heart with a spike in it, and puts that man asleep and with great care and prayer and skill brings that man back to life, he has some reason to be proud of his ability I suppose as a human being. And so, there's some of you so nice that when God saves you, there's not too much. But when He saved me, O Grace Divine, how sweet Thou art. How sweet Thou art that can save a wretch like me.

Well, the precious amends that He made in turning our blame, all our blame into endless worship. Do you know what I think? I think that the Bible teaches, I think our Lord hinted at it and I think Paul developed it further, that the day will be when they'll gather around us from, it may be from outer space, I don't know, but at least from the identifiable heaven of the Bible, they'll gather around us from everywhere and say, behold, the marvels of God.

I remember reading, and you've read it in the book of Acts, seeing the man that was healed standing among them, they could say nothing. And seeing, seeing that that wicked sinner, that wicked sinner standing there, what can we say? We can only say, worthy is the Lamb that was slain and worthy is the goodness of God. That out of His infinite kindness, His unchanging, perfect, loving-kindness, made amends for us full fair and many, turning all our sins into endless worship.

My Brethren, Jesus is God. And Jesus is the kindest man, notice I don't say was, never say was about Jesus except when you're speaking of a historical act which is now over. Jesus was by the well. Jesus was in the manger. Jesus was in the carpentry shop. You can put the past tense or the past perfect wherever you want to when it's a historic fact that Jesus has accomplished. But if you're talking about what

He is, never say was; for what He was, He is and what He is, He ever will be. And Jesus is the kindest Man ever to draw breath in this world. The kindest Man ever to live on this earth.

Well, kindness, you know, is something that we must have a bit of it. It must be a reflection, a lingering flavor like an old broken vase that once had beautiful flowers in it. And the vase is broken, but the scent of the roses hang around the vase. So, mankind, fallen like a broken vase dashed to the pavement and splintered into a million pieces, yet has something we call kindness.

I remember reading and I suppose that one of the kindest men in America was Lincoln. When Lincoln visited the hospital, and here a young soldier, a young soldier, a young officer, so badly wounded that it was obvious that he was going to die, I've forgotten his name. I did know his name. He was a Northern soldier and was lying there, obviously going to die and the nurses whispered, Mr. President, he can't make it. And the great big, tall, homely president went into the hospital ward and walked about among the men. And then he went over to this dying young officer who has bled white and was dying, and went over and stooped down, kissed his forehead and said, Lieutenant, you got to get well for me. And the nurses around said they heard a whispered word, Mr. President, I'll do it. And he did. He did. When a proclamation was signed and the war was over. He's one of Lincoln's boys, not his son, but one of the boys that Lincoln had brought back from the grave.

Another time they went into his office where he sat gazing out the window; looking out the window over the grassy sward below. He said, Mr. President, you seem very serious today. Yes, he said, today is butcher day. They're going to shoot a lot of boys today in the army. Their sentenced to die for retreating under fire or doing something else in wartime. And he said, I don't blame those boys. They weren't cowards. Their legs did it. Half humorous, you know, along with these tears, said their legs are to blame. They're not to blame. He said, I am going over the list and he flipped the papers. John Doe, Jim Smith, all down the line. He said, I'm going to save every one that I can! That's why we love Lincoln, not because he freed the slaves or saved the Union, but we love Lincoln because he had a big heart.

But my friends, his was a limit. He had a limit. They used to say that when his wife Mary did things she shouldn't, somebody came on the White House lawn and she was running, screaming and the great tall president was behind him with a paddle. And they said, "What's going on here?" Oh he said, she won't obey. Now he could get mad you see and he could act otherwise unkind, but not Jesus. The kindest Man ever to live in this world was Jesus. The kindest man ever to draw human breath was Jesus, is Jesus. He is now, is now the kindest man ever to live in this world.

Dickens said to a group of literary men; they were talking about pathos in literature. They said, what, what, they were discussing books and deeply pathetic books, books that moved you to tears. Matthew Arnold said of Burns, that his poetry was so poignantly beautiful, piercingly pathetic, that it was hard sometimes to read, because it wounded you so deeply. Well, they were talking about such literature and somebody said, "what do you consider, Mr. Dickens, to have the most pathos, the most, deep feeling of all literature that you know? Oh, he said, there's no question, the story of the Prodigal Son." He said, there's nothing like it in all literature.

Who wrote it? Well, who spoke it? The kindest man in all the world! When I'm reading through the Scriptures and I come to that passage, and a certain man has two sons, instinctively, I will bow my head. Something inside of me wants to go down and do obeisance before the Heart that could think of that, could think that story.

Well, I must close now in five minutes. But I'd like to say this to you, that He is not revolted by your wretchedness. He has no despite of anything that He's made; nor does He disdain the service in the simplest office that to our body belongeth. The Lord would be your nurse, your caretaker and your helper, and He's not revolted by anything about you. He wills that you joy along with Him, The Everlasting Marvel and the high over passing love of God, the irresistible love of God out of His goodness, sees you perfectly even though you're not perfect, He sees you perfect rather than perfectly. And He wants us to be glad in Him.

Now I'd like to drive this home, as I might be able to occasionally night after night. I want you to get it, that God wants you to be glad in Him. He takes no pleasure in human tears. And He came and wept that He might stop up forever the fountain of human tears. He came and bereaved His mother that He might heal all bereavement. He came and lost everything that He might heal the wounds that we have from losing things. And He wants us to take pleasure in Him. Now let us put away our doubts and trust Him

There's a gentleman friend of mine who's only been converted a year and a half, and he's forty-eight years old. And he's one of the most zealous men that I know, one of the most zealous men. He's learning fast, oh, he's learning fast. He follows me around when he hears that I'm in a town in the East. He brings his tape recorder and comes over. He done that several times. And he was in Pittsburgh. He came up to my hotel room. When he had been saved a year and a half. He has a fine son about twenty-five who was going to the mission field. And I said to him as he was leaving my hotel room, now I said, I want to say something to you. And it'll take you at least five years to understand it. But I said, don't be shocked by it. Don't be shocked by what I'm telling you. You've only been saved a year and a half, but hear this; that God wants to please you and that He is pleased when you are pleased. You're His child, you're surrendered, your will is His will and His will is your will. You're not in rebellion. You're not seeking your own will. You want to do the will of God, granted, that's true. Now, let me tell you, He wants to please you. God loves to please His people. Did you ever see a mother or a father bringing gifts to their children?

Did you ever see the lover bringing gifts to the bride. He wants to please the people He loves and the people that love Him. The idea that God must always make you miserable is not a Biblical idea at all. Jesus Christ knew God and He suffered from the irritations and pollutions or rather persecutions of the world and the bitterness of their polluted hearts. They made it hard for Him. But as far as God was concerned, He was pleased with God and God was pleased with Him. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Well done, thou good and faithful servant. God can say that now to His people, my brethren.

So, remember, that God isn't pleased by your being miserable. He'll make you miserable if you won't obey. But if you're surrendered in obedience, the goodness of God has so wrought through Jesus Christ, that now He wants to please you. And He wants to answer your prayers so you'll be happy in Him. He wants to do that. Let's put away all doubts and trust Him.

I've got this little book, Gerhard Tersteegen, that song, Midst the darkness, storm and sorrow, one bright gleam I see. Well, I know the blessed tomorrow Christ will come for me. And then he writes six stanzas and the last four lines are these. He and I in that bright glory, one deep joy shall share, Mine to be forever with Him and His that I am there. Have you ever stopped to think about that? That God is going to be as pleased to have you there as you are to be there. The goodness and mercy of God, the loving kindness of the Lord.

My friends, it is wonderful, and there's only one way to end this sermon when you're talking about that, and that is, just break off and quit. For one idea suggests another forever. As you talk about the loving-kindness and tender mercies of God, who loves us so much that He wants to please us; and when He can bring us into such relationship to Him that He can please us without spoiling us, and He pleases us, and He's pleased when we're pleased. And when we're pleased with Him, He's pleased that we're pleased. One common joy we'll share, mine that I'm forever with Him, His that I am there.

Thank God. Thank God. We've been a very quiet crowd tonight, but I trust you've heard what I've had to say. Take it home with you. Brood over it. Dream over it. Think over it. Pray over it. And let us praise the loving-kindness of God forever. For of His goodness, there is no end. Amen and Amen.

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