

Subject: A Biblical Picture of God – Part 3

Scripture: Psalm 107:1-9

God is great and God is good. Last time we focused on God's greatness and now we are going to see what the Bible says about God's goodness. Psalm 105-107 all deal with the goodness of God. They focus on God's faithfulness and goodness to Israel through centuries of Old Testament history in spite of their rebellion and disobedience. God's people were not faithful to Him, but He was faithful to them. That is the story of the whole Bible. *Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good.*

We don't always have the right attitude toward God's goodness. We tend to take His goodness for granted. Listen to this rich Puritan prayer from *The Valley of Vision*:

"Woe, woe is me that I am a sinner, that I grieve this blessed God, who is infinite in goodness and grace! What shall I do to glorify and worship this best of beings? O that I could consecrate my soul and body to his service, without restraint, forever! May I always combine thy majesty with thy mercy, and connect thy goodness with thy greatness. Then shall my heart always rejoice in praises to thee."

In worship we should always combine God's majesty with His mercy and His goodness with His greatness. Let's think about God's goodness in these ways.

1. The Bible teaches that God is good

Scripture says that God is all good, only good, and always good. What does that mean? Wayne Grudem: "The goodness of God is the final standard of good, and all that God is and does is worthy of approval." John MacArthur explains it this way: "God is the perfect sum, source, and standard of that which is wholesome, conducive to well-being, virtuous, beneficial, and beautiful." A.W. Tozer: "The goodness of God is that which disposes Him to be kind, cordial, benevolent, and full of good will toward men." God's goodness may be defined as His moral excellence, kindness, or being disposed to the well-being of others. A good synonym for goodness is benevolence. Goodness is translated "steadfast love" in the ESV. The Bible teaches that God's goodness is abundant, enduring, great, rich, satisfying, and universal.

2. God is perfectly good in Himself and all He does

It is God's nature to be good. He is good without trying to be good. What a contrast that is to us. People often try to be good. They want to be good, but they can't seem to do it. God is always good without effort.

By contrast all people are not good.

Romans 3:10-12 ¹⁰ As it is written, *There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹ There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
Matthew 19:16-17 ¹⁶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, *Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* ¹⁷ And he said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

Even after we are saved by God's grace, we know if there is any goodness in us it's the goodness and grace of God. In ourselves we are not good.

Romans 7:18 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

Exodus 33:18-19 ¹⁸ *And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory.* ¹⁹ *And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.*

God's goodness is one facet of His glory. That's who He is.

Exodus 34:5-6 ⁵ *And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.* ⁶ *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*

3. God's goodness is revealed in creation

Genesis 1:31 *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

Genesis 2:9 *And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*

Psalms 33:5 *the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.*

God provided everything good for Adam and Eve. Only one thing was off limits: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God made everything not only to sustain life, but to be enjoyable. Man must eat food to live, but food tastes good. He must drink, but cold water is so refreshing. We need air to live, but a deep breath of fresh air is soothing. God made things not only to sustain life, but to make it enjoyable and satisfying. Satan first tempted Adam and Eve to doubt God's goodness and he still works in the same way.

4. God's goodness is revealed in His generosity

God is the most generous giver. He gives and gives in so many ways.

Psalms 145:9 *The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Psalms 145:15-16 ¹⁵ *The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.* ¹⁶ *Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*

1 Timothy 6:17 *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*

We have so much, but we must never enjoy the gifts and forget the giver. God is generous to all people. We refer to this as God's common grace.

Matthew 5:45 *He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Luke 6:35 *But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*

Acts 14:17 *Nevertheless God left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.*

Paul Washer said: “It would be an indescribable act of benevolence if the infinitely glorious God of the universe were to humble Himself to care for righteous creatures that honored Him in their every thought, word, and deed. But God shows His benevolence to fallen man, who lives in rebellion against Him.”

5. God is good even when circumstances are bad

Some people object to the idea that God is great and He is good because there is so much sin and suffering in the world. They say, if God is great and good why does He allow all this evil and suffering? There is a biblical answer. God is so great and so good that He is able to take bad things and use them for our good.

A. God uses bad things to awaken us

He allows pain and suffering to remind us that we’re living in a sinful, fallen world.

C. S. Lewis said: “Pain is God’s megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

B. God uses bad things to accomplish His purpose

Genesis 50:20 *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

Romans 8:28-30 ²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* ²⁹ *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* ³⁰ *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

C. God used bad things to provide our redemption

Christ was despised and rejected. He suffered and bled and died at the hands of sinful men. But all of that brought the greatest good. There’s a reason we call the day of His crucifixion “Good Friday.” The worst day was actually the best day.

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

God’s goodness includes a lot of things. God is good enough to give you life and all things to enjoy in this world. He is good enough to guide you and teach you through His Word. He is good enough to send His Son to die for your sins. He is good enough to open your eyes to see your spiritual need and what He has done for you. And if that’s not enough, He is patient with you until you repent of your sins and receive Christ as Lord and Savior. That is God’s great goodness. **Romans 2:4** *Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*