

Subject: *Bearing Spiritual Fruit – GOODNESS*

Scripture: *Galatians 5:22-23*

The fruit of the Spirit is the life of God in the soul of man. It is the character of Christ reflected in the Christian. The fruit of the Spirit is what God produces in the believer.

Genesis 1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

Everything produced after its own kind. Apple trees produce apples and apple seeds which in turn produce more apple trees. As in the natural world, so it is in the spiritual world...like begets like...life reproduces life of the same kind.

In this message we are looking at the fruit of goodness which is the quality of being morally upright and doing good for others. The Greek word for goodness (*agathosune*) is not found in other Greek writings except in the Bible. It is defined as moral and spiritual excellence known by its sweetness and kindness. The word “good” is used in the sense of “healthy” to describe things such as a good tree (Mt. 7:17), good ground (Lk. 8:8), or a good conscience (1 Tim. 1:5).

1. God is the source and example of all goodness

A. Goodness is a divine attribute (perfection)

Exodus 33:19 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.

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Psalms 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Psalms 119:68 Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

B. 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.

C. God's goodness is shown in His generous gifts

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.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

D. God's goodness is a blessing for all people

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

Matthew 5:44-45 ⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Acts 14:17 Nevertheless he 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.

E. God's goodness is constant at all times

Psalms 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

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.

F. God's goodness was evident in Christ's life and ministry

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

2. We have no goodness of our own

Last Friday I walked at the Tennessee High track almost one hour and no one else was there until my last lap and a teenage girl passed me with the words on the back of her shirt: "BE A GOOD HUMAN."

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.*

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.

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.*

If the Bible says there is none that does good, no, not one, then why does the Bible refer to some people as being good and doing good? For example:

Matthew 12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

Luke 23:50 And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor; and he was a good man, and a just.

Acts 9:36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did.

Acts 11:24 For he (Barnabas) was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

Romans 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

How can that be true when the Bible says there is no one who is good?

3. All human goodness is produced by God's grace

When God saves us He begins to work in us to produce the fruit of goodness and to enable us to do good works.

Ephesians 5:9 For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.

Ephesians 2:8-10 ⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Believers are created for good works. God has prepared these good works in advance so that we might “walk” in them. That means our good works will be normal and consistent, not unusual or sporadic.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

All human goodness is actually produced by God. Just as the moon does not produce light but only reflects the light of the sun, even so all human goodness is a reflection and extension of God’s goodness.

4. Believers have many opportunities for doing good

A. We should do good to all people, even our enemies

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.

B. We should do good especially to other Christians

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

C. We should do good at home, work, and school

Proverbs 31:12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Titus 2:5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Jerry Bridges (*The Practice of Godliness*): “Most honorable vocations exist to meet the needs of people. God has ordained His world so that people with various abilities meet various needs. We should think of our vocation, therefore, not as a necessary evil to pay bills, nor even as an opportunity to become rich, but as the primary path of our Christian walk wherein God has planned good deeds for us to do. If we feel our particular job does not allow us to genuinely meet the needs of people, we ought to prayerfully consider a change.”

D. We should do good while we can

Mark 14:6-8 ⁶ And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. ⁷ For ye have the poor with you always, and whenever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. ⁸ She hath done what she could: she is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

John Wesley: “Do all the good you can to as many as you can for as long as you can.”

E. We should do good with our unique resources and abilities

Jerry Bridges: "Consider your gifts, your talents, your vocation, and your circumstances as a special trust from God with which to serve Him by serving others. Remember that you are responsible not for doing all the good that needs to be done in the world, but for doing what God has planned for you...Remember that opportunities for doing good are not interruptions in God's plan for us, but part of that plan. We always have time to do what God wants us to do."

Hebrews 13:20-21 ²⁰ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.