

He is Good, Just, and Full of Mercy

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[0 : 00] Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire, enlighten with celestial fire. Father, we deal with evil within ourselves. Often we don't deal with it as we should, or even as we could.

We deal with evil all around us. We deal with doubts and questions. We deal with the questions which others throw against the faith and the challenges which are thrown against the faith to which we do not often know the answer.

And Father, in such a world we give you thanks and praise that you are still sovereign, that Jesus is still the Lord and the Savior, and that the Holy Spirit is still at work. And we ask, Father, that in your kindness and mercy to us the Holy Spirit would move deep within our hearts, deep within our minds and our wills, that we might be gripped once again with the truth of your word and the truth of the gospel and learn to live for your glory.

And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, we're going to look today at the idea that God is good, just, and merciful.

Now, right off the bat, we have a very, very big problem, which is that, as probably every single one of us know, the main argument against the existence of the God that Christians worship, the triune God, is the problem of evil.

[1 : 29] That, in fact, people will, if they, you know, get past their Canadian-ness and actually want to criticize your faith, they'll say, listen, God can't possibly exist.

You just look at the world. I think it was, was it just in Scotland or something or England? Just the other day, some lone gunman shot four or five people and killed himself. And you just look at all the evil that's going on in the world.

Do you know that in Afghanistan is the Taliban take-back areas? One of the things they do, and there's actually precedence for this, is they go up and they round up the unmarried women, including girls up to 12, and they either take them as forced brides or as sex slaves.

That's going on in Afghanistan right now as the Taliban takes areas. Girls as young as 12, taken as either a wife against their will or as a sex slave.

And so to many people in our culture, they just look at the evil in the world and they say, George, there is just no way that there can be a God who is good and who is all-powerful and all-wise, given the evil that's going on right now in Afghanistan and all over the world.

[2 : 45] And for many of our friends, it's one of those, you know, mic drop moments. They say that, they drop the mic, they walk away, and there's not much they feel that we can say against it.

So let's think about this problem. Because on one level, the idea that God is good, when I get to my points, it's very simple. The triune God is good. I mean, that's sort of an easy idea, but it's a hard idea for us to get our mind around in a world where, for many people, the basic thing is that God can't possibly exist and can't possibly be good when there's things going on, like what the Taliban is doing in Afghanistan.

So let's think about it. But there's three problems about thinking about it. And the first problem is, and I know this can be a little bit hard to say, is that, in fact, the pattern is that many times when I talk to people about it, it's a bit of a, it's a common human problem, but I think it's a bigger problem today than it has been in other times, that there's a fundamental incoherence in people and lack of moral seriousness or attentiveness in a lot of people.

Like, people are very moralistic and legalistic nowadays. In fact, I was just joking with somebody the other day that about four years ago, I'd have to regularly talk with people who said that all morality is relative, that there's no right and wrong.

And somehow or another, there's been the invasion of the body snatchers, and all of those people have been taken over by aliens who now are legalistic cancel culture warriors.

[4 : 18] Like, I don't know how the culture shifted so fast. But here's the problem. There's, even though there seems to be a lot of moralism, there is, in fact, often a fundamental incoherence or lack of attentiveness about moral beliefs.

And I had a perfect example of this this morning. I wished I had my phone, and I would have seen if we could put it up on the screen. I went to my local favorite coffee shop to get a coffee between the services, and it happened to be, it's just one of those days, like, the lineup took forever.

Everybody in the lineup ahead of me all seemed to want to order two or three or four drinks. All of the drinks were complicated, and in every case it seemed as if the person getting the drink wanted to negotiate freebies at the same time.

I know you used to work in a, you know, can I have whipped cream with that? Well, you're going to cost money well, and then they blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I'm just thinking there. Anyway, so I'm standing in the lineup for a long time looking, and then I noticed that behind the barista is a sign that says, Be loud, be proud, be you.

Okay? Now, give me some mercy. You all know what that's connected with. Be loud, be proud, be you. But beside the barista was another sign, a scary-looking sign in bright red and very formidable and far bigger than the other one.

[5 : 42] And the other sign was, wear a mask. And then it even went on, it has to cover your nose, like there are all these other types of things, all very, very scary.

And I almost was going to go up into the barista and said, you know, I was going to take my mask off and said, I want to be me. And I want to be proud. And I want to be loud. And I don't like wearing masks because that's me.

I almost said that to the barista. But you think about it. You see messages like this all over the world. Like there's no sense that there's one moment, be loud, be proud, be you. Wear a mask.

Like in even bigger, scarier language. Well, that doesn't fit. That's incoherent. And if you don't understand that point, you have a deeper problem of incoherence than you realize.

Now, the reason I didn't say anything just to finish the story is I came up to the barista. And the first thing I said is, I have a ridiculously simple order. I would like a black, tall coffee.

[6 : 42] And he looked at me and said, he put it in and he said, that's all? I said, I'd just like a black, tall coffee. It's ridiculously simple. He smiled at me and said, for that, it's on the house.

So I didn't ask him about the incoherence of the signage. Because, gosh, that was a very nice thing for him to do. Anyway, so here's the first thing.

There's often just people don't think about things. They don't put A together with B together with C and realize that they're inconsistent. And by the way, I'm not saying that Christians are good at that or perfect at that. But it's just a general problem of how do you live and examine life and really look at moral issues seriously if there's, in fact, unconscious incoherence going on in each of our lives.

But the second problem that we have to discuss this issue is what I call the myth of Switzerland. Now, obviously, when I say the myth of Switzerland, I believe that Switzerland exists.

In fact, I've been in the airport in Zurich several times in Switzerland. So I know that Switzerland exists. But what I mean by that is that a lot of times people have this myth that they can be neutral, that they can give you these objections to your point of view and articulate them very well.

[8 : 00] But then they just sort of go like this as if they don't have to answer any of the issues which have been raised. That somehow or another, if there's, you know, a problem of how do you have a world where there's good and evil in the same world and there might or might not be a God and how you put these things together, they can just sort of criticize you.

But they're Switzerland. They're neutral. They don't have any view. They don't have to account or answer for anything. But that's not true. Like, why should that be true? Like, who made, who died and made you God?

Like, you've got to answer, you've got to put these things together as well, right? I mean, that's just fair. And then the third thing is that when we consider this problem, right, the argument is that there's terrible, evil things going on in this world.

Therefore, God, as you describe him, can't possibly exist. And they just look at one type of experience around this sort of mystery. Because really what they're doing is they're highlighting to us there's this mystery about good and evil.

There's a riddle, an enigma of good and evil that goes on and exists in the world. But the problem is that they stop too soon. There isn't enough attentiveness.

[9 : 11] There's not enough attentiveness to the real moral experience that we have to sort of account for, not only in our own lives but in the world. Like, if you think about it, how is it that there is both good and evil in the world?

Like, you think that every system of thought, every ideology, every religion has to be able to account for why it is, how come there is both good and evil in the world?

And how is it that you can account for the fact that there is differences about how you understand what good and evil are that exist between people?

But even though there's differences about the specifics, there's not a difference fundamentally about the idea that fundamentally there is something which is good.

So we might disagree with whether or not, obviously we're going to disagree with the Taliban on whether or not you can have a 12-year-old girl as a sex slave.

[10 : 12] But at some point in time, the Taliban, well, it was easy with the Taliban because they clearly believe in right and wrong. So we might disagree on the particulars, but the idea that there is a good and that there is a bad is, in fact, something which is, in fact, part of the world.

Well, how is it that you account for that? Like, why is that the case? And why is it the case that it is true, I think, in every culture? This is even true in Canada, even during the time when there were most moral relativists.

One of the things that you saw all of the time was this phrase that I'm a good person. If you saw any of Ricky Gervais' little comedy sketches or series that he did, he did two series of them, at least two.

By the way, when I say things like this, I'm not necessarily recommending you go out and watch them. I mean, it's, but he is a, really, in many, many, many, many ways, you know, anyway, he, I mean, he's very, very clearly an atheist.

But one of the things which was very telling is that every episode, two, three, four, five, six times, he'd say that he was a good person. And so it's always understood, so there's a world with good and evil.

[11 : 19] There's a world where we disagree about the particulars, but we understand that there is a fundamental thing that's good and evil. And we understand that we should seek the good, that that's what we should do.

That's what a moral person should do, that they should seek to become more good. And the other thing about our experience is that we are a mixture of good and evil. That if we're honest about it, that we understand that there is both good and evil that I have done.

I have done good things and I've done evil things. And if you have a system of thought or a religion that says that you never do anything good, we don't know, that can't be right. I mean, obviously, some people do good things.

And if we have a system of thought that says nobody ever does evil things, we say, no, no, no, no, that doesn't it. But, you know, I do good and evil. How is it that I understand my own experience of doing good and evil?

And then another thing with it is that for many of us, in fact, I think for all of us, if we live long enough and have enough of an examined life, we'll realize that there is something within us which is evil, which is scary and wrong and we really need to deal with.

[12 : 23] Like those of us who've struggled with addictions, those of us who've struggled with alcoholism or drug addiction, know very, very powerfully that there is, in fact, some part of us that desires this thing that will only destroy us and has been destroying us and consuming us.

But many of us also have the same thing with whether it's lust or anger, whether it's greed or gluttony or a range of other types of things, that we come to realize that it's not just that there's a mixture of good and evil within me, but there is something within me which is ravenous.

And why is that? Like, why is that? And then with that, there's this other part of human experience is that how do I become good?

Like, how do I deal with the evil in me practically? And then another part of the human experience is how do I live in the world, in a world where there is evil and there is good?

How do I live? So, you see, now what we've done is we're still now going to have to look at the problem of good and evil. But, you see, when you raise the problem of good and evil and you just stop at this one little tiny bit, you're not actually really living an examined life.

[13 : 37] You're not really... The people who raise that objection, they're really on to something. Like, they're really on to something, but they stop too quickly.

They somehow or another think that they don't have to account for these things, that only somehow I have to. Like, why is it that I'm the only one asked to account? If I'm talking to three people, why am I the only one asked to give an account for this?

Like, all of us have to give an account. And don't stop just with this problem of good and evil and God. Like, broaden it out. So, well, here's... Before we...

Let's look at how some of the other attempts to answer this question are. And that... You see, here's the thing. If you realize that nobody's neutral, if you start to actually think about the three...

I think it's three... Three principal ways that people in Canada and throughout history try to answer this thing outside of the Christian faith, if you actually start to think about it for a second, you come to realize that the Christian answer is very beautiful and very wise.

[14 : 43] And wise and beautiful and actually hopeful at a very, very, very, very deep level. That, in fact, the Christian answer is not only wise and beautiful, but to use some postmodern language, it's thick.

It's deep. So, let's just think about it. The most common Canadian view on this particular issue is that, ultimately, I talked about this last week, and we're going to look very briefly at it again today, is that everything that came to exist has come to exist as a result of naturalistic evolution.

It's how they teach it at Ottawa, you at Carleton, CBC, how the Supreme Court would understand it, most of them at least, fundamentally, not all of them, but most of them. It's how the opinion makers understand things, and that's the fundamental bedrock view of the secular world that we inhabit, that everything that exists has come about as a result of naturalistic evolution.

I talked about this a little bit last week. But here's the particular thing. It means there's no God, that ultimately things just came to be. But if this is the case, where on earth does good and evil come from?

Like, where on earth does good and evil come from? You see, not even picking an evil bird.

[16 : 00] For my dogs, there's just breakfast and supper. There's no world of moral striving. There's just breakfast and supper.

In the world of evolution, as it's taught, as it's understood, is that basically the strong survive and the weak die. In fact, often the strong survive by eating the weak.

I mean, we eat chickens. I mean, those of us who aren't vegetarians eat chickens. The strong survive by eating the weak. Well, you will never, ever, ever be able to go from the strong survive and the weak die and the strong survive by eating to, you can never go from the strong survive by eating the weak to therefore love one another.

The strong survive by eating the weak, therefore love one another. That makes no sense. I mean, in fact, the matter is, is that the lesson that if, it's just, if that thing's just happened, then, I don't know, like, why, why shouldn't I hurt the weak?

Like, what ought are you going to give me? And, and if this is the case, then, how on earth does anything, all of these things, how does it account for good and evil in the world, good and differing about it, about seeking to be good, about mixture of good and evil within us, and, and even if we try to say, well, that's just all a matter of adaptation and all of that type of stuff, you say, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, it's just a matter of adaptation.

[17 : 39] Taliban forcing 12-year-old girls to be their sex slaves. In fact, you know what, from an evolutionary point of view, that might be very evolutionarily successful because the strong are breeding with the weak, hopefully providing some strong.

And, you see, the thing about this whole naturalistic worldview is all you need to do is acknowledge one thing that isn't cultural and one thing which isn't to deal, to do with evolutionary survival, just one thing which is good and your whole worldview falls apart.

And the fact of the matter is, is if you don't think it's wrong for a Taliban fighter to take a 12-year-old girl as a sex slave, shame on you. Shame on you.

You have not become more moral. You have exited the world where taking morality is serious. The other very popular response to the whole issue is what's called pantheism or panentheism.

For our purposes, they're basically the same here. One of them is that pantheism is that everything is God. Panentheism is that God is in everything. And at the end of the day, they share the relevant point, which is that at the end of the day, there's just the one.

[19 : 04] That's what we're moving towards is the one. There used to be everything was one and now we've gotten this appearance of difference but in the classic line, the end of all things as you go through cycles of living and rebirth and living and rebirth and eventually achieve enlightenment, you are like a drop of water that finally joins the ocean and become one with the ocean.

And at the end of the end of the end of the end, there's just the ocean. But within this point of view, then really what they say is that God is beyond good and evil. Really? God is beyond good and evil? What on earth does that mean for 12-year-old girls being taken as a sex slave?

Like that sounds very nice. It looks good on a t-shirt that God is beyond good and evil. But really, what does that mean? Like how can that mean anything other than giving evil a pass?

If that was true, shouldn't we all be revolutionaries against that God rather than seeking to join it?

Now obviously, Buddhism and Hinduism is vastly better than that. It's a type of an incoherence within its worldview. But the fact of the matter is that if in fact it's just an appearance that some things are good and an appearance that some things are evil, how does that fit with our immoral experience that there is good and evil in the world, that there's difference about particulars but at the big picture there really is something and it's wise to be good and that you and I are a mixture of good and evil answers and actions and how do I live in a world like that?

[20 : 45] How is it that pantheism or panentheism really actually handles it? And the final thing which is the classic answer and sort of seen in the Star Wars thing with the understanding of the force is dualism.

That somehow there's the good force and the bad force that they're always sort of somehow or another at each other's other sides and there has to be some type of a balance and blah, blah, blah, blah. But here's the thing. What they do is that type of thought often it cheats.

You see, what happens if you rename the two forces the blue force and the yellow force? Now you really have two separate forces that are just different. And then we might even say well who cares if some people like Manchester City because of their powder blue uniforms and some people like Sweden because they love yellow.

Like, you know, big deal. Like who, you know? You have something against Swedish people? You have something against people who like Manchester City as soccer team? But you see, they don't say blue and yellow which is obviously in a sense amoral category somehow or another perennially butting heads and working within experience.

They smuggle in good and evil by calling them good and evil as if there's some other standard above them. In other words, they undermine their idea just in fact in speaking about it.

[22 : 03] In fact, as I used to say back in the days when I was having to deal with lots of moral relativists, the fact of the matter is that human beings can't speak or think without moral categories. It's impossible.

It was always just perennially frustrating to try to talk to somebody thinking that they were a moral relativist while they constantly use moral categories that I oughtn't to think, I ought not to think there's something that's different.

One moment. I ought not to think there's a difference between right, isn't ought like a moral term? You can, it would be almost as if you try to argue with somebody whether oxygen or air exists and they're arguing against you while they breathe without being aware of the fact that they're breathing while they argue with you and they're using moral categories while they argue with you.

So now in light of these problems, in light of in fact the three historic, ancient, and most common ways of trying to deal with our moral experience, let us consider what the Bible has to say and let us consider once again how the Bible addresses the reality that there is a good God and there is evil in the world.

If you take it to the first point, if you could throw it up, is that the triune God is good. The triune God is good. We're just going to look at, this is just so throughout the Bible, I'm not going to give you a hundred verses, we're going to look at just one thing in the Old Testament, one thing in the New Testament.

[23 : 26] If you turn in your Bibles to Psalm 100, this very, very powerful psalm, make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth, serve the Lord with gladness, come into his presence with singing, know that the Lord, he is God, it is he who made us and we are his.

We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. And just as a bit of an aside, there's a bit of a double meaning in the Hebrew and so in the Hebrew, it can also say it is he who made us and we are his or it can say it is he who made us and not we ourselves, which is really a very, very important idea for us post-modern Canadians who sort of somehow want to always be like a self-made person.

We don't make ourselves at a very, very deep level. And then the psalm continues, enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise, give thanks to him, bless his name, for the Lord is good, his steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations.

The Lord is good and his steadfast love endures forever. And it is a constant theme in the Psalms and in Israel's worship. Let's just look to one thing by Jesus in Mark chapter 10, verse 18.

Mark chapter 10, verse 18. And this is all in part of a dialogue. A rich young man has come to Jesus and says, good teacher.

[24 : 57] And it isn't that Jesus is denying that he's God. It's just Jesus trying to tease out from him what exactly he's saying. Does he realize what he says when he calls Jesus good? It's in a sense Jesus trying to get the guy to go deeper to understand that if he's serious about what he says in his introduction then he's implying that Jesus is God.

So here's what Jesus says, verse 18. And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. Now, here's the thing very, very simply.

the Bible understands goodness theologically. God is good. God, it isn't that there's the good and then there's God and by this standard of goodness, God is God.

That's not how it works. God is good. He is good. Everything, our understanding of good and evil ultimately, completely and utterly are in keeping with who he is and things which are congruent with him, in keeping with him, his character, his nature, his attributes, his creation.

God is just good and it's from that that we understand what good and evil is. And just by the way, I'm focusing primarily on God is good as opposed to justice and mercy because, you see, if human beings had never fallen, we would not know that God was just and merciful.

[26 : 20] because, you see, justice and mercy are necessary when evil exists. Justice and mercy, in fact, you see, you can't really think of something being good if it's unjust.

That wouldn't make any sense and if there was a goodness that never showed mercy, we'd think there's something lacking in that goodness. And so, goodness, we see justice and mercy when there is evil.

How does the good, how does goodness deal with the reality of evil? Already, you're starting to see the thickness and the beauty of how Christians and the Bible is going to understand this particular issue.

And then, the second thing, if you could put it up, is that the triune God made all that exists good. The triune God made all that exists good.

Now, we're going to look very quickly at seven verses, all from Genesis chapter one. And, this is part of the foundation of the whole Bible. Those of you who are curious about how I deal with the seven-day creation and Adam and Eve and all of that type of stuff, I did a sermon series a few years ago on the first 11 chapters of Genesis.

[27 : 36] You can look it up. But, what you can see here in this foundational text that introduces the Bible, is that seven times in this first story it is declared that God made everything good.

And the final time, the seventh time, it says very good. And, basically, that's a symbolic type of number. Seven times is the number of completeness. It's the number of perfection. It's emphasizing.

It's why, it's emphasizing. Even though there's six days of creation, the seventh day, God rests, there's seven times where it's said that things made are good. Look at verse 4. And God saw that the light was good.

And God separated the light from the darkness. See? He saw that it was good. Look at verse 10. And God called the dry land earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called seas, and God saw that it was good.

Look at verse 12. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding, seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind.

[28 : 49] And God saw that it was good. Look at verse 18. This is about the creation of the lights, the one to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness, and God saw that it was good.

Look at verse 21. God created the great sea creatures and every living thing that moves with which the waters swarm according to their kinds and every winged bird according to its kinds, and God saw that it was good.

Look at verse 25. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind, and God saw that it was good.

That's six times it's been said. And now we come to verse 31. And verse 31 goes like this. And God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good.

And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day. Now, here's the thing from this teaching that the triune God made all that exists good. For many people in our culture, a human being needs the triune God like a fish needs a bicycle.

[30 : 06] That would be how many of us, that's sort of just one of those things that might never say that but it's in their bones. Like we, you know, I need God, I need Jesus like a fish needs a bicycle. Like I'm fine with my own life.

But what we see from this is very significant when we're trying to think of our moral experience, our experience of the world in terms of good and evil. You see, what it's actually saying is that when it describes a God who is good made everything that is good and he made human beings in this good world, to inhabit in this good world and if you go back and look at it and he made us to be fruitful, he made us to multiply, he made us to flourish, he made us to have dominion over the earth, he made us to, in a sense, you take the Garden of Eden and the whole earth is to become a garden and the whole earth is to become a temple, the whole earth is where we walk with God and maybe if we hadn't fallen it would have gone to the moon and Mars and Venus and stars beyond and beyond and beyond and beyond and to care for it and to flourish and what we see is this, that just as God made fish to dwell in water, God made human beings to live immersed in goodness.

See, that's why every human being thinks that they should be good. That's why every human being when they experience evil and are living in evil, they know that that's not the way it should be because God made human beings to be immersed in goodness as a fish is immersed in water and not only that, God made us to be infused with goodness as water infuses tea.

That in fact, it's not just a matter, like I mean, the fish inhabits the water but in a sense, most of the fish is just fish but that God made us to be infused with goodness.

That it actually is to get right into us which is why we understand why we want to be able to say that we're good. It's why we want to be able to say that we're good and that goodness is better than evil and at the same time, you know, the average Canadian thinks that somehow another goodness emerges from them but that's a bit of a problematic because evil also emerges from them but this idea of being infused helps to capture but the Bible has something which is even deeper and truer to say which is that God made human beings to reflect his goodness that a human being is not a, just as in a sense the hot water doesn't emerge from the tea but the hot water comes into the tea leaves, that's the word I was looking for, that in a sense the tea leaves don't create water that leave the tea leaves to go into the cup that in fact the goodness comes into the tea leaves and infuses it but now to switch the analogies because human beings are weird, we're a little bit like aardvarks, it's almost as if, you know, an aardvark is as if

[33 : 03] God had spare parts left over for different animals and threw them all together in some ways human beings are the same way that on one hand we're immersed, on another hand we're infused, on another hand we're like a mirror that because God is good and that he is the source of all goodness that we're meant to reflect that goodness at the same time that we're immersed in goodness and infused in goodness and finally when we see in Genesis chapter 3 how God designed human beings to walk with him in the garden it means that we are to understand that we were designed to walk with goodness and in goodness in the path of goodness that that's how God designed us to be and if you think about that it becomes clear why some of these things in our moral experience about why it's wise to be good how there really is good and how and how the goodness seems to be something that should be that goodness is right that when we experience like something like at this time of the year when you got a day with the perfect temperature at the end of the perfect day and you've been with your best friends and with your family and you've had a good meal and you have had just the right amount to drink and you're feeling completely healthy and your conscience is clear and there's a beautiful sunset and everything's still and you hear the sound of the loon and it just seems as if there is something good inside and outside and that those things are in harmony the harmony of the beauty the harmony of the world a peace within your family and your friends a cleaning of your own conscience and there is just something about that which is so dang right where you say to yourself

I was made for this no 12 year old girl being captured by the Taliban as a sex slave says to herself I was made for this if you put up the third point the triune God did not create evil he is always and only opposed to moral wrongdoing this is the biblical teaching you see the thing is is that the biblical teaching emphasizes something which is of the highest value to Canadians which is freedom and if in fact God makes human beings truly, truly, truly free it means that they have the option to truly, truly, truly choose that which is evil and that's what happened in our spiritual ancestors our physical ancestors our representatives Adam and Eve and in particular Adam that there come a time described in Genesis 3 which I'm not going to read just for reasons of time where human beings chose to not trust God to not trust his word to desire to be above God to judge God to be the standard over God so that they would be they would determine what's good not God and that they would be over him and that when they do that what they do is that there is something within them which is broken there is something within them which is bent you see because the fact of the matter is that Christians say that since evil comes by human breaking not God making that in a sense all in a very, very real and powerful sense all evil is a perversion of good a corruption of good a disordering of good a removing of good a breaking of good a bending of good a bending of good that that's what all evil is

God made the world good but we pervert corrupt disrupt disorder remove unbalance the words can go on and on and on God is always opposed to evil and that's why his justice comes in that he is always opposed to evil and so it is if you understand this you can see why is it that there's good and evil in the world why is it that we can differ in particulars well we differ in particulars because I don't want to acknowledge that what I'm doing is evil I will come up for complicated reasons as to why it is I mean to my to my Muslim friends who are watching the big problem that you have is that the Taliban will appeal to Muhammad and the Hadith and the Quran to explain them taking 12 year old girls as sex slaves and I know that if there's any Muslims watching this or eventually watch it

I know that you're far better than that but in fact this very very thick encounter and understanding of evil and why it is that we think and why we can't even argue or talk the Christian revelation ultimately based on Jesus makes our experience very powerful and real and know that God is always and only opposed to all moral wrongdoing he never ever ever ever ever ever gives in if you could put up the final point your only hope is the Lord Jesus Christ your only hope is the Lord Jesus Christ see this is one of the things which the Christian faith provides for us that our Jewish friends don't yet realize and our Muslim friends don't have that particular option as well you see the fact of the matter is if I want to know how to deal with evil

I want to know how to deal with the evil within myself and I want to know how to live with evil it's not just that I can do it by myself I need someone to walk with me and I need to be delivered and that's what the Christian faith provides that in fact what we have is we have this ancient promise which is in the Old Testament scriptures that God would send an Emmanuel that God would send one who would crush the serpent that God would send one that means by which all things would be renewed and that's who we have in the person of Jesus you read Matthew chapter 1 that in fact God sends his son to be in the midst of all of our mess and all of the evil and he has the same nature as us and he has evil that happens to him he lives in a world where there's very clearly evil the Jewish people are a conquered people there is the empire which is over them there's the Roman authorities which are over them which will eventually in the year 70 AD which will destroy them as a nation and destroy their temple and he is part of that subject people and he's misunderstood by his parents and his family and his friends and he's put to death on trumped up charges and the demands of justice that should be there by the different authorities are completely and utterly done away with for reasons of political expediency and he lives and he lives amongst human beings he lives amongst our mess he lives amongst the injustice and the evil and the pride and the vanity and the lust and the gluttony and the sloth of the world and he lives amongst us but he never does evil and so it is that when he dies upon the cross as an unjust victim listen

[40 : 41] John was a good worship leader but he can't die for the human race Andrew's a good geek but he can't die for the human race his wife is way better than him she can't die for the human race they're just people but surely the creator of all things can die for all is creation and that's what we hear the creator of all things enters his creation lives the life that you and I could not live lives amidst among and amidst evil and injustice and hatred and prejudice and racism and discrimination and law and all of those things and name calling he lives but never succumbs to evil and when he dies he dies in your place and mine he dies to take the punishment that you deserve and he offers in exchange he the creator can do this for every single one of his creation and he does this on your behalf and offers you the perfect life that he lived that you were not able to live but you should live and the doom that you deserve falls on him and God is a God of justice he's a God of mercy and it's not a matter of favoritism favoritism is when you let somebody off and justice is not the demands of justice are not met but this is true mercy and it's out of the goodness of God that God would send his son to die in your place that you could be reconciled to him that you could he would do for you what you cannot do for yourself and he's not just a savior that does this and then leaves you alone but the

Christian life is a matter of learning to walk with him walk with him towards the evil that you do walk with him and walk with his people to learn how to do good walk with him as you enter into the valley of the shadow of death walk with him as you get the cancer diagnosis as you get the diagnosis of dementia walk with him as you deal with the injustice in your workplace or in your society walk with him as you suffer under it walk with him as you enter into the veil of the shadow of death and beyond into death he is your savior there's not only an understanding of the world which is thick and beautiful and makes sense of it but also it is an account of the world that points you in the direction of where you should be going and it's not merely a pointer he walks with you when you put your faith and trust in Jesus as if you put your hand up to him that he might take you that he might be your savior and you can never reach him but he can reach you and he reaches down he grabs your hand he will never let your hand go you might feel at times that you aren't holding on to his hand and that might be true but he never lets go of your hand when you put your hand on his and he is the one who fits you for heaven and he is the one who walks with you and he is the one who is your hope of glory and he is your righteousness he is your peace take him as your savior remember that he is your savior and we come together because we forget that's where we come together to remember the lord's supper to remember he died to remember that he will return remember that evil will not have the final word remember that justice will finally be done that no one who has done wrong will ever avoid it they might avoid it on this side of the grave but it will not end that way they every single act of evil has been dealt with by Jesus and if you don't accept the covering of him it will be dealt with to your misery and undoing in the final judgment walk with Jesus take him as your savior invite you to stand please stand just bow our heads in prayer father first of all we just father right now it seems as if all we can do is pray and we just pray for those precious young girls taken as sex slaves in Afghanistan father all we can do is commend them into your hands right now father that's all we can do if there is more that we can do father we pray that there would be something maybe governments could do but father we commend them into your hands and we ask father that your holy spirit would move in their lives we ask father for the conversion of the Taliban I confess I don't have the faith to pray it but father I ask that you would you would turn their hearts from evil you would turn their hearts to Jesus the prince of peace and father we ask that you would help us to walk with Jesus to know him as our savior and our lord to walk with him as we confront the injustice in the world and walk with him as we confront the evil within ourselves that you would help us father to walk with Jesus we give you thanks and praise that you are transforming us from one degree of glory to another that your means of grace are preparing us for an eternity with you that one day we will be fully infused with your goodness and reflect your goodness and dwell in your goodness and walk in your goodness and that that is our hope in Christ and father if there are any who are watching this who have not given their lives to Jesus by the holy spirit fall upon them they might open the door to their life and ask Jesus to come in and be their savior and lord and all these things we ask in the name of Jesus

your son and our savior amen