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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor Mr. J. W. Spalding-Tyler
on Thursday Evening, September 21, 1978
at The Dickes

Lesson. Psalms 23 & 65.

Why boasteth thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually. Psalm. 52, 1.

It may sound mysterious to you, the inspired language of the first clause. I acknowledge immediately that the second clause flowed into my spirit, the goodness of God, and it is qualified in a way by a word that some of us know well and pray for. "The goodness of God endureth continually." That is why I read the whole verse, in order to sketch out the background. Let it be said that we have the divine attribute of God, His unfailing goodness to His beloved people in particular. God is good to all. He is good to all men, all creatures, all Nations, to the six hundred millions in the British Isles. He feeds and clothes them: He sends the sun to shine and gives all the benefits of mortal life. His goodness is amazing to all His creatures. Goodness here is special, exclusive. It embraces the human body in a special sense, and your precious immortal soul, and it is comprehensive: His unfailing goodness. One feels to be as a babe on the fringe of a vast ocean. I hardly know how to begin to speak of it or to proceed: it is vast, unfathomed. I believe a note of praise and gratitude is sounded this night. We have experienced in outstanding ways the supreme goodness of God vouchsafed to us.

I will give you as able a sketch of the circumstances David was in. He was a poor, solitary, hunted, hated fugitive, fleeing from his own father-in-law, the king, and pursued by the majority to bereave him of his life. He was anointed of the God of Israel. The precious oil in Samuel's horn had flowed over his head by divine authority. "Arise, anoint him: for this is he." What would you anticipate? An uneventful path? smooth and easy, with no trial or distress? No, there is a trial on everything. When the Lord works graciously, soon the devil works maliciously. To the mature people of God this becomes a confirmation

that it is God's work, because the devil opposes it. If you have in mind something you have held up and anticipated and the devil never touched it, if there was no temptation, no fire to go through, you would say it is false. David soon knew the awful power of those demons, the power of the devil and the foul spirits, and there was a strong spirit of jealousy and he fled for his life. He had been to Ahimelech and sought a favour of him, and he received sustenance and kindness from him. Doeg the Edomite was there, and he witnessed and overheard what was said. He was a malicious tale-bearer, and he went to Saul and discovered the matter to him. The king sent forth the footmen to slay the priests of the Lord. They refused, but Doeg slew them. Now you see the meaning of the language. "Why boasteth thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully." If you can recapture the scene, the revealing of David's whereabouts, and all that followed, you see he was in distress and anxiety, and felt that all were against him. Faith prevailed, and he said, "The goodness of God endureth continually." Whatever the sorrows, trials I meet with here below, I am betrayed, I feel friendless, all on earth are cut off from me, yet, "the goodness of God endureth continually." What is so amazing, as we have tried to emphasise, is the victory of faith in the ^{midst} of everything. I have got a divine secret. Man is deceitful; he has betrayed me, but "the goodness of God endureth continually." That is my secret. Amazing it is to see the language at the end of the Psalm. "The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him." He is in disarray. "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever." In the midst of desolation, malice, hatred, enmity he says, "I will praise thee for ever. I have got my God, and His goodness is unfailing, it endureth for ever." In the depths, when every mortal seems to be cut off, and you are deprived of comforters, and feel, "My earthly joys are from me torn," when the dear Lord draws nigh, you realise His goodness flowing from Heaven. His goodness runs an endless round, no intermission; it is the unfailing goodness of God. That is the message to night. There may be a poor soul in a desperate position, tried and bewildered, your brain confused; the message for you, child

of God is, you are in the old path, in the path the father's trod, and the old saints in this Sanctuary. Go back to the opening of this ~~Sanctuary~~ Sanctuary, and think of all the children of God who have ^{passed} through this Sanctuary and are now gone: they are in peace. God never fails: it endureth continually. Whatever my fears, temptations here below, the dispensations of God, in prosperity or adversity, in health and strength or illness and weakness: in the comforts of the home with all the children around the table, and then when they have all flown: whatever awaits me, days of sunshine, days of gloom, days of holy peace and days of temptation; days of serenity, days of tempest, passing through the furnace of affliction, entering the deep waters, days to prove the tempter's power, days of bereavement and loneliness, in the whole of the way, "the goodness of God endureth continually." I shall never want. Why? "The Lord is my shepherd. He will never see me want." Do you see the wonder of it? This is the triumph of faith. The Lord will exercise faith to look up to Heaven. "Jesus..lifted up his eyes to heaven." What have I to fear? Why be of little faith, in such distress? "The goodness of God endureth continually." That is the secret. In the midst of trial David can say, "I am like a green olive tree." If God could be moved from His throne, (I say it reverently) then all His promises could fail, but they are sure. All He has spoken to you is sure. He united Himself to you in His incarnation and in the Covenant. See the wonder of it! "The goodness of God endureth continually. The issue is before us in the Word of God, the goodness of God. I want to get this over to you: whatever distress, sorrow, trial you are in; however solitary, deprived, low you may be, this is your consolation and holy ^{joy}; here is your safety, security, serenity and blessing. "The goodness of God endureth continually." It means, nothing can obstruct it: it will flow freely to all His dear people. It flows from God the Father through the atonement of Christ, through the power and unction of the Spirit. "The goodness of ^{God} endureth continually."- every moment, all through the day and night through your life to the day of death and through the river, into the full sunshine of bliss. "The goodness of God endureth continually."

I will go further. Two things emerge: one is, it is so mysterious

to us as creatures. You look at the blessings in the Word of God, and you say, "Lord, I do covet these blessings for myself and my dear ones, to enter into the wonder and depth of them." but you enter into them in this path. The greatest blessings the Lord gives His people to enjoy are in the depths. Some may say, "There is nothing much to disturb me now: things are fairly quiet," You cannot speak at such a time deeply concerning appreciation of the goodness of God. We do not walk in the same depths as David did, but when he was cut off from all else he knew the meaning of the goodness of God. As creatures we dislike and resent trouble of all kinds. Human nature flees from it. What we would like to do is to get back in an easy chair and enjoy God's goodness. It is in a path of trial the Lord brings His people into sweet blessing. David was proving it. What? When all created streams are dried I have got a river, the goodness of God continually flowing. Dear heart, precious soul, dear child of God in deep tribulation, this is His message for you. You may be in this, "Neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee!" but you will prove that the goodness of God endureth continually, and you will see it in major and minor things: in the smallest things it will ^{be} most sweet to you. The more the Lord gives you the widely opened eyes of faith, the more you will see His goodness in everything. You see the end of the Lord in this.

I will go back. I have named the holy ^{oil} over David, and all hell could not move the Lord. Not all the powers of the bottomless pit can move the decrees of God. "Divine decrees remain unmoved." What the Lord has promised the devil will never overturn. You will never pray in vain. The Lord has given you a promise and entered into a covenant with you, and you will see the fulfilment of it. Not one of those precious tears which are the fruit of the Spirit, will be lost. You sow in tears and reap in joy. I declare to you His divine faithfulness. You will prove through your trials that the goodness of God endureth continually. The Lord will appear for you. You will say as in the Psalm of celebration, "The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad." It is His supreme goodness. It endureth continually. I would suggest, notwithstanding the temptations of Satan and your servile fears and guilty doubts, the Lord helped you yesterday, why doubt Him to day? The Lord

blessed you as a young man or lady,- how many years has He been good to you? All your life long. Why doubt Him now? It is immoral and illogical according to faith. He blessed and helped you this morning, why doubt Him to night? "Did ever trouble yet befall,

And He refuse to hear thy call?"

Can you name one trouble you came into and the Lord refused to hear you? You say, "No, blessed be God! He delivered me, spared me, saved me, strengthened and enriched me." It is all the goodness of God. This word is for your comfort, and you will drink of the river. With all the trials fears, temptations, deep waters, the goodness of God endureth for ever. There is another part to endureth. With all we are as poor, sinful rebels "Rebellious thou hast been," - peevish, self-willed, carnally-minded sometimes, but the goodness of God to His dear people endureth continually. He never severs the main artery. If it was severed we should perish.

"The goodness of God endureth continually." I want to name three Scriptures that are in my spirit. This is sweet to me, the goodness of God. I wish I could praise Him as I long to, but I shall never be able until I am in Heaven. The first Scripture is,- take the goodness of God that endureth continually. Midst all your sins, fears and woes, "Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee." Why? For two purposes. It is for the glory of God and for your establishment to remember, and for the edification of your family and friends, and for the quickening of the dead. God is taking some out of the world, and remembering all the way He led you is for the quickening of the dead. Some may be saying, "O there is something here that I am destitute of. Lord, give it to me." And it is to remember things of eternal value and blessedness; things that are of God. Do you remember? What is it? Forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty? what about it? You have had a few days on the earth: as you remember you will see that the goodness of God endureth continually. Very wonderful. Since I have known you and been with you, what I have to remember of you. "The goodness of God endureth continually." He has found a home for you, given you a settled rest, blessed your souls with life, fed and clothed you, given you a measure of health and strength. Think of the goodness of God to you!

The second thing is, David was so full he could say, "Surely."

There is no doubt about it. You cannot know Him and not trust Him. Feel His love flow into your soul and you will trust Him. He has made you His unworthy child. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow, -attend me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." You will find this is so sweet to you. When you have your anniversaries this will be your theme; "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." You will have your own thanksgivings in your family, in the Church of God, and in your lot. I could almost see your dear faces lighting up under a radiancy divine. You will say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me."

The Third, we read in the second Psalm; "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness." It refers to this beautiful season, when the Lord places a golden crown on the brow of the year as the corn is harvested. I am to believe and feel there are times when He will crown this year with His goodness: He has already. Some things we are not waiting for because He has already done them. You dear ones go home and let this silent prayer come from your breast; "Lord, crown this year with Thy goodness in my family, in the business and in all concerning me, and in my soul. Lord, before we come to the last day, crown the year with Thy goodness!" This is immortal and divine; it is plenary; it extends to everlasting bliss. It is the goodness of God in the gift of His dear Son to give His life for our sins. He gives His people righteousness, peace, bliss, eternal rest and joy. Blessed be God.