

God's Goodness Before the Fall

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[0 : 00] Amen. Well, please turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 2.! Genesis chapter 2. We're going to read verse 15 through 17, and then we're going to go into chapter 3.

! Let's read the chapter.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die.

Then chapter 3, verse 1. Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?

The woman said to the serpent, We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it or you will die.

[1 : 26] You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked, and so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, Where are you?

And he answered, I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid. And he said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?

The man said, The woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it. And then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this you have done?

[2 : 40] The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. So the Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals.

You will crawl on your belly, and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers.

He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. To the woman he said, I will greatly increase your pains and childbearing. With pain you will give birth to children.

Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. To Adam he said, Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, you must not eat of it. Cursed is the ground because of you. Through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

[3 : 46] By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you will return. Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all the living.

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.

He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever. So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he

had been taken.

After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Let's hear the word of God preached. Well, why study the goodness of God?

[4 : 58] Number one, just because God is good. And we were made to know him. That's the whole reason for our existence. Number two, because it's one of the first things that God tells us about himself in the Bible.

As we read chapter one, we found God pausing in the midst of creating and examining what he had made and telling us it was good.

It was good. It was good. Six times. And then when everything was made and working together in conjunction, it was very good. Every pore of creation oozes with the goodness of God.

It's God's goodness bubbling up for the delight and benefit of man, his highest creature. Why study the goodness of God? Number three, because it's one of the first attributes of God that Satan attacks.

Satan knew that before he could ever get Eve to sin against God, he'd have to plant doubts and suspicions in her mind about God's goodness.

[6 : 07] So Eve, if he doesn't let you eat from any tree in the garden, then he's really not caring about what you want. He's really not good as you may think he is.

He's actually stingy and holding out on you. He's keeping from you something that would be for your good, for your enlightenment, your growth and knowledge. You can't trust him with your happiness.

And once Eve took that bait, she was putty in his hands to do whatever he had suggested, indeed to eat of the forbidden fruit. And she took some and ate it and gave some to Adam and soon had him eating with her.

Now, if Satan could get sinless Eve to doubt God's goodness in the perfect garden of Eden, how easy is it for him to get us to doubt God's goodness, living as we do in a world that is full of suffering and pain and evil?

So, this is just such a favorite device of Satan that it's hardly missing in any of his temptations.

[7 : 16] You think of the temptations you've grappled with this past week and see if there's not at least an element of Satan trying to get you to doubt God's goodness.

For sin is what we do when we doubt the goodness of God. Sin is what we do when we're not content and satisfied with God's goodness, when we're not convinced of his goodness, when we're not trusting his goodness, not enjoying God in his good gifts.

And when we think our good is not safe in God's hands, well, then we think we're better off to look out for our own good and then we lean on our own understanding and we do for ourselves whatever we think is best for us.

Now, nobody has bought this lie more than those who have not yet received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He's got you thinking that if you surrendered your life to Jesus, your good would go out the window.

That would be the end of the good life for you. When just the opposite is true. So I want to conduct a survey this morning, right here, right now, and I want you to be honest in raising your hands.

[8 : 35] The first question of the survey, how many of you who have received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord regret your decision because of all the good stuff that you've had to give up?

And you'd say, receiving Christ was the end of the good life for me. All right, let's hold them up.

Now, come on, I don't want you just to please me. I want a true survey.

Anybody regretting that? I don't see any hands. Second question, how many of you who have received Christ as Savior and Lord can say that you only really began to live the good life when you came to know Jesus, that you have far greater joys in Christ than you ever found in sin?

Hands up. Both hands up. Sing, shout, praise, dance. Hold them up there. Young people, lost people, look around and see.

Now, know this, either they are lying or the devil's lying because they're telling you opposite things. He's saying one thing, they're saying another thing.

[9 : 48] Now, who's lying to you? Well, I know something about these people. I know some of these people would give the world to see you enjoying Jesus Christ as they do.

Like your parents, your grandparents. They care more about your good than anybody on the planet. I know others of these people who pray regularly for you, that you might come to Christ and come to know the joy of sins forgiven.

And there's something else I know about these people. They're truth tellers. They're not liars. And not only do I know something about these people, I know something about the devil.

Jesus told me in John 8, 44 that he's a liar and the father of lies. And he's often lied to me about what is for my good.

And so I can tell you, we can tell you, that he's lied to us and he's lying to you if you think for a moment that following Jesus Christ is to say goodbye to the goodness of God.

[11:00] There's something else about this devil. He doesn't want you enjoying God's goodness in this life or in eternity. He wants you suffering the torments of the damned along with him.

So I'm pleading with you for the good of your own eternal soul. Spit out his lies this morning. Receive Jesus Christ, the truth, the way, the truth, the life.

Come and taste and see that the Lord is good. And begin to live the life that is worth living this morning.

Now, we saw last time that the powerful antidote for doubting the goodness of God is just to keep our hearts full with a fresh sense of God's goodness.

So let Satan's temptations to doubt it. Find us enjoying God in his gifts. Let his temptations to suggest that God is not so good. Find us praising and thanking him for the most recent of his goodnesses to us.

[12:09] And in that way, Satan's fiery darts are extinguished upon contact with the praising heart. Now, that is all by way of review.

And before we move on to the next phase of God's goodness expressed, I want to linger just one more week on the goodness of God initially to Adam and Eve in the garden before the fall.

And I want to point out just how good they had it that we might understand what by sin they forfeited. That we might meet the accusations of the devil and his agents in the world today who cast suspicions and lies about God's goodness.

Often with this question, if God is so good, then why is there suffering and evil in his world? Rabbi Kushner wrote a book 40 years ago in which he claimed that the problem of evil in the world proves that God is either almighty or he's good.

But he can't be both. If he's good, then he wouldn't let evil and suffering exist in his world. But evil clearly does exist in his world.

[13:22] So, if he's good, he must not be almighty. He's got a good heart then, would like to get rid of it, but he's not strong enough to do it.

So he's good, but not almighty. Or, if you'd like a different God, a God who is almighty and does have the power to remove suffering and evil, then your God isn't good.

Because a good God would not let suffering and evil go on in his world. So, we're privileged to take our pick then between the two as to which kind of God we would like to have.

A good God to be pitied for his powerlessness or an evil God to be hated for his lack of good-heartedness. I don't need to tell you, but you know that neither one of those is the God of the scriptures, is it?

Scriptures say that God is good and God is almighty, don't they? And by the way, God is not a pizza where we get to choose our own toppings and we like this attribute but we don't like that one and so we'll have some of this but not some of that and we put together a God of our own choosing, our own making.

[14:41] Nothing's more common today. We have a God who's nothing but cheese. He's all love and nothing more. Just listen to them talk about him.

God is what he has always been. The infinite, eternal, unchangeable God.

And he's revealed to us in scripture what his attributes are. We don't get to pick and choose the God we want. We bow and worship the God who exists and is revealed in his own word.

God is what he has and so there are many. Rabbi Kushner is not the only one who would deny God's goodness because of the presence of suffering and evil in the world.

But men who say such things forget some other things, some important things, other attributes about God besides his being almighty and good like his wisdom.

[15 : 44] His understanding no one can fathom. Could it be, Mr. Kushner, that God's wisdom is so far above yours that his wisdom can actually see a way for him to be good and almighty and still to allow evil and suffering in his world.

He's holy and just. He's too holy, he's too just to not punish something as evil as sin.

That's why there's suffering and evil in our world. That man's sin has brought God's curse down upon our own heads. This is the God who exists as he's told us in his scriptures.

Not only good and almighty but also wise and holy and just leaving no sin unpunished. So we got ourselves into this mess.

That's what we see in scripture. Men are quick to blame God for the troubles and sufferings in the world. The earthquakes, the tsunamis, the floods, the droughts, the coronavirus.

[16 : 51] Whatever the latest thing is that is taking lives. God gets the blame but we need to remember this is not the world that came from the hand of God in creation.

It was all very good. There was nothing bad. And that's why Genesis 1 is so important with its sevenfold statement telling us of God's goodness in creation.

We're living in a different world today. A world under the curse and all because of man's sin. God's goodness and all so we need to go back to that world.

That world before the fall and appreciate how amazingly good God was to Adam and Eve. And I want to do that and I think I've got four points. First, God was good in creation and we looked at this, the creation of man and his world.

It was God's goodness that they were so fearfully and wonderfully made with five senses in a world that God then stuffed with so many good things to gratify all five of our senses.

[17 : 58] Where the lesser creatures were made to enrich man in some way to do them good. God exalted man above all the other creatures and says, now I want you to rule over the rest of creation and to subdue it, to bring it into the service of mankind.

The rest of it exists to bless you. Now take care of the garden. Take care of the world and turn it to man's good. He made the earth for man and filled the earth with his goodness.

What a gift. And so the other creatures, they feed us. They clothe us. They help us pull heavy loads. They make us laugh.

My one-year-old granddaughter, Jada, had her first visit to the zoo this week. And they couldn't pull her away from the monkey exhibit. Not because that's her forefathers, but because God made her with a sense of humor.

And some people call that the sixth sense. That God made us to enjoy funny things and then he made funny people and funny animals. And we're blessed to not be the ones in the cage, but the ones visiting the zoo and looking into these funny animals.

[19 : 20] Maybe some of you laugh at your pets and the funny things they do. If you've not had a good belly laugh lately, you're missing something of the goodness of God.

Could it not be that he just, he made the monkeys to make us laugh? That's how good God is. And then he made us with a soul. Not just a body with five or six senses, but with a soul.

having the capacity to know God, to enjoy God, to fellowship with God on a spiritual level. Not just physically, but a spiritual level. Maybe this is the seventh sense if we want to call it that.

A sense of God. An awareness that God is. And fellowship with him. And so, what goodness to man.

And all of it without any of the bad stuff. that worries us and saddens us, that brings us fears and tears. So, God's goodness was bubbling up in the creation before the fall.

[20 : 29] Stephen Charnot goes on to show other ways God's goodness was shown to Adam and Eve before their fall into sin. And the second way I want us to appreciate is God's goodness seen in his laws that he gave to the man and the woman that he made.

Now, Romans 7, 12 says that the law is holy and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. So, the law is holy and righteous. God's law, God's moral law is holy and righteous. Do you know how man came from God's hand initially?

He was upright. He was holy and righteous. So, what we have is a match between man's nature, holy and righteous, and God's law, holy and righteous.

God's righteous law was perfectly suited to Adam's righteous nature. The law of God required no more from Adam than what was written in his heart.

[21 : 35] God's righteous commands matched Adam's righteous thoughts and Adam's righteous desires and Adam's righteous will. It even matched his ability.

God's laws were not too hard for him to obey. Jesus says, my yoke is easy and my burden is light. That was true of Adam and Eve in the garden before sin.

There was nothing distasteful or undesirable, uncomfortable, or oppressive about the commandments of God. In fact, John says in 1 John 5, 3 that his commandments are not burdensome.

They're not a ball and chain around your leg. No, they're not grievous. But they're a delight to keep. Psalm 112 and verse 1, blessed is the man who fears the Lord who finds great delight in his commands. And so God's laws were perfectly suited to man's happiness.

[22 : 41] You have it in Psalm 19. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. Not bringing gloom to the heart, but rejoicing the heart.

The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. They're more precious than gold than much pure gold. They're sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.

And by them, your servant is warned and in keeping them, there's great reward. Indeed, the delight in keeping them was the reward, the joy of pleasing God.

And all of wisdom's ways were ways of pleasantness and peace. Yes, the law is righteous and holy. And Paul goes on and says, and it's good.

God's law is good. So there are good laws from a good God that are good for man. They're for our benefit.

[23 : 41] They're for our blessing, our advantage. And who knows better how to bless man than the one that made us? He knows the very best way to live so as to experience the greatest good in this life and in the life to come.

And that's his law. It marked out the way to live. Indeed, there was nothing in God's commands to decrease man's happiness one iota, but rather everything to increase it.

And that was his design in the law for man, to do him more good by it. So God blesses us with the good gift of sexuality and he immediately proceeds to, in his laws, to limit the use of it, to restrict this gift to marriage between one man and one woman for life or until they by death are parted.

And men and women scream foul, foul, foul. Who is he to tell me what I can and cannot, who I can and cannot love, who I can and cannot marry, who I can have sex with?

He's your maker, remember. And he not only has authority over you, but he also knows better than you how this gift is to be enjoyed to the full. His laws are good.

[25 : 13] And he is telling you you'll enjoy fire best when it's kept in the fireplace of marriage between a husband and a wife. Yet it was precisely God's law, the goodness of God in his law that Satan attacked with Eve, wasn't it?

It was that prohibition that God said, don't eat from this tree. And it was like that was a federal offense for God to somehow come into my life and put prohibitions on me and not let me do what I wanted.

And Satan continues to attack God's goodness as if his law ruins man's happiness rather than serving it. And being fallen and sinful now instead of holy and upright, sinful man is 100% in agreement with the devil on that.

It's Romans 8 and verse 7. The sinful mind is hostile toward God. There's no neutrality here between the sinner's mind and God. It's enmity.

It's hostility toward God. And what's the point of hostility? The next statement tells us he will not submit to God's law. Indeed, he cannot.

[26 : 35] not as long as he remains unregenerate in his sinful heart. He cannot do the thing that God commands and please him in the way that he obeys.

You see, there's enmity and the point of enmity, the point of hostility is the law. It's that God would tell us what we can and can't do.

Lost people think of God's law as chains that need to be broken and cast off from them. Psalm 2 says the whole world is united in this conspiracy.

Let's break off their chains and throw them away. We don't like that. But aren't you glad that God forbids other people from murdering you?

And aren't you glad that he forbids someone else committing adultery with your spouse and someone else stealing your things and someone else coveting and lying about you?

[27 : 44] Oh yes. Well, aren't God's laws good? And they work both ways. They're good for everybody. But just let a state pass laws against murdering unborn babies and what do we hear? Evil. Evil. No, it's good. It's good for the baby. It's good for the mother. It's good for the family. It's good for society.

All of God's laws. Holy, righteous, and good. They're walls protecting us from what is bad for us. Will you believe God on this or not?

Or will you trust your own fallen feelings? Eve went with her gut feeling. She saw the fruit. It looked good. And it looked like it would actually make her wise.

Because that's what Satan had said about that fruit. And so she took it. And she ate. And she gave to her husband. And she found out the hard way that it didn't do her good.

[28 : 53] God's laws are good because God is good and what he does is good. And when he's doing lawmaking, he's good at lawmaking. And he's good to us in it.

So that was one of the good things God was doing for Adam and Eve before they fell. He gave them a good law. Third, God's goodness is seen in the promised reward for man's obedience. Now God said of the forbidden tree, in the day you eat of it, you will surely die. Now only the threat of death for disobeying is mentioned there, but the promised reward for life is certainly implied. That if Adam and Eve eat, they will die, but if they obey God, they will not die, but they will have eternal life. So God was setting in this covenant that God entered into with mankind, he's setting before them life and death.

Life if they obey, death if they disobey. And it was the sheer goodness of God to promise eternal life as a reward for their obedience.

[30 : 03] Now follow me on that. God was under no obligation to reward Adam and Eve for their obedience. They already owed that to God just by virtue of the fact that he's their maker and that's the way things work that since God made them, his commands are upon them and so they owe him obedience.

And when they've obeyed, no amount of their obedience could ever earn a reward or put God in debt to where Adam can now say to God, well I obeyed, now you owe me eternal life.

No. Romans 11, 35 and 36. Who has ever given to God that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory for him. What do you ever give to God but what he's first given to you? God? So there's nothing you can give to God and do for God that will make God owe you one.

Jesus taught us the same thing in Luke chapter 17, 7 to 10. Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, come along now and sit down to eat?

[31 : 21] Would he not rather say, prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink. After that, you may eat and drink. I mean, that's just the way servants go.

They wait on the master. Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? The inferred answer is no. So, you also, application, when you have done everything you were told to do, you should say we are unworthy servants.

We have only done our duty. You see? You can't come and say, okay, pay up, God. No, you owed that to God.

He made you. He owns you. You're his servant who owes him obedience. So, that's just your duty. And doing your duty doesn't obligate God to give you a reward.

Even if Adam could have done everything he commanded perfectly. God would never owe him anything for it. And yet, this good God, this caring, kind creator, is so over the top good that he actually promised a reward for a debt that was due him.

[32 : 40] Can you imagine that? You owe somebody something and you come and pay it and they give you a reward for that. that's really good, isn't it?

And that's what God was to Adam and Eve when he entered into this covenant. He could have just said, obey me. That's what you owe me. But instead, he attached a promise of eternal life.

A reward. And it wasn't some worthless trophy, a ribbon, a special parking place for the month. It was eternal life in fellowship with him.

And it must have been a higher, a more elevated happiness and enjoyment of God than what they were already enjoying. For it to be a reward. And it shows us the goodness of God.

Because when God made a promise to Adam, he was obligating himself. No amount of Adam's work in obedience could ever obligate God to give a reward.

[33 : 49] But once God said, Adam, if you obey me, I will give you eternal life as a reward. God now was stooping to obligate himself to Adam.

Because now if Adam obeys, he can come to God and say, you promised me a reward. What a stoop. That God, the creator, should stoop and obligate himself to his creature.

What goodness is this? And that's what the promise of a reward of life was. It was God's stooping to bless his servant, his son, Adam.

God's God's goodness. God's goodness. God's goodness. And lastly, even the threatening of punishment was the overflowing goodness of God.

The threat that in the day you eat of it, you will surely die. Why does a mother threaten to slap her three-year-old's hand if she touches the burner on the stove? Is it because she's an evil old woman and doesn't want her child to have a good time?

[34 : 58] Or is it that she loves, she's a good woman and a good mother and she doesn't want her child to suffer harm? And so God is good.

He's good to warn them and to threaten punishment if they should eat of that tree. Sharnak says of God, he promises that he might be a rewarder and he threatens that he might not be a punisher.

You see his heart? Why the promise? Because he wants to be a rewarder of more good to man.

Why the threat? Because he doesn't want to have to be the punisher of man.

So God's goodness comes out even in his threatening as he sets life and death before them. He's showing the goodness of his heart. He would rather they choose life and live than eat and die.

Well, had they remained true, they would have continued to enjoy all of this. And with it, the highest blessing of all, eternal life with God. So God in goodness delighted in enriching Adam and Eve in a world full of his benefits.

[36 : 20] He gave them every motivation they needed to continue to obey him and to love him. He made them for each other and made all creation to serve their good. He gave them sweet fellowship with himself where the only thing better than their delight in him was his delight in them.

The good laws given to them to direct them in the very best way to live his threatened punishment to chase them away from eating the forbidden fruit and his promised reward to allure them to go on obeying and pleasing God.

All was theirs if they would just pass this test of obedience to God. Yet all of this is what they forfeited. They forfeited themselves by freely choosing to disobey God and instead to seek what Satan told them was for their own good.

And once they ate To their dismay, they found that instead of being holy and happy, they became sinful and miserable. For the very first time in their lives, they felt guilt.

Now every one of you have felt guilt. It's an uncomfortable feeling, isn't it? It's to know that you deserve punishment. You've done wrong and you deserve punishment. Whether you're caught or not, you know that, your conscience does, you're guilty.

[37 : 44] And they felt that for the first time. As soon as they sinned. And now they're afraid of God.

They'd never been afraid of God before, but now they're afraid of Him. And they felt like they needed to hide from Him rather than to go and welcome Him as He came to speak in the garden with them.

And so now they feel like they need to cover up. They feel dirty before God. They need to run from Him instead of toward Him.

This is the misery of sin. They forfeited the gift of eternal life. Not only for themselves, but for all their descendants. Cain and Abel, you and me.

They were driven out of the garden and from the tree of life. They brought the punishment of death upon themselves and upon us. For by one man sin entered the world and death by sin.

And so death has come upon all men. Because Adam sinned and we sinned in Adam, our representative head. They also passed on their fallen sinful natures to their descendants.

[38 : 52] So now people came into the world not upright and holy, not with mind and affections and will set on God, but now with a bias toward evil. And that was blatantly seen in what their firstborn son did to their secondborn son.

He murdered him in cold blood. What misery this first family experienced and all because of sin. The perfect marriage was ruined.

We read of it. Adam now blames Eve, doesn't he? And Eve wants to rule over Adam, but Adam will rule over her and no longer with that perfect love. And Eve's curse added pain in her child birth and even more suffering and pain for Adam in making a living because of God's curse upon the environment.

The land now would produce thorns and thistles and only by the sweat of his brow would he bring forth enough to live on. And though the creation remained a blessing to them, it was greatly hindered from what it had been, hindered by the curse, by its bondage to decay as Romans 8 says, and by the introduction of all the destructive storms, all the destructive diseases, diseases, the wild animals, the continuing immoral behavior of men who will not submit to God's law and whose wickedness increases suffering in the world a hundred fold.

I mean, follow suffering, the trail of suffering, and not all of it, but a whole lot of it is due to man's wickedness. sin. That's what resulted in Adam and Eve's sin.

[40 : 37] And worst of all, at death and eternal separation from God in hell under God's wrath as the just punishment for their sins. Now, who can add up that total loss as to what Adam and Eve forfeited because of their sin?

So this is what we have. We've got God's very good world into which Satan comes and through slandering God's goodness, he successfully tempts Eve and through Eve, Adam to disobey God and that brings mankind into a world of hurts, all kinds of suffering and evil, and then Satan has the audacity to blame God for it.

It was through his temptation that he brought sin and suffering and evil and death and hell into man's world and then he turns around and blames God. There's something even worse than that. Fallen men believe his lies. And that's why they're repeating them. That's why people are saying God's not good, not with all this suffering in the world. It's his fault. Where did men learn to blame God?

Well, they learned it from their mother and father, Adam and Eve. When God comes calling and says, Adam, have you eaten from the tree? I told you not to eat up. What was the woman that you gave me, that you put here with me?

[42 : 00] You know, that helper, some help she was to me. Blaming God. Casting the blame. And we have it still today.

Men doing the devil's work for him. But it's man's fault, not God's. We have read Genesis 1 to 3 and we see what kind of world God made for mankind.

mankind. And we see the promise of life and all the goodness that they enjoyed. And we see why they lost it all. It was because of their own sin.

They undid themselves. They ruined themselves. Well, Satan hates God.

He hates the goodness of God toward men. He hates mankind, the image of God. God. And he wants men to join him in hating God forever. So, when people throw in your face or Satan whispers in your ear, how can you believe God is good when there is so much suffering and evil in the world?

[43 : 12] What will you respond? How will you put out that fiery dart? Well, surely, by saying, we're the ones who got ourselves into this mess.

It wasn't like this in the beginning. We need to go back to the world as it was before sin to appreciate the goodness of God. And it's only in that way that we'll maintain right views of God's unblemished goodness.

It's only in that way that we will be prepared to go on. That's the backdrop of what we're going to see in our study next, that God in breathtaking goodness would redeem such rebels and would put an end of their suffering and bring them into everlasting life at the infinite cost of his own dear son. You know, there's another thing that the critics of God say, that if God was good, he would completely obliterate all evil and suffering in the world.

God says, that's precisely what I'm going to do. Next week we'll begin to see how he does that. He will do it when he has taken the suffering and evil in the world and used it to work out the greatest good that none of us could have ever imagined.

[44 : 42] But then he will obliterate it. God hates sin. God hates evil. God hates suffering. And he's got a day in mind for it. So let's go on enjoying God in his gifts.

Let's not let ourselves enjoy the gift without immediately acknowledging the giver and seeing his heart that delights in the well-being of his servants. And if you're without this God and you still are wondering and are afraid that if you came to this God that you would have to kiss your good life

goodbye.

Don't believe the lie any longer. Stop running from God. You can run but you can't hide. You need to turn around and run into his arms and cry for mercy for Jesus' sake.

And we'll see that next week how mercy has been made available to sinners, to rebels that ruined ourselves and then turn around and blame God.

how mercy is available for us. And that through the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, let's pray. We confess our good father that our whole lives have been lived in a world that we instinctively know that these things are not the way that they should be.

[46 : 07] That this suffering, this injustice, this evil, this pain is not right. And we're so blessed to have our Bibles and to have the first three chapters to just set our thoughts right, to remind us of your goodness in creation.

And in that covenant that you made with Adam, not requiring him to do anything that he was not able to do, and that he is the one that ruined himself in this world.

And we have voted a thousand times if we've lived more than a couple years the same thing. We too have sinned and we cannot blame Adam any more than Adam could blame Eve or Eve blamed the devil.

No one is forced to sin. we choose willingly to sin. So we thank you for your word and how it clears up the lies.

It lays bare the hook under the worms that Satan puts upon. And so gird up our minds with your truth and cause our hearts to be overflowing with thanksgiving that no temptation to doubt your goodness would ever find a home in us, a foothold but fill us then with joy and thanksgiving and especially for that indescribable gift, the gift, the good gift of your son.

[47 : 44] We pray in his name. Amen.