

Podcast 261 God is Good

Steve: Believing God is good, and holding on to that truth is a really good start, but it's not the whole package.

Scott: Welcome to the "Building Faith Families Podcast" with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

Steve: I am warm, because outside it is cold, and dreary, and wet. [laughs]

Scott: Welcome to Fall.

Steve: I'm thankful to be inside my warm home, and I had a great weekend.

Scott: What'd you do?

Steve: In 2018, a friend that I've known since he was a teenager, who was in the first youth group I ever had. We connected and he said, "Wouldn't it be great to get a couple of the old guys back together again, guys that we've known for a long time?"

This year we spent Friday and Saturday reacquainting with each other then on Saturday night we had a blessed prayer service that lasted till after midnight. It was awesome. One of our members is a gifted teacher. He taught us Sunday morning, and then we made our way home. It was a really good weekend.

This is something that we need to make sure that we're doing on a regular basis, is connecting with other brothers. I don't think fellowship was meant to be just ladies. Men need fellowship just as much as ladies, if not more. I heard a man say that isolation is the kryptonite of men.

In this COVID era that we're living now, it's very easy to become isolated, withdraw, and pull back from fellowship. We need to maintain breakfast together, weekend retreats, and connecting with other men. We need it all the more as it says in Hebrews 10:24-25, "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

I think, we can all, in some capacity, agree that we do see the day drawing near. Good is becoming more good, and evil is becoming more evil. The lines are being drawn and the gloves are being taken off. This is when we especially need to draw near and gather together with other men.

This morning we're going to talk about another character quality, or glimpse into His nature, which came to me the other night. As I was out on a short walk, I was seeking God, and He met me and gave me this insight which is related to this attribute and which I'm going to share at the end, but we're going to lead up to it throughout the podcast. The character quality we are considering is that God is good.

Let's pray: Father, help us as we contemplate and meditate on your goodness, and I pray that you'll give me words to say. Help Scott. Help our collaboration together, but by your spirit, talk to each of us about your goodness. Open our eyes to see how good you really are. Give us ears to hear what your spirit is saying today. In Jesus' name, amen.

I don't have a hymn that jumps to my mind when I think about God is good, but I do remember a chorus. You and I could probably sing it, and you could strum your guitar, God is so good. God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, He's so good to me.

That never struck me a whole lot back in the day, but the more I thought about it, it is certainly true. I have heard other people say, "God is good all the time. All the time God is good". His very nature, essence, and substance are good. He is completely and thoroughly good. He just is. Everything about Him is good.

I went to bed last night thinking about this subject. I dreamt about God's goodness. It was wonderful, because I thought the intentions of His heart which are good. Every thought that He thinks is good. Every act that He does emanates from His goodness, because at His very core He is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.

I'm going to provide a little bath from scripture where we'll examine the word good and how it's connected with God. I hope that we'll be helped to let that thought marinate right down into our being. God doesn't have any shadowy parts of his character. He doesn't have any darkness. He is good and He is light.

The hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness" says, "There is no shadow or turning with Thee. Thou changest not." God doesn't change. Everything about Him is good. There's nothing mean, or loathsome. There's nothing dark. He doesn't shift gears or change from day to day. God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.

In the book of Genesis, six times in the first chapter, it reads, "God created," followed by, "God saw that it was good." Finally, in the 31st verse, He said, "God saw everything that He had made and behold it was very good, and there was evening, and there was morning the sixth day."

1Timothy 4:4, "Everything created by God is good." That's because the man who created it is good. I don't want to look at the creation so much, except as a reflection of who created it, because it was good. He can only create good because what He makes flows from who He is.

Jesus said, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." I have heard people say, "Oh, man is basically good." We're not basically good. Only God is basically, essentially good.

"The fool says in his heart," from Psalm 14,1-3, "'There is no God.' They are corrupt. They do abominable deeds. There is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of men to see if there were any who understand to

seek after God. They have all turned aside. Together they have become corrupt. There is none who does good. Not even one."

You and I have had glimpses into our own heart, and sometimes we think we're doing things that are good. I like to think that we're being conformed to His image and we're becoming more good, you might say, than we were when we were first saved, but it's tricky. Our hearts are deceitful above all things. Sometimes we do good things, but we do it for the wrong reason.

If there's any good in us, it's a result of God's goodness being poured into our hearts through Jesus, through His Spirit. I think we do become better and we do become more like Him. Our motives change as well as our actions, but at the beginning, there is nothing.

At the end of Joshua's life he was talking to the children of Israel. He assembled them for his final farewell speech, and he says, "Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed, all came to pass." (Joshua 21:45). He had led them into the land of Israel and not one word failed of all God told them.

In Deuteronomy 8:7, "The Lord your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of brooks of water, fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills." God made promises, and they were good promises. God led them into the land of Israel, which is a good land.

God sent his son, who was good to the core because He was God. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with him." (Acts 10:38). When Jesus spoke to us, He gave us the good news.

The Good News is an expression issuing from the heart of our Good God. "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor;" (Isaiah 61:1) I love doing these kinds of studies, because the more I study and the more I marinate in this truth, it works this way down in my heart.

This knowledge of God helps me to love Him more, and it helps me to trust Him more. Deuteronomy 6:24, "The LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good." That's why he gave us His word for our good.

I know you're probably waiting for this passage, Romans 8:28, "We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose." God has good intentions, because He has a good heart, and He has good plans.

My favorite expression for the Holy Spirit, is found in Nehemiah 9:20, "You gave your Good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst."

The Holy Spirit is often misunderstood, and I fear we don't love the Holy Spirit the way we love Jesus or the Father, but He's of the same essence. Psalm 143:10, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Let your Good Spirit lead me on level ground."

I'm coming up to what came to me recently on my walk with God. One of the things that I have been discovering as I've spent more intentional time seeking God and coming into His presence, is how much I benefit from tasting or sensing God. Believing God is good and holding on to that truth is a really good start, but it's not the whole package. It's the basis for knowing that He is good. Psalm 34:8, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him."

Here is an example. Perhaps I have been telling someone what a good guy you are Scott and I make plans to introduce you to them. "Hey, I want you to meet my friend, Scott. He is a really good guy. Then it transpires that all three of us are at a conference together in Cincinnati. We go out to eat and they meet you face to face. Afterwards they tell me, "Scott is a good guy."

It's one thing to hear about how good God is. It's another thing to experience God's goodness. That's one of the things that I have been blessed and discovering as I've drawn near to God. I keep coming away with how good God is and how kind He is.

That experience is worth adds so much more to the written words of truth. The truth was a good start, but experiencing it sealed the deal. Now, we're going to come back to something that was in my recent newsletter. It's something that I think we're aware of more and more in this year of Covid.

At the end of the Book of Genesis, Joseph was approached by his wayward brothers, he said, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." (Genesis 50:20) His brothers meant evil towards Joseph. They were trying to kill them.

They were trying to remove him from the picture, but God redeemed their efforts for good. God took their evil intentions, and He turned it around and the result was amazing. Joseph goes from prison to becoming the Prime Minister of Egypt, and many people were saved. The whole known world was different because Joseph was in Egypt.

Let's think for a second. The opposite of good is evil. As much as we're talking about God being completely good, we have an enemy that is completely evil. John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy." We've been watching his handiwork on television, on social media. This is his work.

He assumes different shapes, and ultimately, flesh and blood is not our enemy. Our enemy is the stealer, the killer, and the destroyer. John 8:44, Jesus was speaking to people and had accused them of being children of the devil, and they didn't take that very well. He replied, "He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand

in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

As much as we have been magnifying God's goodness, which is right since God is good all the time and God speaks out of His own character, and acts out of His own character. As we have observed He creates out of His own nature, and His intentions, and His heart and His plans His people flow from His essence which is goodness. God is good to His very core.

At the same time, our enemy is a liar and the father of lies. He's a stealer, a killer, and a destroyer. That's his character. Everything he touches is vile and evil. God and the devil are the antithesis of one another just as Christ and the anti-Christ.

The insight that I got when I was out seeking God recently was that everything the devil does is just like those wayward brothers of Joseph. They meant evil, and the devil means evil against God's people. He means to steal them, kill them, destroy them.

When I think of stealing, I think of sex trafficking. Killing is abortion. Destroying happened in our cities as riots. As the father of lies I am reminded of the untruths about marriage, when life begins, of the two genders, male and female. I could go on. Everything he does is wrong. Yet, God is greater than the devil and His goodness trumps the devil's evilness. All that the devil means for evil, God turns around and brings good out of it. He is our blessed Redeemer. God's love always wins the day.

The devil thought he had Jesus when he crucified him on the cross, and out of that crucifixion came the forgiveness of sins, the restoration of God's people to God Himself. He broke the power of hell by dying. It was the greatest good that ever happened to the world.

I feel God is helping me to say, "Hold on to my goodness, keep believing even when you think it's dark, even when you think it's out of control. It's not out of control, my goodness trumps it."

And even when God's judgments are in the earth, for we deserve judgment in our country for the millions of murdered babies along of abortion alone. Yet in the middle of judgment, the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness. These sins have to be punished, God is also just and God is also true. Nevertheless, God is going to use these fair and just judgements to draw people to Himself.

I didn't research it enough, but I'm pretty sure that even the expressions, good day, good night, and have a good day, are derivations from, "Have a God day, have a God night." Nothing is truly good unless it is connected to God.

I heard somebody do a little subtraction problem one time. They said, "Think of the letters G-O-O-D, and then think of God, G-O-D. If you subtract the three letters in God from the four letters of good, you get nothing, you get a zero. Good minus God is nothing. All goodness comes with God.

If it doesn't have God, it's ultimately not good. We do have God, and so we do have good. Amen. Let's pray, "Father, thank You for your goodness. I latch on to it. I believe in it. Even when things look askew, help me to look up and get a good glimpse of You. I turn my eyes upon Jesus. I look full in Your wonderful face.

And as the song says, 'The things of this earth grow strangely dim in the light of Your glory and grace,' if I might add, 'and Your goodness.' Thank You for loving us and liking us. Thank You for being good all the time. Thank You for not changing. Help us to hold on to that truth." In Jesus' name, Amen.