

The Goodness of God (part 2)

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Preacher: Roger Cryan

[0:00] Okay, we're going to continue our study this morning on the goodness of God. And you probably thought, well, we had enough information to get through this week that we didn't get through next week.

And here he's given us another sheet of information, a full sheet of information to get through this week. So we're going to move through a lot of this information, not going over all of it. But I still wanted to give you that remaining sheet of information on the responses to the goodness of God. Because any time we interact with truth and God's word, it's going to require a response to us.

How are we going to respond to this information I've learned about God? I mean, we are going to respond one way or the other. It's not like we stand neutral to the truth.

There's going to be either a positive response or negative response to what we hear. And on the sheet on the responses, you will see some positive responses and negative responses toward the goodness of God.

[1:08] Negative responses from unbelievers, even positive responses of unbelievers. But then positive responses of us as believers. But then also some of the things that we wrestle with as well, some of those negative responses.

So something to consider and think about. Not too much as we move through to finish up the lesson from last week. But something that we want to deal with at least a little bit at the end of class.

But as we continue our study on the goodness of God, we want to pick it up and see it in his desire and plan at this point in our notes to make himself known to us in his communication.

Last week we took a look at how it was part of his very nature. It was the essence of God for him to be good. That is who he is. We saw it then in different ways that he displays his goodness in the world, in creation, and bringing it into existence and then sustaining it.

And then this morning we want to pick it up as we look at it and how it's seen in his communication to us. It's something that he did from the very beginning, communicating truth, information that we desperately need.

[2:36] He did that with Adam and Eve even before sin entered the world. It's not like they were born with complete knowledge of everything they needed to know. We see that in the first couple chapters of Genesis, even before the fall, communicating to them and helping them understand how they were to relate to him as creator.

Even how they were to relate to each other and how they were to relate to creation, all the things that God had made around him.

So out of his goodness communicating to them, they needed this information for life even in the world before the fall.

And so God in his goodness is letting them know the things that they desperately needed to know to fulfill their purpose at that time and to glorify and magnify him and live in his world.

And so he continues this communication with us even after the fall. And he does it on such a grand scale. And we can see it in creation and the things that we see, the things that he's made in his written word, and then also through his son.

[3:50] But just thinking a little bit even on his communication through creation. Familiar verses to you. And again, I've got them all written in my notes here.

You don't have that privilege in your notes. But if you would like the expanded version of my notes, let me know and I'll be glad to email them to you. Psalm 19.1.

When the heavens declare the glories of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands day after day. They pour forth speech. It's not just a little trickle.

It's pouring forth in many, many ways. Romans 1.20. For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities have been clearly seen.

And so this is something that has been going on over and over and over again since the beginning in innumerable ways. And even as the history of man continues throughout the ages, there's even, I would say, even grander displays.

[4:55] I mean, it was always there, but man did not see it. He did not recognize it. But as man explores further and further into the heavens, he begins to see some of the extent of the universe.

And what was it recently, a few weeks ago, that they landed that thing on Mars? I mean, that was an amazing thing. I try and shoot my target with my arrow 40 yards away, and here they're hitting Mars, you know, millions of miles away, and certainly something to celebrate.

And the sea is fantastic. But then you think of it, here we are as little men, jumping up and down that we landed something on Mars, and then you go out further and further in the universe, and you can't even see Earth in the grand scheme of things.

So it begins to put us in place a little bit more, but we see more and more the grandeur of God and the universe speaking more and more, not just in that sense, but going out, but even going in further and further.

I mean, man has the ability now to see more minute things that he couldn't see years and years and years ago. And as we see these things, we hear the voice of creation in many, many more ways, declaring the same message of the splendor and the magnificence of God.

[6:32] And so we don't want to miss that message that they're proclaiming to us every day of the goodness and greatness and grandeur of God. This past week as I came to town for something, I took some time and went to visit Lou up at the health care center, and he happened to be in therapy at the time.

And so I was sitting down talking to him, asking him how his back is feeling, and he says it's really doing pretty good, doesn't have much pain, it's just numb. And in the therapy room, they have a picture of the skeletal system.

So he wanted to draw my attention to that and reminded me of the majesty of God and his design, even though he's feeling the effects of some negative things in his body, whenever he saw that and directing my attention to it, that our bodies are telling something of the magnificence of God, the goodness of God that he made us that way, that we could enjoy what we do enjoy in movement in our world today.

So he's communicated to us through creation. So don't miss that as you move through the day and listen to what creation is telling us about our great God and the good God that we have and that we can serve and that we can know.

But he also communicates through his laws, his commandments, his ordinances, etc. And even that the law of God is written on our hearts.

[8:10] We heard that when Pastor John was going through his lesson on the conscience and seeing how really that truly is a display of the goodness of God.

We are made as upright beings. We have a nature that is suited for the law of God and those laws of God are fitting for us in our rational nature.

And it's good. We needed the laws of God to operate and move through the day, to know him, to know one another, to know how to relate, in order to know how to enjoy life in this world as his creatures.

We couldn't live without the laws and ordinances and judgments of God. It was an expression of his goodness that he would communicate those things to us.

I mean, we run into quite possibly some difficulties, whether it's at work or at home, when people, we learn afterward that someone had some expectations of us that we didn't know.

[9:16] And when we run into difficulties, you say, well, it would have been good if you had told me those things beforehand. Well, yeah, we can understand that.

Well, God has done that. He's given us the truth we need for life, to know him and to operate in the world today. He's written those things on our hearts.

And when you think about that, even in the life of an unsaved individual, how good that that is, that they were made that way, and that all they enjoy, even in this world today, is a result of that.

There's a couple examples. Sometimes when Carol and I are driving and I come to an intersection, that's a busy intersection, and a four-way stop.

And what do people have to do? They have to take turns. And sometimes you look at the other people and you see the vehicle or the person, well, it's a rough-looking person.

[10:18] But they stop. They wait their turn for me to go ahead. And I'm thinking, man, there's the image of God in that person right there, that they're waiting for me to go and take my turn.

Something that they enjoy, even the organization that we have in our world as a result of what God has written in the hearts of man, that we aren't as bad as we could be because of our sinful nature. The other example, I don't want to take up too much time with these examples, and I don't know how many of you are into watching certain movies, but Carol and I saw a movie recently.

It's called The Railway Man. Has anybody seen that movie, Railway Man? Nobody has seen that? Oh, Tim saw that. Okay. That's right.

We were at their house, and I told them about that movie. So I'm telling everybody now, but I can't give away the ending. But you have to go to the end, to the very end of the movie, to see what I'm talking about, about what is written on the heart of man.

[11:35] And it just impressed me that what I saw was truly a result of the law of God written on the heart of man.

There's no way an unbeliever would act the way that that man did without that written on his heart. And just impressed upon me, too. You know, brought back to me the good God that I have privilege of being related to, and what he has done in relationship with me that far exceeds what this man was willing to do in this relationship with this other man.

And so I hope it piqued your interest here. You go and listen and watch that movie. It really had a great impact. But it brought me back to this truth and how God is in writing his law in our hearts. But not only in our hearts, but the written word of God. He had his word written down for our good, that we might know him and know his ways.

2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17, all scripture is God breathed, is useful for teaching. It goes throughout the verse and then at the end of the verse, that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

[12:49] He had our good in mind when he communicated truth to us that we desperately needed even to perform that which is good on a daily basis so that we might be equipped for every good work.

In Deuteronomy 10, 12 and 13, he says, Observe the Lord's commands and decrees for your own good.

Trying to help the people of Israel understand. All these things I'm giving you is not because I've got a thing about being in control, but it's for your good.

I'm interested in your good, your welfare. And then, of course, Psalm 19, 7 through 11, we just start with the first phrase, The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

And it goes on through the rest of those verses, telling all the good things, the benefits, the blessings that come to us through God's written and spoken word.

[13:48] So he's communicated to us with the law of God in our hearts and written down in his word, but then also the ultimate is through his son. Hebrews 1, 1 and 2.

In the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets, but in these last days, he's spoken to us by his own son. And we've been learning in Colossians from Pastor Jason in the evenings when the people that the believers were living amongst at that time were questioning the deity of Jesus Christ.

And God had the Apostle Paul come and write a letter to these people helping them understand. No, this same Jesus who has come in the flesh is God. He's God come in the flesh.

In fact, he says, he's the image of the invisible God. So we're beginning to see more and more the special nature through which Jesus Christ are special steps that God has taken to communicate to us.

In John 1, 1 through 14, I just start with the first few phrases. the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us in verse 14. And then another verse that I came across as I thought about this more, John 17, in Jesus' prayer to the Father, I've revealed you to those whom you gave me.

[15:11] I gave them the words you gave me. So it's God's communication to us, coming to us through his son, Jesus Christ. And so we give thanks for what God has done and what he has provided for us to know him and to accomplish our purpose as his creatures.

It is good that God has communicated to us the truth that we need for life. But then we want to move on from the display of his goodness in his communication to us to his goodness as revealed in his plan of redemption.

So we've taken a look at his goodness in creation as he's displayed it to us in bringing it into existence and sustaining it. We've seen his goodness displayed in his communication to us and now we look at his goodness as revealed and displayed in what we'll call the new creation or redemption and how he brought that into existence as well and how he continues that and sustains us as his children.

He has provided us a complete salvation. In fact, it's a greater display I will call it of his goodness or a more expanded display of his goodness because of the manifold expressions of his nature that come forth from it in this whole plan of redemption revealed in his attributes such as his grace, his mercy, his long suffering toward us, his love, his faithfulness, his humility and so redemption is necessary.

I mean, God planned it that it would be a greater display of who he is and so all of these attributes of God flowing out of his very goodness and displayed toward us.

[17:06] It was a display or in accordance with his good pleasure. Ephesians 1, 3 through 12. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ for he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

In love, he predestined us to be adapted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and his will to the praise of the glory of his grace.

And he was under no obligation to redeem us, to redeem fallen man. There was nothing that we merited that he had to act in such a way to redeem us.

In fact, the opposite was true. Romans 6, 23, the wages of sin is death. So the display of his goodness at creation, when you think about that, it wasn't challenged in any way because of the sinfulness of man because man did not even exist yet.

But in redemption, he manifests his goodness in abounding grace that is displayed in the presence of our ingratitude and our rebellion.

[18:25] We are unworthy of God's goodness and rather deserving of his wrath. Listen to some of these verses. Again, it's more verses that we memorize in the past.

Romans 5, you see, at just the right time, when we were still, does anybody remember the next word? When we were still, well, sinners, that comes next, when we were still powerless, we had no power, no ability to do anything about the condition in which we existed.

We were powerless. When we were yet in that condition, Christ died for the ungodly, but God demonstrates his own love for us in this. Why we were still, there it is now, when we were still, what?

Sinners. When we were still sinners, Christ died for us. So he was under no obligation to redeem us as though, you know, we had done something to merit him coming and dying on the cross for us. His goodness is also seen in Christ's humility in his coming to earth. Philippians 2, 5 through 8. Who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.

[19:42] He had everything there as God. But he made himself nothing in taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness.

And then when the angels were announcing that great happening to the shepherds, his coming to earth, we think of what they said, that maybe we'll hear that even today from the children, but certainly as we think about it in Christmas morning and other weeks to come.

Luke 2, 14. Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace. And what is it next? Depends on your translation. Goodwill toward men.

God in his goodness, Jesus Christ himself existing in the very nature of God and the heavenlies did not consider that something that he would hang on to to such a degree that he would not come and take upon himself the form of a servant being made in the likeness of man.

No, he came to earth and the angels were announcing this is God's goodwill, God's favor toward you who are undeserving in the humility of Christ.

[21:00] But also in his living on earth seen in his innumerable acts of his kindness toward men. Go through and travel through the gospels, you hear that over and over again.

And at the end of the gospel of John in verse chapter 21 verse 25 and this is what he writes, Jesus did many other things as well.

If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. And we're impressed with a number of things, the way he manifested his goodness toward people in a myriad of ways as he was in the world at that time. And yet that's just a small fraction of what he did for the undeserving even as he was here in the world. The books couldn't contain all the things that he did in his displays of goodness toward man as he was living on the earth but even beyond that and beyond his coming and his life here on this earth but certainly in his death and the price that was paid for our redemption.

2 Corinthians 5.21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[22 : 27] And it's interesting as I came across these verses the number of verses and again I'm just giving you a small fraction of the verses that talk of the goodness of God toward us even in this specific case and the price that was paid for our redemption.

Another one in 1 Peter 1.18 so it doesn't matter who the people were the believers I guess what I'm trying to say is different places at different times believers needed these reminders of the goodness of God in remembering and reflecting on the magnitude of the price that was paid for our redemption.

So whether it was writing to the Corinthians or to these that were spread abroad in the book of 1 Peter 1.18 Peter reminds the people and says this for you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from your empty way of life handed to you down to you from your father.

So he takes the greatest things the things that were of greatest value in society at that time and probably even today the things that had the greatest value and he helps them understand or wants them to understand that you weren't redeemed with the things that you consider of greatest worth and greatest value.

No those things were nothing compared to the priceless gift of the blood of his son Jesus Christ. You weren't redeemed with those kind of things but with the precious blood of Christ a lamb without blemish or defect.

[24 : 13] So trying to put that into perspective helping us see the glory the majesty the goodness of God toward us in what he was willing to send and what he was willing to give Jesus Christ himself and shed his own blood to purchase our redemption.

It's a quote it's somewhat lengthy from Stephen Sharnock in his book on the attributes of God. He was at no other expense than the breath of his mouth to form man but his man's broken nature cannot be healed without the invaluable medicine of the blood of God.

View Christ in the womb and in the manger in his weary steps and hungry bowels in his prostrations in the garden and in his clotted drops of bloody sweat. View his head pierced with the crown of thorns and his face besmeared with the soldier's spit.

View him in his march to Calvary and his elevation on the painful cross with his head hanged down and his side streaming blood.

View him pelted with the scoffs of the governors and the derisions of the rabble and see in all this what cost goodness was for man's redemption.

[25 : 33] Something for us to reflect on over and over again as we as we're going through day and we forget our hearts seem somewhat weak in its worship and its love for God and who he is in Jesus Christ himself and what he has done on our behalf.

And I think that's again I mentioned this last week a little bit of what moved me toward this study even in my own life as I was kind of going day by day and I guess not impressed as I should have been with Christ and his glory thinking you know what's missing here in life and I think what was missing for me and still to some degree and what I'm praying for that God would work in my heart and your hearts as well is a greater vision and understanding of the goodness of God so that through my day as I move through my day I'm not thinking about oh I wish I had this or I wish I had that but realize thank God I have this and find my glory my joy my thankfulness not in how things are going through my day but what I have in Jesus Christ and who God is and be impressed with that and rejoicing enjoying in that day by day so the goodness of God certainly seen in the redemption that was redemption price that was paid number five goodness seen in the channel through which redemption is given to man certainly God called us by his own glory and goodness

what he's accomplishing

Romans 2:4 even before I was saved he showed the riches of his kindness toward me and then Ephesians 2:8 and 9 how this is all brought to bear in my life it's by grace that you've been saved through faith it's not of yourselves it's a gift of God not of works so that no one could boast so there he was in my desperate condition far from God deserving of his wrath and God doesn't come to me and say well you must do this this and this in order to earn my favor and work your way into my good standing no he says I will send my son to do this this and this for you and what you do is believe and accept that by faith that's that's a wonderful good God and the way that he has manifested his goodness toward me in that but it's also seen in what

God works in our lives so it's not the way that he brings me in to his family and the goodness that he shows and making me a new creation in Christ but he continues that work in me and his goodness is seen in that he's able to work all things together for my good for the good of my transformation into the likeness of Christ we know the verse Romans 8:28 we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love and who've been called according to his purpose so out of his goodness he's continually at work in my life working all things together for the good of transforming me into the likeness of his son Jesus Christ continuing to sustain me day by day and will carry that on until I'm presented faultless before his throne in Christ Jesus with great joy God is good in what he's doing and what he's done through the ages and what he's continuing to do in my life every day and we see that of course finishing up this part of the lesson and the great blessings that he gives to us as his children now just think about that if we had more time

I'd open it up but I do want to get to the responses and give you a chance to respond at that time but think of those blessings that we have now in Christ Jesus I've just again written a small fraction of these down the fact that he makes us children of God in John 1:12 I mean that would be enough in and of itself if he gave us nothing else why we lived in this world that I could be called the son of God joint heirs with Christ and be able to have that rich possession both now and throughout all eternity that that would be enough he makes us said that already joint heirs with Christ Romans 8:17 he gives us his Holy Spirit to dwell in us to lead and to preserve us where would I be without the sealing of the Holy Spirit that good gift that he's given to me if I had to sustain myself between when I got saved and when I go to heaven it just wouldn't happen I wouldn't be able to do it there's nothing within me as a human being even as a

[30:47] Christian without the Holy Spirit that would enable me to sustain myself against my enemies while I exist in this world he knew that he gave us the Holy Spirit to be that one to lead us to continue to enlighten our minds the truth we needed while we're still in this world and then sealed us with the Holy Spirit guaranteeing that which is to come throughout all eternity what a rich blessing that is the fact that we have peace with God the fact that there is purpose in suffering 1 Peter 1:7 these have come so that your faith might be proved genuine and result in praise glory and honor in Jesus when Jesus Christ is revealed in Psalm 139:1 David says it was good for me to be afflicted he says it was good when we're feeling affliction we're going through the affliction man this is terrible I wish this never would have happened

God what's going on of course David struggled with that as well as he looks back on it and he records the fact that no this is good it's good that I was afflicted so that helps me gain a richer perspective of how God's goodness is manifested toward me in life it's not always when things are just running smooth it might be better for him to I'll say disorder my life and he understands how to do that and so David saw that it was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees there's something far more important for us in life than just a comfortable life the far greater thing is for us to know God and his truth to enjoy him and to communicate his glory to others throughout the world so next time you know we're struggling with some of these events in life don't despair think of it again as

God's goodness being manifested toward me wonder why it is what I need to understand about him and his decrees what is it that I need to learn and of course Romans 5 we know that suffering produces perseverance and on and on it goes and so the goodness of God as I said last week some of the books I was taking a look at had scads of pages on the goodness of God I've just given you a small measure of what is contained in the scriptures that we might know him you can take it from here and explore it further but how are we going to now respond to this good God in the ways that he's manifested his goodness toward us it requires a response and that's why I gave you that sheet this morning on the different responses as I took a look in the scriptures and saw the variety

of ways in which people respond to the goodness of God and certainly as unbelievers and I don't want to take the time to go through all of these but I did want you to have them in your possession but for the unbelievers suppressing the truth of God's goodness suppressing meaning to hold it back to hinder it by sinful actions disregard the knowledge of the truth of God as graciously provided to them not giving thanks exchanging the truth of God's goodness for something false turning from God's good design to do the very opposite taking credit for themselves as Nebuchadnezzar did as he looked on his kingdom showing contempt for the riches of his kindness that's meant to lead them to repentance they misinterpret the very goodness of God that he's displaying to them as thinking hey everything's okay I'm okay let's just continue on not realizing that the goodness the kindness of God is meant to lead them to repentance they need further truth and understanding but then there are some also that repent and believe but then look down through the list there of even toward us as believers there's some positive many positive responses but even toward the end a few negative responses that we could have toward the goodness of God so as you look down through that list and I know we've just got maybe three minutes here what would you pick out as man this is something that I need to work on more this is you know I've just have not displayed this kind of response toward the goodness of God what would you say man you're asking me to reveal myself among people here we're not in a small group here you know but if we were in small groups you could go to those small groups and the assignment would be reflect on these various responses and share with each other what response you need to labor toward and to exercise yourself toward and ask your brothers and sisters in Christ hey pray for me in this way this is just not the way

I've been I need your help so what would you say those of you that might be brave enough yeah Roger I know I know what I need in my heart is a much greater craving for God's word yeah you become so familiar over time with the word of God and it becomes too familiar yeah and we can never lose that fire yeah yeah taste and see the word of God is good comes from a good God it's there for our good yeah it's a fountain of life that we that we need to keep going back to yeah what else back here yeah even though we hear that we see that in scripture over and over again we're prepared but yet when something new and I expect it comes as most trials sure we're on our backs going what happened yeah I ask myself is is God really a good

[37 : 19] God yeah yeah isn't it something how that lies within us you know it takes the right circumstances and again by God the grace of God takes those circumstances to reveal that that still exists within me that I would question the goodness of my God who has done all these now God helped me to now reflect and to learn and glorify and magnify your but we're all there we're all there somebody else Jim well it's hard to pick out one but I would say the most is A give thanks because if I spend more time giving thanks I quit complaining yeah I get it reverse I complain instead of giving thanks I need to get it in the right word yeah for sure sure again this is nothing new for any of us we all fall into that category at some point and this is why we go back to the scriptures to be reminded of the truth so that we can be exercised exercise ourselves in doing what is good orient our lives now in this direction of godliness somebody else before we stop stand oh man isn't there a song that be at rest for the lord has been good to you i won't sing it this morning but it's a good song good psalm for us to remember well boy you know this is a rich sharing time but we we enter into each other's needs and and and as a result we pray for one another so let's take a couple minutes now and just pray that god would help us again to see his goodness and to adore him for that father this morning we've taken a short journey through your word thank you for communicating to us in this way we desperately needed it it's the only way we we see you for who you truly are specifically who you are and we see that we come short in understanding and at times believing that you are such a good god thank you for redemption that we have in christ jesus that now we can we are actually delivered from the flesh this old manner of life and we can walk in newness of life by your spirit and with this truth in our hands so help us father now to take this word with us as we move through the week to counsel ourselves with the truth in whatever circumstances whether we're well fed or in need please bring these truths back to us and help us to function as a body of believers to come alongside each other with truth like this to encourage each other and that we would accomplish our purpose which is to magnify the riches of who you are in a world here and also to enjoy who you are in

Jesus name Amen Amen