

God is Good
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What do the following statements have in common?

- God is causing me major problems.
- God sent a storm that destroyed our city – it was an act of God.
- God took my loved one because heaven needed another angel.
- My marriage fell apart and I blame God because He let it happen.

I'll tell you what these statements have in common. They are all lies people believe about God and they all attack one of God's basic attributes: His goodness.

We're in a series of sermons entitled Knowing God. Today I'm preaching a message entitled God is Good.

Unfortunately, too many people have the wrong view of God. Some people think of God as a mean, ill-tempered Being who hates everyone everywhere. But actually He is a loving, kind, gracious and He loves everyone everywhere.

Most of you know that my youngest sister was killed by a head on crash with a drunk driver last year. I preached at her funeral and addressed this very subject. I wanted people to understand that life's not fair, but God is good! In life – bad things happen to good people sometimes. This isn't fair and it's hard to understand.

This is one of the main reasons some people do not believe in God. Many people choose atheism because they cannot believe a good God would allow anyone to suffer any pain. But we cannot allow other people's unbelief or our own lack of understanding cause us to turn on God and blame God.

God is not the source of our problems and if we turn on Him we are turning on the only one who can help us through our problems! That's why Satan works so hard to get us to doubt God's goodness! Jesus made it plain in John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

The Bible plainly tells us that Satan is the source of evil and destruction - but people tend to blame God and let the true culprit off the hook.

Say this after me: God is good all the time – Satan is bad all the time.

We sometimes get those facts messed up.

Have you ever thought that God is not good?

Have you ever thought that bad things come from God?

This is one of the greatest ways Satan tries to steal our joy and steal our faith and steal our peace – by getting us to doubt the goodness of God - by blaming God for evil things Satan actually does. But don't blame God when a person drinks and drives and causes an accident that kills another person.

Today I want to attack and destroy the lie that God is not good. I want to destroy the lie that God causes evil or bad things to happen. And I want to do that with God's word. James 1:13-17 says:

God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

The Bible clearly says that God does not cause people to do evil.

God is not the tempter.

God is not the author of evil.

There is an evil one who tempts us to sin, but it is not God. When people give in to temptation and sin – it's their own decision and it results in death.

When we give into sin it sets into motion consequences in our lives that we have brought upon ourselves. Let's not blame God.

Everything bad that happens is a result of sin – either our own or someone else's or the fact that original sin has affected our entire planet and this world is not as God created it to be.

When God created the world, it was all good. But sin has affected everything in our fallen world. That was man's fault, not God's. Yet, who do we tend to blame for bad things? God.

James attacks this common misbelief. James warns us to avoid the common deception that God is not good. He points out that every good thing in our lives comes from God. Psalm 52:1 says:

The goodness of God endures continually.

We must come to the place of realizing that God is good all the time. No matter what circumstances we are currently in, He does not change!

So don't be deceived: God is always good!

He is so good that He works all things together for our good.

He is so good that even what the enemy means to harm us – God turns to good!

So don't buy the deception that God is not good, but instead have faith in a good God who never changes.

We choose to believe He is good, even when bad things happen.
 We choose to trust in His ways, even when we don't understand.
 We choose to believe what the Lord said in Isaiah 55:8-9

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

One of the greatest things you can count on is that God is good all the time!

Now, when we talk about God's goodness, we are not talking about His moral excellence. That would be His holiness or righteousness. When we say God is good, we mean God is kind, generous and eager to bless. He is full of good will toward us. We read that when the angels announced the birth of Christ, they said in Luke 2:14:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!

God's goodwill is His unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness.
 God's goodwill is His grace and mercy.
 In short, goodwill means that God's will toward you is good!

Remember, there is someone whose will toward you is ill will, but it's not God. Satan is the accuser and he not only accuses people, he brings false accusations against God.

I remember when our youngest granddaughter – Jessica – was about two years old. Two of the first words she learned to say were NO and Mine. Then she learned to bring false accusations. Jessica was at our house one day and did something she was not supposed to do. I said, “Jessica, don't do that” and she said “Harlan did it.” I said “What?” She said “Harlan did it.” I said “Who's Harlan?” and then she said “Hannah did it.”

I called her mom – who used to run a day care in their home – and found out she kept a boy named Harlan and a girl named Hannah. Jessica already leaned to blame them for what she did. She even told me once, “Grandma did it.” Now that I believed!

Seriously, I may not be that smart, but I'm smart enough to see through a two-year-old child falsely accusing someone who wasn't even there.

But many of us don't see through Satan's false accusations against God. Satan causes problems and then says: “God did it.” And we fall for it. We need to wise up and see through his lies.

Everything about God is good: His ways, His character, His actions and His will.

1. God's Purpose for you is Good

What is God's purpose for you? God's eternal purpose is to have a family. At the heart of His purpose is His father's heart. God has a Son – Jesus Christ – that He loves so much that He chose to have a vast family of children just like Him.

So God has all His children in the process of being made like Christ. That's the purpose of everything you go through. Romans 8:28-29 says:

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Jesus is the first of many children. God's purpose for all of His children, including you, is that we become like Jesus.

And to do that God works all things work together for good. It doesn't say everything that happens to you is good. Some things that happen are bad. But God is not the cause of those bad things so don't blame Him. Go beyond that to have faith that God is good and He will take everything that happens – the good, the bad and the ugly – and use it all for our good to make us more like Jesus.

God's purpose for us is good and He can even bring good out of the bad. Joseph had a good promise from God, but he was sold into slavery by his brothers and endured years of hardship that he did not deserve. God did not do that, but He used it for the good of Joseph and the whole world.

Years later, when God's promise was fulfilled, Joseph had an opportunity to retaliate against his brothers, but he did not. Instead, he said in Genesis 50:20:

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

That's how good our God is. He can take bad things that others do and turn them for good. That's how awesome our God is – He can even take what the enemy means for harm and bring good out of it! God's purpose for you is good!

2. God's Plans for you are Good

I want to ask you what your future will be like. You're probably thinking, "How do I know?" I know none of us really know, but what do you believe about your future? Do you think your future is going to be good or bad? Successful or a failure? Happy or sad? What would you say? I want to tell you that you will probably get the future you are believing for and planning for. Matthew 9:29 says:

According to your faith be it unto you.

But the bigger question is what does God want for your future? Jeremiah 29:11 says:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for evil, plans to give you a future and a hope.”

Did you hear that? Get it down inside you.

God’s plans for you are good, not evil!

God wants to prosper you, not harm you!

God wants to bless you, not curse you!

You need to get into agreement with God about your future.

He wants you to have hope for your future because His plans for you are good!

3. God’s Presence is Good

In Exodus 33, Moses had an amazing encounter with God. God told Moses He was sending the Israelites into the Promised Land, but He said He was not going with them. In Exodus 33:15, Moses said:

If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

So, God agreed to go with Him. In verse 18 - Moses said,

“Now show me Your glory.”

And the Lord agreed to do just that. But look at verse 19:

And the Lord said, “I will cause all My goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

What I want you to see is that God equated His glory with His goodness, His mercy and His love. If you have an encounter with God – you will know His goodness. Psalm 34:8 says:

Taste and see that the Lord is good...

The word taste has two biblical meanings: to partake and to perceive. So – when you’ve tasted of God’s presence – the resulting perception will be that God is good. When you experience the glory of God, it’s more than giving you goosebumps. It’s more than an emotional high.

It’s more than a mystical moment.

It’s a revelation of God’s goodness!

If you don’t come away from an encounter with God with a revelation of God’s goodness, you’ve missed the point! God’s presence is good! God’s purpose for you is good and God’s plans for you are good.

Also-

4. The Presents God gives you are Good

Remember James 1:17:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights...

Everything good thing in your life is a gift from Father God. He loves to give good gifts to us. Matthew 7:7-11 says:

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

God is a giving God who loves to give gifts to His children. What are some of the good things He gives us? Psalm 103:1-5 tells us:

Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

These are just a few of the wonderful gifts from our Father mentioned in His Word.

God wants to give good things to you. Dare to ask Him.

God has good plans for your future. Dare to believe it.

God's purpose for you is good. Dare to embrace it.

God is good all the time.

Yet many of us doubt God's goodness when the smallest thing goes wrong. A prayer is not answered immediately and some people turn against God. We must come to the place of believing that God is good no matter what. And that will never change! Here's an interesting Scripture. Proverbs 11:27 says:

He who seeks good finds goodwill, but evil comes to him who searches for it.

In other words, you will find what you are looking for. You will get what you are expecting. You will receive what you are believing for. What are you looking for? If you are looking for good and believing for good and expecting good, you will find goodwill. But if you are looking for evil, believing for bad things and expecting to be harmed, those things will come to you. I encourage you to look for God's goodness!

God's goodness is revealed in the Bible from creation to the cross! At the end of every day of creation, God said that what He created was good. When He was finished, Genesis 1:31 says:

God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.

I know it's easy to focus on what's wrong with the world, but there is much more right than wrong –
 Much more beauty than ugliness –
 Much more joy than pain.

That's why Psalm 33:5 says:

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Creation reveals God's goodness, but the ultimate revelation of God's goodness is found in Jesus Christ! Jesus was God in the flesh, which means He was goodness in the flesh. Acts 10:38 says:

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Remember – Jesus is the exact representation of God. And what did Jesus do? He went around doing good.

- He did not go around doing bad – He did good to people.
- He did not go around hurting people – He healed them!
- He did not go around withholding from people – He gave to them!
- He did not go around cursing people – He blessed them!
- He did not go around killing people – He raised them from the dead!
- He did not go around causing bad things to happen to people – He went around fixing the problems Satan caused.

And the main way He fixed things was through the cross!

The cross overcomes our sin problem!

The cross overcomes our Satan problem!

The cross overcomes our death problem!

The cross overcomes our "Where will I spend eternity?" problem!

I urge you to do what the Psalmist said in Psalm 107:31-32:

Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders.

Begin to praise God for His goodness.

If you're in a good time – God is good!

If you're in a tough time – God is good!

When God answers prayer with a yes – God is good!

When God answers prayer with a no or a not now – God is good!

On the greatest day of your life – God is good!

On the worst day of your life – God is good!

God will not prevent every bad thing from happening to you, but God is so good that He will work good out of it on your behalf!