

PM Psalm 145 The God who is Good

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[0 : 00] We're now going to read in God's Word from Psalm 145, Psalm 145, and you'll find this on page 630 in your pew Bibles.

Psalm 145, we'll read the whole psalm. These are the words of God. I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.

Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts.

On the glorious splendor of your majesty and on your wondrous works I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness, and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

[1 : 05] The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you.

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The Lord is faithful in all his works, and kind in all his works.

The Lord upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.

You open your hand, and you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and kind in all his works. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

[2 : 07] He fulfills the desire of those who fear him. He also hears their cry, and saves them. The Lord preserves all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.

My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever. Amen. These are the words of God, and he gives them to us because he loves us.

So the sermon title this evening is The God Who Is Good, and we will be in this psalm, Psalm 145. And in these verses, David declares the goodness of God.

This is a psalm which proclaims praise to the Lord, and not just for what God has done, but for who God is. His unsearchable greatness, his glorious splendor, his mercy, his love, and his abundant goodness.

And we're going to look at the goodness of God, and what I would like us to get out of this is to see that God is altogether good. And that this goodness can be ours.

[3 : 21] That this goodness is something which flows to us. That because he is good, we can trust, and we can believe him. David, in this passage, is telling us that God is good.

And when we talk about goodness, perhaps we should start first by defining our terms. What do we mean when we say good? We're talking here, in this particular case, about the glorious, divine perfection of God.

That God, in every way, answers to the ideal. That he is pure. That he is sinless. That God is all that he should be. That he is the standard of goodness.

And that goodness is everything in the term that we will say God. And that God is absolutely perfect in every way. So we're going to do that by looking at the psalms together.

So you're going to need your Bibles to follow along. We're going to be anchoring ourselves to these verses in verses 8 and 9. I'll just read those again.

[4 : 21] The Lord is gracious and merciful. Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all. And his mercy is over all that he has made.

And so we're going to be tracing the main ideas that are presented here in other psalms. And this, just as a side note, this is actually a very common quotation that occurs throughout the Old Testament.

It's actually taken from Exodus. But we're going to be looking with one big thought. Which is that we come to worship a God who is good. And so in what ways do we see his goodness?

And in what ways does God's goodness come to us in our everyday life? So the first point that we're going to look at is the first way in which God's goodness flows to us is through his love.

David says of God that he is abounding in steadfast love. That God not only loves, but he loves steadfastly. His love is reliable.

[5 : 27] And not only does God love steadfastly, but he loves abundantly. His love is copious. This is the kind of love that is in the very character of God.

That God is love. It is a part of who he is. And the love of God is the goodness of God in action. And we're able to see throughout the Bible the goodness of God through his love.

And this is a theme which we can trace throughout the book of Psalms. And so come with me to Psalm 13. We'll have a look at Psalm 13. So this is a psalm in which it's another psalm of David.

Let me just take a drink. So this is a psalm of David in which he is in great distress. We see that he may have actually been bedbound by severe illness.

And he is pleading with God. He says in verse 1, How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

[6 : 34] So he says that he feels that God is distant from him. He thinks that God has hidden his face.

He feels that this presence of God has departed from him. And he even goes on in verse 3 to say, He pleads with God. He says, Light up my eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death.

So he even thinks that he is going to die. His enemies are triumphing over him. And yet, when we look at the end of this psalm in verse 5, it says, But I have trusted in your steadfast love.

My heart shall rejoice in your salvation. So we can see here that despite the feeling distant from God, despite feeling that he has been abandoned by God, that God's face is hidden from him, that his enemies are triumphing over him, he still has confidence in God.

And he has faith that God is the author of his salvation. And this is the goodness of God in action, where we can see his love acting as this grounding, this basis of your life, that despite this emotional feeling of not being connected with God, the grounding of your faith is not in yourself or how you feel, but it's in the objective and steadfast love of God for you.

[8 : 10] So come with me also to Psalm 25. This is yet another psalm of David. And this is one in which he says in verse 1, To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

O my God, in you I trust. So he's saying he lifts up his soul, or in other words, his soul's desire is God, that he needs God, and he asks him to forgive his sins.

In verse 6, Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions. According to your steadfast love, remember me for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

So he asks for forgiveness. He then declares God to be good. And he then goes on to say that God is good, good and upright as the Lord.

He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant.

[9 : 21] So we see here in this case, God is the one who forgives sins, but he not only forgives sins, but he gives us instruction in the path in which we are to walk.

Because God wants us to live lives which are ones of joyful flourishing, and so he gives us instruction about the way that we should walk. So he forgives us, he instructs us, and so this is how we should live.

We should come to him, and all the paths of the Lord are steadfast love. And God's forgiveness and his guidance are his love.

And these are ways that we can see the goodness of God in action. We can skip through a few more psalms to Psalm 106.

So we'll go forward all the way to Psalm 106. We will see here that this is, well, it's quite a magnificent psalm. We'll give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

[10 : 25] And it goes on to recount Israel's dealings with God. It says in verse 6, both we and our fathers have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedness.

Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works. They did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea.

Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power. And so in this particular psalm, what we have is a contrast between the rebellion, on the one hand, of God's people, and God's steadfast love, on the other hand, even in the face of rebellion.

And so that God has delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh. And then he even goes on to say how the people then, even after their deliverance, worship the golden calf.

And so this is a psalm which shows that God's goodness shines even brighter when compared to the way that we treat God. So on the one hand, God's love is steadfast.

[11 : 39] On the other hand, we don't meet God's standard and we often rebel. And so we see, in this case, God's goodness and his dealings with us because God still acts, keeps his covenant with his people and he shows his love to them by preserving them.

If you go over to Psalm 107, the psalm after this, this is the opening psalm of Book 5 of the psalms. So the psalms are split into five different books.

Book 5 is where we find Psalm 145 and there are some psalms of David. There are the Hallelujah psalms at the very end. And so this is, you know, deliberately structured in this way.

And so the first words of Book 5 are, Oh give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever. And so this is a key thought to Psalm 107.

And in this particular psalm, we can see the way that God deals with his people. You can see in verse 4, some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in, hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

[12 : 50] Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress. And if you skip down to verse 10, some sat in darkness, in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons, for they had rebelled against the words of God and spurned the counsel of the Most High.

So he bowed their hearts down with hard labour. They fell down with none to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble. What did God do? He delivered them from their distress.

And then verse 17, some were fools through their sinful ways and because of their iniquities suffered affliction. They loathed any kind of food and they drew near to the gates of death.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress. And so that continues through this way and we can see that God's love is key here and we can see how God rescues his people and how he answers their prayers.

And so he answers their prayers because he loves them. They cried to the Lord he answered. They cried and he delivered.

[13 : 58] And so God does in fact answer our prayers and this is the goodness of God in action through answered prayer.

So we can see we have forgiveness we have guidance we have God's persevering love in spite of our unfaithfulness and then we have in this case in Psalm 107 God answering the prayers of his people and this all comes together to demonstrate that God's love is not something that wavers it's not something that comes and goes but it's a love which is steadfast and enduring.

So we'll look back at one other psalm just as we're on this point which is Psalm 100 which is a psalm you should all know well it's a psalm that we in the free church we do love to sing Psalm 100 and this is a psalm which illuminates a couple of aspects of God's love and in this psalm it shows that the love of God is something that lasts if you look at the beginning it's make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth and the final verse is for the Lord is good his steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations and so we see that God's love endures forever that it's not something that we have to worry that it's going to end because it's linked inherently to his goodness and so God will not stop loving you because God never stops being good and this reminds me of the opening verses to Titus where Paul says in the hope of eternal life which God who never lies promised before ages began so God's character is steadfast it's reliable

God cannot lie he cannot stop being good and he cannot stop loving his people his love for you is steadfast and God gives eternal life to those who turn from their sin and turn to him in faith and we also see another aspect in Psalm 100 which is that this is a generational promise his faithfulness to all generations faithfulness to all generations and this just means the same rules apply God doesn't change the rules from generation to generation we can look back through history and see that God is faithful to his people that he preserves his people continuously and he continues to save people today and this extends not just in terms of time but in terms of reach we can see that God preserves his church throughout the whole world that the gospel went into Europe by the apostles and it went through a period of darkness and then exploded into life during the reformation period went all over the world and as you probably are aware most since at least the 1980s the majority of the world's

Christians are not in Europe but are in fact in the global south in places like South America in Africa and across Asia and this is a way that we can see God's goodness in action God continues to reveal his love to people throughout generation to generation and throughout continent through nation to nation because God's love is abounding and it's steadfast now another way that we can't really avoid talking about the love of God without talking about his love in action in the gospels because God's love is incarnational what does that mean we like to talk about theologians have fancy words the incarnation is the coming of Jesus the atonement is his death for us and so the incarnation is where Jesus comes to us in the flesh at Christmas perhaps we would say and so we can see the love of God in action in Jesus we see how Jesus comes and then he sees the individual right he comes and he sees the heart he looks right at people and he calls them by name remember when Jesus enters Jericho and the chief tax collector climbs the sycamore tree and he calls to him

[18:16] Zacchaeus he knows him by name or when Mary goes to attend to the body of Jesus after the crucifixion and she comes across the man who she thinks is the gardener and the gardener calls out Mary he says calls her name and she replies Rabbi knowing that it was Jesus so Jesus comes and he deals with people individually and his love for you is revealed in the person of Jesus now there it would be easy for me to go to different places in the New Testament to see the love of God in action in the person of Jesus but because we're sticking with the Psalms this evening I thought the best place we could go is to Psalm 40 which is one of the great messianic Psalms so if you want to have a look at Psalm 40 this is a Psalm which speaks of the Messiah who was to come written hundreds of years of course before Jesus was ever born we see that this is a Psalm which speaks of the Messiah who comes to do the will of God it starts

I waited patiently for the Lord he inclined to me and heard my cry and then from verse 6 it says in sacrifice and offering you have not delighted but you have given me an open ear burnt offering and sin offering you have not required then I said behold I have come in the scroll of the book it is written of me I delight to do your will oh my God your law is within my heart I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation behold I have not restrained my lips as you know oh Lord I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation so we can see here that the psalm speaks of the Messiah who was to come to do the will of God that sacrifices alone without faith were not enough for sins to be forgiven and the author of Hebrews in chapter 10 verse 10 quotes these verses in Psalm 40 and explicitly applies them to Jesus so we have this divine commentary or interpretation of this psalm knowing that this psalm speaks about Jesus and it says

I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation Jesus comes and he lights the world ablaze with the steadfast love of God he preaches openly and plainly he loved widely and deeply he looked to the individual he examines the heart he heals the sick he feeds the hungry and so if you want to see a clear reflection of the love of God in action then look to the one who did not conceal the steadfast love of God and so should that not be the example for us to do likewise I know that it's something which stings me do I do all that I can do to tell about the love of God to others to speak clearly of the God who is good to display acts of kindness to others these are the examples that Jesus gives us and we can see here the fulfilment of prophecy when we go to the New Testament and we read this psalm we see how Jesus fulfills these words so this is the love of God the second way in which the goodness of God flows to us is by his grace it says in Psalm 145 the Lord is gracious so one of the main implications of God being good is that he is holy flawless morally perfect he is complete in and of himself in no need of another but this is in contrast to us because this is not a reflection of who we are and that is a problem

God is good and we are not and as a result we have no claim on the goodness of God we have no right to even ask for it we have no right to try and take it for ourselves and we can't even point to the things that we do and say see what I do that's good how good I am we can't do that you can remember how the rich young ruler came to Jesus and what did he say he says why do you call me good for there is none good but God because Jesus tells us here that no man possesses goodness in and of himself and that was what the man who came and spoke to him believed he believed that in and of himself he was good and Jesus said no you are not good David writes in Psalm 53 that when God looks down from heaven on all humanity to see if there are any who understand to see if there are any who are good he says there is none who is good no not even one it's as if God is standing on this great mountain and he looks down on humanity looking to see is there anyone who is good and he says no there are none there is none who is good no not even one the standard of good is clear if only

God is good as Jesus says if God looks down on man and sees that there are none who are good then the standard that Jesus gives on the Sermon of the Mount must be true he says you must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect there is no inherent goodness in man that's the standard and then well you say that's tough right what do I do with that right and then we return to Psalm 145 the Lord is gracious and grace is an extra ordinary thing because it's a way of redemption for those who are not good which is you it's me it's where our guilt is forgiven the Lord is gracious we have no right to God's goodness but

[24 : 59] God freely bestows his kindness to us his goodness flows to us by his grace it's unearned unmerited and it's freely given Jesus is the one who fulfills all goodness he came and he obeyed the law of God that's what we read about in Psalm 40 about this servant who delights he delights in doing the will of God and he keeps the law of God in his heart in his life in all of his ways so that we by faith in Jesus can receive this righteousness that Jesus has and possesses his goodness it can be ours by grace so that our sins can be forgiven completely now and that we can stand before God and be declared good and that's all of grace because the Lord is gracious and this steers us to a very practical implication of the goodness of God and we would find this in Paul's letter to the

Romans you probably have some of it memorized where it says do you presume on the riches of his kindness the AV would have said despisest thou the riches of his goodness not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance because if God is so good and he gives us so many good things and yet we take this goodness and we disobey him we shouldn't presume on God's goodness it's something that should show that although we don't measure up it shows that we need his goodness we shouldn't presume on his goodness it should show us that we need his grace to be forgiven it should be something that drives us to our knees in repentance we look to God's goodness and we see how good God is and we see how wretched we are and this should drive us to our knees in repentance and so this is a practical outworking of God's goodness to us and so that's his grace so we have God's love steadfast love we have his grace which gives us his goodness makes us righteous before him and then the third way in which

God's goodness comes to us is through his mercy the Lord is gracious and merciful and his mercy is over all that he has made it says in our Psalm 145 now there are a few ways in which Bible translations render the end of verse 9 in Psalm 145 when you look at the ESV it simply says mercy if you have an NIV with you tonight it will say compassion the old authorised version says tender mercy so it seems that there is perhaps more to the idea than just simply mercy but rather something that corresponds to compassion or tender mercy in any case what we have here is the goodness of God flowing to us in the form of God reaching down from heaven and taking hold of us and holding us up he helps us to stand that's his tender mercy towards us it's something which holds us up

God looks to us and he sees us in our sin he sees a world full of sin and corruption and all the effects of sin that are in the world that cause such pain and suffering we've already seen how God works through grace and forgives our sin and our corruption and he declares us to be good he redeems us he saves us he regenerates us he makes us born again but God also looks at the effects of sin and he seeks to reverse it and he does this by his tender mercy that he shows to us because God deals tenderly with us his tender mercy that is the God who is good he has this great storehouse of goodness within his very nature and it becomes to us this fountain of life it was in his compassion for humanity that God sends Jesus into the world to save us it was in his compassion that he sends the Holy

Spirit to continue this work to apply it to our hearts this Holy Spirit which we read about this morning that put fire in the bones of the apostles to go out and preach boldly the gospel of grace his mercy was active and his mercy dealt a blow to sin and to the devil it was in his mercy that we see Jesus right at the beginning of the gospel of Mark where he reached out with compassion and he touched the man and he says I am willing be clean and immediately the leprosy left him the effects of a sinful world are washed away by the goodness of God that this great fountain of life that overflowed in the life of Jesus we see this in the gospels he bore our burden and he discourages none from coming to him not even one of us every everyone here is welcome to come to Jesus Christ because he deals tenderly with his children so turn with me to Psalm 65 and verse 4

[30 : 40] Psalm 65 and verse 4 blessed is the one you choose and bring near to dwell in your courts we shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house the holiness of your temple you see sin which affects all parts of our life sin makes us discontent sin leaves us empty but the goodness of God is satisfying we shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house do you ever feel tired and overworked do you ever feel worn out then come to God who is the fountain of life come and be satisfied with the goodness of God go to God in prayer and plead with him to be merciful to you follow the example of David when he says in Psalm 6 have mercy on me O Lord for I am weak ask God to show you mercy to exercise his compassion come to him and be satisfied by his abundant goodness to have

God's goodness flow to you that's you responding to him and you're responding to the one who's gracious who's merciful you're responding to the God who's good and David here in Psalm 145 he speaks of praising God of declaring the mighty acts of God of extolling God and he describes all these things to say one big thought which is give God all the glory praise God all day and be satisfied by God by knowing who he is do you want to be happy do you want to be joyful praise God and give him glory we spend our lives learning a lot of things when we think about the rise of the internet even we have a web of information at our fingertips explanations about how things work about the history of the world science technology and yet the internet tends often to not be used for those reasons because knowledge can be dry knowledge can be boring but this is something that there's a quote

I didn't write down actually where the quote exactly came from but it was a book from I think John Flavell one of the old Puritan authors and he says this others may know more in other things than you but if you know Jesus Christ and the truth as it is in him one drop of your knowledge is worth a whole sea of their gifts other knowledge leaves the heart as dry barren and unaffected as if it had its seat in another man's head but the little you have been taught of Christ sheds down its gracious influences upon your affections and slides sweetly to your melting hearts lots of poetic language there but it could be summed up in a few words which is get to know God for who he is get to know Jesus even tiny droplets of knowledge about Jesus is enough to warm your heart it's enough to satisfy the hunger that you have you'll never be able to recognise the tender mercy of

God in your life if you don't know about it God is your father and his goodness comes to you through his tender mercy and he wants all the effects of sin to be removed from you and we all know that this won't be complete in this life it will not be complete till we are in heaven or until Jesus returns but right now we can experience the mercy of God we can see God for who he is we can recognize that God is good to be able to identify his love for us to be able to experience the grace of God for ourselves in our lives to transform us and to appreciate his tender mercy in times of trouble in our lives so I pray that this has been helpful for you we have breathed through quite a number of psalms this evening love through his grace and through his tender mercy that God is one who can be approached that we don't need to turn or flee from

God and let's rejoice together knowing that we worship a God who is good so amen let's sing now to God