

The Goodness of God

TEXT: Various

THESIS: God is pure goodness in both his mercy and judgments.

INTRODUCTION:

1. There is a God in Heaven!
 - a. But, what is he like?
2. We know that God is omnipotent; that is, he is all powerful.
 - a. This means that there is no power greater than he and he can do anything he wills to do.
 - b. His power is unlimited.
3. However, a dictator or a gangster may have unlimited power in some respects, and yet be a tyrant.
 - a. Is God a tyrant?
 - b. He might be if being omnipotent was his only characteristic.
4. However, the Bible, which is God's true revelation to man, says that God is good.
 - a. What does that mean?
5. Let us briefly explore the goodness of God in the facts that,
 - a. God is good in that he is perfect.
 - b. God is good because he is holy.
 - c. God is good because he is righteous and just.
 - d. God is good because his goodness varies.

DISCUSSION:

- I. GOD IS GOOD IN THAT HE IS PERFECT
 - A. Socrates said that goodness was that which was useable or useful for some purpose.
 1. The Greeks said that a good thing is that which everyone desires.
 2. Nietzsche said that which was good was important, strong, mighty and beautiful.
 - B. And when we speak of a good house, or a good friend, we are referring that the house has sterling qualities, or that the friend is loyal.
 1. However, goodness means that which is ethically sound in and of itself, regardless of advantages or disadvantages.
 2. Therefore, God in this sense, is the sum total of all perfection.
 - C. And in order to define and describe the goodness of God, we must look to various characteristics of God.
 1. The psalmist said, "**Truly God is good . . .**" (Psa. 73:1)
 2. One said, "**For thou, Lord, art good**, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." (Psa. 86:5)
 3. Again, "**The LORD is good to all**: and his tender mercies are over all his

- works.” (Psa. 145:9)
4. “And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, **and abundant in goodness** and truth,” (Exo. 34:6)
 5. “Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? **the goodness of God endureth continually.**” (Psa. 52:1)
- D. So, the scriptures continually tell us that God is truly good to all and abundant that it endureth continually.

II. GOD IS GOOD IN THAT HE IS HOLY

- A. When Christ, in Matt. 5:48, said that God is perfect, he was describing the goodness of God, and he exhorted us to be perfect, even as God, who is in Heaven, is perfect.
1. Christ meant that God does not need to become anything.
 2. He is the ultimate in power, wisdom, justice, righteousness, love, kindness, and all other good characteristics.
 - a. Furthermore, he is absolute, the sum total of all goodness.
- B. And God’s goodness can be described by the word, “holy.”
1. Isaiah records angels falling before the God of Heaven and declaring, “. . . **Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts:** the whole earth is full of his glory.” (Isa. 6:3)
 2. Moses wrote, “Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, **glorious in holiness**, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Exo. 15:11)
 3. The psalmist said, “God reigneth over the heathen: God **sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.**” (Psa. 47:8)
 4. “The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and **holy in all his works.**” (Psa. 145:17)
- C. Now, holiness is from the word, “qdsh” and is derived from the root word, “qd” which means to cut or separate.
1. Therefore, it indicates apartness or separateness.
 2. God is, thus, called holy because he is separate and apart from sin and sinful man.
 - a. He is exalted by his holiness above man.
 - b. We, thus, speak of God’s exalted majesty.
- D. God said in his separation from the apostasy and wickedness of Israel, “I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for **I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee:** and I will not enter into the city.” (Hos. 11:9)
1. Now, holiness is synonymous with God’s divinity.
 2. His holiness sets him apart from man because he is superior to man, yet because he is holy, he is our ideal of what we should aspire to be.
 - a. And therefore, God aches for us to be like him.

- b. Therefore, we find the statement, “**Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:**” (Heb. 12:14).
- E. God is perfect and holy and desires us to follow in his mighty steps right behind him.

III. GOD IS GOOD BECAUSE HE IS RIGHTEOUS AND JUST

- A. The holiness and goodness of God may be further defined by the words righteousness, and justice.
 - 1. The scriptures records that, “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: **a God of truth and without iniquity**, just and right is he.” (Deut. 32:4)
 - 2. The psalmist said, “**Thy righteousness is like the great mountains**; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.” (Psa. 36:6)
- B. Now, to say that God is righteous is to declare that all his actions are right, that in him we have the perfect standard of right, and that God adheres to law.
 - 1. Interestingly enough, he is not flexible or partial even though man is, but acts only according to that which is right.
 - 2. Henceforth, God always does that which is right.
- C. But, it is impossible to describe God’s righteousness without describing justice.
 - 1. The two are inseparable.
 - 2. Which is why the scriptures say, “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, **just and right is he.**” (Deut. 32:4)
- D. Furthermore, to say that God is just, is to declare that he gives to all—the good and the evil—according to their desserts.
 - 1. Notice these things that God does:
 - a. “Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but **establish the just**: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.” (Psa. 7:9)
 - b. **He helps**, for “In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.” (Psa. 31:1)
 - c. “By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou **answer us**, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:” (Psa. 65:5)
 - d. “**Hear my prayer**, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.” (Psa. 143:1)
 - e. **He delivers** or, “Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.” (Psa. 143:11)
 - f. **He revives** for, “Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.” (Psa. 119:40)
 - g. **He acquits**, “The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and

- none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.” (Psa. 34:22)
2. So, God establishes, helps, answers, hears, delivers, revives, acquits and gives to the righteous many blessings, yet, these are not the only things that God does.
 - a. He sustains the oppressed. (Psa. 9:9)
 - b. He exalts the poor. (Psa. 72:12-14)
 - c. He relieves the afflicted. (Job. 34:28)
 - d. He protects the widow. (Isa. 1:17)
 - e. He defends the orphan. (Psa. 82:3)
 - f. He comforts the weary. (Matt. 11:28)
 - g. He forgives the penitent. (Psa. 32:5)
 - h. And he justifies the righteous. (Deut. 25:1)
- E. God’s goodness is seen in his righteousness.
- F. However, the righteousness and justice of God also demands that he punish the wicked.
1. In Rom. 2:8, 9 it says, that God inflicts indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish upon those who do evil.
 2. You see, God could not be just and give the devil his dues unless he did so.
 - a. Therefore, God’s punishment is described as fierce (Psa. 58:9), terrible (Psa 76:7), destructive (Jer. 42:18) and grievous (Heb. 12:11)
 - b. Furthermore, God’s judgement and punishment of the wicked are declared to be part of his righteousness.
 - (1) Listen to God’s word here in Psa. 96:13, “Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”
 - (2) Furthermore, “Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly:” (Neh. 9:33).
- G. Now, God’s judgment of the wicked and punishment of the wicked are not intended for their destruction, but for their correction, that they turn from their wickedness, do right, and be saved.
1. Correction is a big part of God just as his love is because if he did not love, then he would never correct.
 - a. But listen to this, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” (Heb. 12:11)
 - b. God tells us that his corrections are, “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Cor. 5:5)

- H. Now, if the wicked do not change from their evil ways, they can expect the full fury of God's wrath at the end of time.
1. But, notice who God calls evil in 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
 - a. He says that they are not just murderers.
 - (1) Do you remember hearing the hypothetical story about a man who is stranded on a deserted island who dies never obeying the Lord. Will his soul go to Hell considering he never heard the Gospel?
 - (2) How about the hypothetical story where a man is in the desert and suddenly wants to obey the Lord, but no water is in sight and he dies before baptism. Is he allowed into Heaven?
 - (3) Or even this classic, suppose that a Christian is dying in a hospital being of sound mind (that's important in this story) and right before her last breath she begins to speak several swear words. Will she still be saved even though she was otherwise a faithful Christian most of his life?
 - b. God said that terrible punishment will be upon those that do not know God and that will not obey (completely) the Gospel (all the new covenant) of Christ.
 2. Sadly for those who do such things were not seeking the Kingdom of God first in their lives and in order for God to be just and righteous, he must be consistent, for wickedness and sin cannot go unpunished no matter how great, no matter how small it is in the eyes of man.
 - a. For all sin is great wickedness in the eyes of God.
 - b. God remembers all and we should, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7)
 3. Yet as we continue to live our lives, it appears that the wicked and guilty go unpunished, but rest assured that God will give them their just reward in the day of judgment. (Rom. 2:5, 6)

IV. GOD IS GOOD BECAUSE HIS GOODNESS VARIES

- A. The goodness of God varies according to its objects.
1. When his goodness is manifested (demonstrated) in patience toward those who deserve punishment, it is described as longsuffering.
 - a. It is interesting to notice that many say that the God of the New Testament is all love and that the God of the Old Testament is all about judgment and wrath. However, if this were true, then Numb. 14:18 would be an exception to this rule because Moses writes that God is a very loving and caring God because he is longsuffering, full of great mercy, and a forgiving God.
 - b. Notice also that the writer of Chronicles wrote, "O give thanks

- unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.” (1 Chron. 16:34)
2. Furthermore, God’s goodness toward those who are oppressed and in misery is called compassion or pity.
 - a. “But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.” (Psa. 86:15)
 - b. Likewise in Psa. 103:8-14, God is described as being merciful, gracious, slow to anger and abundant in mercy.
- B. Now, God also has grace.
1. There are many in the brotherhood who declare that Christians are so sinful that they deserve Hell, but because of God’s grace we are given Heaven.
 - a. However, man does not deserve Hell because it was a place that was built entirely for the devil and his angels. (Matt. 25:41)
 - (1) He made man perfect and through the blood of Christ and our obedience we are made perfect again.
 - b. But, when man became sinful as the devil and his angels, unwilling to repent, Hell becomes extended to include mankind.
 2. Now, what is great about God’s goodness is that it is revealed or demonstrated when those who deserve nothing but evil and punishment, that they can restore their lives in faithfulness to God’s will.
 - a. This is called grace.
 - b. Grace is God’s voluntary, unrestrained and unmerited favor toward the guilty, extending to them life, justification, and salvation so that they may come to God and be saved instead of death and punishment which the sinful deserve.
- C. In fact, there is one scripture that shows the grandeur of goodness in God’s grace which is seen in the book of Titus.
1. It says, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Tit. 3:5-7)
- D. Oh, how great, wonderful and marvelous is the goodness of God to give man eternal life with him!

CONCLUSION:

1. God is abundantly good to all which endureth continually.
 - a. He is glorious as well as all his works.
 - b. He is God and not man and therefore, he is pure and able to be righteous and just because he is truth without iniquity.
2. He has done all that he can possibly do for man including the giving of his son and has given us every opportunity and everything we need to follow him.

- a. He has even given every reward he has promised and has never lied to us.
 - b. He is longsuffering, compassionate, and loves to give grace to those whom God finds favor with.
3. But, God gives punishment to all those who refuse to follow or neglects his words and shames his house.
- a. It will be those individuals living in sin who will suffer the wrath of God.
 - b. I pray that there are none here who live in such a manner who take the words of God lightly because judgment is coming and we should all strive to be with him.