

## **GOD IS GOOD**

**(WDXE – July 18, 2010)**

Just how “good” is God? Have you experienced the “goodness of God”? I am afraid there are many people who do not recognize or rejoice in the goodness of God. Perhaps the hardships they have experienced in life have caused them to overlook God’s expressions of goodness that are bestowed every day in the lives of people.

Hello, I’m Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. We welcome you to this program.

I am reminded of the blind man that Jesus healed in Jerusalem. He had been blind from birth. When that child was born, I wonder if his parents had questions to arise in their hearts about the goodness of God. Did they, like others, think that they had sinned? Jesus’ disciples asked Jesus that question. “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?” (John 9:2, ESV.) Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.” That is an amazing statement! So many hurts, so many heartaches in this world; I can’t think of many things worse than my child born blind...but yet, God had plans for these parents and for that child. Doesn’t that make you wonder about what other good things God may be doing with those conditions that we call handicaps? I am also reminded of the time when the apostles were whipped in Jerusalem because of their preaching the resurrection and lordship of Jesus. The high court of the Jews “beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.”<sup>41</sup> Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.” (Acts 5:40-41, ESV.) Those apostles rejoiced in the goodness of God that had allowed them to suffer for Jesus; now doesn’t that “blow you away”? Well, those apostles continued to preach every day in the public places of Jerusalem. While doing so they were subjecting themselves to the possibility that they would suffer again, perhaps even die.

Three times the apostle Paul asked the Lord to remove his “thorn in the flesh.” The Lord answered him by saying, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is

made perfect in weakness.” Paul’s response was, “I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” What an extraordinary attitude toward suffering. Was God “good” when he left Paul to struggle with his “thorn in the flesh.” Paul thought so! He would swap his comfort any day for the strength and power of Jesus Christ in his daily life.

Even though David sang about the “valley of the shadow of death”, he could still sing the line in the same song that reads, “surely **goodness** and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (Ps. 23:6, KJV.) Notice that God’s goodness and mercy are found in “the days of my life.” Not just in the house of the Lord in eternity! That’s right!

David loved to sing about the “goodness of the Lord.” In Ps 27:13, he wrote, “<sup>13</sup> *I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the **goodness** of the LORD In the land of the living.*” (Psalms 27:13, NKJV.) Yes, sometimes we have to look for the goodness of the Lord underneath hardship, but we can find it in the land of the living. Ps 33:5 says that “the earth is full of the **goodness** of the Lord.” (NKJV) Ps 107:8, 9 says, “Oh that men would give thanks to the Lord for His **goodness**, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with **goodness**.” (NKJV)

Chip Ingram tells of an incident in the life a missionary friend of his. The missionary friend lived and worked in Sri Lanka, an island off the coast of India. He and his family took a day off and went to a beach. Upon arriving they immediately was hailed by a boy swimming nearby. He was calling for help! An undertow was pulling him out to sea. Chip’s friend dived in to help the boy. He got to him and was able to get him out of the undertow and pushed toward shore. But then the missionary was caught in the same current and was being pressed down to the bottom as if by an invisible hand. He thought he was going to drown..he stopped resisting and was ready to die. But all of a sudden the current shot him up and onto a wave that carried him to shore. Another family friend had just arrived and helped him to shore and helped him pump up water from his lungs. The first thing the missionary could say to his wife was... “God is good.” His

friend replied, “Yes, God is good; but he would still have been good even if you had died out there.”

Let’s not just think God is Good because of our blessings and experiences here on earth. But let’s believe that God is good for wanting us to live forever with Him in Heaven!

God is good because He sent His Son Jesus to die for the sins of the world. The apostle John wrote, “<sup>1</sup> My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup> He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:1-2, ESV.) God’s goodness was expressed to the whole world when He sent His son. The golden text of the Bible is John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” The goodness of God toward the world is seen in this great gift!

The Old Testament Psalm says, “<sup>15</sup> Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.” (Psalms 116:15, KJV.) In the eyes of the Lord, the death of His people is a good thing. On our end, death is to be avoided and when death overtakes our loved one it is a sad situation. When Jesus was approaching the tomb of Lazarus the sisters, Martha and Mary, were weeping. Even though Jesus knew exactly what He was going to do, when He saw the heartache of Martha and Mary, He too wept. There is a song we sing... “Does Jesus care when my heart is pained too deeply for mirth and song? As the burdens press, and the cares distress, and the way grows weary and long? Does Jesus care when my way is dark with a nameless dread and fear? As the daylight fades into deep night shades, does He care enough to be near? Oh yes He cares, I know He cares; His heart is touched with my grief...when the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.” A similar song reads, “Yes, for me, for me He careth with loving, tender care; Yes, with me, with me He shareth each burden and each fear.” Yes, even in the land of the living and the dying, God’s goodness shines through.

Paul wanted Christians to be reminded “To be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, <sup>2</sup> to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.” Why should Christians be this way? Because “we ourselves were once foolish,

disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the **goodness and loving kindness** of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:1-7, ESV.)

Herein is the “goodness” of God in that He sent His only begotten Son to die for the sin of the world.

Do you know the goodness of God. Wake up friend. Look around you. The apostle Paul pleaded with the Lycaonians “<sup>16</sup> In past generations [God] allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. <sup>17</sup> Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.” (Acts 14:16-17, ESV.) Friends, God has left His mark of goodness on you also. Are you ready to acknowledge His goodness by giving Him your life of service?