The Goodness of God - Part 1

Every new day gives us reason for expressing our gratitude to our God, Who is truly alive and has made possible all things worth having in this life and in the life to come. Many may respond to the goodness of God in various ways, yet the Scriptures tell us the goodness of God should lead us to repentance (Rom. 2:4). In Psalm 107, the Psalmist expresses some very beautiful and meaningful thoughts that ought to remind us of the goodness of God and what our response to that goodness should be: “O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

This psalm begins with an admonition to all to give thanks to God. Why? Because He is good. God is the epitome of goodness and love, and the goodness and love of God prompted Him to extend His mercy to us in the most beautiful and meaningful way possible—in the gift of His Son Jesus Christ. It was the total goodness of God that caused Him to love you and me when we were totally unlovable. It was that complete goodness that caused the God of Heaven to give up the darling of His bosom that we might have access to eternal life, to the abundant life, now and forevermore. “O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

The second verse calls upon those who have appreciated that goodness above anyone else to express that goodness to others. We should appreciate above anyone else the goodness of God! The redeemed—those who have been saved from their sins, should appreciate the goodness of God above all others upon this earth. The world doesn’t particularly appreciate the goodness of God. Those who are living their own lives, going their own way, living as they please, do not appreciate the goodness of God that brought salvation down from Heaven, because they have not responded to that goodness. They have not shown their appreciation in the only meaningful way possible—through obedience to God's will. But we who are Christians, above all others, should appreciate the goodness of Almighty God. As verse 2 admonishes, we should tell others of that goodness. “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.”

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.” In other words, let the redeemed of the Lord talk about the goodness of God. Let's talk about our religion, not hide it. Generally we think those who talk about their religion—about what the Lord has done for them—are a little strange, don’t we? Of course, if one has an erroneous concept of salvation and of what God has done for him, then he is in error. However, one cannot criticize the enthusiasm and zeal often characteristic of those even in error religiously. Yet, the redeemed, the truly redeemed of the Lord, those who know they have the truth and have rendered obedience to the truth, say less about it many times that those who have followed the traditions and the teachings of men. “Let the redeemed of Jehovah say so.” Let the redeemed say that God is good. Let the redeemed say they have been redeemed. Let the redeemed say they have been saved from their sins through the grace and mercy of Almighty God through their obedience to the Gospel, and let the redeemed call upon those of their loved ones, their neighbors, and friends to do the same.
“Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;” and our enemy is Satan. Yet, Christ has dealt a fatal blow to Satan. The very first prophecy of the crucifixion of Christ in Genesis 3:15 foretold of the time when Jesus Christ would bruise the head of Satan, while Satan would deal only a minor blow to the heel of Christ. Satan's head has been bruised, a fatal blow has been dealt to him, if, indeed, we will avail ourselves of the wonderful opportunity we have through and in Jesus Christ. Satan cannot overcome us. Death and the grave can no longer hold the fear and horror for us that once they held before Christ came to die. How much gratitude should be engendered in a heart that realizes it was without hope before Jesus Christ came to earth! Christians, above all others, should praise God for his deliverance of them from sin and Satan, our greatest of all enemies!

What has God done for us? How has his goodness been shown? If we look further at verse 3, we see a figurative description of what God has done for us spiritually as Christians: “And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.” Here is a figurative description of our plight before we were brought together in the body of Christ, the church, added thereto by our obedience to the Gospel of Christ. We were those wanderers; we were those in that solitary way; we were those who found no city in which to dwell; we were those who found no satisfaction; whose souls hungered and thirsted and fainted because there was no hope. Yet, “they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.” That verse reminds us of the beatitude which says, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” That beatitude depicts the state of those who mourn over their sins, who realize their lost condition, that they are hopeless and there is no way out. Yet there is a way through Jesus Christ. Blessed are they that mourn over their sins because there is comfort, there is solace, there is security, and there is salvation, because of the goodness of God in sending Jesus to die. “Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.”

But that was only the beginning of what God did for us in His great goodness. He delivered us from sin, but the next verse says, “And he led them forth by the right way...” Not only has God delivered us as Christians, but now He leads us. We don’t have to wander aimlessly. As Jeremiah said, “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Yet there are millions upon this earth who are still seeking to direct their own steps, to go their own way, and it cannot be done. But because of the goodness of God which delivered us from sin, we have direction in our lives. We have goals—heavenly aspirations. We know where we are going; we know why we are here; and we known whence we have come. We know everything we need to know to be peaceful and satisfied and comforted in this life, because we are led by the will of God. The goodness of God did that for us. It delivered us from sin as we wandered aimlessly, and it brought us together as one in the body of Christ and now leads us in the right way.

For what purpose? “…that they might go to a city of habitation.” For that very purpose we are led by God that we might go to a city of habitation—the Heavenly city. That’s where our citizenship is, where our aspirations lie, and where our hope is attached—all because of the goodness of God. The world cannot do that for us—it cannot give us that hope, that direction; it can’t free us from sin and Satan. But the goodness of God did through Jesus Christ, and it leads us to that Heavenly city.
Is it any wonder that in the next breath, the Psalmist says, “Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” That verse is repeated more than once in those very words, as we will see in this chapter. It is interesting to note in the verses that follow verse 8 and verse 15, we have explanations of why we should praise God: “For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness” (v. 9).

The goodness of God leads to goodness in men. Any true goodness in this world is because of the goodness of God. The good done in this world is done through the influence of God and His righteousness. Certainly, that’s true of the Christian, and how appreciative we ought to be that we can be good because of the goodness of God. His goodness leads to goodness in us. It leads to a satisfaction of the longing soul that hungers and thirsts. Again we are reminded of the beatitude, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Thanks be to God we can be filled through his goodness. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, but only in and through Jesus Christ can we be righteous, and that is because of the goodness of God. There is no way for man to be good outside of Christ. One may do beneficial things for others; one may be generous—give away every dime he has for all sorts of good causes, but no matter how much good is done, if it is done outside of Jesus Christ, it is all for nothing in the final analysis. Only the goodness of God which leads to goodness in those who follow God can satisfy the longing soul. So, the psalmist says we ought to be thankful that the longing within can be satisfied in and through Jesus Christ. In our final segment of this study of the goodness of God, we will continue looking at this verse: “Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”