

The Goodness of God

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[0:00] Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, begin reading in verse 17 and read through verse 31.! We find here a familiar story with glorious truth.

! So would you stand together with me for this reading from God's Word. Let us give attention to that word from Mark 10, beginning in verse 17. As Jesus started on His way, a man ran up to Him and fell on his knees before Him.

Good teacher, He asked, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Why do you call me good? Jesus answered. No one is good except God alone.

You know the commandments. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not give false testimony. Do not defraud. Honor your father and mother. Teacher, He declared, all these I have kept since I was a boy.

Jesus looked at him and loved him. One thing you lack, He said. Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.

[1:06] At this the man's face fell. He went away sad because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.

The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus said again, children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

The disciples were even more amazed and said to each other, who then can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, with man this is impossible, but not with God.

All things are possible with God. Peter said to Him, we have left everything to follow You. I tell you the truth, Jesus replied, no one who has left home, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or fields, for me in the gospel, will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields, and with them persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life.

But many who are first will be last, and the last first. I ask you to open your Bibles with me to the biggest, the longest chapter in the Bible.

[2:29] The 119th Psalm. And in this longest chapter of the Bible, we're going to look at a very short verse. Verses do not need to be long to be full.

And here in verse 68, we have a very short text, packed full of truth that we need to think about. Psalm 119 and verse 68.

You are good, and what you do is good. Teach me your decrees. Notice there's two things being said about God.

What God is, and what God does. You are good, and you do good. So God is first of all, good. Before He does good, He is good. So let's look, first of all, at the something that God is. And that is, He is good. That is His essence.

[3:42] That's His nature. That's why He does good. Because inside, He is good. There's nothing evil, nothing dark, nothing bad in Him.

Now this goodness speaks of the largeness of His heart, His benevolence, His kindness, His generosity, His goodwill, many other words that would describe it.

His enjoyment in making others happy by doing them good. This is the goodness of God. Notice three things this morning about God's goodness.

First of all, He is altogether good. good. Not like some apples that you get, and you look at them, and they look good. The flesh is beautiful on the outside.

They feel good. They feel firm. But when you cut into them, you find some brown stuff in there, some rot, that you must cut out the bad from the good. Not so God.

[4:46] He is altogether good. Good all the way through. You can cut as far as you can into God, and you will find goodness all the way to the core.

Go to the very depths of the being of God, and at the bottom, you find this goodwill, this goodness at the bottom. He's altogether good.

All His attributes, all of them are good. His love is good. His justice is good. His faithfulness is good. His truth is good. His sovereignty is good. His entire being is shot right through with goodwill. He's altogether good.

And then He always is good in the second place. He never changes. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. Goodness is not a mood that He's in, like with us.

[5:48] We're in a good mood, so we're good today. Not so with God. This is His essence. It's something that He is all the time. He's never less than good. Oh, how different from man.

God complains about His own people that their goodness is like the morning dew, the morning mist. You go out in the morning, and the grass is wet. It's real. It's really there.

But by noon, it's gone. And so it is with the goodness of man. It's so quickly gone. It's not lasting. But God is always good.

He's altogether good. He's always good. And thirdly, He alone is good. Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

The rich young man asked Jesus, and Jesus answered him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

[6:50] You see, you don't think that I am God. You think I'm just a man, and yet you call me good? Don't bring God's goodness down to the level of man.

Jesus is saying, you need to think again, young man, about what good is. And when you do, you must know that no one is good except God alone.

And Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures, Psalm 53, where God looks down from heaven, and He's inspecting the earth.

And He concludes, There is no one who does good, not even one. Everyone is turned away. They have together become corrupt. No one is good except God alone.

He only is pure good. He's the fountain of all good, and all goodness dwells in Him, so that any good that you find in man has derived from Him who is good.

[8:04] It's the result of God's goodness communicated to man. God altogether is good. God always is good. God alone is good.

That's what God is. God does. But the verse goes on to tell us what God does. And here's our second point.

All God does is good. All God does is good. You are good, and what you do is good. You see, what He does flows from what He is.

What's in the fountain will be found in the stream. So since God is good, all He does is good. All that proceeds from Him is good.

It's not just that some of God's deeds are good, but whatever our God does is good. Jesus doeth all things well.

[9:06] He can't act in any way contrary to His goodness any more than He can act contrary to His holiness. It's who He is. He cannot deny Himself.

He can't contradict Himself, so He cannot ever be anything less than good. He's good when He gives to us, and He's good when He takes from us.

God is good, and all that He does is good. Just as He cannot lie, so He cannot do anything that is not good.

Just as He cannot be less than faithful, so He cannot be less than good. So we see that what God is controls all that God does.

Now this goodness of God doesn't just stay bottled up inside of His being. It doesn't remain as just good intentions. That is His goodness, His inclination, that settled disposition to do good to people.

[10:13] But it doesn't just stay there as good intentions. By very definition, He expresses that goodness in everything that He does. That goodness overflows from His being, in His actions.

And so we want to consider some of the ways that God makes His goodness known. Now, we just sang that this is a large theme, the goodness of God.

In fact, it's so large that what did we sing in verse 3 of the song, Come Christians, join to sing, that in heaven, that blissful shore, will praise His goodness forevermore.

We'll look and we'll see His goodness. And we'll praise Him for His goodness forever. So, I don't have forever this morning. I just have to be very selective and set before you three different ways that God displays His goodness.

You could add 300 more. God makes His goodness known in creation, in His commandments, and in His salvation.

[11 : 23] First of all, in creation. And by the way, I trust that something that we're learning in our study of the attributes of God is just how central creation is to revealing what God is like.

Creation is huge. It's seen that way throughout the Scriptures. It reveals the power of God. It reveals the wisdom of God.

It reveals the sovereignty of God. And it reveals the goodness of God as well. Sell out creation to evolutionists and we lose a superb book on God.

The creation is a book that tells us about God and glory would be stolen from God for this His greatest work. So, we turn to creation again this morning to understand something more of God's very nature.

He is good. The Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4 talked about a group of preachers who were speaking of some of the things that God had made as if they were bad.

[12 : 41] Like marriage. And so they forbid people to be married. Like certain foods. And so they forbid people to and told them they must abstain from certain foods. You know what Paul says?

Those are doctrines of demons. Doctrines of demons. For everything God created is good.

And nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. Everything God created is good. Is that your view of creation this morning?

That was God's own assessment of it, wasn't it? As He created in six days. And we find Him pausing along the way, don't we? And He makes something.

He creates it. And then He inspects it. And He weighs in on it. And He says, It is good. It is good.

And after the six days of creating, He looks at all that He has made.

[13 : 43] Everything that was made. And He says, It is very good. Everything that God created is good. And it is good and seen as good in that it is made to serve man's good.

And in so doing, it reveals the goodness of God, His kindness toward man, His goodwill, His benevolence towards His creatures. The Bible says He opens His hand and satisfies the desires of every living thing.

Just like you kids feed your dog or your cat. You've got the food in your hand and you open your hand and satisfy their desire. That's the way God does with all dogs and cats and people and deer. All that He's created. He's so good. He opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. Chapter 2 of Genesis, verse 9 says, The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground. Trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. Do you see that? That's sheer goodness. He made trees that were both pleasing to the eye and good for food.

[15 : 05] He didn't have to do that, did He? But He did it out of the sheer goodness of His heart. The creation does not just fill a utilitarian need to keep us alive.

That in itself is a goodness untold. But it was intentionally designed for our enjoyment and our pleasure. And in that point, we see how the creation displays the goodness of God.

He richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. What must the goodness of this creator be? Paul tells the pagans in Lystra who worshipped idols and gods of their own making.

And he tells them about the one true God who made all things. The God who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. He has not left Himself without testimony.

He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons. He provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.

[16 : 11] That's right. These pagans that don't know God, God makes them happy. He fills their stomachs with food and fills their hearts with joy. God is good.

In creation, our good God made man with five senses. And then He just filled His creation chuck full with things that satisfy the five senses.

That's His goodness abounding to His creatures. Think of some of the senses. Think of the sense of taste and all the things we have to eat.

You know, He could have made filling up with food as void of any pleasure as filling up a car with gas.

Time to fill up. And you stick the thing in there and you squeeze it and then it squeezes your wallet back and you go on your way. There's nothing pleasurable to the car about it. It just takes it in. We could eat like that.

[17 : 20] Without any pleasure. Just fill up so we've got strength for the day and off we go. But instead He creates us with taste buds to taste that food on its way down. Why?

Just that we might have pleasure in doing so. That we might sit back and say what is this God who has made me and all things around me.

He could have just given us grass to eat like the beasts of the field. Very nourishing. For breakfast, lunch and supper. Grass, grass and more grass and it would keep us alive.

But instead He gave us almost an endless variety of foods. Spices and drinks. He made the source of our nourishment to be a source of great pleasure as well.

How indulgent of God to satisfy our desires with good things. Taste the goodness of God in your food.

[18 : 21] It's there. How can we go into a large grocery store and you come in the fruit section and you see all these beautiful apples different varieties just of apples and then you go on to the oranges and grapefruit and all the fruit and vegetables and you look at this and you say amazing variety just that we might enjoy these things that God has given us.

And you go on through the store and you see all the things that God has done that display His goodness to us. About your sight, the sense of sight.

You know, God could have made all the leaves on the trees the same color. But instead He takes the colors of the rainbow and He splashes them throughout His trees and leaves.

Why? Why? Why'd He bother? Just because He's good and He wants to do His creatures good. He wants His creatures to say, Wow! Wow! Isn't that beautiful? Driving home from our vacation in South Carolina it was all painted up in the mountains and He'd come around a curve and I'd say to my wife, Wow!

Look at that! And come around Wow! She'd say, Look at that! And we just said it to each other. I mean, we'd said it enough times but you can't help but say it. God is good. He made the eye, the hearing ear and the seeing eye.

[19 : 46] God made them both. And then He filled the earth with things to please. Sound! He could have given the birds all to sing the same note. Monotone.

Wouldn't that be something? But instead, their varied songs add enjoyment to our ears. In summing up this point I could do no better than quote Psalm 33 and verse 5.

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. It's full. A good God creates the earth and fills it all the way up with His goodness.

It's everywhere. It's all around us. His goodness. It's beneath us. It's above us. If I survey the ground I tread or gaze upon the sky, His goodness comes into view.

It's within us. Fearfully and wonderfully made. How good of God to have made me like I am. What is the goodness at the very heart of this great being that so filled the earth with good things?

[20 : 57] Do you have ears to hear? Eyes to see? Taste buds to taste? Not just the good things but the goodness of God in them.

God's goodness seen in creation. But secondly another way God's goodness is seen in His commandments. It's seen in His commandments in giving us His law. Now this may not be something that you would have immediately thought about.

When I said goodness of God the first thing in your mind probably wasn't the commandments of God. But why not? Why not?

The sinful mind hates God's commandments and will not submit to them and cannot do so. Romans 8-7 but that's because the law is good and His heart is bad.

What happens when the heart is changed in regeneration? In the new birth? What happens when the Holy Spirit takes out that bad heart and puts in a new heart?

[22 : 07] Our attitude to the law does a flip-flop. It's turned upside down or really put right side up. The law we once hated the commandments we once despised we now love.

We have a whole different attitude towards the law. The longer a Christian lives the more he appreciates the goodness of God in giving us His laws.

And so the psalmist says seven times a day I praise you for your righteous commands. That must be something really good. Seven times a day.

You thank the Lord and praise Him three times a day for your food. Seven times a day David's thanking God for his righteous laws. I obey your statutes for I love them greatly he says. And did you hear it in our scripture reading that was put on the overhead? I remember your ancient laws oh Lord and I find comfort in them. The laws of God are good.

[23:16] Now we have a law that commands us to stop when the traffic light is red. You say oh I don't like that law. I don't like waiting. Okay but is it a good law or a bad law?

You do like it when others have to wait when it's red for them and green for you. And all we have to do is imagine for a moment what that intersection would look like if there was no law governing the traffic light.

It would be bedlam. It would be a death trap. There would be pileups and traffic jams as each man did what was right in his own eyes. Everybody doing what they pleased.

The law is clearly for our good. That law is for our good. Now sad to say not all human laws are that way. They're not all for our good. But all of God's laws are good.

And that's because he is good. And all he does is good. And all his legislation of laws is good. Every single commandment he makes.

[24:26] Listen to the Apostle Paul. The law is good. And the commandment I'm sorry the law is holy. And the commandment is holy righteous and good.

Romans 7 12. And good. Not just holy but good. In Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 13 God is being praised for giving the law to Israel.

You came down on Mount Sinai. You spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right and decrees and commands that are good.

That are good. The ten commandments are not only right and just and holy they are good. The psalmist in 119 39 your laws are good.

And again just like creation they are good and they are good for you. They're good for you. When Moses is about to die he gathers together the second generation of Israelites who are now ready to go into the promised land and he repeats the law Deuteronomy the second time of the giving of the law chapter 4 and verse 40 he says to them keep his decrees and commands which I am giving you today so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time.

[26:04] Keep these laws so that it might go well with you later in chapter 10 and verse 13 he says again to the people observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good for your own welfare that it may go well with you so folks in giving us commands God comes to do us good to bless us to enrich us to make life better for us he commands nothing but what is conducive to our happiness what is beneficial to us that is advantageous to us nothing but what is best for us that means we ought to view his commands as something very good the apostle John who lived a long time under God's commandments steps up to the podium and says in first John 5 3 his commandments are not burdensome they are not grievous they're not oppressive they're good for you they are not something that weighs you down they're not a ball and chain around your leg and the

Lord Jesus says as much my yoke is easy and my burden is light David in Psalm 19 is lauding the virtues of God's laws and he says they revive the soul they make wise the simple they give joy to the heart they give light to the eyes and they're more precious than gold they're sweeter than honey by them is your servant warned and in keeping them there's a great reward his commands his laws how good of God to have given us such good laws he says by them is your servant warned God's commands act like warning lights warning signs to turn you away from paths of destruction and to keep you on the pathway of life and blessing they act as warning signs to us that sign in the mountain that warns of a hairpin turn up ahead it's there to save you from disaster and oh it was good of someone to put that there wasn't it his law is good it warns us from ways of wickedness displeasing to the

Lord ways that bring misery to us every day that you walk in the way of God's commandments you are being kept from a thousand harmful traps that would plunge you into ruin and destruction for when the momentary pleasure of sin is worn off what's left is the miserable consequences of sin and so you follow the sexually immoral young people into the doctor's offices with their sexually transmitted diseases you follow that person out for a good time a joy ride and some fun with some drugs and you follow them into the alcohol and drug rehab centers in and out in and out you follow them into prisons you follow them into bankruptcy courts into broken homes shattered lives

bondage guilt depression the cries of the damned in hell how good of God to give us his commands that warn us how good of God to have said you shall not commit adultery you shall not lust in your heart after her how good of God to have said do not steal do not lie do not murder do not covet do not take revenge my friends do not provoke your children to wrath set no vile thing before your eyes love your wife submit to your husband obey your parents

God is coming to do us good in his commandments buy them as your servant warned and in keeping them there is a great reward a great reward because this is the path along which you enjoy fellowship with God this is the path the way to true freedom and joy and pleasure the blessed life the good life that everyone's talking about but no one seems to find it's here he's marking it out with his laws his commandments and an even far better eternity kids trains run best on tracks right oh but they're so restrictive have you noticed that about train tracks they're so restrictive you can only go one place you can only go there you're not free to roam over here and you can't go over there it only goes there but is the train better off or worse off for having the tracks

Christian the law of God is like the rails you say oh but they're so restrictive I can't go here would you want to go there there is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to destruction oh God how kind of you how indulgent of you to have given me your commandments to hedge me in the way of peace great peace have they that love thy law isn't God good to give us his commands in Isaiah 48 18 God is lamenting over his people to whom he had given his commands and he says if only this is God speaking if only you had paid attention to my commands your peace would have been like a river if only do you hear the heart of God in that this this is cutting him open this is laying his heart open and what do you find at the bottom you find goodness goodwill to man if only you had paid attention to my commands but they would have none of it if only you had paid attention to my commands your peace would have been like a river your shalom your peace your prosperity life the way it was meant to be it would have been like a river continuous ongoing uninterrupted all your life for all eternity all yours if only you had paid attention to my commands ask a mature

[33 : 29] Christian if he ever looks back with regrets for having kept God's laws oh if only I hadn't been so concerned about obeying those commands of God if only I would have lived a little looser and compromised a little more with God's commandments no never you will never meet such a man or a woman rather you will meet many Christians who will say the only regrets I have are the times I stepped outside of God's commandments if only I would have paid more attention if only I would have had such a heart within me to keep all his commandments all the time and so he prays make me to go in the path of your commands for there I find delight yes God's goodness is made known in creation in giving his commandments and thirdly

God's goodness is seen in his salvation in giving us his son Charles Bridges calls this that one display of goodness which cast every other manifestation into the shade oh how bright the goodness of God looks in creation the goodness of God in giving us his good commands but when we come to this the giving of his son everything else is thrown into the shade this is the grandest display of the goodness of God in giving us his son that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life if God was good to us in giving us his law how good is he in giving us his gospel when we had broken his law and forfeited our very life and that God has anything good to say to us is an amazing expression of goodness to us and yet that is exactly what the gospel is it is good news isn't it it's the goodness of

God being announced to man there's good news for you man it finds us in our sin condemned to hell and it offers us forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus Christ the goodness of God in the many times the Psalms call on us to give thanks to the Lord for he is good we'll see more of that next week Lord willing J.I.

Packer comments on that that when the singers of Israel summoned the people to give thanks to God because he is good it was usually because of redemptive mercies it was usually redemptive mercies that they were thinking about in other words his goodness for not treating us as our sins deserve or repaying us according to our iniquities his goodness in forgiving us all of our sins his goodness in saving us and choosing us making us his treasured possession and saving us from all of our enemies of sin and death and hell give thanks to the Lord for he is good Psalm 107 gives us four different pictures of salvation from certain and deserved destruction we studied it in the adult class a couple months ago Psalm 107 four times men were lost in the desert about to die of thirst

and then the

Lord intervened and every single picture of salvation ends with this phrase oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness displayed in his salvation for that's where it shines the brightest when in the garden of Eden Adam and Eve had rebelled and plunged the whole human race and themselves into condemnation the goodness of God that goodness and well being in his heart could not stand as a spectator and do nothing he saw me plunged in deep distress he flew to my relief he must do something for the recovery of those in misery his goodness bubbled up within him and caused him to do something for the relief of our misery and to do so in the most astonishing of ways the most staggering of costs even the sacrifice of his own son yes when

[38 : 19] Adam and Eve sinned against God and God came to them in the garden it wasn't a second chance that he was giving the human race going to give you a second go at obeying the law we'll try it again now don't eat from this tree it's not the way it was because we could have been given a second and a third and a fourth and a fifth and a thousandth chance and we would have failed every time what we needed was more than a second chance at keeping the law he didn't give us a second chance he gave us something better he gave!

his son to obey the law for us and to suffer the punishment that we deserve for breaking it he gave us salvation full and free in Jesus Christ do you want to know just how good God is come to Calvary and look come to the middle cross and gawk mark the sacrifice appointed see who bears the awful load tis the word the Lord's anointed son of man and son of God you see if we were to be made truly happy then God must become man the creator of all things must himself become a baby and lie in a manger he who gave the law on Mount Sinai must be born under the law that he might keep it and keep it perfectly he who was without sin must be made sin for us the prince of life must be put to death the heavenly father must crush his own son yes the father must put him to grief if we're to know the bliss of sins forgiven he must suffer our hell if we're to enjoy his heaven he must be cursed if we're to be blessed if we're not to be cursed if we are to be spared then he must not spare his own son and all of this for us who deserved his curse forever what more could

God do to convince us of his good will of his goodness there was nothing more that he could give for when he gave his son he gave everything oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and the goodness of God was no different in the heart of the son of God who was so willing to become poor that we through his poverty might be stand in a door and ask how can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me that would lead us into the application of this doctrine of God's goodness that he is good and all he does is good and we're going to save that for next week what difference should the goodness of God make in our lives so we'll leave the for next week until then be looking for the goodness of

God in creation in his commandments in his salvation his savior in any place that you might find it that as we come together next week our hearts might be swelling with a sense of just how good God is to us that we might then be ready to put it into practice the effects of this doctrine that it should have upon us but you know some of you can't wait till next week to have this doctrine applied to you because some of you are still in your sin and if you perish in your sin you will be in hell forever you cannot wait till next week come to Christ but you know something you will not come to Christ!

until you are convinced of your need for Christ the greatest goodness in the universe something that man would never think of only the goodness of God could come up with such a good gift as giving his son for sinners and yet that gift though it is so good you will not receive until you see just how much you need that gift and here again is one of the blessednesses the goodness of God giving us his law because you know why one of the reasons that he gives us his law is to lead us to Christ and the law comes to us and it makes commands of us and it says thou shalt not and thou shalt and we find ourselves wanting to do what we're not to do and not wanting to do what we're told to do and we try to obey and we try to obey and we fail and we fail and the law condemns us cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law but that's one of its good and kind ministries to sinners you see you'll never come to

[43 : 41] Christ for life as long as you think you're good enough yourself and what the law does for you sinner says you're not good enough you're not good enough you cannot keep the law you cannot be pleasing to God you cannot attain that righteousness he requires for entry into heaven Paul says it's by the law that I have a knowledge of sin I wouldn't even know what sin was except by

the law how good of God to give it to us and it points us away it brings us to despair salvation in ourselves in religion in any other works and it points us away the law says you've got one refuge and it's the Lord Jesus Christ who kept the law perfectly for sinners and who died in the place taking the punishment of sinners my friend there's your hope there's God's goodness coming to you again saying come to

Christ trust in him upon a life I did not live upon a death I did not die another's life another's death I rest my whole eternity you ready for that come on sinner go to him go to him and cast yourself upon him ask him to forgive your sins ask him to give you eternal!

life trust in him to do so throw yourself on him and you will find just how good he is taste and see that the Lord is good and all who have tasted say along with me amen let's pray our good and gracious God we bow in your presence as we've just seen something more of your glory displayed in your goodness will give us eyes to see that we swim in your goodness it surrounds every aspect of our being that all day long we're taking in your goodness!

without them we would be going like a man in the dark without a lamp upon our way thank you for a light in a dark place thank you Lord or we would still be thinking we're good enough thank you for using your law to chase us to Christ and thank you for him who is your goodness personified fill us then with a sense of your goodness receive our thanks and praise in Jesus name amen