

God Well Pleaaed

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[0 : 00] It's in Mark chapter 1, we read at verse 11. And there came a voice from heaven saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The idea, the understanding of God being well pleased doesn't really surprise us when we're talking about Jesus. When we're talking about his only beloved Son, of course he is going to be pleasing in his sight.

Then of course, our Lord himself makes mention of this in John 8, verse 29, where he says, He that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him.

Not only did the Lord know from all eternity, but when his Son came to the world, he would fulfill perfectly the law of the Lord in every detail, which man, of course, since the fall had been completely unable to do, but he would render up that perfect obedience as the representative of humanity, or rather of redeemed humanity.

And he would then lay down that perfected sacrifice upon the cross as the once and for all sacrifice for the sins of all his people. It shouldn't surprise us that the Father delights in the Son.

[1 : 22] Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Now, of course, as you'll be aware, each of the different Gospel accounts has an ever so slightly different take or different description of events that they all describe it, or that are familiar, perhaps, to us from the different Gospel accounts.

If we just look, for example, for a moment, at Luke chapter 3, at verse 22, where it says, The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

Both Mark and Luke have the voice addressing Jesus personally, as though it is the Father speaking through the Spirit from heaven itself to the Son.

Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. But, of course, John the Baptist describes in John's account of the Gospel how he beheld the Spirit coming down like a dove, how he himself saw that event, and that's how he knew.

Excuse me. I saw the Spirit, John chapter 1, verse 32, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And he had been warned in advance.

[2 : 36] He says, you know, it's said before that whoever he saw the Spirit descending upon, this was to be the Lamb of God. This was to be the chosen one. I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptise with water the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining with him, the same as he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.

And we don't know if John then, at that occasion, heard any voice or not, or whether the voice was simply exclusively for Jesus. But Matthew would imply that perhaps others also heard it.

Matthew chapter 3, verse 17, although a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Now that's slightly different from Mark and Luke, of course, and you would expect, where there are independent but truthful accounts of a narrative, that there would be slight differences in detail.

That's exactly what you would expect. If they were all identical, you'd know it would have been faked. You'd know it would have all been just sort of stitched up. But because they're each giving their unique account, there are slight differences, and that might beg the question, so which of them is right?

[3 : 48] The cynic might say. Did it say, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased? As those speaking to the rest of the world, or those the crowd gathered? Or is it just a voice to Jesus?

Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Now you might think, well, does it really matter? It's a detail. But these are precisely the sorts of things people try to pick apart. But I would suggest to you that just as, for example, in the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, where the disciples are all declaring the wonderful works of God, all those who have gathered from lots of different nations under heaven, devout Jews as they are from all these different countries, they say, we do each hear them speak the wonderful works of God in our own languages.

And they recognize that different ones of them who maybe spoke more than one language were each hearing them in their native tongue. Now, Peter and John and Thomas and all the others, they didn't suddenly have the ability or the gift to have learned all these languages quickly, but the Lord obviously spoke through them to the ears of those who were hearing.

And I would suggest to you that perhaps, given the truth of God's Word must be consistent throughout, that this is probably a both-and situation where the Lord, the Father, is speaking directly to His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, but at the same time, others who are present at the event hear Him address the wider audience.

This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Now, Matthew, of course, goes on to reference this same kind of address on the Mount of Transfiguration.

[5 : 31] Chapter 17, verse 5 of Matthew, Well, he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Hear ye Him. And, of course, he references this, Peter references this in his second letter, in chapter 1, verse 17, For he received from God, the Father, honor and glory when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory.

This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. So, as I say, it shouldn't really surprise us that the Lord delights or is well pleased in His only begotten Son.

That's what you'd expect. Of course we think He's delighted with Jesus. He has a reason to be delighted in Jesus. But, remember that God's delight is being well pleased, desires to encompass more than just the exclusive Trinity.

You will be aware, no doubt, and we've referenced this in the past, but if you go back to the beginning of creation, where you find that as God begins to speak out the creation of the world, and as it comes into being in those six days, we read six times when God beholds what He has done.

[6 : 50] He said, you know, God divided the light from the darkness. God saw the light that it was good. And again, God called the dry land earth and the gathering together of the waters He called seas, and God saw that it was good.

And so on. God saw that it was good again and again. But when He has created man in His own image, when He has fulfilled the pinnacle of creation, we read God, saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. This is a God well pleased with all that He has done. He's not just delighting within the inner relationship of the Trinity.

He is also well pleased with all His work of creation, not least with that which has been made in His own image, that which has been made for relationship with Him.

Man, male and female, He has created for that relationship with Him. And He is well pleased because what He has seen is very good.

[7 : 58] But of course, as we know, man loses that perfection and that relationship with the Lord. God has no longer any cause to be well pleased with us.

But He is well pleased with His Son, although we have reason to hope that He will be well pleased with His people when they are perfected.

In Psalm 149, we read at verse 4, For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people. He will beautify the meek with salvation.

He will beautify the meek with salvation. Now, of course, we know from the Sermon on the Mount that the Lord says, Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Well, the Lord is promising them an awful lot more than just the earth.

With salvation, there is all the glory of eternity as well and they are beautified with that. Now, of course, you can't make beautiful something which is by nature ugly and deformed and defaced just by putting different clothes or coverings on it.

[9 : 06] But what you can do is if something already has beauty, it can be enhanced and it can be made the best that it can be when it is attired differently, when it is rather placed in a different context.

He will beautify the meek with salvation. In other words, those who he is going to delight in even more, the Lord taketh pleasure in his people. He takes pleasure in them because they are his and being meek, that is, recognizing their own weakness and helplessness and that all that they have comes from the Lord, then they are beautified, made holy, made acceptable in his sight by the fact that they are redeemed and saved and granted salvation, which makes them beautiful where before they were not.

He will beautify the meek with salvation and then he will set them in the context of a blessed eternity which only enhances the beauty that he has made. The Lord taketh pleasure in his people.

The meek he will beautify with salvation. This is, remember, still back in the Old Testament, this is before the gospel dawns on mankind, before the Lord's people of Israel receive the Messiah at all.

The Lord takes pleasure in his people, which again indicates to us that prior to the actual coming of the Messiah, that which the Lord had revealed by way of the Old Dispensation, the sacrifices and the sacraments of the Old Testament, Passover and circumcision and so on, all of which was pointing forward to the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, pointing forward to the fact that even natural regeneration must be, as it were, clothed and covered with blood of the sacrifice and only by that are we cleansed.

[11 : 03] All of these things point forward to the fulfillment in Christ and as a result, those who in faith follow that which the Lord gives them are accepted, beautified by the salvation which Christ will purchase in the fullness of time.

and they are saved and redeemed by what Christ has already come and added to do. They are just as beautified, they are just as well pleasing to the Lord in the Old Testament if they are whose, than those who are saints in the New Testament.

There's not a distinction in that or a difference in that sense. David and Samuel and Moses and Elijah and all the prophets and so on, all those who are truly, faithfully the Lord in the Old Testament, they are in glory long before the Lord actually gets born at Bethlehem and they are in glory only on the basis of what Christ has covenanted to do.

But because he is God, his having covenanted to do so from all eternity means that that payment is effectively as good as made and on its promise the father receives these redeemed souls, the spirits of just men made perfect into his presence.

of course he delights in his son, but he also is well pleased with those whom his son purchases for him. The Lord takes pleasure in his people, the meek will be beautified with salvation.

[12 : 34] But there is a little more also that the Lord is well pleased with. He is well pleased also with the faithfulness and obedience of his children.

Of course the Lord knows that our human nature, our tendency particularly in our fallen condition is towards pride and towards seeking to be more important and better than other people.

And part of what we are called to do as followers of Christ is to follow the humility which he exemplified. Although he was king of kings and lord of lords, he washed his disciples' feet.

He walked the dusty roads of Palestine. He didn't ride in a chariot or a carriage or a great white charger. He was humble. He was meek. And his followers are called to be like him.

And part of that meekness is that they submit to one another and to the authority that the Lord has set over them. I mean, look at how Jesus behaved in the presence of the high priest and the Sanhedrin when they were taunting him and they were beating him up and they were abusing him in every way.

[13 : 42] He could have called down his meetings of angels. He could have zapped them with lightning bolts from heaven. He could have done anything but he just meekly accepted that which he knew had to be endured.

And that was not to his shame. That was part of his glory. And so we see in the letter to the Colossians, excuse me, we read how the apostle writes to them, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly and all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord, and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

And then when it follows about how husbands and wives and children are to behave, that's the context in which they are to behave, doing it all in the fear and knowledge of the Lord, submitting to one another. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey all things your masters according to the flesh, not with all these services men please us, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.

[15 : 07] And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men. You see, what is being required here is that we submit one to another in our differing relationships and where the Lord has placed each of us.

There's always somebody you have to submit to. There's always things you have to do. Whether, you know, whether it's a politician has to submit to the electorate and he or she might far rather just carry on in office.

I mean, they go to the people and get votes every so often, they'd far rather just carry on as they are without having to refer to somebody else. But they have to submit to that. However powerful they are, they have to submit to that.

We each have to submit to other authorities. We think, well, the Queen's ahead of state, she doesn't have to submit to anyone apart from God. But of course the Queen has to submit to the required norms and duties and state visits and goodness knows all.

What? She doesn't really get a choice in what she does about all these things. So we all have to submit to one another in different ways.

[16 : 16] So when it says, for example, children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. It doesn't just mean, oh, well, if you're kids, then that's the main thing. It means rather, and the catechism's bringing this out, that as we submit to our parents, we recognize also that all the authority that God has placed in this world, the powers that be, are ordained of God.

All of this is encapsulated within the command to honor our father and our mother. It's not just, well, as long you have your parents, you can be rebellious and you can be a civil disobedience and you can plan the overthrow of the government and so on, all these things you can do.

know, if you're honoring your father and mother, that means also recognizing those whom the Lord has appointed in their due and proper place over us in civil and ecclesiastical and church affairs and in all the powers that be in all the different dominions of life and there'll be a lot of those powers that we don't like and there'll be a lot of things that they may command that we don't agree with.

Us not agreeing with them is one thing, then commanding things which God has forbidden. Well, that's quite another. There are way come times when obedience to the Lord means we have to reject some of what either the civil magistrate or a particular power may require of us.

When it comes down to God or man, it's a no-brainer. But as far as all other relationships are concerned, we are to submit to them. Children, obey your parents in all things.

[17 : 52] For this is well pleasing unto the Lord. And we're all somebody's children. The reason we exist in the world is because we have biological parents, whether or not they're still living, whether or not we may have known our individual parents, whether we may be adopted or fostered or anything like that with somebody else.

We all had biological parents. We all had those who were physically responsible for us being in the world. So we are all children of parents somewhere along the line.

And likewise, we all had somebody that we have to submit to. And we might think, oh, might it not be great just to be a boss that doesn't have to submit to anyone? There's always somebody, no matter how high up the boss is, to whom he or she must likewise submit.

And how we do so shows our faithfulness to the Lord. Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Whatsoever you do, verse 43, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men.

This is in Colossians 3. So dwell pleasing to the Lord in order to submit one to another and have that humility which does not come by nature.

[19 : 09] And because it doesn't come by nature, if we have it at all, it can only be a work of grace. It can only be because the Lord has placed that there and nurtured it and brought it on.

And that is well-pleasing to the Lord. It is that which causes him to be well-pleased. One other example we could look at is in Hebrews 13 where the Apostle writing is encouraging the believers to support one another, to strengthen one another, to be giving one to another.

That's partly what he means in the word communicate, where he says, to do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased.

Now we've already established how the Lord is well-pleased with his people, not only by way of creation, God saw what he made, that was very good, but also by way of redemption, particularly by way of redemption.

The meek he will beautify with salvation. The Lord takes pleasure in his people, Psalm 149 tells us. We also read of how he is well-pleased with our mutual obedience one to another.

[20 : 26] But here in Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 16, they're talking about sacrifice, about the sacrifice of supporting one another. And in some ways, of course, it's easier just to keep what we have for ourselves and say, well, it's mine, and I worked with it, and I did it, and I've got it, so I'm entitled to do it, do what I want with it.

Well, it's okay to have things that are under your control, and under your power, and accumulation of wealth, or goods, or resources, but for the believer, the greatest advantage in having more under your control is that when you get to say, under God, what gets done with it?

The more you have at your disposal, the more good you can do with it. The more you can help those who may be in need, the more you may be able to support missionaries, or church plants, or those who are serving the Lord, but are needy elsewhere, to communicate, forget not.

That's what Paul was writing about to the Philippians when he praised their support of him. In chapter 4, verse 15, Now, ye Philippians knew also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

So he says to do good and communicate, forget not. Don't forget to support one another. Don't forget to give. Don't forget to uphold each other, not only with prayer, but with practical help as well.

[21 : 56] And although we say, oh, yeah, but I wanted to do this for that money, I wanted to do that, but I was saving that for this, oh, why do I have to get rid of it? Why do I have to let it go? It is sometimes we are called upon to let go of something that we have perhaps focused upon and wanted and really desired for ourselves.

And yes, it's a sacrifice. Yes, it's a suffering in a sense. With such sacrifices, God is well pleased.

Why would he be well pleased with sacrifice or suffering in that sense? Well, why do we make a sacrifice of that? Why in the Old Testament times did they sacrifice their sheep or goats or oxen or whatever?

Because it cost them. Because they were demonstrating in obedience and love to the Lord. Lord, this is not just how much I love you, but this is a token of the fact of how I love you and how I recognize that everything everything I have is from you in the first place.

If I've got 50 oxen in my herd, and that's great, and I'm giving you one of them, Lord, I acknowledge the other 49 I've only got because you gave them to me. It's a demonstration of love.

[23 : 10] Such a sacrifice demonstrates our love to the Lord who provides for us and states to the world, look, I love the Lord this much and more.

Of course I'm happy to part with something he's given me. With such sacrifices, God is well pleased. It doesn't come by nature. And when we are ready to sacrifice our goods, our resources, our money, our time, or whatever it may be, we demonstrate that the Lord has become more important to us than all these lesser things.

And if there is one thing the Lord delights in more than anything, it is the knowledge of how much his children love him.

And the more they love him, the more they want to show they love him. And the more they show they love him and put that love into practice by submitting and obeying one another in the mutual relationships that Colossians was talking about, which doesn't come by nature.

It only comes readily by grace. By giving to one another, supporting one another, and helping each other, yes, even at a cost, but such sacrifices, God is well pleased.

[24 : 27] Now, of course, as we mentioned at the outset, it's no surprise to us that God should be well pleased with his Son, Jesus Christ. It is perhaps a huge surprise to us that he should ever be well pleased with his children, if that means the likes of us.

Well, of course, if we're going to please him at all, then we must first put our trust and our faith in him. Now, as Hebrews tells us, going back a chapter, he that cometh to God must believe that he is.

Without faith, it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is in a ward of them that diligently seek him. So we can't please the Lord at all without first putting our faith and our trust in him.

But when we do, that's not like a static, lightless thing. It's not like just clicking a switch and leaving a marker down somewhere. It becomes, as Jesus said many times in his parables, like a seed, something that grows and develops.

And in other words, what we are doing when we share and sacrifice out, things we would rather keep to ourselves when we submit one to another in humility, is we are showing that we are growing.

[25 : 43] We are showing that we are being changed. And it's no surprise that the Lord delights in Jesus. But the miracle to us is that he can delight in us too as he sees us become more and more like Jesus.

And that is, of course, his objective. That is his desire, his intention that we become more and more like him, that we become like Christ because Christ is the perfect image of his Father.

1 John chapter 3, Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Now, of course, as I mentioned often in the past, sons inherit in a way that in biblical times daughters don't. So when we become honorary sons, whatever our gender may be, when we become only sons, we stand to inherit that which will become ours through the death of our only Savior.

And in that sense, to that extent, we become, as the Bible says, sons of God. And it can be, with all reverence and humility we might say, that the Lord might at the last say to each, save one of us, for all who are redeemed as his children, as he said to his only begotten son, thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

[27 : 24] That's right.