

Goodness

Introduction (Notes from a sermon by Dan Farrelly)

Every congregation has certain truths that they hold in high regard and teach/minister into.

As a congregation, one attribute of God that we highly value, is God's love.

Love is who God is-part of His essence/character. You cannot separate God from love.

In a world- rejects God- love becomes perverted.

1 John 4:8 The *one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*

We also place a high value on prayer/worship as a means to develop our relationship with God.

Prayer/worship are doorways into God's presence. Another attribute of God that we value highly, is that God is good.

Again, goodness is part of His essence/character. You cannot separate God from His goodness.

However, have we taken time to consider what it means that God is good?

What are the ramifications for mankind that the Creator of this world is good?

What are- ramifications for us as believers, that the God we have chosen to serve is good?

Psalm 100:5 For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations.

Luke 18:19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

The Goodness of God

In looking at the goodness of God- helpful- define what we mean when we say God is good ...

1. God is everything that is good and He has no evil in Himself
2. Goodness is part of His nature and He cannot contradict His own nature
3. Therefore, God always acts in accordance w/His nature, and
4. Everything God does is right/true/good

This means that God's goodness extends from His nature to everything that He does.

God always does what is right, and the outcome of His plans/purposes are always good.

Psa 119:68 You are good and do good ...

I want us to understand what it means that God is good and how that affects the way we live.

God and Evil

First, if God is good, what about evil?

God did not create evil- evil is the absence of goodness- it is whatever God is not.

1 John 1:5 ... God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Therefore, because God is good, He abhors evil and sin, and He must judge all sin in the end.

It is never the will of a good God for us, as His creation, to walk in sin or embrace evil.

As a culture rejects God its idea of goodness becomes unanchored from reality/perverted.

All Powerful God

It is also true that God is omnipotent- all powerful.

If God is an all powerful being who can do whatever He wishes- but we do not know that He is good- that would be a frightening God to follow.

That is why it is so important to settle in our hearts and minds that God is good.

Knowing- God is good should lead- thanksgiving.

Psa 107:1 Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

A Moral God

Not only is God good- He has revealed Himself to mankind as a moral God- who has defined ...

>how human life should operate

>what is acceptable/unacceptable behavior

You cannot teach values/morality apart from God, because w/o God- no standard for morality.

No society has ever survived ... without morality, and no morality has ever survived without a transcendent source. Peter Kreeft

As our culture rejects God- our sense of morality becomes more/more distorted- many genders.

Because God is good ...

>He has an expectation as to how, as His created beings, we should live our lives

>He expects us to be good

When Satan tempted Eve He convinced her that God was withholding something good from her and therefore God was not good.

Once she was convinced that God was not good- it was easy for her to rebel.

As our culture drifts from- understanding that God is good- rebellion against God has increased.

This is why- so important to know- God is good.

When Adam sinned, sin entered- world of men.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and

death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

ALL of mankind is sinful and in need of a Savior. God is looking for transformation- to undo the affects of sin and make us again like Him.

I am thankful that God loves me and for the grace that He extends to me- BUT- I also want to ...

>respond to the reality of His goodness-and

>be transformed (changed) to be like Him

When we talk about being good we are not just talking about behavior- but being like God, God gave mankind something different from the rest of His creation.

We were given part of His character and created to bear the image of God to the world.

Adam/Eve were free- to choose God's way or their own way- they chose their own way.

We face the same struggle today.

1 Peter 1:15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;

This means that much of life is a journey of becoming good and loving goodness.

To be clear- you cannot earn your salvation by good behavior.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB95)

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

In other words, God ...

>forgives our sin

- >pronounces us not guilty
- >gives us His righteousness
- >adopts us into His family
- >and sends the HS to live in us

However, it must not stop there- the next step must be transformation- change/conformed.

Titus 2:11–12 (NASB95)

**¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,
¹²instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in- present age ...**

What are ungodly/worldly desires- these are questions each of us must wrestle with.

What is God saying to you about living ...

- >sensibly,
- >righteously, and
- >godly ... in this present age?

God purchased us- be good/do good.

Sanctification

We are talking about-process of sanctification.

Sanctification- to make holy, set apart for God.

Sanctification involves two distinct truths ...

1. a status supernaturally conferred on us

We are set apart for the purposes of God.

Like a ... good set of china we only pull out for a special occasion- we set it apart from everyday wear for special events- in the same way we have been set a part from evil, for- righteous purposes of God

We see this principle ...

**Psalm 4:3 But know that the Lord has
set apart the godly man for Himself ...**

We have been given the righteousness of Christ
in place of our own corrupt righteousness.

**2. a grace that we cooperate with as we learn
what it means to be good**

Sanctification is a reality we are called- walk out.

Using marriage as an example ...

**>get up one morning and you are not
married/later that day you are married**

**>a status was conferred on you and you
are suddenly a husband or a wife**

>now you must live out that reality

**>you will spend the rest of your married
life trying to walkout/live this new reality**

It is- same for us as believers as we are learning
how to live sanctified, set apart, holy lives.

But God has not left us helpless- have- indwelling
HS to guide us /grace of God to empower us.

In other words, we embrace the grace

God has given us, to live up to the status

He has conferred on us.

God is calling us to be a noble/virtuous people.

Some people like to say ...

“I am just a sinner saved by grace.”

Yes you were “a sinner saved by grace” but God’s
design for you is to become noble/virtuous.

He changes our identity from “a sinner saved by
grace”, to- righteous person set apart for God.

We are empowered by the HS/grace of God- to
again become like Him and reflect His image.

Much of life is learning to live in this new reality.

What Does It Mean for you/I to be Good?

If we are destined to become good then we should define what it means to be good. The problem that man has began in the garden. In the garden God defined what was good/evil. God told man in the garden ...

Genesis 2:16–17 (NASB95)

¹⁶The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good/evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

In other words ...

>good- was everything other than eating of the tree of the knowledge of good/evil

>evil- was not trusting God and doing the one thing God asked man not to do

Perhaps the bigger issue in the garden was who gets to define what is good and what is evil.

God is looking for a people to ...

>cooperate w/His definition of good/evil

The Purpose of the Mosaic Law

People like to say that they are not under the law but under the grace of God.

However, it was through- Mosaic Law- God was equipping them to distinguish good from evil

Rom 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.”

God gave the Law to help man understand what was good/evil- according to His definition. The problem is not the Law but- desires of- flesh. If we decide to steal/covet/commit adultery- it is much more than breaking a commandment- it is being disloyal to God and His goodness. In the end we are choosing to not trust God- just like Eve when He told her not- eat of the tree.

Sermon on the Mount- A Call to Goodness

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus again reminds us what goodness is- i.e ...

Matthew 5:21–22 (NASB95)

21“You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ ...

22“But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court ...

Matthew 5:43–44 (NASB95)

43“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

44“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Jesus is teaching us what goodness looks like from His perspective.

He is not just concerned about ...

>physical murder, but the condition of our hearts- harbor anger, unforgiveness?

We have been given the opportunity to learn the culture of God’s kingdom and how to live in it.

Word of caution- particularly in today’s culture ...

we must avoid creating our own definition of good- God has already defined it for us.

What About Tragedies?

Even should tragedy strike our lives- it does not change the truth that God is good.

If we do not embrace this, when things go wrong, we might find ourselves ...

>rebelling against God, and

>making accusations against God like Eve

In any tragedy we face the enemy will always defame-goodness of God- do not be deceived.

Never doubt that God is good and God is calling us to be nothing less than like Him.

Conclusion

Ultimately God's goodness is seen in His plan to save mankind from sin/death- through Jesus.

God's grace is ...

>undeserved love, but also

>the power to transform/change us

When we talk about goodness/virtue we are not talking about works, HOWEVER ...

Grace may be opposed to earning but it is not opposed to effort. Unknown

I cannot earn my salvation, but I must cooperate with the HS to bring about transformation.

To resist temptation and choose God's way, takes work and can be painful.

It takes courage to make room for the refining fire of the HS to bring transformation into our lives.

He has given us His grace so we can be good, noble, and virtuous.

Let the cry of our heart ...

Psa 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

We have been adopted into- family of God as true
sons/daughters with all the commensurate
authority/rich inheritance of God's Kingdom.
We are royalty and now it is time to act like it!