

GENERAL SUBJECT: GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE

Message One

God's Good Pleasure—What Makes God Happy

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:11-16; Phil. 2:13; Matt. 3:13-17; 17:5;
Gal. 1:15-16; Rom. 14:17-18

I. God's good pleasure, His heart's desire, is to meet the demand of this age, which is God's need in this age:

- A. God's present need in this age is the Body testimony, which is the reality of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:1-16; Rev. 19:7; 21:2; cf. Gen. 2:22.
- B. Ephesians 4:15 and 16 say that **all the members** of the Body grow up into the Head and function out from the Head; thus, **“all the Body”** (with the supplying joints and the functioning of each one part) “causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.”
- C. In the present age, we are being perfected to become functioning members of the Body of Christ; this is our being perfected “unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ”—vv. 11-12; 1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12; 1 Cor. 4:16-17.

II. God's good pleasure, God's heart's desire, is what makes God happy:

- A. God is happy with the creation of the earth; His kingdom will be set up on the earth—Job 38:4, 7; Matt. 6:10; Rev. 5:10; 11:15; 21:1; Zech. 12:1.
- B. God is happy with the creation of man; for each of the items that God had created, He said “good” (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 21, 25), but for the creation of man, He said “very good” because man had God's image and had been given God's dominion for the glory of God and the kingdom of God (vv. 26, 31; Isa. 43:7; Matt. 6:10, 13b).
- C. God is happy with the incarnation (Luke 2:9-14); Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Eternal Father, and the Prince of Peace to be the unique Governor, and the government of the Triune God is upon His shoulder (Isa. 9:6-7); He is our Savior and our Emmanuel, the God-man, the One who is united, mingled, and incorporated with man (Matt. 1:21, 23; John 14:9-11, 16-20).
- D. God is happy with Christ's baptism; when He was baptized to begin His public ministry, “the heavens were opened to Him... And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight”; the Lord Jesus, taking the standing of a typical man, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness and to allow Himself to be put into death and resurrection so that He might live and minister in resurrection—Matt. 3:13-17.
- E. God is happy with the resurrected and glorified Christ; when Christ was transfigured, as a foreshadowing of His resurrection, “behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!” (17:5); God took pleasure in the resurrection and glorification of His Son (Luke 24:26).
- F. God is happy when His prodigal sons return to Him; the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 may be called the parable of a happy father; after the father “ran” to his returning son (v. 20), he told his servants to bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and he said, “Let us eat and be merry” (v. 23); here we see the merit of God.
- G. God is happy when His Son is revealed in us—“It pleased God... to reveal His Son in me” (Gal. 1:15-16)—and when we are fully brought into the sonship of God (4:4-6; Eph. 1:4-5); this fulfills God's good pleasure to have many sons for His corporate expression; the Son revealed in us has brought us into the meaning of the earth, of man, and of the incarnate, crucified, and resurrected Lord.

- H. God is happy to operate in us “both the willing and the working for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13); the Christian life with the supply of the Body life (1:19) is a happy life; our inward joy is an indication that we are living and walking according to God’s good pleasure; since the book of Philippians, written by Paul in prison (v. 13; 4:22), is concerned with the experience and enjoyment of Christ, which issue in joy, it is a book filled with joy and rejoicing (1:4, 18, 25; 2:2, 17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4).
- I. God is happy to have a man of God (Psa. 90, title; Deut. 33:1; Ezra 3:2) who lives God and lives out God in order to gain God by being one with God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Tim. 6:11-12; Phil. 3:8, 14); Jesus of Nazareth is the standard pattern of a man of God who lived out God (John 6:57; 5:19, 30; 10:30); the Lord said that He did not come to do His own will or to seek His own glory (5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:18); when we take Christ as our crucified life for His manifestation as the resurrection life, we will experience Him as the indwelling and enabling power of resurrection to deny our will and our glory (Phil. 3:10; 2 Cor. 4:5-7; Rom. 14:7-9).
- J. God is happy when we eat Christ as our spiritual food in order to live because of Him (John 6:57); to eat Christ is to eat His words by exercising our spirit to both pray-read and muse upon His words so that His words become the gladness and joy of our heart (Jer. 15:16; Psa. 119:15-16; Josh. 1:8-9); to live because of Christ means that the energizing element of Christ becomes the supplying factor for us to live Christ.
- K. God is happy when we are daily strengthened into our inner man so that Christ may make His home in our hearts through faith; our inner man is our regenerated spirit, which has God’s life as its life (Eph. 3:16-17; John 3:6b; Rom. 8:10).
- L. God is happy when we remain in our spirit and pay attention to our spirit (v. 6b); when the Lord says, “Abide in Me” (John 15:4), this wonderful “Me” is in our spirit, and when we are in Him by being in our spirit, in us the ruler of this world has nothing—no ground, no chance, no hope, and no possibility in anything (14:30; cf. 12:31-32).
- M. God is happy when we serve Him as a slave by living in the reality of the kingdom of God in the way of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit; this is well pleasing to God and approved by men, and it preserves the oneness of the church for the practical Body life—Rom. 14:17-18.
- N. God is happy when we worship Him in spirit; God’s eternal economy is focused on and is carried out by our mingled spirit—the divine Spirit mingled together with our human spirit as one spirit—John 4:23-24; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 1:9.
- O. God is happy when we are one with Him in His ministry to carry out His eternal economy; in the Lord’s ministry we care only for the divine dispensing of the Triune God, embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit, into His chosen people—Eph. 1:9-11; 3:2, 9-10; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6; 1 Pet. 4:10.
- P. We must be a people in whom, with whom, and through whom God may have His good pleasure; we must be “determined...to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him” (2 Cor. 5:9) by being one with Christ as the One who sacrificed Himself on the cross to produce new wine to cheer God and men (Judg. 9:12-13; Matt. 9:17).
- Q. God will be happy with our glorification—“The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed upon us. For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God...The creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now. And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body”—Rom. 8:18-19, 21-23; cf. Eph. 1:4-5.