

- I. Session 54: The Grace of God Part 6: Common Grace Part 3: God's Temporal Blessings
- a. Review: We have been looking at common grace for the third week. First week we looked at the His common grace in restraining sin with the second week we looked at God's common grace at restraining His wrath.
 - b. Purpose: In this session we shall explore the attribute of the grace of God as it manifest as common grace. We will see God's common grace manifest in temporal blessings. We will then draw implications of this doctrine to apply to the Christian life.
 - c. Recap of the definition of Common Grace
 - i. John Murray: "Every favour of whatever kind or degree, falling short of salvation, which this undeserving and sin-cursed world enjoys at the hand of God."¹
 - ii. My definition: The unmerited favor of God that both the saved/elect and nonsaved/non-elect can commonly be recipients of from God.
 - d. What do we mean by God's Temporal Blessings?
 - i. By temporal blessings I am referring to God's blessings this side of eternity (before death, before the Second Coming of Christ).
 - ii. Here I want to cover God's common grace that are less about restraining as in the previous two lessons and more on God's "positive" blessings.
 - iii. We must however remember that both God's restraining activity of common grace and His positive blessings are inter-related. You can't have God's temporal blessing without presupposing His common grace restraining His wrath being fully exercised, etc.
 - e. The Bible's teaching on God's temporal blessings
 - i. Note of method: We will demonstrate the truth of God's temporal blessings to both believers and nonbelievers by going from Old Testament to the New Testament, both before the fall and after the fall of Adam and Eve.
 - ii. Before the Fall
 1. The fact that Adam and Eve were created and given life is an act of God's common grace in bestowing temporal blessings.
 - a. Both nonbelievers and believers benefited from this, since we are all descendants of Adam and Eve.
 - b. From the very start everything that is a temporal blessing from the time of Adam and Eve is an act of God's common grace because we didn't deserved it.
 2. "*10 Now a river [g]flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four [h]rivers. 11 The name of the first is Pishon; it [i]flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there.*" (**Genesis 2:10-12**)
 - a. God created everything including rivers and what's found on the ground.

¹ Quoted in John Frame, *Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002), 429.

- b. Here we see the mention of gold in the land and the gold was good there.
 - c. This again, is something that people benefit from, both believers and later unbelievers.
 - 3. *“The Lord God [t]fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called [v]Woman, Because [w]she was taken out of [x]Man.’”* 24 *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”* (Genesis 2:22-24)
 - a. This is creation of the institution of marriage!
 - b. This is an institution that is a blessing to both Christians and non-Christians!
 - c. Note Adam’s joy in receiving this temporal blessings that He sings a song in **verse 23**.
 - d. **Luke 20:35** does state that this blessing is for this side of eternity: *“but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage”*
- iii. Immediately after the Fall: *“The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.”* (Genesis 3:21)
 - 1. Context: This is after Adam and Eve’s first sin and after God has pronounces His curse that were consequences for their sins.
 - 2. This is rather somewhat surprising that following His curse, God shows care for Adam and Eve by clothing.
 - 3. I think there is a typology here of something living dying to cover the shame of Adam and Eve but we must not miss the immediate temporal blessing of what God has done either.
 - 4. It is amazing to see how God’s common grace is shown so early after Adam and Eve’s sin.
- iv. *“It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house on account of Joseph; thus the Lord’s blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field.”* (Genesis 39:5)
 - 1. Notice *“the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house on account of Joseph”*
 - 2. Here we see unbelievers being blessed by God.
 - 3. But the blessing is on account of a believer.
- v. *“He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, And vegetation for the labor of man, So that he may bring forth food from the earth,”* (Psalm 104:14)
 - 1. Context: Psalm 104 is an amazing Psalm describing His care for His creation.
 - 2. Here we see God’s temporal blessings to humans in general when God causes vegetation to grow.
 - 3. Purpose? *“So that he may bring forth food from the earth,”* (v.14c)

4. This is described in two ways:
 - a. God “causes the grass to grow for the cattle,” and cattle of course is one of man’s food.
 - b. Vegetables itself is a food: “*And vegetation for the labor of man*” (v.14b)
- vi. Other passages that describes God’s blessing of living creatures with food can be found in **Psalm 136:25** and **Psalm 145:15-16**.
- vii. “*You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may [a]be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Therefore [b]you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*” (**Matthew 5:43-48**)
 1. The blessings:
 - a. “*He causes His sun to rise*” (**Matthew 5:45**)
 - b. “*and sends rain*” (**Matthew 5:45**)
 2. The recipients of the blessings:
 - a. “*rise on the evil and the good,*” (**Matthew 5:45**)
 - b. “*and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*” (**Matthew 5:45**)
 3. This is essential as part of God being perfect: “*as your heavenly Father is perfect*” (**Matthew 5:48**).
- viii. “*and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, [a]satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.*”” (**Acts 14:17**)
 1. The context
 - a. Words of Paul as he preached to Gentiles in Lystra.
 - b. In the previous verse Paul told them that in the past God has allow the Gentiles (Hebrew word is “*nations*”) to sin without facing God’s full wrath.
 2. Now this verse echoes God’s teaching of Common grace that we have seen earlier taught in the Psalms concerning food and rain.
 3. But Paul pursues an apologetics’ angle that God did this and therefore “*He did not leave Himself without witness.*”
- f. Implication for the Christian life
 - i. Do you thank God for His temporal blessings?
 - ii. When was the last time you thank God?
 - iii. When you pray for your meal, do you pray thanking God for your meal or is it just a routine?
 - iv. Be a blessing to others even as God has blessed you!
 - v. Look at Matthew 5 again and see the application is to love our enemies!