

"The Goodness of God"

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Sermon Study Guide

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Do you want to have the good life? Not everyone can have the good life. Only those faithful to Jesus can have the goodness connected to God. Does that mean God is mean to those who are not His? Not at all! His nature is love. He sent His son to die for us while we were all yet sinners and rejected Him. (Romans 5:8)

His love for us was so great. His victory was so real. He is the King of the Kingdom of Good Living. How do you get into His kingdom? This happens only through His Son Jesus (John 14:6). What goodness did God bring by death? He turned a bad thing – death, into a good thing – the good life. This includes eternal life, but there is more on earth in store for the righteous than sitting at home in our favorite recliner! If you don't know that God is good, you'll never experience the God life. Let's find out about His goodness.

II Chronicles 6:41 NIV

**41 "Now arise, LORD God, and come to your resting place,
you and the ark of your might.
May your priests, LORD God, be clothed with salvation,
may your faithful people rejoice in your goodness.**

God said, "May the faithful people rejoice in your goodness." Those who have faith will reap the goodness of God. Once you know God is good, it changes everything about your life. It requires a responsibility from us.

Do you know about the goodness of God? What is your responsibility? It is rejoicing in His goodness wherever you are – in your car, at work, at the grocery store, at the gym, in the midst of difficulty and prosperity.

Definition of Goodness:

Generosity, kindness, quality and excellence, useful and beneficial

I mentioned Romans 5:8 earlier. It describes how God gave His only Son. That is generous. Generosity and kindness is also expressed in **Psalm 31:19**:

**19 How great is your goodness,
which you have stored up for those who fear you,
which you bestow in the sight of men
on those who take refuge in you.**

His goodness is also useful and beneficial. Take a look at **Psalm 84:11**:

**11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
the LORD bestows favor and honor;
no good thing does he withhold
from those whose walk is blameless.**

Who wants favor and honor? Those are useful in everyday living. Those who walk with the Lord will receive that.

The goodness of God is also displayed in **Psalm 34:8-10 NIV**:

**8 Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.**

**9 Fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him lack nothing.**

**10 The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.**

You will lack no good thing if you seek the Lord. He'll take care of you before he takes care of the hungry animals. We must fear the Lord. More about the fear of the Lord will be discussed in next week's sermon study guide.

I must emphasize that without faith, the goodness of God is limited unto you. **Psalm 103:1-5**
Message explains the connection between faith and the goodness of God very well:

**1-2 O my soul, bless GOD. From head to toe, I'll bless his holy name!
O my soul, bless GOD,
don't forget a single blessing!**

**3-5 He forgives your sins—every one.
He heals your diseases—every one.
He redeems you from hell—saves your life!
He crowns you with love and mercy—a paradise crown.
He wraps you in goodness—beauty eternal.
He renews your youth—you're always young in his presence.**

Now, let's dig into the connection between faith and God's goodness.

Hebrews 11:6 NKJV

6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Living faith is direct; it has its foundation in diligently, actively, consistently, zealously seeking Him in study and prayer and in conforming to His will. Those who are doing these things are encouraged that they will be rewarded. The reward is to find Him. This, in turn, increases faith. Now, while nothing is impossible for God (Luke 1:37), impossibility surrounds man who is disconnected from Him. God isn't looking for you to please Him in the sense of making your life miserable. He wants to bless you! As you grow in Him in faith, you will be rewarded. How do you grow in Christ? The key word is sincerely or as the NKJV puts it, you need diligence and consistency. Look at how The Amplified paraphrases Hebrews 11:6:

6But without faith it is impossible to please and be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him out.

Believing that God exists is a necessity. Not any God, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The God of Moses and David. The one true God. You must also believe that he rewards those who seek Him. That's goodness expressed. His goodness isn't just in character, but it is goodness expressed. It would be a contradiction to say you were an electrician unless you did the job of an

electrician. The same is true if you said you were friendly, yet had never talked to anyone. God acts upon His character when your faith is expressed.

Question: Is God rewarding you? Are you experiencing the goodness of God? Have you ever viewed God as bad?

Hebrews 11:1 Amplified defines faith.

1NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].

A title deed is proof of ownership. Faith means you have God's blessings and goodness. It's great to have faith in what you have seen and tested. But real faith is trusting in just the word of God. If you have to prove everything before you'll believe it, you make your limited mind and knowledge the standard of proof. Jesus told Thomas in John 20:29 that those believe and have never seen are truly the blessed ones.

Question: Do you believe only after you see enough evidence or do you believe only because He said so?

TWO THINGS YOU MUST DO:

1. You must BELIEVE THAT HE IS.

What does it mean to believe that God is? We are constantly challenged by atheists, skeptics and hecklers to prove that there is a God. It is difficult for natural man to believe in something that he cannot see, touch or feel (I Corinthians 2:14). The problem for the Christian is solved with the first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). The Bible is not a textbook that attempts to prove the existence of God - the Bible opens with a positive fact that God does exist. It did not occur to any other writer of the Bible to prove this fact. The Bible plainly states that it is the fool who denies the existence of God. Psalm 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Anyone with any intelligence would acknowledge the evident fact of a living God. The greatest proof apart from Scripture of the existence of God is our daily fellowship with Him in prayer.

Here are some other scriptures on the existence of God.

Psalm 19:1, 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.' The beauty and glory of the heavens speak loudly saying, "God exists."

Romans 1:20 goes farther and suggests that creation even teaches about the eternal power of the Godhead, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

The world is here. It must have come from somewhere. Somebody or something must have caused it to come into being at one time or another. Here is a book. Someone must have written it. No printing press can of itself produce a book, even the most technological advanced.

Someone built the building. Someone created the trees. Someone operates the universe. If all the pieces of a watch were placed in a can and the can shaken gently for a million years the watch would not be "accidentally" put together and running. The only sensible answer to the problem of the existence of the world is the existence of an intelligent Being. That is God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

God exists apart from your belief in Him. The absolute truth of God's existence is truer than the law of gravity. He is God and exists to be good to those who serve Him!

Man is born with a universal belief in a Supreme Being; no tribe has yet been discovered that lacks this. They know that some Being creates and controls. Everyone's conscience points to God's existence.

Rom. 2:15, "Which shows the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." The existence of God is written in the human conscience.

Acts 17:23, "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown God." Conscience told them that there was a God though they did not know Him personally.

2. You must **BELIEVE HE IS A REWARDER**

While experiencing the Goodness of God is proof of his generosity and kindness, scripture speaks for itself on His nature of being a rewarder:

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:17 NIV

"God is not a man. He will not lie. God is not a human being. He does not change his mind. What he says he will do, he does. What he promises, he keeps." Numbers 23:19 The Everyday Bible

"Now you have every grace and blessing; every spiritual gift and power for doing his will are yours during this time of waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 1:7 The Living Bible

Read Matthew 20:9-16 and Luke 12:42-44.

Questions: Do you believe God can reward you? Have you set your life up for reward? Are you living a lifestyle of faith?

Let's look at more scripture concerning the goodness of God.

Ezra 8:22 NKJV

22 For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him."

Have you ever asked for help in a tough situation? What about asking everyone for help but God? Ezra said he couldn't ask anyone else for help – he was even ashamed – because he knew the goodness of God. It was better than any other help. His hand was on them who would seek Him.

Psalm 27:13 NKJV

**13 I am still confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.**

Because of tough circumstances or the heaviness of a fallen world, we sometimes get discouraged. Is there any goodness left? Be confident. Don't doubt. If you follow the Lord, you will see his goodness. Not in the land of the dead or defeated but in the land of the living. Be alive in your faith!

QUESTION: Are we supposed to believe to see the goodness of God?

God doesn't do good in your life because you wish it. He does it because you believe it. It's clear that God will act because of our faith. It's not luck or earthly riches.

God does not do bad. Bad things are not the result of God. It is not in His nature. **Isaiah 5:20** says, "Woe to those who call **evil good** and **good evil**, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." If you are calling God evil when it is clear that He is good, you are wrong. When you call evil things good, you are wrong. **1 John 1:5** says, "This **is** the message we have heard from **him** and declare to you: God **is** light; in **him there is no darkness** at all."

You have to get that in your mouth. You have to begin speaking the goodness of God. Quote scripture. Stop being negative about nothing. Declare the goodness of God. Let his praises flow out of your mouth.

Psalm 40:5

Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

Psalm 71:17

Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.

SPEAK IT OUT! DECLARE HIS MARVELOUS WORKS!

2 Peter 1:3-4 says His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

That scriptures says we can escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. Jesus promised trouble (John 14). But He said he had overcome the world. Don't lose heart in your present circumstances. God will bless you tremendously if you don't give up and go back to the world's way of doing life. He said he would help you escape the corruption caused by evil desires. Because of our unbelief and sin, we cause things to happen to us that are evil. If we would just stop those evil

desires from happening and manifesting, we can experience more of the goodness of God. That doesn't just happen. It comes from a proactive, faith-filled, consistent walk with the Lord.

If you look up and your life is in shambles, the best question to ask is "am I seeking the Lord? How is my relationship with Him?"

Acts 10:38 NKJV

"...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."

Jesus went around doing good. Jesus is God in the flesh. God was with him and commissioned Jesus to go do good. He was displaying the very nature of God through His good works – healing, preaching, teaching, and miracles.

I Timothy 6:17 NIV

17Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

Do you think God gets pleasure from watching people hurt? Let's go back to Isaiah 5 and look at verse 21. It says woe to those who look good in their own eyes. There are certain things that are absolutely evil and absolutely good. Humans do not determine that. Sickness isn't good. Depression isn't good. Poverty isn't good. Evil is the direct opposite of good and is a bondage to the Christian walk.

Romans 12:2 AMP

2Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

God has a good, acceptable and perfect will for your life. When you renew your mind in Christ and get away from a shabby mentality, you begin to reap the blessings of God. We are not to be conformed to this world. Don't give into the customs of this world. Just because a celebrity says it's acceptable doesn't mean it is! We have to be transformed by entirely renewing our mind – our attitudes must line up with those of Christ. Read scripture and find out how He thought. What did God believe about you? About people? About blessings and rewards?

Ephesians 3:20 NKJV

20Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]--

When you get to the place of believing that the Devil's plan for your life is to be accepted you are walking by sight, not faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). You don't have to accept his plan of destruction for your life. The devil comes to steal, kill and destroy but Jesus wants to give you the good life (John 10:10).

He can do far more than you think or ask for. The Amplified says it is infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes or dreams.

QUESTIONS: Can you expect something bigger than what you ask for? Can your life be better than it is? What are you dreaming for as a believer? What are you praying for? Can God bless you more than that?

Memorize this scripture and begin proclaiming the goodness of God today!

Psalm 23:6

***Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.***