

Gal 5:22-26; Exodus 33:18-19 & 34:5-7; Ps 145 //

The Goodness of God's Glory

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[0:00] The first reading this morning is from Psalm 145, which is on page 631, which I will find with you just now.

Page 631. I will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds.

They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all.

He has compassion on all he has made. All your works praise you, Lord. Your faithful people extol you. They tell of your glory, your kingdom, and speak of your might, so that all people may know of your mighty act and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.

[1:43] The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

The Lord is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him.

He hears their cry and saves them. The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name forever and ever.

This is the word of the Lord. Now I have a couple of readings, and the first one is from the International Children's Bible, and that's Galatians 5, verses 22 to 26.

And then we're going on to the NIV for Exodus from 33 and 34. So we'll start with Galatians. But the Spirit gives joy, gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

[2:57] There is no law that says these things are wrong. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their own selves. They have given up their selfish feelings and the evil things they wanted to do.

We get our new life from the Spirit, so we should follow the Spirit. We must not be proud. We must not make trouble with each other. And we must not be jealous of each other.

And then from the Church Bibles on page 92, so Exodus 33, verses 18 to 19, and then 34, verses 5 to 7.

So that's page 92. Then Moses said, Now show me your glory. And the Lord said, I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you.

And I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. And 34, verse 5 to 7.

[3:56] Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished. He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation. And this is the word of the Lord. Thanks so much, George.

Hi, everyone. My name's Robbie. If we've not met, I'm the pastor for youth and children here. And as you've heard, this is an all-age service. So first things first, that means, boys and girls, if you

want to come down to the front, you're more than welcome to talk to me in two halves.

The first half, come on down, and then we'll go back for the second one. If you don't want to, that's okay. But there's so much space. We do all-age services partially because we love being together, hearing God's word spoken to every single person, because every bit of God's word is applicable to every person.

And this summer, we've been looking at the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Now, I want just for a second, everyone's coming up. This is good. I want just for a second, everyone to think about a tree.

[5:12] Just imagine what a tree looks like. Think of its big, thick trunk. It's got deep roots that go into the ground. When it's healthy, the leaves are all green. And if it's a fruit tree, when it comes into season, fruits start appearing.

Now, have you ever seen an apple tree grow oranges? No, we haven't. Have you ever seen a banana tree that grows kiwis? No, it doesn't happen.

Fruit trees tend to grow one fruit. And so when Paul is talking about the fruit of the Spirit, he is talking about one fruit that grows in Christians' lives, the more they look at Jesus.

And that fruit is being like Jesus. Sometimes we think of it as like nine different fruit, and then you kind of have to grow nine different things. But it's just nice and simpler than that.

The fruit of the Spirit, when the Spirit is at work in a Christian's lives, we become more like Jesus. Now, this morning, we're looking at the fruit of goodness. Goodness. And goodness, well, it's actually, it's quite a hard one to define.

[6:15] Like, we use the word good in lots of ways. If I were to ask you all, what does it mean to be good? Well, it might depend on the context. If you're at school and you're asked to be a good boy or a girl at school, it might mean listening well, being nice to everyone, doing the work you're meant to do.

If I said it to a dog, it would look like, be cute, accept my pets and don't poo in the house. That's what being a good dog is, isn't it? Really, good, it's confusing. It can feel quite weak. Sometimes, if I bump into you in the street and go, oh, how's your day been?

And you go, yeah, it's been good. What you actually mean is, it's been fine. Kind of average, it's good. Or if I say, listen, I've got plans. We're going to go out for lunch after.

Do you want to come along? You might say, oh, yeah, that sounds good. Which actually means I don't really care enough to make a decision on my own, and you've offered me something, so I'm going to come with you. Good, it just means lots of different things.

If you're really excited, you might say, oh, it sounds awesome, or amazing, I'm so up for that. But, you know, good, it's good. I don't think Paul is using goodness meaning like, yeah, be good.

[7:19] I think Paul is using it in a different way. And we also use it in this way. Sometimes we talk about goodness. We think about living the good life. We all want to live the good life. We want to be happy, want to be successful, have everything we want.

That's what the good life is. If you ever read the Greek philosophers, which I'm sure you guys all have, they are trying to figure out what is the good life. What does it mean to live a good life?

That kind of good is more close to what Paul is talking about. He wants us to see what the best thing for our life is. And what the Bible says is if we want to know what goodness is, we need to look to God.

Because that is the best goodness for all of us. God's goodness is revealed in the Bible. I mean, just think about it. Think way back to the very beginning of the Bible. Genesis 1. God makes absolutely everything.

And it was good. We hear that a lot. Sometimes you think, yeah, okay, he made the sky. It's good. He made the stars. They're good. Yeah, I get it. God made a good creation, right? I want to really drill down on this.

[8:19] Because when we think about what God has made for us, we see just how good God is. So we're going to play a game called God could have just. And what's going to happen is we're going to see something on the screen, and we're going to think God could have just made us broccoli.

Broccoli. There we go. Thanks, Rona. And God, he could have just made broccoli. Broccoli is good. Broccoli has vitamin C or D, one of these vitamins in it. It's lots of fiber.

It tastes good. If you don't eat your broccoli, you should. He could have just made us broccoli. But our game is going to be this. He could have just made broccoli, but he actually made us some way better stuff.

So for the next one I'll ask you, but here's my example. God could have just given us broccoli, and that would have been really good. But he also gave us chocolate, and he also gave us grapes, little flavor bombs exploding in your mouth.

He gave us bacon and watermelon and pizza. He could have just given us broccoli. But he decided that he wants us to enjoy every kind of good food that he's made. He could have just given us hule, and that would have been kind if really depressing, because hule is disgusting.

[9:28] But he didn't. He gave us all these things. Right. So here's what we're going to do the next one. God could have just given us a... He could have just given us daisies. Daisies are lovely flowers.

They're very pretty. They have nice yellow in the middle. Right. Turn to the person beside you. God could have... If he just gave us daisies, that would have been good. But he's also given us what? What do you think as well as daisies is good?

Talk to the person beside you. Go. Chat. Chat. Okay. I'm going to draw that in there.

We've got a few rounds of this. You don't get too long. Somebody shout out. God could have just given us daisies, and that would have been good. But he also gave us... Peonies.

Great. What else? Tulips. Louder. Lilies. So many flowers. The next slide. He has given us. He gave us roses and dahlias and lovely big yellow sunflowers.

[10:32] Here's a flower, right? Listening. I don't know if you guys have heard of this flower. This is what we call the bird of paradise flower that grows naturally to look like a bird is like drinking from the nectar.

That's just a flower. Isn't that amazing that God went, I could have just given them a bush, but I'm going to give them a plant that looks like a beautiful bird. God could have just given us daisies, but he gave us so much more.

God could have just given us cows. That could be the only animal he ever gave us. And cows are nice. They're quite soft. You can scratch them. They make fun noises. If he only gave us cows, that would have been very kind of God.

It would have been very good of God. But to your neighbor, what more has God given us that shows how good he is? Go. Go. Okay, let me cut back in there.

Let me cut back in there. Come on. Shout out. What are some of these amazing animals that God has given us? Dogs. Chickens. Keep more. Just shout them out. I'm not going to repeat yours.

[11:41] I can't hear anyone. There's so many animals. Look, he could have just given us cows, but he's given us hippos and eagles and whales and camels with their weird humps.

Isn't that so kind of God that he gave us these animals that you can sit in between their humps to go through the desert? So cool. God could have just given us cows, but he gave us all these animals. He gave us dogs.

God could have just given us cows, but he gave us dogs. God could have just given us a Labrador. He could have just said, here's a Labrador. That's the only dog you're getting. And that would have been very, very, very good of him. But God actually gave us so many types of dogs.

God gave us cute dogs, silly dogs, loyal dogs, huggable dogs, walkable dogs. He just gave us so many dogs. Look, he gave us Cocker Spaniels and Corgis and Retrievers and St. Bernard's and Poodles and Terriers.

He even gave us Chihuahuas for people who think they want dogs, but actually just want to carry around a rat in their handbag. It's so good of God that he gave us so much of this creation.

Everything God made is so, so good for us when we think about it like this.

[12:45] From the Grand Canyon to the great big tree in your garden, from the way he hung the stars so perfectly in the sky that they twinkled just whenever we look at them, to the way the mountains and the highlands are put together to make those glorious vistas we see in the photos.

God's creation shows us just how good God is. If you remember, like, is God that good? Just look at these dogs, man. It's just so good of God.

But creation isn't the only way we see God's goodness. It's a pretty big way. We also see how good God is in the way he redeems. We see God's glory in redemption.

Now, what that means is when God sent Jesus, he did it to redeem us, to save us from our sin. And so when we look at that redemption, we see just how good God is.

In Exodus 33 that George wrote out for us, we read this. Moses, that's the guy that did the plagues and split the sea and stuff. He spoke to God and he asked God a pretty big question.

[13:47] He said, God, show me your glory. Now, glory, if we want to see glory, that is basically seeing God on display. To see God's glory, to see everything that makes God God.

And God responds in this quite interesting way. Moses asks to see God's glory. And the Lord said, I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you.

And I will proclaim my name in your presence. So that means if we want to see God, if we want to see his glory, we see God on display. God is saying we find his glory in his goodness.

That's quite big. Goodness isn't just an average thing. It is God himself. And if we want to see God's goodness, well, we need to listen to what his name is. Thankfully, because that's quite confusing.

He goes on to proclaim his name. And his name explains what God's goodness is like. He says this later on. The Bitten Bold. The Lord passed in front of Moses and proclaimed.

[14:47] The Lord, the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God. Slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth. Maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations. Forgiving iniquity, rebellion and sin.

Look at how good God is. God is compassionate. What that means is he cares for every single person he has made. That's a whole lot of people.

But he's not just compassionate. He's gracious. That means he doesn't treat us like we deserve. He knows everything we've done. Every way we turn our backs on him. And yet he still shows us his love because he is slow to anger.

He's patient. He waits until he acts. He is abounding in faithful love and truth. And abounding means that there's so much of it in God.

It's like it's overflowing. If I was more prepared, if I'd had a cup and I'd have poured water into the cup and the cup would have overflowed. And that is what abundance is. Abundance is overflowing. And God is overflowing in faithful love and truth.

[15:51] They pour out of God. That is who he is. So God's goodness is seen in this name. And his name tells us what he feels about us.

He loves us. He cares for us. He has compassion for us. That we see these things most fully. Not just when he says his name. But when God steps into his creation.

When Jesus came to earth, we see God's compassion. We see God reach out towards us in our needs. Not in anger, but in love.

Not to push us away, but to pull us back to him. That is God's goodness. He wants us with him forever and ever. Some of us find it hard sometimes to see just how good God is.

There may be things going on in your life that really make it hard to trust. It blurs our vision. We'll see in Exodus that God's love, his goodness, it never changes. It is remaining true forever to the thousandth generation.

[16:56] And Exodus was given to us to help clear up our vision. You are not the thousandth and first generation for whom God's goodness will fail. I promise you that. Because it is in his character that his love will abound forever and ever and ever.

So what we are going to do just now is we are going to sing a song about just how great God's love is. It is a song called Wide and Long and High and Deep. Because that is how big God's love is for us.

So what we are going to do is we are going to stand and we are going to sing this. And then, boys and girls, you can go back to your seats and we will do the next half of our talk. We have been thinking about the fruit of the spirit that is goodness.

Goodness is a key part of who God is. And so if we are struggling against evil or difficult circumstance, we might find that that vision of God's goodness is blurred.

And it is in those times that Psalm 145 reminds us, we are to commend God's mighty works to one another, tell of his mighty acts. And that is how we encourage one another to keep going even when it is hard.

[18:06] The best place we can look for God's mighty good acts are in the life of Jesus. So a big question. We have two big questions. The first one is this. What is it that makes Jesus good?

It is quite a hard question, but it is worth thinking about. You see, if God in his character and his creation is good, then that means that everything he says or does is good.

So every law he gives in his Bible is good. We actually, we experience God's brilliant goodness when we live out the way he wanted for us. Jesus is good because he was able to perfectly keep every single law that God made.

Jesus' goodness is seen in his submission and obedience to his father. And so if Jesus obeys the perfectly good God that is his father, then he must be perfectly good.

Now, God's law is best summarized in two statements. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and minds, and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus, he is the only person who has ever kept both of those laws perfectly.

[19:18] We try to. We do our best to. Those are really helpful ways to live your life, aren't they? And we really want to be good. But even when we want to love God with every part of us, we kind of only love him up to a point, up until something else that we love more.

A bit of comfort, maybe. Maybe a God-like ambition in our life that takes over who he is. And we love to love our neighbors. We think that's good for everyone, but only up until a certain point, isn't it?

When that neighbor gets too difficult, or actually loving them distracts from the rest of our life, well, maybe that's only as much as we need to love them. We have a limit of our love, but Jesus does not have that limit.

He loved the people around him. He loved his father, and he obeyed him up until death on a cross. And that is how God shows his goodness to us, that when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. You see, Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. In his goodness, Jesus knew that his death would fulfill the law and allow everyone who believes in him to have the good relationship with God that they were designed for.

[20:44] And he submitted even to death. Stephen Charnock, who is a Puritan writer, once said this, the whole gospel is nothing but one entire mirror of divine goodness.

The entire gospel is nothing but one entire mirror of divine goodness. And so we see that Christ's goodness is not just in him laying down his life, because what good is a dead man?

Christ's goodness is seen in his ability to pick it up through the resurrecting power of the spirits. We see that the destructive badness of death is wiped out forever by this expansive power of life in Jesus.

That is the goodness we need when we are suffering and struggling. We see that the goodness, it will never be overwritten by badness. The goodness of the resurrection will wipe our evil forever. And our eternal happiness, our deepest good of goods, right now, this very minute, is sitting at the right hand of the Father. And he's sitting there waiting to return in glory to get rid of all of that evil and difficulty we face.

[22:02] That is the goodness of God. That is the goodness of Jesus. And so, to bring it back, we're thinking about the fruit of the Spirit. What does it look like to be more like Jesus by keeping in step with the Spirit?

Well, to grow in goodness looks like reflecting God's goodness to those around us. It's really easy to think that being a Christian requires us to be good boys or girls, to keep the rules, to do as we're told, to be nice.

And if we're nice and keep the rules, then we're a Christian. But that's just not it. There's way, way more to being a Christian. Or you might say it's way simpler than that.

But we actually can't be good. Please don't hear this sermon and leave thinking, well, this week I've got to grow in goodness, so I'm going to go out and be good. No, there is no goodness in our hearts.

As Paul says, there is no one that is righteous, not even one. But thankfully, in God's goodness, he has poured his abundant love over us.

[23:05] He has made it so that if we know and trust in Jesus' goodness, something amazing happens. He transforms us. He takes our sinful, broken hearts that are turned inwards on ourselves.

He removes them and gives us a new heart, a good heart, a Christ heart. Jesus is so good that he removes our sin from us as far as the East is from the West.

And because of that new heart he's given us, we can truly live good lives. We can truly love God with our whole heart, body, mind, and soul. We can love our neighbours as we would love ourselves in wholesome, pure ways, not in the selfish ways we did before.

So when we live and love like God made us to, we become mirrors of God's goodness in the world. When we follow Jesus and live like him, everyone else who looks at us sees little glimpses of him. And the more our eyes are set on Jesus, well, the more our reflection will be like him. We're not going to be perfectly sin-free in this life.

[24 : 22] We are still going to fight with it, but the goodness of God is such that he will remain faithful to us through that struggle. But also that day by day, hour by hour, he is actively transforming us by his spirit, making us more like Jesus and growing that fruit of Jesusness in our lives.

The deeper we put our roots in Christ, the more fruit will look like him. And this is not something we have to will in ourselves.

It's just impossible for us to be good like God on our own. But in his kindness, in his goodness to us, he has made it possible through his son.

So if you're here today, if you're looking, how do I live the good life? Look to Jesus. It really is that simple. We can put away the self-help books.

You can ignore the atomic habits. You can quit trying to find hacks that help us be better Christians. All you need to do is look to Jesus. So my friends, if you want the good life, if you want the goodness that we ache for in our hearts, I bid you come to Jesus and you will find it.

[25 : 38] Let me pray. Father God, we thank you so much for your abundant goodness to us. Lord, I thank you that you sent your son, that he obeyed you perfectly, that he showed us what the good life is and he has given us a new heart that we might live it with you.

Lord, this week I ask that we would reflect your goodness, your son, more and more and more as we look to him and root our lives in him. Help us to be a church that is so abundantly in love with Jesus that everything we do reflects his goodness.

We ask these things now in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.