

His Good Pleasure

Let's pray:

Lord, we thank You so much for the precious time around Your table and revealing Yourself as the precious One. And Lord, we are thankful that we can continue in Your presence throughout this time. We do acknowledge that You alone have those words of eternal life. And Lord, we come to You just as we beheld You at the table, we want to behold You in Your Word, that Your Word could impact us. We are not here for an academic study, we are here to behold the Lamb of God, beholding the Word of life, that that Word would grip our hearts, would continue to be working within us in a very living real way to prepare us to be the people of God You are calling us to be in the hour and time that we find ourselves living in. We are thankful, Lord, that we can offer ourselves unto You this morning as that living sacrifice for you to have Your way within our hearts and within our lives. In Your precious name. Amen.

Mark 1:11: "And a voice came out of the heavens: 'You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.'"

This was after our Lord was baptized and came out of the waters. And the Wuest translation says, "In whom I take pleasure."

Matthew 17:5: "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice came out of the cloud and said, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!'"

This is on the Mount of Transfiguration and the Lord showed forth His glory and how Peter, James and John got caught up in everything, and Peter was going to make those tabernacles for the three of them to dwell in, and God the Father stepped in and took over. This speaks of while Peter was still speaking, who was just babbling along, and the Lord intervened.

(Note that little phrase again, "I am well pleased." And if you look at it in the Wuest translation it says, "In whom I take pleasure.") Colossians 1:19: "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him."

Note that these familiar words of "well pleased" and "good pleasure" are actually the same word. Well pleased is the verb, good pleasure is the noun for the English majors here. I had to look that up.

We see how from the heart of God when He beheld His Son, He was well-pleased; it was His good pleasure, and it was such a relationship. When we think of what is precious to the Father, I had no idea what Jerry was going to open with this morning. He had no idea what I was going to share, but the Lord seems to be focusing us on the preciousness of our Lord, and in that preciousness, the Father testifies how He is so well-pleased with Him. I think what I have upon my heart this morning is that we could really gain a greater appreciation of the Father's heart for His Son, and not only that but the Father's heart for us. The Father has a great heart for His Son, and in that He testifies in a marvelous way. And He has a great heart for us, and He testifies of that also.

When we think of words like “well-pleased” and “good pleasure,” what does it mean? I looked it up in Vine’s and other dictionaries, and it probably takes a PHD to figure out what they are saying. So this is Mac’s paraphrase colloquialized version in an attempt to understand what these theologians were trying to explain. Well-pleased or good pleasure is not just somebody doing something right or making you happy. From the Father’s perspective, it is really looking at that person and stressing and emphasizing the pleasure, the joy, the delight, that the Father has when He sees His Son’s willingness, out of love and His own free will, do what is the desire of the Father’s heart. The Son knows the Father; He desires to please Him, and out of that love for His Father, no matter what the cost is, He says, “this is what I am willing to do.”

And in the same way the Lord is calling us. As we behold Him, the more we behold Christ, the more the cost of following Him seems to fade away because it pales in comparison with the greatness and glory of the Father and the greatness and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it captures us. “Jesus Lord, I am captured by Thy beauty.” We move ahead. And this is what this particular phrase “well-pleased” means.

What is the desire of our Father’s heart? His desire is that His Son would have preeminence in everything, not just most things, not just some things, but everything. He wants His Son to have that preeminence in every heart and every life throughout this world, beholding Him. And we know that one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord, but He is jealous for that now.

He also desires that His Son will have that eternal companion. The Father is jealous that His Son will be married, His Son will have that eternal companion, that bride. The Father’s heart is that His Son will have the preeminence and that eternal companion, and this is driving, if we could say, the Father’s heart and His desire. Our beloved Lord Jesus has captured that desire of the Father’s heart, and it is governing His life in such a way that in order for this to be accomplished He freely gave of Himself to leave the splendor of heaven to come down to this earth and take on the form of a man, that bondsman character. He was obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. So we see how so willing He was.

One of the first steps that He did publicly was to be baptized. And we saw that when our Lord Jesus was baptized, and He came up from those waters, the heavens opened up, and the Father declared: “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.” Why was He pleased that our Lord Jesus was baptized? We look upon baptism sometimes as just a simple act, but why did it please the Father’s heart that His Son was willing to be baptized? Out of heaven this joyous delight burst forth from the Father, saying, “In You I am well-pleased!” He was testifying of how His Son was willing to leave heaven, come to this earth and be crucified in order to accomplish His purpose. He was testifying of His faithfulness to those thirty hidden years. Here was the Creator, the Son of God hidden upon man, unknown to most throughout those thirty years, and willing to learn throughout that time.

His Father was also testifying, “Here is the Son of God, the Son of Man who was willing to pay the price for all of mankind that we would not have to die, we would not have to suffer that eternal death. We would not have to suffer that second death because He was willing to go to the point of being baptized.” What is baptism? What does it testify of? It testifies of one willing to go

down into death; it testifies of the resurrection; it testifies of that death, burial and resurrection. In many ways the baptism of our Lord Jesus was a prophetic testimony of His life upon this earth. It testified beforehand of the way He was going to walk, of His willingness to go to that point of death. And most people had no idea what was going on at this time, the significance of it, but when His Father saw it, He said, "Wow! My purpose is going to be accomplished! My Son is testifying that He is willing to go this way," and heaven opened up and declared, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." What a pleasure it brought to the Father's heart! Every time there is a baptism, would the Lord open our hearts in a fresh way to a fuller understanding of the beauty and glory of baptism.

It is one of our first steps as a believer, taking that step of testifying. We often sing, "I have decided to follow Jesus," and that could sound like such a beautiful song, and it is, but what does it mean to follow Jesus? It means to go the way of the cross, but if you only see the cross as the end, we are really not seeing the fulness of Christ because it did not end there. It was a cross; it was a burial, but there was a resurrection. There was that ascension. There is a Man in glory. We can rejoice now because there is a man seated in glory, and we worship Him. He has paid that price for each and every one of us. What a joy it brings to our heart!

Then we move on to this scene in Matthew 17, the transfiguration. And we see again the Father uttering that same declaration of how pleased He is with His Son. Why was He pleased? The Son is at the Mount of Transfiguration. He had lived His life upon this earth, and He had been obedient. He came up to that mount and was transfigured, and the glory that was within Him shown forth, that glory of what was to be throughout all eternity. And there was Moses and Elijah standing there with Him, talking about His departure. Moses and Elijah were great servants of the Lord, one speaks of the Law and one speaks of the prophets. But when you think about them, neither one of them, some say, fully finished his mission upon this earth; they came short. Now they are talking about the departure of our Lord Jesus who could have ascended to heaven because he had lived that perfect life as a Man. He did not have to go the way of the cross. As we have heard so often, if He had ascended into heaven, there would only be one Man in glory now, but He said, "No, I want to finish what I came for, I want to finish the work that My Father has called Me to." So He made a declaration: "I am willing to go down from this mountain and go the way of the cross." It was a precious testimony. He was willing because He was captured by the Father's purpose and the Father's heart. He said again, "I am willing to go down and walk this way." No wonder that voice came out of heaven and said, "This is My beloved Son in who I am well-pleased."

Also in that verse there is a little phrase that God adds to that declaration. He says, "Listen to Him." Who is God speaking to on the Mount of Transfiguration? His testifying was not for the Lord's sake. The testimony of God speaking on the Mount of Transfiguration, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him," was for the disciples' sake.

In Matthew 16 right before this setting, He had really shared with them some difficult things. They knew that He was the Christ, and He told them, "I am going to have to go Jerusalem. I am going to be crucified and die, but I am going to be resurrected." And Peter says, "No! You are not!" Peter steps in, babbling again, but the Lord said, "No, Peter! Get behind me."

He had shared this with them, and then He shared with them that if anybody wanted to follow Him, he was going to have to deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Him. These were some hard sayings for the disciples. So He had really given them about a week to meditate and consider on these things. They heard these precious teachings, but it was beyond them. It was hard for them to comprehend the fulness of what our Lord was saying to them. And it says it was about a week between chapter 16 and chapter 17, so they could consider it in their hearts. Then in the grace of God, there is the Mount of Transfiguration experience to show them the glory set before them, to show them as one goes the way of the cross there is a glory set before them. In one sense, it was a pictorial lesson, a visual lesson for them to experience and see everything that our Lord was calling them into. He was trying to explain to them visually what He had been sharing with them verbally. They obviously did not comprehend it fully, but it was to encourage them on. Why did the Father say this? The Father knew them, and the Father knew they did not understand. Maybe they were frightened of what was going to be ahead. But He said, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him." He shared that to those disciples, and He shares this with us to comfort us, to encourage us, to strengthen us, to allow us to press on. Even through some of the hard things we might not understand, some of the things we may not fully grasp, in Him we are pressing on to glory in what He has for us.

There is a dear Quaker brother, William Penn, and he has a precious book out called, "No cross, no crown." Many want the crown. How we love to have that crown! He says, "There is no crown without the way of the cross." And this is what the Lord was conveying to these dear disciples, and again the Father's heart was overflowing with joy. In many ways if you can say this of God, "He was a proud Father." Proud can be neutral; it all depends on how we use it. He was a proud Father, saying, "Look at My Son! Look at what He is sharing with you! Look at what He is showing you!" Do we get it?

When we take this table on the Lord's day, it is a marvelous testimony of all that God has for us. Praise God, we are not just remembering His death, He is showing us there is that hope set before us of His return, of Him being with us, caring for us, and the provision He has made for us every day throughout our walk upon this earth. I believe when saints celebrate the Lord's table and remember His Son, what pleasure it brings to the Father's heart. There is a joy there. Praise God for the privilege we have.

There are three times when the Father says this of the Son. We mentioned it twice, and then it is incorporated in Paul's letter to the ones in Colossi. Paul is writing of the revelation that he has, and he is testifying of the Father.

Colossians 1:19: "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him."

This word "dwell" is such a precious word; it is a special word. It means to dwell there permanently. Sometimes we think of abiding as coming and going or dwelling somewhere that can be temporary. There can be an element of time associated with it. But this is a permanent dwelling; all the fulness is to dwell in Him. And depending on your translation, literally it says, "It was the good pleasure that in Him should all the fulness dwell." That is the literal way it reads in the original. There is no Father, God, Godhead. Depending on the translation you have, some have inserted one of those words in there, and normally they put it in italics because originally it was

not there; it is implied. If you look at the text there, it is implied of the pleasure that it brings to them. But then it says, "All the fulness," All the fulness is dwelling in Him. What is all this fulness? If you look at those verses from Colossians 1:15-20, there is a picture which has the image of the invisible God, firstborn of all creation. The Creator, eternal before all things, holds all things together, the Head of the church, firstborn from the dead, the preeminent One, the Reconciler, Peacemaker. And I do not believe this is a comprehensive list. You can go on and on describing the fulness of who the Lord is.

When we consider all this fulness, we see the pleasure and the joy that the Father had. It was not so much that it dwelt in the Son of God alone because really all the fulness dwells in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit permanently. So what is the difference here? This was a Man; all the fulness of God was dwelling in a Man. The fulness of the Godhead, the fulness of the Father, however you want to phrase it was dwelling in a Man. and it brought such pleasure to the Father's heart because He was accomplishing everything.

As we have looked upon these verses, I think all of us agree fully with all these verses, and we accept them, and we say, "Praise God for it." As we said, we can celebrate it every day, every Sunday with the Lord's Table, but that is not the burden upon my heart today. That is more of an introduction.

What really is upon my heart today is to take it a step further, and just ask ourselves, "Do we believe?" Now this is us. Do we believe it was God's good pleasure to reveal His Son in us? It was God's good pleasure to reveal His Son. Do we believe it? It is His good pleasure to work out our salvation. Do we believe it was His good pleasure to give us the kingdom? Now when we come to these matters of what we believe, we say that we believe, but all of a sudden we find ourselves beginning to struggle with this. There is a great battle that goes on, and what happens is that our eyes begin to shift off of Him and His glory and splendor, and we see ourselves. I battle with it. I imagine most of us do. How could God be pleased to reveal Himself to me? Look at what I am. Look at the mess I have made after knowing Him all these years. I am like one of the disciples. He said, "I have been with You so long, and You do not know me that well." It was His good pleasure to give us, the plural flock, the kingdom. We can get it in our minds, but is there a reality of that within our hearts and do we believe that it is God's good pleasure? He brought great joy in revealing Himself and revealing His Son to us. Again, we all say, "Amen." But as we walk through this life, as we go through our daily experiences, we find ourselves challenged with the reality of that, and it is a process that we go through. It is not instantaneous. This Christian life, this whole process of knowing Him more and more in reality, it is coming into that day by day. As day by day we accept the challenges that He puts before us, as day by day we learn of Him, and we gain a little more of Him, He increases and we decrease.

The three things I asked us about, let's look at the verses specifically so we will know what we are talking about.

In Galatians 1:15-16 this is Paul's testimony. "But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles."

Again what is our caveat in that verse? We say, “Oh, I know He would be pleased to reveal this within Paul, but I am no Paul. I am nothing. Look at me, look at this.” But no, it is the same for each of us.

Philippians 2:12-13: “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

When many of us look at that verse, we stop about half way through when it says, “work out your salvation with fear and trembling,” and we say, “No way; I cannot do this.” Praise God, it does not stop there, “For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

Luke 12:32: “Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

It is His good pleasure for us to enter in to the kingdom. But thank the Lord, each of these verses testify of the truth. Just as much as it testifies of the Father’s good pleasure for the Son, it testifies of the truth related to us. Now these are magnificent verses. Each of these verses that we are going to look at, we could have one whole message on each one, we could have a conference on them. But we are just going to look at one aspect of these verses today—His good pleasure. It does not take away from the significance of other parts of the verse.

Galatians 1:15 says, “But when God was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.” What a wonderful testimony Paul had there. We remember the story of Paul, the Pharisee, how he was the persecutor of the church and he was going to Damascus to arrest and persecute more and more believers of the way. But on that road to Damascus, God knocked him off his high horse. He humbled him. He brought him down and revealed the gospel to him, and he was saved. Paul had a great revelation at that point in time. I know he was called Saul and Paul at times, but for simplicity sake, I am going to say, “Paul.”

Had Paul done anything to deserve to be saved? He had actually been an enemy against the church. He thought he was doing good works for God. It is interesting that he had not done anything to qualify him to be saved, neither had he done anything to disqualify him from being saved because it was not dependent upon him. It was dependent upon God. God revealed Himself to him.

In the same way, none of us have done anything to qualify us for salvation, nor have any of us done anything to disqualify us from salvation. Praise God for that! We know we have many testimonies of the things we have done in the past, but we are thankful the past is concluded, and there is nothing that can keep us from entering in. It is amazing when you stop and consider who God is, and yet how He could find good pleasure in revealing Himself to an enemy of the church, a persecutor of the church or to ones like us who had no desire for Him. But we see that God has a purpose. He has something that He wants for His Son, and we might not fully comprehend God’s purpose. What does it mean that Christ have the preeminence, that God have a bride made ready. We might not fully comprehend that, but there is a sensing within us. We see in part, and there is a sensing within us that captures us and wants us to follow Him wherever He

goes, that we could follow the Lamb wherever He goes, and that would bring such great pleasure to the Father.

It is amazing the word that God gave to Paul, the zealot of Israel, the zealot who was of the Law, and then converted to being a proclaimer of the grace of God. Wow! What a contrast that is! This is the persecutor who became the caregiver, the persecutor who became the apostle, and the caregiver. It talks about how at times he was a mother, and he was a father to ones. He was so formed. Paul was the first apostle, and it speaks something of the revelation that he had. He was the first apostle to preach Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He was the first one to openly proclaim to those around: "This is the Son of God." What a marvelous testimony he had seen!

It pleased Him in the same way to reveal His Son in us. We are all called to the same purpose, but there is a great diversity in the work we are called to. The Lord works out things in many diverse ways. Paul was called a certain way. Each one had a calling, and the Lord has a calling upon each one of us. We are the called, and that is a broad term, but it is also a very specific individual term. God has a calling for each and every one of us because He created us for good works. He has created us for the good works that Christ could come forth. But why don't we enter into it? Why don't we really enter in to all that He has? Our greatest hindrance is very simple; it is unbelief. "This verse is wonderful; these are great truths. They are for many, but for me I am not good enough. There is something within me, and I cannot accept this." Therefore, we do not fully enter into believing it. But by the grace of God, we can say, "yes" to the unseen and "no" to the seen. As we say, "Yes" to Him, we can enter in to more and more. And as we enter in, He begins doing this wonderful great work that we considered in Philippians 2:12-13:

"So then my beloved, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

Praise God! Salvation here is not speaking of justification but sanctification. He is speaking here of the salvation of our soul in which He must increase and we must decrease. And the working out here means entering into the experiential reality of what has been given us by the grace of God and the Holy Spirit within us. It is working out what He has given to us of entering into the reality. And we are thankful how as God reveals His Son to us, His desire is that His Son would then be formed within us, and His Son would continue to increase and we would decrease.

When we think of this work of transforming or conforming, who does this work? So often we think we have to do it. "I am going to be a better Christian. I am going to do this." But who is it that is calling us to this transforming work? Who is it that does the work? Because we cannot do it ourselves, this is what many of us wrestle with. Maybe it is something like a generational thing. The generation I grew up in would say, "When you run into hard times, you just press through. When things got difficult, you worked through it." It did not matter what obstacle there was, you found a way to work through it. And sadly, some of us have transferred that to our Christian life. "I am going to work hard and be a better Christian. I am not going to let the obstacle of my flesh hinder me from pressing on. I am going to do it." The Lord eventually opens our eyes to see the marvelous grace of God because we come to a point of seeing that we cannot do it. We try, we fail, and we go at it again. Then we are thankful for the Holy Spirit indwelling us, and bringing us

into the reality of this verse: "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." He is delighted to do His work in us. But it is not only His working; He gives us the will, the desire to do it.

I always remember F.B. Meyer had this prayer he would pray because at times there were things the Lord would ask him to do, and he did not have a willingness to do it. But based on this verse he said, "Lord, make me willing to be willing, that I would surrender to You and go Your way."

What is the way that God works? It is the same way as His Son; it is the way His Son went. In the first part of the verses out of Philippians 2 you see the way of the Son, how He left the splendor of heaven, came down upon this earth and went the way of the cross. But it did not stop at the cross, as we said before. He was exalted on high and given that Name above all names. Praise God for that! He finished the race.

In the same way, these verses that we have read provide the same provision for us. As we look back at this verse, there is a full provision for us for God to work in us. None of us have been shortchanged. It is not like He was prejudiced, and He gave more to this one or more to that one.

Why do we see more of Christ in some believers than in others at times? It is simply because that dear one was willing to go the way of Christ, to go the way of the cross, and God was able to express more of Christ through that one. Praise God! There is nothing within us that magnifies Christ in ourselves; it is the Son. Actually Christ gets magnified in us as we get out of the way, as we decrease, more of Him can shine in fully. The more transparent we are before our Father, which is laying ourselves open and bare for Him to work as He desires, the more Christ can shine through us by His grace, by that Holy Spirit enabling—"not I but Christ." This was Paul's testimony.

We come to the place of saying, "No to my desires, no to my ability, no to my energies, no to thinking I can handle it. I have shared the gospel with hundreds of people before; I can go out and share the gospel myself. I have done many Bible studies; I have taught Sunday school for years; I can do it." No, we are just as dependent upon the Lord the very first time we shared the gospel, the first time we shared the Word, the first time we ever taught a Sunday School class as we are with twenty or thirty years' experience. Our dependence upon Him has not changed one iota. It is that He could have the place of preeminence in our lives.

It is also thinking that God is not adequate for the task. Probably all of us at times in our experiences have found ourselves in a difficult situation, and one of the first thoughts that has come to me is, "This one is just too big; even God cannot work this out." However, eventually as we first try to work it out, making an even bigger mess of it, we find that He is adequate for the things that are way beyond us, but it is a matter of coming into that reality. And if the Lord would give us a greater perspective of the challenges and circumstances that we face in our everyday life, we would see them as opportunities to learn of Him. These are the things that we face at school, at home or work or in the assembly that He uses to reveal His Son to us in a greater way and do that transforming work of Him increasing and us decreasing. We have those difficult ones at school in which you have difficult classmates, teachers, and bullies. We have had bullies for years, but there is a way in Christ to overcome. I think one of the hardest things to see at times is

that God is bigger than the biggest bully. Who was one of the greatest bullies in the Old Testament? Goliath! One little stone knocked him out because David had faith in the living God.

We have some Goliath bullies in our life, whether at work, school, or other various situations, but God is greater! Are we going to give Him the opportunity to prove Himself by His grace, by the Holy Spirit? There may be difficult coworkers and others, but one of the greatest challenges we have been given in our lives as brothers and sisters together is in the assembly of God, but God does such a perfecting work. If we are honest there are brothers and sisters that get under our skin. I know I get under people's skin, and some people get under my skin. But in these we see opportunities to learn of Christ, to press on, and to allow Him to work out this so great salvation that we have been brought into. May we be constrained by that love of Christ in such a way that we no longer live for ourselves, but we live for Him who loved us and died for us; it is not for ourselves but for Him. He has made that provision for us, and what a great pleasure it brings to the Father's heart when He sees ones that by that grace and the Holy Spirit have been able to say, "no" to themselves and the struggle. God sees the struggles we face, and He sees the struggle that it was to say, "no" and continue to press on. But it brings forth that fragrant aroma when we say, "no" to ourselves, and we are willing to go the way of the cross. It is like that precious ointment, that fragrant aroma that comes forth, and oh, how it pleases God! Nobody else upon this earth may know of it, but our heavenly Father does.

There is a dear brother who has a translation of Paul's letters plus the letter to the Hebrews, and if anybody is familiar with Amy Carmichael you have already been introduced to Arthur Way. I appreciate him and his translation of this, a couple of words in particular.

He says, "Therefore my dear ones, work out your salvation with fear and self-distrust." I love that word, self-distrust. I had not seen that anywhere before, and I said, "Wow! That summarizes a lot. If we could come into a greater self-distrust, how it could work in the working out of our own salvation! "You are not to do it unaided, in your unaided strength; it is God who is all the while supplying the impulse and giving you the power to resolve, the strength to perform, the execution of His good pleasure."

"The execution of His good pleasure." The more we see this little phrase, "His good pleasure," we could put in there, "His good purpose;" "His will;" "His desire." It comes out in such a wonderful way. I appreciated Way's translation of it.

It is an amazing thought of how God has this desire to do such a great work within each and every one of us to reveal His Son to us, that His Son would have that preeminence.

Fear Not Little Flock

Then we come up to that next little phrase, "Fear not little flock." When I am talking about His pleasure today, we are not doing an in depth study, we are flying over. You can see how rich this is the more you start considering it. We are touching some things and hopefully it will stimulate it to consider it even more.

Fear not little flock for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Now the little flock is obviously corporate. He is given His people, the little flock the kingdom. But the corporate

is made up of individuals. Fear not little flock, fear not Jerry, fear not Jenni, fear not Herb, fear not Faye. It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. Praise God for that!

What is the key to the kingdom? The key to the kingdom is His Son. I gained a greater appreciation for this verse as I started to meditate upon it because in this verse you see a fulness of the Lord. It says, "Fear not, little flock." Now the King does not say that. Who says that? The Shepherd says that. It is the Father's good pleasure; that is the Father's heart to give you the kingdom. Who can give you the kingdom? It is the King. You see in this verse there is a fulness of all the various ways that are used to describe the fulness of the Lord. We see in this precious verse here.

It says, "Fear not little flock." They have nothing to fear in their weakness. One of the characteristics of Little flock is something that is pretty weak. It does not say a mighty flock. At times God talks about His great work, His mighty fortress, the mighty things that He is doing. Little flock, you are weak, there is a weakness there compared to everything else, but you have nothing to fear because it is My good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Praise God, they did not have anything to fear. We do not have anything to fear in our weakness. We know that we are not where we should be. God has shown us so much, there is a weakness within us, but praise God, we do not have to focus upon the weakness; we can focus upon Him, and we see the greatness. Many assemblies look around at their assembly and they see weakness. Some see weakness in size, some see weakness in teaching, weakness in this or that. Every assembly has weaknesses because we are frail human beings, but praise God, our eyes are not upon ourselves but our eyes are upon the King. These are ones who have seen the King, seen His heart, sees what He after. Because if you actually go back and look at the verse right before Luke 12:32 it says, "Seek the kingdom." It is just like with work out your salvation, then he comes in with this answer in Luke 12:32 it is a response where he said in Luke 12:31: "Seek ye the kingdom, and these things will be added to you." And you say, "Seek the kingdom" but the Father has given it to you. Have you received it? Have you entered into the goodness of it? Praise God for that because that is what He is calling us to.

This has always been His desire. We have been reading out of the New Testament; this is something that is a New Testament, a new covenant teaching. This has always been His great desire because if you look in Ephesians chapter 1, and we know that in Ephesians we see His heart opened up through Paul to that church in Ephesus to reveal the fulness, the whole council of God, the eternal purpose of God is revealed there. But how does this letter start?

Ephesians 1:5: "Having marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

The New American Standard puts "kind intention." That does not carry to me the same power. Most of the others does "the good pleasure of His will."

We see that even beforehand, before the foundation of the world, before anything had really occurred, it was in His heart; it was in His desire and His will to bring us in to adopt us through Christ, bring us into Sonship, bring those many sons to glory. This has always been there, and this is what He is after again today.

In a couple more verses down in Ephesians 1:9-10 and again you see the fulness of what has been upon God's heart from eternity past.

"Having made known to us the mystery of His will according to his good pleasure."

He made known to us the mystery of His will which is Christ, Christ in the church, Christ in us. Praise God, He has opened the eyes of our heart to see that mystery of His will.

Ephesians 1:10 "for the administration of the fulness of times; to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in him,"

Praise God it has been His good pleasure from eternity past to reveal His Son to us and to conform us into His image. We are thankful for all that He is doing. We are thankful for all that He has done. He gave Adam, Eve, and as Adam looked upon Eve, he said, "Oh, this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." What is in our Lord Jesus' heart? He wants to be able to look upon this one and say, "Oh, this one has My character, My nature, not so much the bone and bone and flesh and flesh, but it is the very character and nature. It is a reflection; He looks upon this eternal companion, the bride, and He sees Himself. This is in answer to the Father's heart.

Again, if this can grasp us in a way, sadly again our unbelief comes in, and we just do not feel like this is for me. There are probably ones in the room right now who say, "This is for everybody else in this room except me because of this." Brothers and sisters, this is for every one of us. He has broken down every barrier; He has overcome every obstacle. He knew you before you knew yourself, and He said, "I want to reveal My Son in that person, and I want this one to be conformed to My image." Praise God, He does not give up on us.

So as we start to close, I want to do a little bit of an exercise. I have had this on my heart and it was confirmed. All of this that God is desiring to do, we are enforced when Brian was mentioning last week about the Lord's return, the anticipation of His return, being made ready. As we yield to Him, we conform to His image, that is being made ready. Also, when Daniel Kammi Reddy shared on the light and Jerry Linnebur shared on faith of Abraham, they used some of these verses, and it gave me an amen within my heart to go ahead and consider this because we see how even our brother shared on light, we feel like there are so many out there but I am not in the light. Yes, we have the light within, that light desiring to come forth. We have that faith within, not our faith, but He has given us that faith by His grace that we can walk into all that He has for us.

So as I start to close I have just a little exercise for us that we can all participate in. But I would like for us to all read together these verses, and as you read them, ask yourself do I really believe it. There is a famous quote in history and there are great debates over who said it first, but it says, "Do you really believe what you believe?" It means does it really get worked out in you what you say you believe.

We will read this and put our name in the blank. And may we ask the Holy Spirit: do I accept this? Have I come into it?

"But when God who was pleased to reveal His Son in _____. Praise God! What a precious testimony!

Philippians 2:12 “So then my beloved _____, work out your salvation with fear and trembling according to His good pleasure.”

Praise God! Would that become more and more real in each of our hearts and lives.

Luke 12:32: “Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give _____ the kingdom.”

This is what He is after. As we have considered this thought today, it is just a simple thought that we could see how much the Father is pleased with the Son. And that we could see how He desires also that we would be those who would allow the Son to do a great work in us in order that He be pleased with us. We are thankful that we are accepted in Him. When He looks upon us, He sees the Son; He has this desire. And we could really allow the Lord to open our hearts. We see in part, but we could gain more and more of a fuller understanding of His heart, of His love, His desire, His will, what He is calling us into. There is the full provision that we have in Christ so that we can be made ready for His return, reflecting His life. And may we gain a greater appreciation, a different perspective on the trials that we face every day of our lives in the school of Christ, in the gymnasium of Christ or however we want to refer to it. And our training is every day.

There are some days that you go to the gym, you do not feel like going there at all. There is one gym that we used to go to and you walked in the front door and it said, “Getting here was 50 percent of the battle.” Now you are there, just continue, and you press through. Obviously it is not in ourselves, and that is what is so precious.

Maybe we do not have a desire; maybe we do not have the will to do all of this, but we know we should. Ask Him: “God, make me willing to be willing. I want this desire; I want Your Holy Spirit working in me to do this great work. And as we go along, that goal of Him is increasing, and we must decrease because that brings such great pleasure to our Father’s heart. May we be willing sons of the Most High to be a testimony unto Him in the days that we are living in.

Let’s pray:

Lord, I have to confess that some of these verses seem so far off from where I am, but I am thankful, Lord, that I am not judged based on my sight, but You see things from a whole different perspective. Lord, I want to have my perspective changed that I could see the great work you are doing in myself and my brothers and sisters. Oh, that I would not resist You, and think I can handle things in myself. As we die daily we would allow You to really have Your way in each of our lives. Lord, we are thankful that it is still called today. We are thankful we have opportunities to learn of You, and we come in a desperate way, crying out unto You for You to continue to do that great work that You have started in each and every one of us. Lord, we have a desire to finish well, and make us willing to go that way. As we see that glory set before us, it will be a great encouragement to press on in spite of the difficulties and challenges that we face every day. In Thy name we pray. Amen.