

Study 2 – The Goodness of God

1. Why the Attributes of God?

- a. Like getting to know your spouse, friend, child, or relative – you know who you’re talking to, you know who you’re talking about, and you can better understand and receive God’s love, grace, care, discipline...
- b. Especially in this season it can help us gain sight for what God is doing even now...

2. What are the Attributes of God?

- a. List: Article 1 BC – ends with “and good, and the overflowing source of all good.”
- b. Incommunicable and communicable attributes – Sov. Is incom but Good is com
- c. Importance that God is all of them at the same time and in all times – He is simple (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/the-simplicity-of-god/>)

3. Goodness introduced

- a. Cultural Goodness – dress: my hat and my face; Gillette commercial
- b. God’s Goodness... Jones p. 135: “God is good and necessarily so. God’s essence does not conform to some external standard of goodness. God is essentially goodness itself.” God is good – in fact the word God comes from good.
 - i. Only God is good – Mark 10:17-18

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.

Read the Psalms – God’s goodness is all over them!

- ii. In the beginning – we see His goodness...
- iii. God is good to creation
 1. Ps. 136:25 He gives food to every creature. His love endures forever.
 2. Ps. 145:9 The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.
 3. Matt. 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?
- iv. God is good to all humanity – common good

Babylon Bee:

‘What Has God Ever Done For Me?’ Asks Man Breathing Air

LYNNWOOD, WA—Sources confirmed Tuesday that local freethinker Jared Olson called into question the “absurd” idea that God had ever done anything for him, all while inhaling oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide in a complex process well beyond his mind’s capability of understanding in its entirety...

According to Olson, he plans to detail religion's negative influence on society at next week's meeting, which is being held in the annex adjacent to both a Christian homeless shelter and Catholic hospital.

v. God is especially good to His chosen people

Eph. 1:3-14 (just 3-6)

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves." *He gives us what we don't deserve!*

vi. What is His goodness?

Petrus van Mastricht p. 331

"Specifically, the goodness of God is nothing but that perfection of his through which he can communicate himself and deserves to be desired, and, must be. For this reason, it includes three things: (1) his infinite perfection, which is made known to us by all his attributes, the perfection through which he is *El Shaddai* (Almighty God Gen. 17:1) and sufficient for all things, and that to infinite blessedness. By this perfection he is good in himself and goodness itself (Ps. 25:8; Ex. 33:19), in whom there is no evil (Deut. 32:4). (2) His faculty of communicating himself, when he wills and to the extent that he wills, from which he is said to be good and to do good (Ps. 119:68). By this faculty he distributes his goodness bit by bit, so to speak, to everything: to beasts, to men, to the elect, and so forth (Ps. 36:5, 10; 57:3, 10; 104:24; 119:64). (3) That relation which rests on the preceding two as upon its foundation, the relation through which he is desirable and must be desired or sought in every way (Ps. 42:2; 63:1; 9:10; 34:10; 69:6, 32; 119:2, 10).

So what does that mean? Right? *Goodness is God's perfection in his attributes—they are fully sufficient for you and perfectly communication to you, which makes him desirable above all things.*

Think of a "good" friend, spouse, parent, etc.

4. What about us?

a. Created good

b. What happened in the Garden? Gen. 3:1-5

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

We did not trust God’s goodness! We don’t think God is truly good and for our good!

- c. In our fallen state we can no longer do or be truly good:
 - i. Mark 10:17-18 – rich young ruler mentioned earlier
 - ii. HC LD3

Q & A 8

Q. But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good and inclined toward all evil?

A. Yes, unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.

In the garden we could truly reflect God’s goodness, but now we will always, in some way shape or form, point to ourselves – our own goodness...

- iii. Andrew Cuomo’s (NY) Comment:

He was insistent that God didn’t make things better, man’s hard work did. He said: “The number is down because we brought the number down.” And emphasized: “God did not do that. Faith did not do that. Destiny did not do that. A lot of pain and suffering did that . . . That’s how it works. It’s math. And if you don’t continue to do that, you’re going to see that number go back up. And that will be a tragedy if that number goes back up.”

Among other things Cuomo is questioning God’s goodness. There is a lot in that comment, but one thing I want us to see is that Cuomo is lodging the good in us, and the good of defeating this pandemic is up to us not God...

And what Cuomo is doing is something we all do quite often. We can so quickly act as the true arbiters of good – right? The garden “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil...”

The rich young ruler went away sad why? Because Jesus told him to give away all his wealth...he couldn’t do it because he thought it was his according to his goodness, not God’s...

Cuomo’s statement says the lowering numbers was according to his goodness not God’s...

To grow in goodness is to “Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.” (Psalm 34:8)

- d. But there is a true question that Cuomo’s statement does get at: what about times like these? How do we see God as good in a pandemic? (reiterate from last time)
 - i. Reality of God as simple
 - ii. Augustine – likens God’s sovereign rule to a stained glass window: we see just a few cracks whereas God sees the whole stained-glass window – look at the story of Joseph
 - iii. The reality of the Psalms:

Ps. 13:1,5-6

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?...

But I trust in your unfailing love;

my heart rejoices in your salvation.

I will sing the Lord’s praise,

for he has been good to me.

Ps. 22:1-2

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?

My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,

by night, but I find no rest.

- iv. Finally, Good Friday – The Cross – there you see the greatest picture of God’s goodness that is for you. What is goodness? Goodness is God’s perfection in his attributes—they are fully sufficient for you and perfectly communication to you, which makes him desirable above all things.
- v. BC Comic strips:





The Cross is Good News...Christmas Angels, it's not just news or advice it's good news because God takes what you deserve eternal judgement and gives you what you don't deserve – his eternal goodness.

5. Application: The result of God's goodness in our life is gratitude and generosity

Wilkin p 52-53:

“Be good. Be the person who seeks the welfare of others. Be the person who gives without counting the cost. Be the person who serves joyfully with no expectation of thanks or recognition. Be good employees, good next-door neighbors, good parents, good children, good musicians and public servants and artists and volunteers and caregivers and bankers. If you are, you'll draw attention like a city on a hill at midnight in the desert.

But don't expect that others will necessarily flock to your light in glad acceptance...

It will not do to “be good for goodness' sake” —we must be good for Goodness' sake— for God's sake, whose goodness we daily enjoy.

Scripture for Reflection

Exodus 33:18-19

Psalm 100:5

Romans 8:28

James 1:17

Psalm 25:8-9

Nahum 1:7

Galatians 6:9-10

Questions for Reflection (From Jen Wilken with my additions in italics):

1. Which everyday aspect of the goodness of God do you recognize and savor the most? What everyday good might you thank him for that you have perhaps overlooked? List several
2. Describe a time in your life when you were rejected for doing good. What was the result? What did you learn about being a follower of Christ?
3. In what area of your life are you most prone to grow weary of doing good? What relationship or circumstance would benefit most from a renewed determination to be generous with your time, gifts, or possessions?

4. How should a desire to grow in goodness impact our relationship with God positively? How should it impact our relationships with others positively? Give a specific example of each.
5. *How do you see God's goodness in this time of pandemic? How do you struggle to see his goodness? What do you do with your times of struggle? How does Good Friday comfort you especially in times like these?*

Pray

Take time to pray. Give thanks for God's goodness in creation, to all of humanity, and to you and his church – especially for the gift of Jesus. Pray that you and others may see God's goodness in Jesus, trust his goodness more and more, and that all of us will come to see his goodness even in this time of pandemic.