

# God is Good

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[ 0 : 00 ] I can't think of any other time where we need to hear this message that God is a good and gracious King.

I remember when I grew up, you would hear stories and you'd watch old video of riots and protesting back in the 60s, whether it be for the Vietnam War or some other take on life.

I would imagine that nothing can quite captivate what has happened in the year 2020. Not only did we begin with our lives turned upside down because of COVID-19, but today we see very clearly the broken downness of our society, the brokenness of our society, and our sin is clear for the world to see.

To be honest, I have found these past several days to be profoundly sorrowful and heartbreaking. We see people struggling for justice, people struggling to be heard, and people are struggling because lives have ended that should not have.

From the extreme that started it off, Gavin Floyd dying at the hands of people who are supposed to serve and protect the community, to David Dorn, a retired St. Louis police officer who was killed by protesters while trying to stop them from looting his friend's business.

[ 2 : 04 ] What's insane about this is that their deaths, their bodies were filmed and left to see on social media.

It is heartbreaking and it is devastating. Beyond these deaths, there's even more hurt. There's financial ruin.

We see physical injury, destruction of physical property, deep anxiety, fear, emotional distress. One of the most powerful videos I saw was a simple business owner who was pretty much at the verge of going bankrupt with COVID-19.

He finally opens everything up. He's ready to go. And then he's looted and everything that he owns for his business is stolen.

It's easy to weep with those who weep. For some of you who are from the States, I know Dave and there's a few others here who are both members and attenders, your hearts are heavy and they grieve for what they see.

[ 3 : 19 ] I have friends and pastors in some of the hot spots who shared with me some of their pain. Just a simple example of my friend driving his wife, driving their four kids, and the car is peppered with paintballs, including the windshield.

Their churches have been defaced and destroyed. The cry is racism and hearts are filled with hatred. James writes in chapter 2, he warns us so clearly that we are so prone to prejudice and favoritism and not loving our neighbors as we are called to.

However, in this past week, the most striking example and a powerful scene for me was a man in an intersection and someone blocked off his path.

And as he honked, trying to move his way through the protesters, a swarm of people charged him and they threw rocks and a whole myriad of objects at his vehicle and they surrounded him and they were trying to get in and he sped off.

And while speeding off, he ran over several people. And then one of the protesters cried out, Why God?

[ 4 : 55 ] Why God? Seemingly not understanding that their actions directly influence this man's response to drive a way to save his life.

That has been the cry of our hearts for so long, hasn't it? Why God? Why God? The Bible doesn't speak of this, but I'm sure Adam and Eve expressed the same sorrow when news was given to them about the death of their son at the hands of their other son.

If there's anything that we've learned from these past few weeks is that this world is filled with thorn and thistles. How do we remain focused on what God calls us to during these times and events in this world?

A world where there's chaos, shattered hearts, lives, hurt, injustice, clearly seen before our eyes. And then we have a press that manipulates lies and deceives its readers and viewers.

The only advice I have for you is that we need to cling to what is true. I wish that I had a silver bullet sermon that would properly identify and bring answers to this sordid chaos that would take away every fear and every anxious heart.

[ 6 : 45 ] I wish I could preach a sermon to you. But perhaps I actually can. The only thing that I can really do is I can preach to you about God.

Preach to you about God. I began this sermon series that to understand reality begins with understanding God.

The next couple of weeks I want to focus on some particular qualities of God. One, today it's the goodness of God.

I want to preach on the grace of God and the love and mercy of God. Because I think only in understanding these qualities of God, we can come to the conclusion that why hasn't God wiped us out yet?

I think when we cry out and ask that question, why God, we are asking for justice.

[ 7 : 51 ] But the problem is, do we really want justice? Like the man who cried out, why God at the protest, and it was partially due to his direct inability to control themselves, to attack another man.

Even Adam and Eve knew the reason why death had come into the world. Even though we ask why God, the better question is, why haven't you burned this whole world to the ground and truly brought your justice?

For truthfully, who would stand? Even in the midst of our pain, I believe that each and every one of us can think about those times when we know that our pain is a direct reflection of our brokenness, our sin, our rebellion, our actions, our inactions, our attitudes.

So, it may seem counterintuitive, but I want to tell you how good God is.

How good God is. Because the true truth of our reality is that when we call out to God with why, with prayers, and even for salvation and repentance, we are depending on God's goodness.

[ 9 : 31 ] We are depending on God's goodness. When we cry out for him to save us, we rely on his goodness to save us, don't we?

When we petition and make our appeal unto God in prayers, we are petitioning God to hear us and grant us, granting us our heart's longing based on his goodness.

We are simply asking God not to treat us according to what we deserve, but we are entreating God to treat us because he is good.

Let me begin by first identifying what this word good means. A.W. Tozer, Christian writer, tells us that the word good can mean so many things to so many people.

But when it comes to the subject of God, the goodness of God refers to the perfection of his nature. The perfection of his nature.

[ 10 : 37 ] The apostle John sums this up quite clearly in 1 John 1.5 when he states, God is light and in him there is no darkness.

You see, there is such perfection in God's nature that there is nothing that it is missing, nor is there anything defective in it. And as such, there is nothing that needs to be added to make it better.

When we speak of God's goodness, we speak of God's goodness being complete, God's goodness being perfect, and God's goodness lacking nothing.

The Puritan writer Thomas Manton simply remarked, God is not only good, but he is goodness himself. In fact, God is indefinitely good.

Our goodness is only a drop in God's infinite ocean of goodness. You see, goodness is at the core of who God is.

[ 11 : 46 ] It is the basis for his kindness, his affection, his graciousness, his benevolence, his warmth, and his goodwill towards us. It's why the writer of Psalm 34 simply tells us in verse 8, taste and see that the Lord is good.

So this morning, I want to talk about three specific areas where we see God's goodness. I want to look at the area of creation where we see God's goodness.

We're going to look at what goodness looks like in the life of an unbeliever. And finally, I want us to look at what God's goodness looks for us as believers in Jesus Christ.

So I want to look at God's goodness in creation, goodness in the lives of unbelievers, and goodness in the life of a believer. Let me just begin by simply stating, in the matter when we see this first area, that we see God's goodness is creation.

No better verse sums it up in Genesis 1.31. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was good. Science and the study of this world, this solar system, this planet, always reveals how good God is.

[13:09] Everything that we learn about ourselves, the clearer we see God's benevolence to us. In everything, how our hands move and articulate, we see God's goodness in the sleep we just had last night that allows our bodies and our minds to heal.

We see how wonderful God is in the creation of our eyes that allows us to see so many colors and perspectives of life that we would never know.

He gives us these ears to hear melodious music and a nose to smell the sweet smell of the flowers and tongues that allow us to taste a variety of wonderful foods such as meats and fruits and vegetables.

God is good in his creation to us. The prophet Zechariah 9.17 said, For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty!

Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women. God's goodness is seen in how we enjoy the fruits of food and drink for us.

[14:28] Psalm 136.25 says, He who gives food to all, but his steadfast love endures forever. So even in the goodness of creation is a reflection of his greater love for us.

What's interesting about God's goodness in creation that it even extends to the animal world. If any of you have had a chance to watch the BBC series of Earth or the oceans, we see this incredible cycle of life that God purposely nourishes the fish and the animals and the birds of the air in such a way that can only be described as loving and caring.

Matthew sums it up so clearly in Matthew 6.26.

Look at the birds of the air. How life goes without waste as God cares for his numberless creatures. Psalm 33.5 says, Everywhere we look around us at this creation is a testimony to God's goodness.

[16:09] The beauty, the sun we experience, the mountains we get to see. The second area that we see God's goodness is actually how God is so good to unbelievers.

Those who reject God, those who hate God, God still demonstrates his goodness. James 2.13 says, For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy.

Mercy triumphs over judgment. You see, God's goodness is not simply restricted to believers. Every year, every month, every day, every hour is a demonstration of God's goodness to those who do not follow him.

If you've been following Pastor Dave's blog on Common Grace, he's blogging or talking or sharing about this subject. That even when people persist in their sins, God remains merciful and patient. What's interesting is that unbelievers are also able to experience God's incredible goodness. When Paul was meeting with the Gentiles in Acts 14, he was speaking to them, and he simply said, Yet God did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, sanctifying your hearts with food and gladness.

[17:49] That God, just by taking care of their food and allowing them to farm and reproduce, was a sign of God's blessing. Matthew 5.45 tells us, For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.

In fact, the matter, we know this. Unbelievers are able to marry and have children. They're able to laugh and experience great joy.

They're able to experience friendships, love, support from family members. Unbelievers are able to enjoy the fruit of their hard work, experience, feel satisfaction, deep accomplishment for what they've accomplished.

They're allowed to make amazing discoveries. We see the creation of art, music, writing, and the sciences. We see it in sports, architecture, any construction or marvel that man has made.

God allows them to experience this joy. They are able to witness the beauty and kindness and goodness of God through this. God doesn't hide amazing things from them, nor allow them to participate in creating amazing things.

[ 19 : 13 ] Psalm 104, verse 27 says, These all look to you to give them their food in due season. When they give it to them, they gather it up.

When you open your hand, they are filled with good things. One of my professors noted that sometimes the greatest stumbling block for us is we can see that God is, that people can experience such goodness of God in such ways that it makes us jealous when our minds become misaligned with our priorities.

Psalm 73 speaks exactly to this point. The psalmist is simply asking, for they have no pangs until death.

Their bodies are fat and sleek. They are not in trouble as others are. They are not stricken like the rest of mankind. But a warning happens at the end of the psalm.

But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me to be a wearisome task. Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then I discerned their end.

[ 20 : 34 ] Sometimes this world's joys can distract one from understanding who God is. So why does God show such goodness to those who reject him?

I want to propose three simple reasons why. The first, the Bible tells us, is that they would be without excuse. At the end of days, when they come before the Lord and they say, I never heard of you, never thought of you, God will say, you did.

You saw the goodness, but you sought it for yourself. You didn't inquire because all the information about God and how to know him was plainly available to you.

The second reason that God allows such goodness is so that it would point them to him. It's kind of the vice versa of the first one.

The first one is those who see God and reject him, but it also, people can see it. Many of you have testimonies regarding how kind someone was to you or a blessing that you experienced that you hadn't had elsewhere.

[ 21 : 50 ] That is God's kindness to you. And the third reason is that even in death, God is glorified.

Just as God is in saving people from the wrath of hell, God is equally glorified by his justice when people enter into hell.

It brings glory to his justice that God cannot see and accept sin in his place. Now the third area where I want to spend a little bit more time is, is to see God is good to his children.

I want to look at seven different ways that God lavishes on believers his goodness. The first way that he lavishes goodness upon us is salvation.

It is in the form of his son, Jesus Christ. When we were under the law, we couldn't get free. We couldn't get out of our prison. Yet he sent his only begotten son to come and live the life that we could not live.

[ 23 : 07 ] To bring forgiveness to our sins, to have that weight of debt removed from us. The penalty of our sins taken away in a God-glorifying fashion.

Salvation brings the harmony of the relationship that once existed with Adam and Eve can now be had with you and I, with God.

Jesus did for us what we could not do. Because of the work of his son, Jesus Christ now calls us sons and daughters.

As we sang today, we are friends once again with our creator. That is primary and the first way we see God's goodness towards us.

Second of all, we see God's goodness to us in the Bible. God's will. And I don't specifically mean just because we have a Bible, but a Bible that informs us of God's will.

[ 24 : 17 ] That God just didn't reveal to us his existence, his power, and his majesty, but he reveals to us what pleases him. What wisdom it brings to us in Proverbs to those who follow him.

The goodness and blessings that can happen. Paul writes in Romans 12 too, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good, what is acceptable, and what is perfect.

God is so amazingly good that he tells us what these things are. We are not left to grope around in the darkness, not understanding his will.

Those who seek after him, those who seek to know God, to obey God, to live in harmony with his wonderful blessings, we can ultimately know and understand.

Because without knowing, we are lost, and we are without excuse. The third area where we see God's goodness, and the next list I'm getting is actually from one of my professors when he speaks

on this.

[ 25 : 48 ] He's got these views, but the first one is his blessing is found in the physical provision that he gives to us. Sometimes it's not a wealth or an abundance of provision, but that is never the key to a believer's life.

But scripture is clear that every good and wonderful thing is from the Lord. We should never forget that. Whether it's a small house or a big house or a small apartment or a place to rent or a place to own, where we live, that is the hand of God's blessing and how he takes care of us.

The fourth area is that we know God's goodness because he delights in meeting the needs of his children. When we come to God, we ask for bread.

He does not give us stone. The command simply given to us in Matthew is ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find.

Knock, and it will be opened to you. We do this based on God's goodness. The fifth, sixth way, I'm not sure which number I'm at, but, and I've talked about it before, is summed up in James 1, 17, where everything good ultimately comes from God, God, whether it be our health, blessing, athletic ability, artistic ability, our ability to work, do things that we like to do, James simply sums up every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.

[ 27 : 34 ] Coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation of shadow due to change. God never changes in his goodness towards us.

The next area that we see is that God is good in his plans for believers. In his plans for believers, we see this often written verse of Jeremiah 29, 11, for I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future in hope.

In its context, that prayer was meant for Israel as they were being captured and taken away to Babylon to assure his people.

But I believe we can still lean on those promises in this day. that God desires welfare, future, and a hope for us.

And that we would bless his name while we do so. Ephesians 2.10 simply says, we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

[ 29 : 08 ] God is so good that he calls us to live in such a way that he has prepared for us beforehand that we should walk in good works to bring blessing and glory to his name.

We learned a couple of weeks ago, even when you look at Hebrews 12, that even in our trials are used for our growth and maturity.

The next area that we see is God is good in respect to his providence. His providence. Romans 8.28 for we know for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.

I think this is best summed up. I think there's these times in our lives when we really wanted something. We thought it was good and it was true and we thought it was plan A for our lives and God didn't give it to us.

Instead, God gave us something else and we're able to look back and say, that plan A that I thought I had, that was actually like plan Z. Like as far as blessings are concerned and who I am and how God is growing me to serve him, this is the best way.

[ 30 : 36 ] So we see God is good in respect to his providence. The next area where we see God's goodness is in his protection for us.

Nahum 1.7 simply says the Lord is good. a stronghold in the day of trouble. He knows those who take refuge in him.

How many times have we called out to the Lord, asked him for his protection, either from a decision or an action, and he did.

The final way where we see God's goodness is ultimately in his patience and forgiveness of sins that he demonstrates to us.

We struggle with this one, don't we? I mean, we sin, we know we sin, and then we feel shame, we no longer feel worthy of him, and then because of our sin, we feel we are miles and miles and miles away from God, and then we start to believe this lie that we have to do some great act in order to feel close to Christ again.

[ 32 : 05 ] God. This is one of Satan's major tools that he does against the children of God. It's simply a matter of just turning around and confessing and repenting.

But Satan wants you to believe that God isn't sweet, God isn't beautiful, and God isn't loving. You see, we fail to understand that one of God's most wonderful attributes is his unchangeableness. He doesn't change. That same love he has for us when he first saved us, and we experience that great, incredible blessing and love showering over us in the just forgiveness of our sins. Is there tomorrow, the day after, the week after, the month after? This isn't a love to be abused, for those in Christ would not abuse that, but we ultimately see who God is in Jesus Christ. When we read the Gospels, we see that God is wonderfully patient and wonderfully forgiven. One writer on the subject calls our attention to how Jesus is to people.

[ 33 : 29 ] He simply writes, to the hypocritical and to the basically insincere people, they will find God both cold and aloof. To the penitent, they find God to be merciful. The self-condemned find God generous and kind. Those that are fearful and frightened will find God to be friendly. Those who are poor in spirit will find God to be forgiving.

The ignorant find God considerate. Those who are weak will find God to be gentle. The stranger finds God to be hospitable.

You see, by our own attitudes, we may determine our reception by God. The reality is God and his goodness does not force himself on us.

[ 34 : 38 ] He reveals himself daily, minute by minute, with his goodness towards you. Some, he simply says, come as you are.

Obey me. The reality is we will never have a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ unless we give up of our sin.

And some of us, we cling so close to that sin, we believe it's going to bring protection, we believe it gives us a standing or a grounding or something that you control.

people. But to follow Jesus, to know Jesus, is to give all that away and let Jesus hold you.

For some of you, you have struggled for years with a desire to see you want God's goodness in your life, but the reality is you continue to hold on to your badness.

[ 35 : 48 ] And I don't mean bad in that it's evil, it is evil, but it's rotten, it's stinky, it's horrible, it weighs you down, you derive unhappiness from it, it destroys your relationships, destroys your relationships with your friends, your families, your peers, and you just want to hold on to it, just so you can control that little bit.

Let me tell you, one of the most wonderful illustrations of what it is to come to Christ, I read it this week, and the example used was as if a man had been rebelling against the king his whole life, just think he's like a guerrilla warfare fighter, and anywhere God comes against him, or the people of God come against him, whether it's the church, or Christians, they fight, they fight, they fight.

They don't even really understand anything about God or Christians, but they fight. But sooner or later, they give up, and they are now called to come before the king, the king who they've been fighting, the king who they have been warring with for their entire existence.

they are now forgiven, they have laid down arms, but they are scared to death of going into that courtroom.

They don't know what to expect because the back of their minds, they're asking themselves, or maybe the front of their minds, can God really be this good?

[ 37 : 45 ] Maybe he's going to allow me in, but he's going to punish me somehow. You, back to the slums. You, back to the worst place. You're in the stockade. You have to work off your freedom.

Whatever it is, that's what they think. But what's amazing about God and how good God is, is that when we enter that great king's court, it's filled with people who are looking at us.

We, sometimes, we start to look at the people on the left or the right, and we think we're going to be condemned. But the great king simply says, Son, I love you.

Come and partake in my kingdom. Those sins that you had, as far as the east to the, far as to the west, they are thrown away.

I will never bring them up, and I will never speak of them again. sin. That is how good God is.

[ 38 : 59 ] So if you are holding on to something, you are desiring a relationship, or you're desiring this closeness to God, but you've rationalized that you need to have this sin, God is calling you to give it to him.

The testimony of all those people that are around that courtroom are those that are shouting, God is holy, God is good, God is faithful, and God is true.

Psalm 107, 8, 9, the writer says, let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works for the children of man, for he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

Come to him today, right now. Give up what you're holding on to. Give up what you think you control. God is faithful.

My friend, C.H. Spurgeon sums up God's goodness by simply saying, when others behave badly to us, it should only stir us up the more hardly to give thanks unto the Lord, because he is good, and when we ourselves are conscious that we are far from being good, we should only the more reverently bless him that he is good.

[ 40 : 47 ] We must never tolerate an instant's unbelief as to the goodness of God. Whatever else may be questioned, this is absolutely certain, that Jehovah is good.

His dispositions, dispensations may vary, but his nature is always the same. My friends, God is good.

Father, we just close this Sunday sermon with a praise to who you are. May we be open to these ideas that you are good.

May you open up our eyes, our ears, our minds to the goodness that you are. For those that have been reflecting and pondering God and wanting the blessings of you, God, but not experiencing them because they will not come the whole way to you.

Father, I pray that this would be the day that they would confess you as Lord and Savior and by doing so are willing to obey you in everything for only in that obedience can they be called children of God.

[ 42 : 00 ] You can look like a Christian, smell like a Christian, do Christian things, but if God does not know them, Father, we know they will not be saved and never experience the closeness that comes from knowing that you are good.

Father, we pray for this broken world. I pray that they would lean on the goodness of you. Father, you are the solution for healing this racism, this divide of poverty, all these areas of injustice that we clearly see today.

No one man can solve them, but we do know that there is one God who has the answers for us.

Father, I pray that we would put down our sin, put down our arguments, put down our injustices, and just come to you.

We ask these things in your everlasting good and precious name. Amen. Amen.