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Be Good For Goodness' Sake

3 JOHN 11

Introduction

1. What do you think of when you hear the word goodness, or certain phrases which include the word good in them?
 - a. He is a good boy.
 - b. She is a good student.
 - c. I have a good job.
 - d. That was a good meal.
2. The use of the word "good" in each of these examples indicates that each of these meet a certain standard, a person's expectations.
3. The meaning of goodness often depends on context:
 - a. A book is good or not good based upon the person reading it and the purpose for which it is being read.
 - b. A textbook may be good for educational purposes, but not for bedtime reading.
4. What qualities do you attribute to someone you consider "a good friend?"
 - a. Dependability — they are there when you need them.
 - b. A listening ear.
5. What do we mean when we say that someone has "a good heart?"
 - a. They are sincere, honest, moral.
 - b. But who defines morality?
6. For those of us who are Christians, God is the one who defines moral goodness.
 - a. He is the one who sets the standard.
 - b. It is His expectations which must be met.

7. Today, as we continue our study on the Fruit of the Spirit, I would like for us to consider the last of those three graces which turn our attention toward our fellow man — patience, kindness and now goodness.

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I. All Goodness Starts With God

A. IT WAS HIS GOODNESS WHICH GOD CAUSED TO PASS BEFORE MOSES

1. In Exodus 33:19, after Moses asked God to show him His glory, God said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you . . .”
2. Later when God did this, He proclaimed to Moses, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations” (Exodus 34:6-7).
3. God’s goodness is seen in his compassion and the grace He extends to us, the fact that He is not easily angered, but that is abundant in lovingkindness and truth.

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B. GOD’S GOODNESS IS THE DECLARATION OF THE PSALMIST AND THE SON

1. We find it on the lips of David more than once in the psalms:
 - a. “Good and upright is the Lord . . .” (Psalm 25:8).
 - b. “How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up for those who fear You . . .” (Psalm 31:19a).
 - c. “O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!” (Psalm 34:8).

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2. In Matthew 19:16, a young man came up to Jesus and asked Him, “Teacher,

what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?”

3. Jesus responded to him with a question and a statement: “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good . . .” (Matthew 19:17a).
5. In Mark and Luke’s parallel accounts Jesus asked the young man, “Why do you call Me good? ” and then said, “No one is good except God alone” (Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19).

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C. IT IS THE BASIS OF OUR PRAISE AND OUR PRAYERS

1. How often have we sung *"God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, He's so good to me"*?
2. How many of us were taught as children, or taught our children to pray this simple prayer: *"God is good. God is great. Let us thank Him for our food. Amen."*
3. Time and again in the psalms we find the charge, “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good” (Psalm 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29; 136:1).
4. Psalm 135:3 urges us to “Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.”

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II. God’s Desire Is That We Imitate His Goodness

A. SADLY, SIN DESTROYED OUR GOODNESS

1. Following the six days of creation, God rendered His verdict on all He had made. He said, “it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).
2. However, as Paul stated in Romans 5:12, “through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”
3. By the time Noah arrived on the scene, God’s verdict on mankind was that

“the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5).

4. In David’s day, he would write “there is no one who does good, not even one” (Psalm 14:3; 53:3).
5. Paul quoted these words of David in Romans 3:10-12 and then added in verse 23, that all of us “have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
6. In Titus 3:3, Paul describes our condition before we came to Christ — we were “foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”
 - Even if only one of these traits describes us, we stand guilty before God.

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B. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE GOODNESS OF GOD REACHED OUT TO US IN CHRIST TO SAVE US

1. In Ephesians 2:1-2, Paul writes that you and I were “dead in [our] trespasses and sins, in which [we] formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”
2. But God’s compassion and grace, His lovingkindness which refuses to leave us in our sin, were all expressed to us in the person of Jesus Christ.
3. In vv. 4-5, Paul describes the way in which God’s goodness redeemed us: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”
4. God set us free from our slavery to sin (Romans 6:18), “He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13).

5. In Ephesians 2:8, Paul tells us that this salvation is God's gift to us.
6. In verse 10, he adds that you and I are God's "workmanship" and that we have been "created in Christ Jesus for good works" which as he writes, "God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

Slide 8**C. NOW WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SHOW HIS GOODNESS TO THOSE AROUND US**

1. Go back with me to our reading this morning from 3 John 11, "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God."
 - a. As Christians, we are to imitate "what is good."
 - b. In this way, we imitate God's goodness, and show that we are of God.
2. Paul puts it this way in Romans 12 :
 - a. "Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good" (v. 9).
 - b. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (v. 21).
3. In Galatians 6, he reminds us that we are to be people who go about doing good:
 - a. "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary" (v. 9).
 - b. "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (v. 10).
4. In Paul's letter to the evangelist Titus, he had much to say about the goodness that was to be evident in the lives of the Christians on the isle of Crete:
 - a. In Titus 1:8, Paul indicates that one of the qualifications of those of you who are our elders, our "overseers", is that you are to be "lovers of good."

- b. In Titus 2:3, he writes that you who are the older women in this congregation are to teach “what is good.”
- c. In Titus 2:7, he urges the “young men” of this congregation to “be an example of good deeds.”
- d. In Titus 2:14, Paul lets us know that “Christ Jesus . . . gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds (“eager to do what is good,” NIV84).”
- e. Finally, in Titus 3:8, Paul tells Titus that he wants him to “speak confidently” concerning the things involving our salvation, “so that those who have believed in God will be careful to engage in good deeds.”

Conclusion

1. The bottom line in all that has been said today is this: *As the fruit of the Holy Spirit grows within us, the goodness of God will permeate our lives.*

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2. Remember, Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).
3. Such good works flow from a heart filled with God’s goodness.
4. Does this describe your heart? Is it filled with God’s goodness?
5. If not, is it because you aren’t growing in the fruit of the Spirit?
6. Is it because you are still living in Satan’s domain of darkness?
7. Do you need Christ to set you free?