

The Goodness of God

Intro: Many parents have taught their children to say this simple prayer: “God is great, God is good”. If only we could keep that child-like trust in God’s goodness.

Life has a way of causing us to doubt God’s goodness. Every day’s newspaper and every evening’s newscast for the most part rehearses all the bad in the world (corruption in government, war in the Middle East, a hurricane in Florida, etc.) Maybe at last we come to believe that God is aloof from this world and detached from the individual, that He has lost control of the world He created.

The truth is God is good; and we benefit from His goodness daily.

God’s person is good

God is great in goodness

How great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast stored up for those who fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for those who take refuge in Thee, before the sons of men! (Psalm 31:19)

The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him. (Nahum 1:7)

God alone is good in the ultimate sense.

And behold, one came to Him and said, “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?” And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:16-17)

The meaning of Jesus’ words may be subject to varying interpretations.

He could have implicitly been calling the young man to recognize His deity. If he were good, then He must also be God. But the one that makes most sense to me is to affirm that Jesus wanted the young ruler to be careful about how he threw the word “good” around. A comparison of the other accounts might even produce this conflated translation, “Good teacher, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life”. It is as if the young man imagines that eternal life will be obtained by merit, but doing some “good thing”. The first thing he needed to understand if he would have eternal life is the God is good and that men are sinners. It is only from this perspective that we can seek the grace of God that brings salvation.

In Scripture the testimony of man does not flatter him: “There is none that does good, there is not even one” (Rom. 3:12). This was Paul’s way of showing that men are sinners. To speak of men as good is to describe them under

the influence of God, transformed by His power and nature.

God's goodness is the root of all goodness; and our goodness, if we have any, is rooted in God's goodness (William Tyndale).

The user-friendly God seems at times only slightly superior to man. God is good; but man is too! Such a view overly exalts man and diminishes the unique goodness of the heavenly Father. Because God's person is good...

God's provision is good

Typically when bad things happen to people they say, "why me Lord?" When good things happen, "Look what I did!" We human beings are so quick to blame God for all evil but take credit for the good in their lives. The good things in our lives are God's provision!

The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing. (Psalm 34:10)

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11)

"Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? "Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:9-11)
Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. (James 1:17)

When we begin to understand this, then we should be drawn to the place where God is worshipped so that we can thank and praise Him for His goodness toward us!

God's providence is good

It is easy to acknowledge the goodness of God when all our hopes and dreams are being realized, when we are receiving from Him what we seek; but what about the times when life presents suffering and difficulty? Is God good then? Yes, God's providence is good! We may not always know what God is doing and how he will use our circumstances. Joseph could see this after many painful experiences.

"And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. (Genesis 50:20)

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

What a comfort this is to us. The intercession of the Holy Spirit results in a divine response that works always for our good in keeping with God's eternal vision for us—to bring us safely home to glory!

God's plans are good

There is a tendency for people to associate doing God's will with misery and suffering. Many young people I think put off becoming Christians because they imagine that serving God is a sentence of misery and so they want to drink in all the world they can.

If only we could move beyond these shallow concepts to see that nothing is better for man than to honor God his whole life and live by His direction. That is the point of Eccl. 12:1. Essentially Solomon says, "God wants young people to rejoice; but if we choose our own course we will never find true joy and then we will come to the end of our lives where there are only evil days never having experienced the true joy of living. Thus he urges "remember your creator in the days of youth". See that God's plans for us are good and that the earlier we start living in God's will the greater our joy in living.

'For I know the plans that I have for you, ' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

(Jeremiah 29:11)

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

How blessed is the one whom Thou dost choose, and bring near to Thee, to dwell in Thy courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, Thy holy temple. (Psalm 65:4)

Conclusion: *When we see God as He is, then we can live with assurance and hope. He who believes in Him will not be disappointed, because He is a good God. Such was the assurance of David who entrusted himself to God as one of His flock: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life..."*

And finally note that God's pardon is good

For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee. (Psalm 86:5)

A good God awaits your return to Him that He may forgive you and bestow upon you His goodness.