

Imitate God in Doing Good

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 6. The Lord went up onto a mountainside to pray, and he spent the night praying.

! And when the morning came, he chose his twelve apostles. And then, verse 17 begins, he went down with them, that's the apostles, and stood on a level place, a large crowd of his disciples was there, and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Looking at his disciples, he said, Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you, and reject your name as evil because of the Son of Man.

And rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven, for that is how their fathers treated the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.

[1 : 35] Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. And woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.

But I tell you who hear me, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you.

If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you?

[2 : 46] Even sinners lend to sinners expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies. Do good to them. And lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

Then your reward will be great. And you will be sons of the Most High. Because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.

Why are we glad to come to the house of the Lord? It's because the Lord is good. His love endures forever. And he dwells in his house.

You are his temple. You are his house. And as we gather in his name, which is two or three of us, he is present with us.

[3 : 46] And so we're here to rejoice in his goodness. He has been unbelievably good to us. And we're learning that he's watching our response to that goodness.

And so we're coming closer to the end of our series on the goodness of God. And we're asking what is our response to his goodness to be. We are to be overflowing with praise and thanksgiving for his goodness.

Our very prayer lives are to be shaped by his goodness in our asking, in our pleading, in our expecting from his goodness. And then last week we saw that we are to serve the Lord with gladness, both in doing his will and suffering his will.

And now this morning we'll see that we are to imitate God in doing good to others. God is good and does good.

Therefore, you are to do good like he does. That's the point this morning. Now, it's an observable fact that young children want to be like their parents.

[4 : 56] So there's Dad and he's mowing the front yard with his power-driven push mower. And there's little Jimmy pushing his little plastic mower, trying his hardest to keep up with Dad's big steps because he wants to be just like Dad.

And inside is Mom in the kitchen and she's baking and little Susie's there on top of standing on a chair on her tiptoes and has her apron on and flour in her hair and all over her face.

And Mother spreads the flour on the countertop and starts rolling out the dough. And little Susie starts rolling like crazy on her little pat of dough because she wants to be just like her mother.

And this behavior that we see so clearly in nature is just a reflection of what we see in grace. That in the family of God, God's children imitate their heavenly Father.

They want to be like their Father in heaven. They bear his family likeness and so they imitate him in this matter of doing good to others.

[6 : 17] Jesus makes this point in his Sermon on the Mount. We're more familiar perhaps with Matthew 5 through 7, but we had read for us a portion of it from Luke chapter 6, in which he says that the true citizens of God's kingdom show that they are children of their heavenly Father by doing good like he does.

So in Matthew 5, the Jewish teachers of the law had so perverted God's law that they were telling the people, you should love your friendly neighbors and hate your enemies.

And Jesus says they've got it all wrong, folks. They've so twisted the law as to teach its opposite. That's what they say.

But I tell you, love your enemies. And pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

True sons who imitate their Father because he causes his son to rise on the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

[7 : 25] So God loves both friend and foe. That doesn't mean that he doesn't have a special love for his own. He does. But there's a goodness of God's love that spills out like the rays of the sun upon all his creatures.

Indiscriminately upon the good, the bad, the ugly. And he says, see that yours does too. Proving yourselves to be sons of the heavenly Father. And that's what he means when he concludes there in Matthew 5 and verse 48.

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Be perfect in your love and goodness as he is. Now, I've long been wanting to clear something up, perhaps a question that's risen with you, and this is kind of a rabbit trail or a side note at least, an introductory point, we'll call it, that someone might look at a passage like this and say, but Jesus is talking about imitating God's love, not his goodness.

Let me just say that's a distinction the Bible is not prepared and concerned to make. As Luke records this sermon, he records Jesus as saying, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.

If you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. But love your enemies and do good to them. And then your reward will be great and you will be sons of the Most High because he's kind and good.

[8 : 56] He's good. That's the word there. It could equally be kind or good. He's good to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful just as your Father is merciful. So are we being called to love our enemies or to do good to them?

To love them or to have a good heart toward them? Both. And they're much the same. God is love and does good to all men.

God is good and does good to all men. And just as love desires and seeks the good of its object, so does goodness.

Desire the blessing and seeks to do good to those objects of his goodness. Love and goodness are very difficult to decipher the difference.

They're both expressed by doing good. And we not only see this closeness of meaning in this point in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the two are very closely related throughout the Bible.

[10 : 02] The most common Old Testament word for love is chesed. And that can be equally translated unfailing love or unfailing goodness. Loving kindness.

We have Psalm 136. Give thanks to the Lord. Why? For he is good. His love endures forever. These two are really saying much the same, if not the same.

And in other places, we read of the goodness of your love. Psalm 69. Through the ages, pastors and Bible scholars have noticed this in the Bible.

And it's reflected in their writings. I've told you how much I've profited from the Puritan Stephen Sharnick in his book, Existence and Attributes of God. And the chapter on the goodness of God is amazing.

So there's 14 chapters in the book. And there's this wonderful chapter on the goodness of God. But you'll look in vain to find a chapter on the love of God. It's not because he somehow missed that in his study of the Bible.

[11 : 08] It's because his love is seen in his goodness. His goodness is his love. The Westminster Confession, not just one pastor, but a hundred pastors and Bible scholars gathered together for years, a thousand sessions of studying the Bible and coming up with a confession of faith and a catechism to teach our children.

The shorter catechism answered a question for what is God? I want you to listen for what is there and what isn't there. What is God? God is spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being.

Wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. Period. What's there? His goodness.

What's not there? His love. Did they somehow miss that in all their years of study of the Bible? Not at all. They just saw that his love is his goodness. His goodness is his love.

And these two are so inextricably bound together that we really wonder what the difference is. Now, so if you've wondered that, as we're studying the goodness of God, you say, boy, it sounds a lot like his love.

[12 : 26] Yes, it does, doesn't it? And that's the way the Bible presents it. Even Jesus, in this passage we're looking at this morning. If you think that God's love ought to have its own chapter, you're not alone.

So, that's just the way that men have tried to categorize these attributes of God. And they see his love and goodness so tightly intertwined. Now, according to Jesus, then, our response to the goodness of God is that we're to imitate him in doing good like he does.

I have over 10 points, and we're not going to get to them this morning, so I'm going to save the latter half for another day. Point number one, we're going to look at examples of imitating the Father and doing good.

Now, our greatest example is our Lord Jesus Christ. So, we'll consider him first. When God's eternal Son became man and visited our planet, what did he do? Well, Peter was down in Cornelius' house, and this is how he summarizes what Jesus did.

He speaks of Jesus of Nazareth, who went around doing good. What a summary of Jesus' life. He went around doing good.

[13 : 43] Where did he do good? Around. All around. Wherever he went, he left behind a trail of good. Good works, good deeds, good words.

And as the God-man, he perfectly imitated his Father in heaven, who's constantly doing good. John 5, 19, Jesus says, I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself.

He can only do what he sees his Father doing. Because whatever the Father does, the Son does, you see. He's imitating the Father.

And in Jesus, the Eternal Son, this truth hits its high watermark, its climax. Nobody imitates the Father like Jesus does. For he's the perfect Son, who is the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being.

And so he perfectly imitates the Father. So to be Father-like is to be Son-like, is to be Father-like. He shares the same divine nature as his Father.

[14 : 54] If you've seen me, you've seen the Father, he can say. So true is his imitation, his doing the works of his Father. So in Jesus Christ, we see him imitating his Father by going around doing good.

I wonder, could you have that engraved upon your tombstone? She went around doing good. Well, that's the example Jesus left us.

And there was a lady. Dorcas was her name, a disciple of the Lord Jesus in Joppa. And she's described as always doing good, comma, helping the poor. That was one of the ways she did.

Always doing good. Always at it. God's been good to me. How can I spread the goodness? And she found opportunity enough in a world of woe and brokenness and need.

And there were plenty of widows when she died who mingled with their tears, their stories, and showed the clothes that Dorcas had made for them, these poor widows.

[16 : 06] She's an example given us of always doing good. And in that, she's like her master and like her father. Indeed, 1 Timothy 2.10 says that all women are to clothe themselves with good deeds appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

You profess to worship a God who is so good that He gave His one and only Son, then it's only fitting that you should cover up and wear as a garment good deeds yourself to others.

Always doing good. That's Dorcas. Joseph of Arimathea is another example. Luke 23 and verse 50.

This is how he's described. Now, there was a man named Joseph, a member of the council, a good and upright man who was waiting for the kingdom of God. And he showed his goodness by not consenting to the council's decision to condemn Jesus to death.

He broke with the crowd. He broke with the majority. He stood with Christ. And when Jesus had died on the cross and was so poor that He didn't have any clothes, He didn't have any house, He didn't have any burial ground, Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

[17 : 27] And then he provided his own freshly cut tomb to give his Lord an honorable burial. He was a good man. A good man. And then there's Barnabas.

Another example, Acts 11, 24 says, He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. Well, if you're full of the Spirit, then you're full of His fruit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness.

No wonder He was a good man. He was full of the Spirit and the Spirit produces goodness. And Barnabas could not keep that goodness within.

Do you know His real name? It was Joseph. Another Joseph. This one from Cyprus. But His life was so full of the goodness of God extended to others in encouraging ways that the Apostle renamed Him Barnabas, which means son of encouragement.

So He sold a field that He owned and He brought the money to the apostles and He says, There's others that need this more than I do.

[18 : 39] Distribute it to those who are in need. He did good with His money. He did good with His possessions. He shared with others in need.

Is that not imitating the Heavenly Father? Sharing what is His? What is His? The earth is the Lord and everything is the Lord's and everything in it. And He's kept it all to Himself.

No. He's blessed you with it. He's shared it with you. He's given the earth as man's dwelling place. He's even given us His own Son.

He shares His possessions. What is His with us? Barnabas was a good man imitating his Father in Heaven bearing that family likeness by sharing His possessions, His money, doing people good with His dough.

Secondly, when Saul of Tarsus was converted, no Christian would get close to him. They were scared to death of him. He'd been killing Christians and persecuting them and imprisoning them.

[19 : 47] They were afraid of him. They said, He's not a genuine disciple. He's just getting in close where He can do more harm. And so this good man, Barnabas, took him in and spent time with him and listened to his testimony.

And then he went to bat for him and he brought Barnabas to the other apostles and he said, Listen, what God has done for this man.

He's a true disciple of Jesus. He stood by Him when everyone else was afraid. He did good with His time, His fellowship, and His hope-filled love.

But stood by this new brother in Christ. Barnabas did something similar with John Mark too, didn't he? When Paul said, I'm not ready to take him, he bombed out on us and Barnabas saw what he could be and by the grace of God what he became profitable to the apostle later in life.

But you see, he's willing to gamble with this trusting, hopeful love in others. He did them good with His trusting love.

[20 : 59] And when the Gentiles up in Antioch first heard the gospel, for the first time, Gentiles in Antioch hear about Jesus of Nazareth, dying for sinners, not just Jews, but Gentiles included.

And they believed. The word got back to the church at Jerusalem and who do they send up to check it out up in Antioch? But Barnabas. Why Barnabas?

Because he's a good man and he knows genuine grace when he sees it. He saw it in the apostle Paul. And if there's genuine grace up there in those Gentiles in Antioch, Barnabas will not only spot it, he'll encourage it.

And so they send Barnabas, the good man, and when he came, he saw the grace of God. And he encouraged them to remain true to the Lord Jesus.

And that's where we read, he was a good man. You see, he did good with his words. Oh, the power of these words that tumble out of our mouths. Power to kill and destroy or power to build up and give life.

[22 : 04] Power to harm or power to help. Power to do good or power to do evil. Barnabas used his words to build up and encourage.

So these are some examples in our Savior imitating his heavenly father. These other disciples of Jesus, children of the heavenly father, doing what their heavenly father does.

And now, if you're a child of God, he's watching to see if your response to all of his goodness to you will work its way out in what you do with your words and your money and your time and your investment in other people.

Examples of imitating the father's doing of good. Secondly, we want to consider that doing good is impossible without a new heart and the Holy Spirit's indwelling.

If we take our Bible seriously, and you do, then we've got a problem because Jesus says in Luke 18, 19, there's none good but God.

[23 : 20] And Paul quotes from the Psalms saying there's no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who does good, not even one. And Jeremiah says, can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?

The answer's obvious. No, you can't rearrange the spots on the skin or change it from black to white or yellow or red. Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil, Jeremiah says.

So, we're born with sinful bad hearts that go astray. Astray from the good and choose the bad.

And that becomes our habitual custom, our way. and just as a man or a leopard can't change their skin, neither could we, accustomed to evil, do good.

And yet, we've just read, she was always doing good. He was a good man and so on and so forth. How is it that we fallen sons of Adam, daughters of Adam, who have sinful hearts, can ever imitate God and do what's good?

[24 : 36] Well, it's only if God does what's impossible with man and changes our nature. The very DNA of our hearts.

Jesus said it in Matthew 12, make a tree good and its fruit will be good. So, if you want good deeds being done, good fruit, you gotta make the tree good.

The heart. Or, he says, make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad for a tree is recognized by its fruit. In other words, what's inside is what will come out.

And then he says, you brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? How could you have good words like Barnabas when your heart is evil?

No, he was a good man and therefore what he said was good. But how did he get good? That's the question we're up against. Jesus says, the good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.

[25 : 43] Well, the answer is that our God delights to take bad men and to make them good. To take bad boys and girls and make them good boys and girls.

And that's what it means to be born again. That's why he told Nicodemus, you'll never enter the kingdom much less even perceive it until you are born again.

You got a bad heart, you need a new heart. You need a heart transplant. You need a spiritual heart transplant. And only God's in that business. Ezekiel 36, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you and I'll remove from you your heart of stone.

that adamant rock that refuses to give, that's stubbornly going our own way. He'll take that heart out and he'll put in a heart that's soft and fleshy.

And I'll put my spirit in you, my spirit in you and through him move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. So that's how Joseph, that's how Barnabas, that's how Dorcas could be said to be good and to do good.

[26 : 54] they had received a spiritual heart transplant. A heart that was made good, that was rotten and filthy with the disease of sin and now good and a home for the Holy Spirit who dwells in them and produces his ninefold fruit, one of which is goodness.

Goodness. Jesus puts it in terms of a vine and the branches in John 15.

I'm the vine. You believers of mine, you're the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit but apart from me you can do nothing.

That is nothing good. And so there we were dead in sin like a dead branch that's fallen overnight in the storm. It just needs to be picked up and thrown on the fire pile.

And that's where we were headed until God took a hold of us and put us into Christ. It's because of him that you are in Christ Jesus and being put into Christ Jesus now his sap of grace and life and spiritual life flows through us the branch and now it's to our Father's glory that we bear much fruit one of which is goodness.

[28 : 15] Goodness. So, that's the second point. We've got to have a new heart in order to do good and imitate our Father.

Point number three. Doing good is not only possible now. Point three. Doing good is the very purpose for which God saved you.

Everything God does he does on purpose. He never works without purpose or plan. So, what was his purpose in saving you dear brothers and sisters? Well, that's a manifold answer.

The highest of all is to bring glory to himself to make people stand in awe of him and say what a God to save such a people.

That's the ultimate reason why he saves anyone. To show forth the splendor of his being. But Titus 2.14 says that he saved you that he might have a people who imitate his goodness.

[29 : 22] Turn there in your Bibles. Titus 2.14 We recently finished that study on Titus on Sunday evenings and verse 13 of Titus 2 says that we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now verse 14. Who gave himself for us. Where did he do that? That's the cross, isn't it? This verse is taking us right to the cross, right to Calvary, the center cross where Jesus gave himself in the place of punishment for us on our behalf.

And to what end? Why? For what purpose? Well, to redeem us from all wickedness.

That is to set us free from a life of wicked deeds. And to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good.

So the purpose for which Jesus Christ gave himself to suffer and die for you was not just to get you out of hell and into heaven, but rather to make you his very own people.

[30 : 43] I think the King James says a peculiar people, a unique people. And the peculiarity about them is not that they're weird in the sense of bad weirdness.

No, the peculiarity of these people, the uniqueness of his people that he's bought with his own blood is that they are eager beavers to do what's good. they're out doing good.

They're eager to do. They're zealous for good deeds. That's what marks these redeemed people. He died that we might be forgiven.

He died to make us good that we might go to heaven at last saved by his precious blood. Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved and we must love him too and trust in his redeeming blood and try his works to do.

You see, he died that we might be forgiven, but he also died to make us good that we might do his good works. And we were so turned inward on ourselves and so committed to self-will, to self-centeredness, self-focused lifestyle, that it took the cross of Christ to purify us from that rubbish and to get us turned outward to serving God and serving our fellow men with an eagerness to do what's good.

[32 : 12] So he's given himself for us. That was the highest good ever done, ever in history, ever to be repeated, giving himself. And it was done to win a people who would be zealous for good works.

So as you think of the cross, as you come the next time we're able to celebrate the Lord's Supper and meditate again on Jesus giving himself up for us, ask yourself, is he getting from me what he gave himself to get?

He gave himself to get a special people who are marked by their eagerness to do good. You have it again in Ephesians 2, 8, 9.

We're so familiar with Ephesians 2, 8 through 10, I should say, and we're so familiar with verses 8 and 9 and very emphatic that we're not saved by our good works, but by grace through faith.

And that itself is the gift of God so that no man can boast and we put a period and we walk away from the passage, but Paul doesn't stop there. He goes right on. That's the wrong place for good works.

[33 : 24] Now here's the right place for good works. For we are his workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus. You see, salvation is not our work at all.

It's his work. He's the workman and we're the workmanship. We're the piece of work that he's done. What is his work?

It was to create you in Christ Jesus. You came forth from the womb of your mother, created in the likeness of Adam, the fallen Adam, a sinner, going to hell.

But when God put you into Christ and created you anew in Christ Jesus, he joined you to Jesus Christ. And you're being transformed more and more into that same image of its creator.

And so that was his work, where his workmanship created in Christ Jesus. To what end? For what purpose, Paul? To do good works. Do you mean to tell me that the reason God in pure, sovereign grace reached down and snagged me when I was going to hell and didn't want anything to do with him was in order to have a man who would do good works?

[34 : 38] Well, that's what he says. Yeah. Wow. Then I better be at it.

This is the very reason he saves us. Pull us off that broad road that leads to life. Live in our way. To doing the works of our father.

Oh, we're not saved because of our good works. We're saved by pure grace in order that we might do good works. There's a wrong place for good works and there's a right place.

Make sure you keep it on the right side of the cross. Talk to a lady and she's all about doing good works and she goes to church and she's very active in all the rest, doing good deeds. She's on this side of the cross.

She's never seen herself as a sinner in need of forgiveness, in need of a new heart, never seen that she's under God's wrath and she's just doing good. She's a do-gooder. I said, friend, there's a place for good works but it's on the other side of the cross.

[35 : 49] It's only when you've come with nothing in my hands to break. I have no good to offer you. I'm a sinner. God, be merciful to me, a sinner. And he's merciful and he saves you.

Puts the spirit in you now on this side of the cross. What are we about? We're about doing good. Just like our father, just like Jesus, just like Dorcas and Barnabas. keep works on the other side of the cross.

It's the purpose for which God saved us, the purpose for which Christ died for us. And then lastly, this morning, fourth and lastly, be sure to include your enemies in your good works.

And that's the very application that Jesus makes on the goodness of God. What is our response to God's goodness? It's got to be this, that we do good like our heavenly father, which means including our enemies.

His goodness is as diffusive as the sun shining on all. So must our goodness be. He's so good that he's even good to his enemies. He's so good that he prays for those who are crucifying.

[37 : 05] Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. And there's one persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, killing his children, killing Christ's people.

And Jesus comes and does him good. His enemies, his enemies. Therefore, you are commanded.

You do good to them that hate you, that you might be children of your heavenly father, for that's how good he is. So be like him. Show your true sonship. It's this goodness to enemies that is to be a distinctive mark of his children.

Whose goodness doesn't just go to friendly neighbors and friendly family and friendly friends, but who goes beyond to the unfriendly, to the unlovely.

In fact, to those who hate you. In fact, to those who do evil to you, who mistreats you. That's the distinctive goodness of your heavenly father.

[38 : 15] Man's so-called goodness is often quid quo pro. We've heard that in the news lately, haven't we? It's just Latin for where what is given is contingent upon something being received.

I'll scratch your back, but only if you scratch mine. It's tit for tat. I'll do you good if you do me good. But if you don't do me good, pack it up. You're not getting any good from me.

That's man's goodness. That's the sinner's goodness in the words of Jesus. That's not God's goodness. It's man's cheap imitation. Where self is always in the forefront.

What's in it for me? What will I get out of this? And if that's as far as your goodness reaches, you're in trouble according to Jesus. For he says, if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners do that. In other words, more is expected from you who are children of the heavenly father. We would expect that of the world.

[39 : 20] That's what the world does. That's how they've never received this goodness of God to them as his enemies. They never tasted that goodness and got a taste for what it is.

But more is expected from you who do have such a good father who loved you when? When you were a sinner. Romans 5a.

God demonstrates his love toward us in this and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And two verses later, Romans 5.10, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son.

That's the father's love. He pursued us when we were enemies. And we were shrugging him off like the worst shrugger of all. We didn't want him. We liked our way.

The devil had blinded us to see it's going to hell. It's the fast lane to hell. And we didn't want people telling us about Jesus. We wanted our way.

[40 : 33] And as Pastor Jason said in his prayer, he just kept pursuing us like the hound of heaven until we would just turn and run into his arms and taste this amazing goodness of saving his enemies.

enemies. So we prove our true pedigree as his children not by reserving our goodness to those who are good to us, but extending it to those who do us wrong, to those who are against us in some way.

There's to be something of the quality of father's goodness seen in our lives. Not just good. Yes, that. Not just to the church. Yes, that.

But to enemies. That's the that's the quality that. Should be noted. Among God's people.

So imitate God. It's father like. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you.

[41 : 39] Pray for those who mistreat you. Paul did says when we're cursed, we bless. Adoniram Judson was preaching the gospel to hostile sinners in Burma, present day Myanmar.

He was out on the street and some of the. Idolatrous priests were shouting curses on him. As he preached. And he stopped and he prayed for them.

And if I knew what my prayer would be like in that situation, you may not want to hear it.

But he didn't just pray for their spiritual good. Yes. He prayed for their physical good. For their health. Their financial good. Their family.

God's blessings to rest upon them. When we are cursed, we bless. We bless. We bless. Because that's father like.

[42 : 45] That's what he did with us. So the high priest servant was there in the mob that night that came to arrest the innocent and sinless pure Jesus. Jesus.

What a mistreatment that was. To arrest and bind. The perfect son of God. Well, Peter's going to deal with it.

And he draws his sword. I'm sure he meant to get the head of this high priest servant. And he managed to lop off an ear. And Jesus is there. That'll show you. Doing something evil to me.

No, no. That that would. That would maybe be my first response. No, Jesus picked up the ear and put it back and healed his ear. You ever wonder about that servant of the high priest?

What happened to him after Jesus was just hours later seen on a cross? Not a hard word, a mean word for anyone from that cross.

[43 : 49] Everybody else on cross is curses. forgiveness. And he prays forgiveness. Wonder where he is. I won't be surprised to meet him in heaven.

Would you? Where do you find that kind of goodness on earth? You don't. To love and heal.

To take care of the physical need of an enemy that was just coming to do you harm. Oh, what kind of effect do you suppose you're doing good in return for evil?

When others do you evil and you return good and you overcome evil with good. Wonder what kind of effect that could have on our world. Oh, I know what it's supposed to do.

It's supposed to cause them to be turned and converted and to give praise and glory to God on the day he visits us. First Peter 2. Well, you see Adam and Eve had no sooner sinned against God's goodness in the garden than God came to his new enemies who had just sided with his arch enemy Satan.

[44 : 59] They had left his side with all the goodness of the garden and himself and they had just become new enemies with the devil. And the first thing he did when he came to them.

was not to work for their ruin but to announce their recovery. I'm going to cause the woman to bring forth a son and he will crush the serpent's head.

And he will redeem a people back to me. His enemies. The first were. I redeem you.

Not ruin you. And that was the twist and that was the bite in Jesus parable of the good Samaritan. You know, the Samaritans were hated by the Jews.

They were a bunch of defiled half-breeds. They mixed the true religion with the false religions of Assyria and they came up with their own worship and their own high place doors and all the rest and they wouldn't have anything to do.

[46 : 00] And that's why the woman at the well was so shocked that Jesus was friendly to her. Never been treated so kindly by a Jew. And so when Jesus tells the story of the good Samaritan.

There's the Jew beaten and bloodied on the road left to die. Who is it that does good to him? It's a Samaritan. You see, he's doing good to his enemy.

If it was the Samaritan, the Jews would have walked by and scoffed at him. But now, no, in Jesus' story, he has the one who is loving neighbor be the Samaritan who's loving his enemy.

So that's father-like. Do you have an enemy? They come in all different shapes and sizes and situations.

You know why sometimes your husband is your enemy, isn't he? We're being honest. And they're doing this evil. They're doing this wrong. What they said was not kind.

[47 : 08] Okay, you've got an enemy. Now what are you going to do with them? You're going to pack him up? Ship him out? You're going to give him back what he gave you? Or are you going to be father-like?

And love him? Do good to him? And pray for him? And serve him? If he's thirsty, give him a glass of water. If he's hungry, give him a meal.

And do it with gladness. Because that's the way the father always does goodness. Never reluctant. Oh, you're my enemy, so there. No, no. He delights to do good.

He delights to do good. Even to his enemies. So yeah, you have enemies. Maybe it's somebody at work. Maybe it's a neighbor. And they're always irritating you with something they do on your property or whatever.

There's a lot of different kind of enemies. And if we just think that it's somebody like Saul of Tarsus that's trying to kill us, we may not understand what this passage means to us.

[48 : 09] We have enemies. Every one of us living in a sinful, fallen world, we have enemies. And we also have a Savior who loved us when we were enemies. And so we have his spirit in us to imitate the Father.

And to shock them. Even as we're perhaps shocked ourselves at kind words coming out instead of harsh words. This is the good life.

This is what we've been saved to live. The God-like life. Children of God imitating our Heavenly Father's goodness. Even as Jesus did and even as Jesus taught us.

And I just conclude with going back to the example of our Savior's goodness to us when we were enemies. It's the motivation we need to get out there in the world and love our enemies and do good always and wherever we go to leave behind a trail of good with our words, our money, our time, our efforts.

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. That though he was rich, yet for your sakes, you his enemies, he became poor.

[49 : 26] That you, through his poverty, might be made rich. Oh, how happy he was to make you rich. That was the joy set before him. That's what held him to the cross.

I'm going to see these people brought to heaven. That joy of bringing you an enemy into God's family to taste this free grace and and and to extend it to others.

Oh, how happy he was to me to become poor for you to make you rich. Well, that's the goodness of God's grace and Jesus. Now let's go and do likewise becoming poor that we might enrich.

Others. We're going to sing from the overhead. Oh, how I love him. And may the Lord help us then as we look at him and his example.

Stand with me and sing. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope.

[50 : 43] Encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word through Jesus Christ. Forever be the praise.

Amen. Amen. Amen.