

Goodness of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 August 2024

Preacher: Kate Lees

- [0 : 0 0] Now, looking around and thinking how I've planned this service, I feel I've got the demographic just right. I've got pictures for people to cheer at, and I've got a cartoon to watch, so excellent.
- Go with it. Okay. Now, who said they watch the Olympics? Okay, so you'll know how to cheer, even if no one else does. This morning, we're thinking about the goodness of God, and I was thinking, well, what is it that is good?
- What does it mean, something that is good? So I've got a few pictures I'm going to show you, and we have to do the whole cheering thing. God likes cheering.
- It's okay. We have to do the whole cheering thing, or if we don't like the picture, what do they do in the Olympics? Oh, I know what they do. You know when, like, someone does a bad dive, they go, oh, no.
- I saw that quite a lot. Oh, no. So if this is not something good, if you see a picture, you think it's not good. Oh, no. If it's good, you're like, yes. I think I might practice that, because I'm not holding out much hope.
- [1 : 0 7] So if you think something's good, you go, yes. That's all right. And something not so good, you go, oh, yeah, that's good.
- Okay, so first picture, what have we got? Let's see, is this good or not? Oh, flowers. Yes. Yes. So, okay, we had some cheering, and then we had some.
- So some people not so keen. Flowers good, then? Yes. Oh, yes, okay. What do we have next? Rain. Yes.
- Yes. A bit of a mix, then. Okay. Who's for the cheers? Yes. Who's for the, oh, no.
- 50-50. Rain's okay. But what they say around us is, well, the farmer needs it. And I go, well, can't the farmer have it at nighttime? Yes. Okay. Okay, next one, what do we have?
- [2 : 0 9] Oh, beautiful sunshut. Yes. Yes. Okay, that's good. We'll go for that. Good. Yes, what's next? Oh, chocolate. Yes. I'm sorry, we've just, we've, we've finagled on the arms.
- Sorry, we're doing the cheer now without the arms. So, chocolate. Yes. What's that known, Michelle? Oh. Well, we were friends.
- Okay, so what have we got next? Oh, little puppy dogs. Who thinks this is good? Yes. No.
- No, not so good. Who thinks no? Oh, a couple. Okay, a couple. Okay, what do we have next? Exercise. Exercise. I know you're all trying to be good.
- Yeah, we love exercise. Yeah, right. Okay, next. Oh, bees. No. We need the bees.
- [3 : 1 7] If it was a wasp. Full on no. But bees, is that a yes? Yes. Excellent. Okay. What do we have next? What else is good? Oh, Christmas.
- I don't know. It's middle of summer. I thought I'd... Well done for the premature cheer at the back. Yes. Okay, so let's go. Christmas. Christmas. Yes. Hooray. Everyone.
- Some people have just given up now. Okay, next. Oh, fruit. No? Anyone else know?
- Okay, next. Oh, money. Money. Yeah, what is that? Does anyone have any today?

- Okay. Okay. Money. Let's go for it again. Yes. Okay. Interesting. Next. Oh, power.
- [4 : 16] People don't know now, do they? Because you're like, hmm. Well, it depends, doesn't it? How you use your power. Okay.
- Okay, next. Do we have any more? I can't remember. Oh, time. Is time good? Yes. It depends. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. It depends how old you are.
- Oh, it depends how old you are. Yeah, okay. Yeah. I see what you're saying. Yeah, I do. Yeah, I do. Okay, what's next? Oh, school.
- Well, you can say that now. But some, no, Josh, no. No. Why'd you bring that up in the holidays, mom? Okay, anything else we've got?
- Is that, oh, ice cream. Oh, okay. Sorry, all I can hear from Michelle is, oh, no.
- [5 : 15] Oh, I know. Anything else? Was that the last one? Oh, phones. Mobile phones. Oh, I knew that would bring a mixed reaction.
- Yes, okay. I think that's the final one, wasn't it, Richard? That's the final one. Oh, well, okay. Some things you like, some things you didn't. Fair enough, fair enough. We all have opinions about what is good, don't we?
- We all think some things are good and some things are not so good. For instance, I feel that chocolate is very good. You know, I mean, it tastes good. It looks good.
- It's nice to eat. And I've realized that as you get older and you eat the dark chocolate, you can say it is actually good for you. Apparently. That's what they say.
- But is it really classed as good? If we're to be honest with ourselves. Or maybe we could categorically say that flowers are good. Because they're beautiful. They attract the insects.
- [6 : 12] But actually, what if we've got hay fever? Not so good. People don't like flowers. We've got hay fever. Or we could say fruit. Now, there's nothing wrong with fruit.
- Unless, of course, maybe, I don't know, you've got allergies. Or high potassium. Or diabetes and certain fruit is actually not good for you.
- So, maybe what we class our this is good on is whether it's good for us. If it's good for me, then it's good. Or if it's good for the majority of people, then it must be good.
- And so, you know, when the Bible says that God is good, which the Bible does say, we've got to think about it a little bit, haven't we? What does that mean? There are numerous stories and passages and verses where we're told that God is good.
- God's first statement to Moses after the people have been worshipping someone else is this. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious.
- [7 : 18] This is who God says he is. Long-suffering and abounding in goodness. Abounding in goodness. And when David brings the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem, the people say, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
- His love endures forever. Remember, we see numerous times throughout the Bible when God is merciful and God is gracious and God is patient.
- Numerous examples of his goodness. We're even told in the book of James that all good things come from God. The Bible declares that God is good and everything from him is good.
- This is what we're told. And this is what we know in our lives if we look back and we see how God has been with us. But the goodness of those things on the screen is very dependent on who we are.
- Whereas the Bible tells us that God is good to everyone. To all he has made. That unlike chocolate and flowers and money, God is good for all.

[8 : 28] Psalm 145 says this. The Lord is gracious and compassionate. Slow to anger and rich in love.

The Lord is good to all. He has compassion on all he has made. If you look that verse up in the Message Bible, it says, God is good to one and all.

Everything he does is soaked through with grace. Everything he does is soaked through with grace. God is good. Which means that he's not just good to those who seek him.

He's not just good to those who try and live good lives. He's not just good to some people. But God is good to all. I want to take a little look at a story in the Bible which we'll know very well.

We'll know it as the parable of the prodigal son. I've picked a cartoon because I figured that all the people who are gathered here today for the family service would love a cartoon. So take a look at this.

[9 : 37] It's the parable of the lost son told in a slightly different way. So sit back and enjoy. And she's like, oh, but I thought he was a man.

Is he quite safe? She says. I'd be quite nervous about meeting a lion. And Mr. Beaver says, safe?

Of course he's not safe. But he is good. He's not safe. But he is good. And you know, we're told God is good.

But this doesn't mean he's safe. In fact, sometimes he's so outrageously gracious that we can't contain it. However much we want to try.

We can't put the walls up and stop the grace from flowing out to everyone. He's not safe at all. But he is good. Which means that his goodness reaches out to us.

[10 : 42] Even in our darkest place. It reaches out to everyone. Even in their darkest place. We're going to pray in a moment.

But first of all, we're going to use our thumbs. You notice they're thumbs up. Thumbs up's for good. Maybe I should have done that in the quiz. That would have been better, wouldn't it?

Never mind. Thumbs up or thumbs down. Yeah. And I want to use this as a prayer card. So there might be people who you would struggle to see God's goodness reaching out to.

Or there might be areas in the world that you would want God's goodness to reach out to. There might be those who you know personally who you feel would need God's goodness right now.

And in a moment of quiet, I just invite you to write someone, an area, a place, person. Draw a picture if you don't want to write a name. About someone who you feel you want God's goodness to be shown to.

[11 : 48] Or it could be someone you really struggle with and you want God's goodness to be shown, even though you find it really hard. And in a moment, Will, I'll invite you to bring these up if you want to, but you don't have to.

So take a moment on your thumbs up to think about someone or an area, a place or a person that God's goodness can reach out to today.

If you haven't got a pen, there are some more, I think. If you don't want to write on the card, you can just hold it and think about someone just for a minute.

And then we'll pray together. Father God, we thank you that your goodness reaches out to us. In all circumstances, in all places, at all times.

We thank you for your goodness that runs after us. When we are busy with our own things, when we have our heads down, when we're not focusing or recognising you, that your goodness continues to reach out.

[12 : 52] We thank you there are no barriers to your goodness and your grace. There are no barriers to your love. That you are not a safe God who we can contain. The only one whose grace is poured out upon all.

Forgive us where we have excluded some from your grace and love. Forgive us where we have felt there are people who do not qualify.

Help us to recognise that none of us qualify. And yet your grace is poured upon us. And your goodness is given to us each day. Help us to recognise that grace and goodness in all the things we do.

In the days where we feel we're living in darkness, may we see a glimpse of your goodness in the light that breaks through. And in the days when all is good and all is right, may we offer you thanks for that.

We offer you our prayers for those we really struggle with. For those areas where it seems there is no goodness at the moment. For those people who are bringing hurt and harm to others.

[14 : 03] May your goodness reach out, Lord. May your goodness transform and change. May your goodness run after all you have made. And all you have created.

For we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. There is, of course, one more part to the parable of the prodigal son.

One more part of the story of the running father. And that's the older son. The one who has been with the father all along. The one who has shared everything that the father has.

The one who, when the younger brother returns, is angry. He cannot celebrate. He cannot join in the fun. He cannot join in the party. Because even though he's been with his father all this time, even though he's seen his father waiting for his brother day in, day out, even though he knows what goodness looks like as his father's face was pressed against the window, he's unable to find it in his own heart to be gracious.

All he can see are the problems that the younger son has caused. And so he refuses to join in the celebrations. Because even after spending all that time with his father, he has become nothing like him at all.

[15 : 37] And although we might agree with the notion that God is good, and maybe we're one of those who responds all the time, in reality, if we believe that God is good, we are also called to live out this goodness every day.

Not only with those that we love and enjoy and cherish, but with those we struggle with as well. Bringing God's goodness into the places that we're in.

With those who turn their back on us, and also those who welcome us. It's a goodness that reaches out to everyone. And today, it reaches out to everyone through us.

It's a challenge. But it's also exciting to join in with God's goodness, with what he is doing, and to be guided by him each day.

Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you.