

THE GOODNESS OF GOD:

Living and Discipling in light of it

“You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.” Ps 119:68

Introduction:

- David Wells, in his book several years ago, *God in the Wasteland*, writes that in many evangelical churches the people have a “**weightlessness of God.**” (88-117)

I. The Importance of the Goodness of God

A. Without it

B. The importance God and his saints place on it

1. God desires that we know Him as He is - of which His goodness is a huge and vital part (Jer 9:23-24)
2. How much it is mentioned in Scripture
3. Other saints
 - “Goodness is the brightness and loveliness of our majestic Creator. To fancy a God without it, is to fancy a miserable, scanty, narrow-hearted, savage God, and so an unlovely, and horrible being: for he is not a God that is not good; and is not a God that is not the highest good: infinite goodness is more necessary to, and more straitly joined with an infinite Deity, than infinite power and infinite wisdom: we cannot conceive him God, unless we conceive him the highest good, having nothing superior to himself in goodness, as he hath nothing superior to himself in excellency and perfection. No man can possibly form a notion of God in his mind, and yet form a notion of something better than God; for whoever thinks anything better than God, fancieth a god with some defect: by how much the better he thinks that thing to be, by so much the more imperfect he makes God in his thoughts.” Charnock (vol 2, 216-7)
 - Only God is originally good of himself – “all created goodness is a rivulet from this fountain, but divine goodness hath no spring...he hath it in, and of, himself; man hath no goodness from himself...” (Vol 2, 211)

- “Nothing can add to Him, or make Him better than He is; nothing can detract from him, to make him worse; nothing can be added to Him, nothing can be severed from him; no created good can render him more excellent; not evil from any creature can render Him less excellent”
- The Puritan Pastor, Thomas Manton wrote, “He is originally good, good of Himself, which nothing else is; for all creatures are good only by participation and communication from God. He is essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself: the creature’s good is a superadded quality, in God it is His essence. He is infinitely good; the creature’s good is a drop, but in God there is an infinite ocean or gathering together of good. He is eternally and immutably good, for he cannot be less good than He is; as there can be no addition made to him, so no subtraction from Him.” (In A.W. Pink’s AoG, 57)

II. Rehearsing the Truth of God’s Goodness

A. The Goodness of God Declared

1. Old Testament (sample)

- a. Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31 = Creation: God approves of His creation – “it was good”
- b. Gen 2:8 “not good to be alone” – not complete
- c. 2 Chron 5:13 “He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting”
- d. Ezra 3:11 “They sang praises and gave thanks to the Lord saying “for He is good for his lovingkindness is upon Israel forever”
- e. Ps 23:6; “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” There is a kind of eagerness about the benevolence of God. ...God pursues us with goodness” (Piper, TPoG, 191)
 - 25:8; “Good and upright is the Lord”
 - 27:13; “I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living”
 - 33:5 “his goodness is abundant”;
 - 34:8; “Oh taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusts in Him”
 - 65:4 “We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple”

- 73:1 "...saving goodness" "Surely God is good to Israel, to those pure in heart.."
 - 86:5; "For thou art good and ready to forgive
 - 100:5; For the Lord is good and His lovingkindness is everlasting
 - 103; "...forget not all his benefits.."
 - 106:1, 44-46; "O give thanks for the Lord is good..."
 - 107; "Oh give thanks for the Lord is good.."
 - 118:1, 29; Oh give thanks to the Lord for he is good...
 - 119:68;"You are good and do good"
 - 145:7-9 "The Lord is good to all..." = his goodness is universal in some ways , 13, 15,16
- f. Lam 3:25 "The Lord is good to those who wait for Him..."
- g. Ezekiel 33:11 "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live."
- h. Micah 7:18 "Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?..."
- i. Nahum 1:7 "The Lord is good – a stronghold in the day of trouble.."

2. New Testament (sample)

- a. Matt 5:45, 48; God makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
- b. Mark 10:18 "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone"
- c. Luke 11:11-13 "what father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him"
- d. John 10:11,14 "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep..."
- e. Acts 14:17 "Yet, he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons..."- (God's common kindness is seen)
- f. Rom 2:4; "or do you think lightly of the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance."

- g. Rom 8:28 “God works all things for good to those who love him”; 11:22; 12:2
- h. 1 Tim 4:4 “For everything created by God is good..”
- i. Jas 1:17 “every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights...”
- j. 1 Pt 2:1-3 “So put away all malice and all deceit ...like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation – if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good”

B. The Goodness of God Displayed

1. Old Testament (sample)

- a. In Creation/Fall - Gen 3:15 – a future redeemer will come
- b. Ex 33-34 “I myself will make all My goodness pass before you” (This is especially important in light of the context - a perplexing situation has developed of how a holy God can lead and dwell with a sinful people.)
- c. In bearing with man’s weaknesses (1 Kings 15:14)
- d. In forgiving sins (2 Chron 30:18; Ps 86:5)
 - “For you O Lord are good and forgiving , abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you”
- e. By doing good because He is good (Ps 119:68; 145:9)
- f. By providing for the poor (Ps 68:10)

2. New Testament (sample)

- a. In providing temporal needs (Jesus in the Gospels – helping every situation –key: redemption needs –Mk 10:45)
- b. God to all peoples- Acts 14:17
- c. Salvation: Rom 1-5 (5: 6-8);11:22
 - “When the goodness and kindness of God our savior appeared... He saved us” Titus 3:4
 - “it is not the condescension, but the interest, of a traitor to creep upon his knees in sackcloth to his sovereign, to beg his life; but it is a miraculous goodness in the sovereign to creep in the lowest posture to the rebel, to importune him, not only for an amity to him, but a love for his own life and happiness...” Charnock, vol 2, 285

- “The goodness of God appeared most illustriously when he sent forth his Son...” (Gal 4:4-5) Pink, AoG, 76
- d. Sanctification: “God works all things together for good...” (Rom 8:28-29)
- e. Trials and Temptations: 1 Cor 10:13 – God shows his care in our temptation by not allowing us to be tempted above what we are able: (Charnock, vol 2, 311-13)
- f. God’s forgiving of sin and recording only the works of faith – Heb 11
- g. God’s blessings that still await in Heaven (John 14, Rom 8:16; 2 Cor 4:16-18; The Book of Revelation)

C. The Goodness of God Defined

- A.W.Pink, The “goodness” of God refers to the perfection of his nature: “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). AoG, 73
- The Theologian, Louis Berkhof: “That perfection of God which prompts Him to deal bountifully and kindly with all His creatures.” (70)
- Easton’s Bible Dictionary- “God’s goodness appears in two things: giving and forgiving” (c1897)
- J.I. Packer “Yes, God’s goodness extends generally to all his creation, but only specifically to His own to those who have experiences the fullness of redemption. His goodness is limited and unlimited: “God is good to all in some ways and to some in all ways.”
- Wayne Grudem, “The goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval.” (Systematic Theology, 12)
- John Frame (The Doctrine of God) = The most common meaning = BENEVOLENCE (JF, TDoG, 410)

III. Eclipsing or Highlighting the Goodness of God

(We are all either contradicting/eclipsing or supporting/reflecting the truth of God’s goodness in how we think and live)

A. Ways a Christian can eclipse the Goodness of God

1. For ourselves

“It is his goodness to snatch away that whence we fetch supports our security, and encouragements for our insolence against him: he takes away the thing which we have some value for, but such as his infinite wisdom sees inconsistent with our true happiness... **to prevent what is evil, is to do us the greatest good!** It is kindness to prevent a man from falling down a precipice, though it be with a violent blow, that lays him flat upon the ground at some distance from the edge of it. Charnock, vol 2. 309-10

2. For others

B. Ways a Christian can Reflect the Goodness of God

1. Focusing on it in our own lives

2. Reflecting it towards others

Conclusion

- **“Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble...Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.”**
Psalm 107:1,8-9