

A Most Generous God

By Don Green

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Truth Community Church
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

We have a wonderful time together in God's word tonight as we're going to turn to Psalm 65 and I invite you to turn there and we'll just begin by reading the text itself to set it in our minds and then we will go through it and I know that you will be encouraged by the picture that this gives us of our great God. Psalm 65.

1 For the choir director. A Psalm of David. There will be silence before You, and praise in Zion, O God, And to You the vow will be performed. 2 O You who hear prayer, To You all men come. 3 Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You forgive them. 4 How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple. 5 By awesome deeds You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea; 6 Who establishes the mountains by His strength, Being girded with might; 7 Who stills the roaring of the seas, The roaring of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples. 8 They who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy. 9 You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth. 10 You water its furrows abundantly, You settle its ridges, You soften it with showers, You bless its growth. 11 You have crowned the year with Your bounty, And Your paths drip with fatness. 12 The pastures of the wilderness drip, And the hills gird themselves with rejoicing. 13 The meadows are clothed with flocks And the valleys are covered with grain; They shout for joy, yes, they sing.

Once again we come to a text of Scripture that outlines for us the goodness of God and one of the things, you know we want to obey Scripture, we want to believe God in every conceivable way, and one of the things that we just have to come back to again and again because we are tempted to unbelief, is that our God is a good God. In the midst of trials we are tempted to doubt that but God is always good and this Psalm is a Psalm that is devoted exclusively to extolling the goodness of God and that's what we need to lay hold of. I think for many of you, you have embraced and grasped hold of the sovereignty of God, the providence of God, that God is at work in everything that happens, that there is

nothing that happens outside of his control, we understand that, we teach that often from this pulpit, but again we come to the point that that doesn't exhaust everything that we know about God, that doesn't exhaust all of his attributes. God is preeminently a good God and we worship him not simply for the splendor of his greatness, not simply for the splendor of his majesty, but we thank him and we honor him and we revere him because he is so good and we need to have that settled as deeply in our hearts as we do his providence and his sovereignty and other aspects of his attributes that we embrace.

So Psalm 65 will help us to that end and in that sense Psalm 65 introduces kind of a new tone from what we've heard in the prior Psalms. They were Psalms to varying degrees of complaint, they were Psalms in which enemies were in view in David's mind and he's seeking protection and working through the issues that enemies bring, but this Psalm is something completely different. Its tone is something fresh and different in the flow of the Psalter as we come to it.

No one really knows exactly what the occasion of this Psalm was, meaning under what circumstances it was written. Perhaps the best alternative that's been offered is that this was a Psalm that was sung at the time of harvest, at the Feast of Tabernacles as they were getting ready to gather in the grain of that year's harvest. One writer said this about that time of year and you'll see how it fits with the tone of this Psalm as we go along. He said and I quote, "When the people thanked God at the celebration of Tabernacles for all the fruits of the past year, vine and olive as well as barley and wheat, they did not forget his gift of rain apart from which none of these crops would have grown. This ceremony which was intended to acknowledge God's goodness in sending rain and to ensure a plentiful supply for the following season was enacted at dawn on the first seven days of the festival."

Now, there is an aspect to this Psalm that makes it a little bit hard for us to fully enter into perhaps. We are used to grocery stores and we are used to going into places where there is just a complete abundance of anything that you would ask and we didn't do anything really to work for it. We work for the money to pay for it but the fruit that's there in the store is not the labor of our own hands and it's there whether we get rain or not. Somehow the food distribution chain just works and it has been perfected to a fine art form in Western culture. We should remember that as we step into Psalm 65, that that was not the environment in which they procured their existence. They were dependent on God for rain and to have the crops grow and there was always this level of uncertainty as the seasons progressed, would there be enough rain or all of that. Well, when the harvest came in and they saw once again that God had been good and that God had been faithful, they saw the provision there for the coming months, their hearts were overflowing with gratitude and it was a deep profound gratitude as they realized God had blessed the fruit of the ground in a way that is separate and distinct and different from the bounty that we understand when we go into a normal grocery store here in the 21st century. So we don't want to bring our presuppositions and our experience of abundance into this, realizing that there is something different that is going on here in Psalm 65. Now, I suppose you could look at it, a godly man could walk into a grocery store and recognize the hand of God in providing the bounty in this way, that's certainly legitimate but the people of

Israel were experiencing his provision in a way that's a bit foreign to our own environment, but this Psalm is a Psalm of praise for the goodness of God.

The inscription says it is a song. This was meant to be sung and Psalm 66, 67 and 68 have that same inscription about it being a song, a song of praise for the goodness of God. And it extols God for three aspects of his goodness that we're going to see here this evening, and as we'll see at the end of the message, this is a Psalm that prepares us to recognize the deity and the goodness of Christ himself as we'll see at the end. We see Christ throughout this Psalm as is often the case.

Well, why do we praise God? Why do we say that God is a good God? Why should it be settled in your heart that he is a benevolent deity, that he is exceedingly fine and gracious with his people? Why should that be such a settled principle, a bedrock perspective from which you view God and life and you never waver off of that no matter whatever happens? Well, the first of these is that he is a God who forgives sin. He is a God who forgives sin and we'll see that in the first four verses here this evening. And those of you who know Christ and whose sins have been forgiven through his shed blood should be eager to enter into the praise that David expresses here.

Look at verse 1 as we begin. David says,

1 There will be silence before You, and praise in Zion, O God, And to You the vow will be performed.

David is stating his intention right from the very beginning of this Psalm that, "I intend to praise God with what follows here." So he's setting the theme, he's setting the whole tone of the Psalm right from the very beginning and calls his readers to praise even as he expresses his own praise.

Now, he talks about silence and that's maybe a little bit foreign to us. We don't often use silence as praise, especially in public gatherings like this, however, it is fitting. One writer said this, he said, "Silence may sometimes be the height of worship as we fall silent before God in awe at his presence and in submission to his will." We've lost that by and large with all of our loud music and the drums and the guitar riffs that mark what passes for praise music in other locations and it seems like the higher the volume, the louder the praise supposedly is. Well, Scripture speaks of an appropriate praise of silence, of a praise that says, "I will fall silent as I recognize the greatness of God, the holiness of God, the majesty of God. What can I say, what could I add to that? I'll hold my tongue here and recognize in reverence who I am before."

The same thing could be said as we contemplate the goodness, as you think about the way that God has been good to you. We're speaking to Christians here this evening. Aren't you here as a sinner who has been forgiven? Aren't you here as one who has violated the law of God? Who perhaps in the past blasphemed his name and used the precious name of Christ as a curse word and worse? And yet God looked down on you and had mercy on you and drew you to Christ. And in all of your guilt and in all of the

judgment that could have come upon you, instead you stand reconciled to him, a child of God forgiven by the blood of Christ and fully reconciled to a holy God who will never turn his back on you ever ever ever. Silence helps that to sink in and you say, "Wow, I didn't deserve that. I don't deserve that. God has been exceedingly gracious and good to me, and sometimes I forget to even thank him for that." And you say to yourself, "Let me just hold my tongue. Let my silence be an expression of worship to this God."

So David says, "There will be silence before You, and praise in Zion," another word for Jerusalem, a reference to the city of Jerusalem, the city of God. And he says, "And to You," verse 1, look at it with me, "And to You the vow will be performed." He's referring to the fact that the vow was a promise of thank offerings or songs of praise made before the blessing of God was received, and yet when the blessing came, then the promise to thank him when it was received was made and now here in Psalm 65 with the harvest in front of them, now is the time to pay the vow, now is the time to fulfill the promise. "God, I said I would praise you for your blessing. You have blessed me. Now I will praise you and fulfill my vow."

Now, as you go on in verse 2, what you see is that David is thinking beyond the walls of Jerusalem here. He says in verse 2,

2 O You who hear prayer, To You all men come.

He's expanding it beyond the Jews. He's expanding it beyond the nation of Israel and he's making a recognition that God is the God of all the earth. He's not just the God of the Jews, he's not just the God over the footprint of Palestine, this is the God who reigns over all of the earth and therefore the praise should come from all men and that all men should come to God even if they don't. And if you look at verses 5 and 8, you'll see this universal aspect to the worship, expressing and giving a nuance of the universal goodness of God that is being extolled here in Psalm 65. Look at verse 5, he says, "You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea." In verse 8 he uses a similar phrase and says those "who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy." Do you see it? Do you see the universal aspect of praise that is being called upon here? The whole earth is being called to recognize and acknowledge the goodness of this God.

I mentioned Psalm 66 through 68, they add to to this universal theme as well and I want you to see this in anticipation of coming weeks. Psalm 66:1, "Shout joyfully to God, all the earth." Verse 4, "All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You." Look at Psalm 67:1, "God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us. That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness And guide the nations on the earth."

We shouldn't think about the Old Testament as simply being a call to Israel to worship, the Old Testament has themes of worship that are universal in their scope and Psalm

68:32 adds to it as well. Psalm 68:32, "Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth, Sing praises to the Lord. To Him who rides upon the highest heavens, which are from ancient times; Behold, He speaks forth with His voice, a mighty voice." All the nations, all the earth from the dawn of the sun to its setting, the name of God is to be praised.

And we must understand that as we come to worship the God of the Bible, we must understand as we worship the Lord Jesus Christ, that the call of Scripture is to recognize this God as the one and only true God. He is God over all, God over all the nations. There is no other God. There is no other path to God except through the Lord Jesus Christ. And every other God, every other deity is false worship and we proclaim that, we defend that, we teach that without apology, without yielding, without bending or acknowledging anything else. We don't have the liberty to do that because the objective truth is that the God of the Bible is the only true God. Christ is his only Son and is the only Mediator between God and man. And Scripture tells us that while the world may object to that at the present time, there will come a time where this will be universally acknowledged and God will be acknowledged by all as the only true God. Philippians 2:10 says, "at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Some will do so willingly, some will do it under compulsion. All will acknowledge that this is the only true God. Well, Psalm 65 set the tone for that 3,000 years of go by calling all the earth to acknowledge the God of Israel as the one true God.

So listen carefully, I'm going to use a word that normally is a bad word but there is a universalism in the Bible in reference to God. It is not that all religions lead to God, that is a false universalism, however the universalism of the Bible is this: is that all men will recognize the true God. All men will bow down before him one day. And universally, all men, all men everywhere without exception, are invited to come to this God through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel is for everyone who will believe. So in silence we bow at the majesty of what God's word just said to us, of what was just proclaimed from God's word, that there is one God, he has truly revealed himself in Scripture, and here we are gathered to together in a speck called Cincinnati on a spinning globe in one remote galaxy and we know who this God is and we know him not remotely but as our Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. That's how good he has been to us, that out of the billions of people that have lived, he has made sure that you and I as Christians entered into his family; that Christ willingly gave himself up for us, gave himself up for our sins. That God who is universal did that on our when we were sinners and rebels against him. Well might we fall silent in the grandeur and the splendor of what God's word says.

David sings freely and he puts at the heart of his praise right from the front, the fact that God is a God who forgives sin. Look at verse 3,

3 Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You forgive them.

That word "forgive" is a word that means "to cover or to atone." It's only used three times in the Psalms but it occurs 15 times in Leviticus 16 where Moses is writing about the Day

of Atonement where a blood sacrifice would be offered to atone for the sins of the nation. This covering, this atonement, this blood sacrifice made and God hid his face from their sins and did not hold them against them. He provided an atonement to cover sin until Christ would put sin away forever for those who believe in him. That's the forgiveness, that's the covering that David is speaking about here.

And what you see is this, and for you young people, maybe you're not sure if you know Christ yet or not, you really need to work this out in your heart: you cannot worship God apart from the forgiveness of your sins. What God does in response to sin is he hides his face from the sinner. "If I regard wickedness in my heart," we'll see next week, "the Lord will not hear." So no man can approach God apart from the forgiveness of sin. Left on his own devices, David would have been lost, all of Israel would have been lost. They were unable to approach God because of their sin and yet what had God done? God had provided an atonement. God had provided redemption for them. And in place – watch this – in place of the judgment they deserved, they received favor that they did not deserve. Instead of receiving banishment and condemnation, they were reconciled to the one true God and in that, what had been displayed? The whole point of this Psalm, what had been displayed in that forgiveness was nothing less than the perfection of God's goodness.

That's a good God to forgive sin. You know, and that God is not like men, certainly not like unregenerate men. What do you find when unregenerate men are angry with others? What do you find with unsaved people when they have been wronged or someone has done things against them? Forgiveness is the farthest thing from their mind. They want retaliation. They want revenge. They want to strike back. This is the state of unregenerate man, cold and unbending and unforgiving. These are people, we are people who have no right of judgment. Here is a holy God who does have the right of judgment, who looks out on sinful humanity, a human race that is fallen and sinned against him and by nature and by choice and what has he done? He has provided forgiveness? In Christ he will not hold our sins against us? He showed mercy to us when judgment was our due? He will not bring our sins to mind again? He has removed our sins from us as far as the East is from the West? And not only that, it's not just that he has wiped them away and declared us innocent of the charges, he's imputed righteousness to us. He has welcomed us into his family. He has adopted us and made us his own so that we may freely and rightly and completely call him Father and have bold and confident access into his very throne room. I ask you, isn't that good? That is goodness of an order and a magnitude that is foreign to the human heart. That is goodness of infinite value and of infinite measure on sinners like you and me.

And notice David was an early Calvinist, in verse 4 he said,

4 How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts.

He says, "God, this was you're doing. This was your choosing. This wasn't something that I earned with the works of my hands. This isn't something that I did, something that I

chose." He said, "We are blessed because you chose us. You chose us as a nation to bring us to yourself. We were not many, we were not mighty." In fact Scripture says God chose them because they were least and they were small, and in that way he would all the more get the glory because there was nothing in the object of his affection to earn and merit his love.

So, beloved, well might we fall down in silence in recognition of this. Well might we meditate on the reality of undeserved favor, of undeserved goodness freely showered upon us; that the God of holiness, the God of creation, the God of heaven and earth, the God who is over all of the nations, had mercy on you by name and brought you into his courts, brought you into his family, brought you into his kingdom, forgave all of your sins never to raise them against you ever again. And with such a perfect love, promising to keep you forever and ever, never to let you be plucked out of his hand, Satan and the forces of hell cannot disrupt this love of God that has been bestowed upon your soul, death and life, angels and principalities could do their best, nothing will bring a wedge between you and this God. I ask you, isn't that good? We have nothing on earth to compare that to.

There is no earthly parallel to that so David says at the end of verse 4 in recognition of this God who forgives sin, he says,

We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple.

Those of you who don't know Christ, one of the things that Scripture says is this: the kindness of God leads you to repentance. You should be so overwhelmed and so humbled by the goodness of God being like that and by his free invitation to include you in his kingdom that you would run to that and you would respond with loving submission and faith in Christ to a God who is like that. There is no reason not to. He will receive you. There is nothing to hold you back except your own unwillingness.

And yet let us gently warn that the one who spurns that kind of free love and free goodness and free grace will rightly bear the consequences on his own head. There is no excuse for rejecting goodness like this. There is no justification for refusing love of this order and this magnitude. Scripture says how much severer judgment will be for those who have trampled underfoot the blood of Christ by which they were sanctified, by which the Gospel promises were made and rejected. That is the worst place of judgment because it is such an unjustified sinful refusal of the goodness of God. He's the God who forgives sin. My unsaved friend, deal carefully with the Gospel that's offered to you here this evening.

Now secondly, we see the goodness of God in another way. From this position of spiritual blessing, David moves on in the next section of the Psalm and extols this God as the God who rules nature and he praises God for his works in nature and manifests his goodness in the way that he rules in nature. Look at verse 5. He says,

5 By awesome deeds You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation

Do you see the goodness again? God answering prayers, God responding with awesome and powerful deeds, responding to our feeble and halfhearted prayers with blessing and goodness poured out upon us, God answering us in righteousness is another manifestation of his goodness.

He goes on and says in verse 5,

O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea; 6 Who establishes the mountains by His strength, Being girded with might;

With his position of might and with his position of goodness, with these attributes, these perfections, bestows his blessing on his people so that the whole earth would come to recognize and know him as this surpassing and great God.

Verse 7, "You are the God

7 Who stills the roaring of the seas, The roaring of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples.

Think about this, think about the way from David's perspective writing before the cross and about some 400 years, 450 years after the Exodus from Egypt, think of the way that God delivered his people from Egypt, that they were in slavery in Egypt and they were under the power of the mightiest nation on earth at the time and what did he do? He led them out. As Moses performed miracles before Pharaoh and Pharaoh hardened his heart and God led them out, and the Egyptian army, the greatest army in the world at the time, mind you, chasing after these people. And they come up to the Red Sea and it's either death by the sword or death by drowning by their apparent choice and options that they had there at the moment. God parts the Red Sea. They go through on dry land and when the Egyptians try to follow after them, the sea closed up on them and they were drowned and the greatest army of the earth was defeated at the hands of this great and powerful God. And God did that so that the whole earth would know that he is a powerful God and that he is a good God to his people.

So David's says there in verse 5, he says, "You are the trust of all the ends of the earth." Look, look, this God who is so great and who is so good has the claim on the trust and obedience of everyone in the earth even if they don't give it to him. The right response to a God of this power and this goodness is obedience and trust and that is the claim that God asserts over all the earth. Everyone will be accountable for this. Scripture says in Romans 1, they see it and they spurn it, they harden their hearts, they turn against it, but that doesn't diminish the claim of God that he has. His power and his goodness calls forth praise. His power over nature points to his power to forgive sin which David had been extolling in the first part of the Psalm.

Now, let's think for a moment about the common conceptions of God in our day and bring them up against what Scripture is saying. Some think of God as a distant deity, uncaring, unconcerned about what's happening in the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is God's creation. This is God's world. God has a plan that he is working out. God is a God who answers prayer. God is a God who invites all to come to him through Christ. He is so good and he is so powerful and he is so intimately involved that to accuse him of indifference toward the people that he has made or toward his creation is nothing less than blasphemy. It is a total lie and distortion of who God is. This portion of Psalm 65 puts that false notion to rest. Our God is a God in whom anyone on earth can find refuge. Anyone on earth is welcome to approach him through the Lord Jesus Christ. Whoever would believe in Christ and bow the knee finds that he will not cast them out, John 6. So beloved, it should be buried deep in your heart, it should be established as an anchor of your worldview and of the way that you think that you will not only revere this God but you will rejoice and revel and honor him for his goodness as he has expressed it in his willingness to forgive sin and in his willingness to rule over nature.

Notice in verse 6, "He establishes the mountains by His strength. He stills the roaring of the seas." Beloved, he has a sovereign hand over it. Those mountains did not put themselves into place. This seas did not establish themselves. They did not come from an impersonal big bang that just kind of echoed out and rippled out like a lake for billions of years. No, no, there is one true God and God is the one who established all of these things. There was not a random force, there was a personal, intelligent, good God who established these things and the proof of his power is seen in the sunrise and in the sunset.

Look at verse 8,

8 They who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy.

You realize that this is a reference to the wonder and the beauty of those times of day when the sky becomes a kaleidoscope of colors. You know what it's like to look and say, "That is a magnificent sunset." And the richness of the colors and the profundity of the beauty and it's like it's singing the praise and the glory of God. You know that. We'll probably see it as we're driving home tonight, won't we? Well, as we do, we see evidence of the power and the goodness of God displayed in creation.

And beloved, as you see those things, as you contemplate God's work in nature, as you contemplate the multifaceted beauty of it, one of your responses to that should be, "The God who did this, the God who paints like this is so very good. He is so good and his goodness is displayed even in the beauty with which he paints his creation." And if I could say this pastorally and I can. Who is going to stop me? You should have that so anchored in your heart that even the worst of your circumstances and disappointments, you don't allow those to contradict that bedrock principle about the goodness of God. You settle it in your mind, beloved, you stamp your foot down and say, "I will stand here

and I will not move. This God whom I know, this God who saved me in Christ, he is a good God and I will never question that. I will never contradict at that. My lips will never express doubt about that. He is good and I will not allow my circumstances to force me to think or say something different and contrary to it no matter how bad it gets. I will hold to the goodness of God no matter how much my life seems to contradict it."

You see, these things matter. These things determine the way that you think. These things determine the course of your life. And if this is established in your heart, is a bedrock nonnegotiable principle by which you view the world, then you're going to live life differently rather than being tossed about on the waves as circumstances come and circumstances go. Even just the back-and-forth just kind of makes you a little bit seasick as you're going back and forth on the waves of circumstances and you realize, "Yeah, there is instability in that when I am basing my life on my circumstances, my thoughts about life and my thoughts about God based on my circumstances." Well look, beloved, one day you're going to get sick or you're going to be in an accident or you're going to have a sudden heart attack and you're going to die. It's not about this life. It's inevitable that sorrow and trials and death itself, it's inevitable that it's going to come. That's appointed for us. That is part of our life since Adam fell. And people are going to disappoint you, people are going to hurt you and things are going to go badly sometimes. Your rock in that is not that you will somehow evade what comes to all men, your rock in it is that you are in the hands of a good God and you must view life that way because that is the only thing that is worthy of this great God and it is that which alone can bring you stability. "My God is sovereign. Yes, praise God, nothing escapes his notice. Everything that comes into my life comes to me filtered through his hand and directed by his wisdom." But it's not just that, beloved. Oh, we so much need to get this into our minds individually and corporately. It's not just that, it's that God is also supremely, unalterably, invariably good no matter what happens, no matter what comes. And as life challenge you on that tonight and you say, "I don't see it. This is the hardest week of my life." I get that. All the more for you to stand up and say, "Even if I can't see it, I believe the goodness of God even in this." And in that place of weakness and seemingly faltering faith, your affirmation of the goodness of God even in that is the means by which you glorify him in the circumstances that he has appointed for you in this day and age, and it is that which alone can cheer your heart and give you the motivation to go on. We must know this. We must embrace this. We must own this as the only fitting response to the God who forgives sin and the God who rules over nature.

Now, the Psalm ends with David extolling him as the God who provides. The God who provides and we'll deal with this quickly. Here in this Psalm, David is extolling God for his goodness, particularly as the God who provides, and it is particularly seen at this time of harvest. Look at verse 9 through 11. He says,

9 You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth.

And there are agricultural images in what comes.

10 You water its furrows abundantly, You settle its ridges, You soften it with showers, You bless its growth. 11 You have crowned the year with Your bounty, And Your paths drip with fatness.

Now, it's easy for us in this rain-soaked region in which we live to take water and rain for granted but for those in that land and in that day, it was a matter of life and death. So they were so dependent on the rains to come to water so that they would have a harvest, they were so dependent on the rain to give life and in this, notice how repeatedly David is ascribing to God himself as the one who did this. Notice the word "You" here. As he's praying to God, he's acknowledging God and he uses that second person pronoun "You" to ascribe the praise where it belongs. In verse 9, "You visit the earth. You greatly enrich it. You prepare their grain. You prepare the earth. You water its furrows. You settle its ridges. You soften it. You bless its growth. You have crowned the year with your bounty and Your paths drip with fatness." David looks out on all of this bounty of the harvest and says, "God, this all comes from You."

And well might you whether it seems that you have comparatively little or if you have comparatively a lot compared to those around you, you look at life, very few of you if any are going home to an empty cupboard, very few of you have missed a meal today, very few of you don't have some manner of human relationship that you find love and satisfaction and happiness in. Somewhere in there there is an expression of the bounty of God to you and you should view this from, "Oh, I see it. This home that I have, these relationships that I enjoy, this bounty that we have, this is all an expression of the goodness of God, his hand personally extended to to me. God, you have done it. You are the reason I enjoy these blessings. And God, I thank you. I praise you. I see in your provision the fact that you have been good to me." David is saying throughout this entire process of the agricultural season, "God, you have generously provided what we needed. And the abundance and the waving fields of grain about to be harvested show his generosity."

David describes the bounty further in verse 12. He says,

12 The pastures of the wilderness drip, And the hills gird themselves with rejoicing.

Now normally the wilderness in that part of the land is brown and bare. Those of you that have been to Southern California in the dead of summer know just how brown and barren it can be. Israel's climate is a lot like Southern California's but when the rain comes, it turns bright. It turns flowerful. It turns cheerful. And David looks at the bounty that is all around and the normally barren hills bursting with flowers and says, "God, all of this beauty and all of this bounty has come from your hand through the rain that you have provided. God, it's like they are singing for joy as I look out on them. The beauty of the harvest, it's like it's singing for joy."

Look at verse 13.

13 The meadows are clothed with flocks And the valleys are covered with grain; They shout for joy, yes, they sing.

The beauty of it all, David attributes and personifies it as if the colors and everything are just singing forth the praise of God and the bounty that he has provided and they are secure once again in a harvest that has been given to them, that God has provided and that they will be cared for in the coming days through this harvest.

Now, David has extolled the goodness of God. He is the God who forgives sin. He is the God over nature. He is the God who provides. We could stop there. It would be fine to stop there in one sense but, you know, as you contemplate the principles of which David is speaking and the things that he is attributing to God, I don't want you to miss that this Psalm points forward to our Lord Jesus Christ, and this Psalm points us to things about Christ that help us recognize his deity and recognize his goodness.

Does God forgive sin as David spoke about here in Psalm 65? So does Jesus Christ. Turn in your Bibles to the Gospel of Mark 2, beginning in verse 5. This is the story of the paralytic where Jesus was in a house, they dug a hole in the roof and dropped the paralytic down in front of him and Jesus in verse 5, oh, he is so good. These helpless men, this helpless paralytic, this man who had to have friends carry him about on a pallet lowered down in the presence of Jesus and what does Jesus say? "What are you doing?" No. "And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'" Ha, he forgives sin. "But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 'Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?'" And Jesus makes the point that he can forgive sin therefore he is God. Verse 8, "Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, 'Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk?'" It's equally easy to say either of those things with your tongue. One of them is in an invisible realm one of them is in the visible realm. You can see one, you can't see the other. So Jesus says in verse 10, "so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," in the invisible realm, "He said to the paralytic," in the visible realm, "'I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.' And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this.'"

God is good. God forgives sin. Do you know what? Jesus Christ forgives sin. Do you know what? Jesus Christ is good. He is good and let us never question that. Let us never question the goodness of the Christ who forgave us at the cost of his own life. Never, never, never go there again in your mind. He is good.

Does God rule over nature, the Psalm said. Yes. Psalm 65. Well, so does Christ. Look at Mark 4:35, "On that day, when evening came, He said to them, 'Let us go over to the other side.' Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He

was; and other boats were with Him. And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'" And just as Psalm 65:7 described, Jesus "got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Hush, be still.' And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. Jesus said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?' They became very much afraid and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'" I'll tell you who he is, he is God in human flesh, just like Psalm 65 said. He forgives sin. He rules over nature.

Does God provide food? Psalm 65 extolled him for that. Do you know what? So does Christ. Look at verse 34 of chapter 6 in Mark. Mark 6:34, "When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things. When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, 'This place is desolate and it is already quite late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.' But [Jesus] answered them, 'You give them something to eat!' And they said to Him, 'Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?' And He said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go look!' And when they found out, they said, 'Five, and two fish.' And He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass. They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. And [Jesus] took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all." Two fish and five loaves. "They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish." Verse 44, "There were five thousand men who ate the loaves." He has the power to provide. He rules over nature and all of these things pointing to his ability to forgive sin.

So here we are as believers in Christ and we are in him. We are in this God, we're in this Christ who forgives sin, who provides for all of our needs, who rules over all of the world and we realize that we know Christ as our brother and we know his Father as our Father; that we are welcome in the throne of God; that we have bold and confident access there; that he will receive us into heaven; that he is preparing a place for us even now and having prepared the place, he plans to come again. Oh, beloved, don't you see it? This is a good God. This is a most generous God and we join with the Psalmist tonight in response in praising him.

Let's pray together.

Lord, we thank you for your goodness. Thank you for forgiving our sins. Thank you for ruling not over nature but over our very lives, and there is nothing that has come into our lives that hasn't been planned by you, directed by you, and that, Father, you will take all of that and somehow work it together for what? For good for those who love you. You provide food for us. You provide everything that we need. When the day of our departure from this life comes, you will be with us and your angels will carry us into your presence.

Father, what people is there anywhere in the world that is as privileged as those who know you as Father through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? No one is privileged like us. No one is on the receiving end of grace like this and we thank you for it all and we acknowledge that it all expresses your immense goodness to us.

Father, in light of that, for those that are with us tonight, hearing over the live stream, perhaps hearing in subsequent media, Father, no doubt some that do not yet know you, we ask you according to your goodness, according to your grace, to work in their hearts and to lead them to faith in Christ, that they might share in this bounty of this most generous God and that they would join the chorus which gladly sings your praise. In Christ's name we ask all of these things. Amen.

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