

# Why Do We Do Good Things ?

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Nice to be able to take this off in church. Just to ensure, Jean, that it's not an age thing, I say good morning as well. So, yeah, it's one of those things that we get used to reading in the morning.

But yeah, thank you for having me back, and it's good to share God's word with you. Before we read the word and read the passage, I want to just pray for us as we hear his word.

Holy Spirit, we pray that you would come and you would use your word to change us. Father, we thank you for what you have given us.

We thank you that you have given us your word and everything that pertains to life and godliness. Son, we thank you that you are the focus of the word, that you are the one who the word speaks of.

And Lord, we do pray that as a trinity, you will come and you will work in power through it today. Make my words acceptable to your ear, O Lord, as I preach it, as I say what has been given to me, so that you might be glorified.

[ 1 : 1 3 ] And I pray this in your name. Amen. I want to begin with maybe a simple question, but perhaps a more difficult one.

Why do we do good things? Why do we obey the law? Why do we help someone across the street? Why do we give to charity?

Why do we do anything which benefits another person? The scientists, the evolutionists, would say that we are all geared to self-preservation.

If you've ever heard of Richard Dawkins, he wrote a book called *The Selfish Gene*, which basically talks about the idea that as a species, we are more likely to be going for our own benefit, doing stuff for our own benefit, rather than the benefit of those in the community.

So the scientists would tell us that we do good from a social aspect, in order to make sure that we are social beings so that we can live alongside one another.

[ 2 : 1 9 ] But I want to consider the real reason I believe that we do good, the real reason I believe that there is goodness in us.

And it may be that we're just totally altruistic. It may be that within ourselves, we are good. Or it could be that it is something else. And I want to look at a passage in Titus, in Titus chapter 2.

If you could open that for me. It's about two-thirds the way through your New Testament. So Titus chapter 2. The verses I'll be reading will be on the screen, but we will refer to some of the other verses as we go along.

And Titus chapter 2. We'll be reading from verse 11 all the way through to the verse 8.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

[ 3 : 51 ]     Declare these things. Exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling, to be gentle and to show perfect courtesy towards all people.

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us. Not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good work. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

Amen. So why do we do good things? From the passage, I'm going to think of three things, but firstly, I want to think about the context of this passage.

[ 5 : 27 ]     Titus is one of those books that we usually get around to sometime in October, if you do your yearly Bible readings, but we should really read the letters of the New Testament in their whole, because they weren't written in verses and chapters.

In fact, they were written as one solid block, one letter, if you like, to the person or the church. And I believe that the theme of Titus can be found in chapter 1, verse 5, where Paul says to Titus, This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained in order and appoint elders in every town as I directed you.

The first chapter of Titus is dedicated to the appointment of elders. These are the leaders of the churches. Now, why did they need elders?

Why did they need leaders in the churches? Well, it was because in Crete there was false teachers. There were people who were teaching things which were not from Jesus.

There were people who were teaching things that were not from the scriptures. And so they needed elders who could combat that. They needed people who were in leadership in the churches to combat this false teaching.

[ 6 : 50 ]     But when you read through chapter 1, you read not about the elders' teaching ability, not about their degrees, not about their ability to understand the word or to expose the word.

Instead, what we read about is their character. We read about their character, that they should not be some things, that they should be other things, and their families should be certain ways as well.

Now, why would the focus be on their character instead of how they could teach and what they could teach? Well, I believe it was so that they could be distinct from the false teachers.

And I believe that Paul sums it up really well at the end of chapter 1, verse 16. He says about the false teachers, they profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.

They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work. So the way that they could spot these false teachers, the way that they could identify them in the community, was how they lived.

[ 7 : 58 ] So that's why these elders had to be upright in their living. They had to be beyond reproach. They had to be basically holy because they were in office of God.

So we have what Paul calls here, professors. They profess to know God. They claim to know God. They have every idea in their head that, you know, as David was praying, we've been to church, we've been to seminary, we've done Bible college.

We know God. But what they do denies them, denies him. And again, we can go back to Jesus in the Gospels in Matthew chapter 7.

Many will say to me, Lord, Lord, and I will say to them, depart from me. Our theology, though important, will not be the thing that is vital.

It will be that we've done the will of our Father in heaven. Now, is that saying then that doing good works is good enough within themselves?

[ 9 : 07 ] Well, some may argue that because in chapter 2, as we go down the list at the top of chapter 2, we find a whole range of things which are good things to be.

We have got dignified. We have self-controlled. We have kind. We have good. things which would be desirable for anyone to be.

Things which would be a good thing for anyone to be. And perhaps if there's someone else preaching this passage or has preached this passage this morning in another church somewhere, maybe they would stop there.

Maybe they would stop there and say, you know what? Just go read the list that belongs to you. Find your category on that list and you need to work at being those things.

You need to find the things in your life which are bad and you need to work on these behaviours. You need to find these ways of being these things. And that might be it.

[ 10 : 15 ] That might be end of sermon. Be good because it says in the Bible be good. good. But I'm not going to stop there. It's a bit early yet.

Instead, I'm going to spend a lot of my time under my next category because I want to look at why. I want to look at why we are being asked to be this way.

Why are we being asked to act in a way that is contrary to the false teachers which is contrary to our society. well I believe we have been asked to be good because God is good.

As we begin our passage in verse number 11 we have there the reason that these commands are given the reason that these attributes are put down for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people training us to renounce ungodliness.

and I want to go through this passage I want us to dwell here I want us to really soak this in because this is the real reason why we are good this is the real reason that we do good things and we are holy is because God is good and he has done good things for us.

[ 11 : 41 ] So we're going to start with we should be good because God is good and that he showed us grace. Right at the very beginning of verse 11 for the grace of God has appeared.

It's one of his attributes it's one of those things of God that is integral to him he is gracious God is gracious now what is grace? Grace is unmerited favour grace is where God looks upon us and he gives us things even though we don't deserve it and we're told in this passage that God's grace has appeared now some of you might think well if God was always like this how can it appear?

Well the word here is actually the word where we get our word epiphany now I don't know if you've ever been sitting and someone's been saying something to you and you just don't get it nothing seems to click in place you just seem to be sitting there and thinking right that just makes no sense at all and then they say something and the penny drops and suddenly it seems like everything's clear it just seems like oh that's what they were meaning that's where all that was leading to that's where everything was going to I hope that my sermon does the same thing but the word epiphany has that same aspect doesn't it when we have an epiphany we have a clearing of the mind it's suddenly like everything kind of makes sense it's there in the full and I believe that God's grace talked about here the epiphany of God's grace when it was all made clear happened in a single event it was clear before that there was pictures before that in the

Old Testament of when God's grace would be shown to the people of Israel but I believe that God is good because he sent Jesus this is the epiphany that we talk about when we talk about the grace of God appearing to us because Jesus was sent to earth and I find it amazing to think that it was Jesus who most clearly revealed God Jesus who most clearly explained what God was all about what God was doing throughout history if you go to John chapter 1 you'll read it like this that the word became flesh Jesus Christ became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth for from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace for the law was given through Moses grace and truth came through

Jesus Christ no one has ever seen God the only God who is at the father's side he has made him known Jesus Christ has made him known he is the penny drop moment when Jesus came everything was made clear about who God was and what God was doing because God is not only good because he sent Jesus but he is good because he sent Jesus with a mission to bring about salvation for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation and notice in our passage it says it brings salvation for all people now some may ask the question does this mean that everyone is now in the saved category because everyone has seen the salvation of the Lord Lord I don't believe so but I believe our passage tells us what it does mean because we look back again at those lists and now look at the categories that are there put in look at the communities so you have older men you have older women you have younger women you have younger men you have bond servants now correct me if I'm wrong but I believe that that would encapsulate all areas of society that would encapsulate people who had money people who didn't have money people who had property people who were good church going people people who are not good church going people in fact

[16:12] I believe that everyone can be involved in those categories and I think that is the amazing part about the gospel is that it's not confined to some category it's not just older men it's not just younger women or bond servants go to the gospel and find peace and hope and truth but actually all peoples every kind of person whatever they are can be brought under the sound of the gospel they can hear the gospel and they can respond to the gospel God has put no human barriers in place of coming to Jesus there is no glass ceiling there is no age limit on the gospel it doesn't matter about your age sex status wealth everyone can come whosoever wills may come but not only has he brought the salvation but he enacted the salvation he sacrificed himself

God is good because he sacrificed himself verse 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness Jesus Christ came not with the thought that he was going to come and just preach a message and then disappear back into heaven as if nothing had happened but he came knowing that he was going to die knowing that he was going to be put on a cross and sacrificed now why would someone need to be sacrificed in the old testament sacrifice was an idea of payment for sin when someone sinned they had to make atonement they had to go to the temple taking a lamb or duttle dubs or something like that that they could sacrifice as propitiation for their sins the sin was covered because of their sacrifice but

Jesus Christ came to sacrifice himself as a full atonement as a full price for our sin you may remember a few years ago there was a man a local man named Craig White and he paid a price he paid a price of one pound for Rangers football team now legally by size it doesn't seem like a lot but legally that is required for a purchase to be a legal transaction that a price has to be paid and we are the same because legally before God before the judge of all the earth a price needs to be paid and Jesus Christ gave himself to pay that price to go on the cross to die in our place that we might go free and so we know that the price has been paid and that's another reason that

God is good because he sacrificed himself rather than letting us perish Peter puts it in this way in 1 Peter 1 knowing that we were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish and without spot so God is good because he showed his grace God is good because he sent Jesus God is good because he sacrificed himself God is good because he set us apart verse number 12 in our passage in chapter 2 it says that he is training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled upright and godly lives here's the rub here's where God makes us good now that doesn't dissolve us of responsibility however it says that he is training us to renounce ungodliness worldly passions and to live self-controlled and upright lives that word training there is a word which means to bring up children now those of you who have brought up children know how beneficial that how rewarding that is as an experience but you also know how tough it is to bring up a child and to have them do the right thing to have them do them be good citizens and that's what the passage says that

God is doing for us God is doing for us that he is making us and disciplining us and bringing us up my mother used to say you were brought up not dragged up and yeah I have to agree with her that I was brought up I was disciplined I was brought up in a way that was good for my parents good for society and it shows then that I have been raised in a way that is acceptable and so what we see here is actually that God is active in teaching us how to be good and teaching us how to do the right thing he is training us he is bringing us up he is really bringing us to the point where he can say that we are like him and God is good because he's coming back in verse 13 we have waiting for our blessed hope the appearing of the glory of our great

[ 22 : 14 ] God and saviour Jesus Christ God is coming back and he's coming back for us those of us who have trusted in him those of us who have believed in him who are working towards that goodness that he is putting into us and again this word appearing it's an epiphany it's a clearing of our minds it's a clearing that says wow this all makes sense now all of this trial and tribulation as we were singing about in our first song it clears because the epiphany happens the penny drops as we see Jesus verse John talks about that when we see him we shall be like him and then in verse 14 it says that Jesus himself is purifying us for himself that he has saved us and he is purifying us he is making us holy he is making us right with

God he is purifying us in our bodies so that we put away the things that we used to do and embrace the things that God is and that brings me to the last section that we are good because God is good even when we were not good we go on to chapter 3 in verse 3 we find that for we ourselves were once foolish and disobedient now again we look at the context of this verses 1 and 2 it would keep our 2 meters distance that is us being courteous and

I find it interesting that it highlights these particular things that the Christians have to be they're all outward and they're all relational and I believe that these are things that the Christians in Crete were supposed to be to the non Christians in Crete because he brings it back to Titus to the team there in Crete who is evangelizing saying that we ourselves were once foolish disobedient led astray slaves to various passions and pleasures passing our days in malice and envy hated by others and hating one another that was our state before Christ came in that was our state before Jesus and the grace of God was shown in our lives that we were not good we were nowhere close to good we did things which were contrary to God again as David prayed that we were going against

God in all the ways of our life we might not have known it we might not have realised it but that is what we were doing however and I love the buts in the Bible the blessed buts they used to call them in verse number four there's one in Ephesians two but when the goodness of the loving kindness of God our saviour appeared he saved us so even though that state we were in that the mindset of doing the wrong thing of hating and being hated of being led astray of slaves to various passions when the goodness and loving kindness of God our saviour appeared he saved us he did it we didn't do it of ourselves we didn't say you know what I'm going to pull my bootstraps up I'm going to be a better person I'm going to go out and do all the things the

Bible tells me to do because that's the right thing to do no he saved us not because of works done by us but according to his mercy his own mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit so in this passage in these short few verses we see that this is a Trinitarian thing the whole of the Godhead is active in bringing you to Christ and to changing you from the inside out making you holy making you good the Holy Spirit has come in and is washing us from the inside out I find that amazing that the Godhead the person who created heaven and earth Sam 8 puts it really well that when I think of the heavens what is man that you're mindful and the son of man that you consider him the Godhead loves us so much that he came he dwelt among us he saved us and he is changing us that's how much he loves us so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life that changing that transformation means that we will become heirs of eternal life we are heirs of eternal life that when we die we will have life with

[ 28 : 08 ] God and that begins now our life with God does not begin when we die our life with God begins now if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ if this is happening to us if we are being changed from the inside out we are already having our life with God and then Paul sums up really well why we have to be good why are we being made holy why are we being made good people the saying is trustworthy and I want you to insist on these things that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works these are excellent and profitable for people now the people there he's not talking about the ones who are in the church the ones who are in the body instead doing good works is the benefit to the outsider it's the benefit to the person who's not within the walls it's the benefit to the person who's outside and how many of us know of people who would need especially at time like this good things presented to them and these things are actually witnesses they're witnesses that within ourselves we are being changed we are being changed to be like

God we are doing good things like God and I would argue that by doing good things we are actually presenting the gospel Jesus says in Matthew chapter 5 do your good works amongst men that they may see your works and glorify your Father in heaven knowing that it's not us it's not because of us that we do good works but because of the power of the Holy Spirit that works within us to do these good works I think that James sums it up in probably one of the more famous verses in the Bible that faith without works is dead if we have faith if we have faith in the Lord Jesus if we are changed and transformed by the Lord Jesus why are we not doing good things may be the question why are we not helping our society why are we not benefiting those who are around us because these things are the spirit the

Godhead working within us to change us and I wonder have you been good by your own account have you been good because you think you ought to be you know can do it by your own strength or are you good because Jesus Christ has died for you redeemed you paid for you has brought you out of that life of unrighteous living and is working within you to do good things to others let's pray father we do pray that the spirit would be working within us helping us to do good things to show our society that we have you working within us to show our society that we are being changed not because of anything we've done Lord not because of our own goodness inherent goodness but because of your goodness because you came down because you redeemed us because you're sanctifying us and are changing us by the whole power of the

God head and so Lord I do pray for those in the congregation today those listening online that Lord you would change us more and more to become like yourself and Lord I pray that if those in this congregation have not heard that they can come to Jesus have not heard that he can change them he can make them into something new Lord I pray that they would come unto you today that they would seek you and find you and I pray this in Jesus name you