

“The Fruit of the Spirit is ... Goodness”

Galatians 5:16-23

I. What is goodness?

- 1. Definition - Goodness is described by various dictionaries as describing those qualities in anything which constitute its value, excellence or perfection.*

What is “good” in regard to an apple is different from what is good in a dog or what is good in regard to human beings. Reference to human “goodness” usually implies moral “goodness.”

- 2. Two of the NT Greek words translated in English “good” or “goodness”-*

The word used here describing the fruit of the Spirit is

ἀγαθωσύνη agathosune {ag-ath-o-soo'-nay} Meaning: 1) uprightness of heart and life

It is only used a few times in the NT and yet its root - 8 ἀγαθός agathos {ag-ath-os'} Meaning: 1) of good constitution or nature – is used in the NT about 100 times with about 80 of those times being translated “good”

The other Greek word translated “good” in the NT is καλῶς kalos {kal-oe'} Meaning: 1) beautifully, finely, excellently, well

I mention it here because it seems to me that agathos usually describes inward, heart, constitutional “goodness” while kalos usually described the appearance of things and good deeds people might do.

¹⁷ "Even so, every good (agathos) tree bears good (kalos) fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ "A good (agathos) tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ "Every tree that does not bear good (kalos) fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Mat 7:17-19 NKJ)

So the essence of the tree was “agathos” in its constitution, therefore it would bear fruit that would appear beautiful / good “kalos” and by

seeing such good we recognize the good trees and distinguish them from bad. Jesus was speaking of recognizing “false prophets” – “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. (Matthew 7:15 NKJ)

- 3. Important in understanding the Biblical concept of “good” is realizing it is often contrasted with “evil”*
- 4. In the NKJ version of the Bible 85 verses contain both the word “good” and “evil” contrasting the terms, this is in both the Old and New Testaments:*
- 5. Examples:*

The tree –

¹⁷ "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen 2:17 NKJ)

Joseph’s brothers and God (their wicked actions, His providence) contrasted –

²⁰ "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. (Gen 50:20 NKJ)

In David’s description of wicked men –

⁴ He devises wickedness on his bed; He sets himself in a way that is not good; He does not abhor evil. (Psalm 36:4 NKJ)

Things we should not confuse –

²⁰ 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! (Isa 5:20 NKJ)

As that which we are to seek and avoid, hate vs. love–

¹⁴ Seek good and not evil, That you may live; So the LORD God of hosts will be with you, As you have spoken. ¹⁵ Hate evil, love good; Establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. (Amos 5:14-15 NKJ)

Describing opposite conditions in life –

²⁵ "But Abraham said, `Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. (Luke 16:25 NKJ)

In describing godly love –

⁹ *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. (Rom 12:9 NKJ)*

II. Are we (as human beings) basically good or evil?

How important is a correct diagnosis of the moral condition of our hearts?

What is the great problem of mankind?

- *Carl Marx said economic disparity not lack of morality was our problem-*
- *Many today say man made global warming is the PROBLEM / many of them try to create a new immoral morality -*
- *If you have cancer and your doctor diagnosis a head cold, you are in trouble!*
- *A little boy, thinks there might be monsters in the closet – what kind of problem is it?*

According to Scripture human beings are not basically good –

¹⁷ **Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"**

¹⁸ **So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. (Mar 10:17-18 NKJ)**

As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. (Romans 3:10-11 NKJ)

⁹ **"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9 NKJ)**

¹⁸ **For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. (Rom 7:18 NKJ)**

Atheists, Arminians and Calvinists are all SINNERS!

1. *The group now called the new atheists likes to blame everything on religion –*

<To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.> The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works,

There is none who does good. ² The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. ³ They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one. (Psalm 14:1-3 NKJ)

2. *Arminians admit to a sin nature but they like to think of one part of that nature as free from sin, or at least free enough to choose God without any special distinguishing grace –*

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, (Ephesians 2:1 NKJ)

The Arminian says "mostly dead, still slightly alive" – they usually believe that the will or the conscience is free (from sin) to choose God!

The results of this are –

- A. *A different kind of evangelism*
- B. *A less converted convert*

3. *As Calvinists we admit to "total depravity" mean sin has impacted every part of us, our mind, our emotions, our flesh and even our conscience and will!*

4. *Goodness does not come from the flesh!*

¹⁹ **Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21 NKJ)**

III. This is why we NEED the Holy Spirit and His fruit –

1. *We cannot and will not be good without His help –*

²³ **Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil. (Jeremiah 13:23 NKJ)**

2. *This need is constant –*

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5 NKJ)

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26 NKJ)