

What's Good About God: His Creation

Genesis 1:1-25; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Today we begin a new series of messages which I've entitled "What's Good About God?" We sometimes sing the little chorus "God Is So Good" without really understanding the importance of that truth, or even *why* it is so important. So let's just begin by saying that God *is* good, and that that truth is basic to everything else you believe about Him.

In Exodus 33-34, we read that Moses was on Mount Sinai, where God was going to give him the Law for the second time. This is the time when God put Moses in a cleft of the rock and covered him with His hand until His glory passed by. God told Moses, "*I will cause all my **goodness** to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence*" (33:19). Then in the next chapter we see something very interesting. Get this! God said, "My goodness will pass by you," and when God's goodness passed by, He reveals Himself in 34:6-7: "*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.'*"

So put those together. All of those attributes we see in 34:6-7 are wrapped up in the one concept of *goodness*. The idea of goodness is the sum total of everything about God that is good—His love, His forgiveness, His patience, His compassion, His faithfulness, His grace and mercy and so much more—all of those things can be described with the one word *good*.

When we say that God is good, we are in complete agreement with the Scriptures. Here is a sampling: "*The goodness of God endureth continually*" (Psalm 52:1a, KJV). "*You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees*" (Psalm 119:68). "*The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made*" (Psalm 145:9). "*Praise the Lord. O give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever*" (Psalm 106:1

When we say that God is good, we mean that everything about God is good—Who He is, what He does, His thoughts about us, His plans for us, His blessings, His Word, His guidance, His protection. Even the circumstances in our lives are good, even though they may not seem good or feel good.

As you might expect, the Bible tells us some wonderful things about God's goodness. But let's begin with the basics. Let's begin with the foundation of it all.

“What’s good about God?” We begin at the beginning: One of the first things in the Bible we learn that’s good about God is His creation.

We’ll look at two types of creation which are found in the Bible: the Creation of the universe and the New Creation of the New Birth. In the fresh greenery of the Spring, in the dazzling color of Autumn, in the joy of discovery on a baby’s face, and in the fulfillment and meaning of the New Birth, we can see the goodness of God.

1 We can know the goodness of God through His creation

In Genesis 1 we have of course the story of creation. In that one chapter, we can read that seven times God said that what He had made was good. Of course it was true then, and it continues to be true to this very day. In every direction, in every season of the year, in every nation of the earth, in every climate, God can be found. His goodness is evident in the millions of little things as well as in the greatest of creations, from the smallest plankton in the sea to the complex systems of the human body. There is nothing that God has done that is not or has not been good. His works are good because **He** is good. And all of creation speaks of the goodness of God.

Charles Hanson Towne expressed it beautifully in one of my favorite poems:

*I need not shout my faith.
Thrice eloquent
Are quiet trees and the green listening sod;
Hushed are the stars, whose power is never spent;
The hills are mute; yet how they speak of God!*

You see, the glory of the day and the silent splendor of the night are but reflections of the majesty of God. Everywhere you turn, there is evidence of God’s goodness to us. And it has been that way from the very beginning of the world. In the very first chapter of Genesis, we find that “*God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good*” (Genesis 1:31a). And His creation was good because God is good. That’s what the Psalmist was trying to express when he said that “*the earth is full of the goodness of God*” (Psalm 33:5).

God’s goodness can be ignored, as it so often is, even by Christians, but His goodness cannot be denied. The very essence of His nature is goodness. From that nature emerge all the manifestations of His love and kindnesses to us.

Many times we overlook the multitude of tiny kindnesses our Heavenly Father shows to us. We forget that He has created this earth and set it into motion, that we are neither so close to the sun that we burn, nor so far away that we freeze, but we are at just the right distance, and at just the right angle, for all inhabitable regions of the world to receive the benefit of the sun's warmth and light.

We are told that 75% of the earth's surface is covered by water, yet God has so designed it that we can live on dry land, rather than floating upon the waves, or even under them. The oceans and the seas of the world affect the temperatures and climates of all parts of the world. And if all the low spots were filled in so that the surface of the globe was perfectly level, the world would be covered with seawater everywhere to a depth of 1.5 miles.

We know that just a few thousand feet up into outer space, the atmosphere becomes unfit for humans to breathe. Yet here we have enough for everyone to breathe (if we do not pollute it). God in His infinite wisdom has even designed plants that thrive on the wastes from our lungs.

God's goodness can be seen in every part of His creation. The goodness of God comes shining through "in the rocks and trees, the skies and seas" and "in the morning light" and "the lily white." You see it in the sparkle of dew on the grass early in the morning. You see it in the changing of the seasons. God's goodness can be seen in a solitary leaf on a tree and in every single blade of grass. From the summer sunrise to the winter sunset, and from April's glory to October's majesty, the goodness of God can be seen. His goodness can be seen even in those aspects of nature that we might think are "mistakes":

*When God had finished the stars and whirl of colored suns
He turned His mind from the big things to fashion little ones,
Beautiful tiny things (like daisies) He made, then
He made the comical ones in case the minds of men
Should stiffen and become
Dull, humorless and glum:
And so forgetful of their Maker be
As to take even themselves quite seriously.
Caterpillars and cats are lively and excellent puns:
All God's jokes are good, even the practical ones!
And as for the duck, I think God must have smiled a bit
Seeing those bright eyes blink on the day He fashioned it,
And He's probably laughing still, at the sound that came out of its bill.
--F. W. Harvey*

There may be some aspects of His creation that we do not yet understand, but more and more secrets of nature and this world are being unlocked every day, and as they are unlocked, the goodness of God comes shining through. We can see the goodness of God in His creation of the world.

2 We can know the goodness of God through His creation of the New Birth

But God didn't stop with His creation. He didn't stop with the warmth of the sun or the romance of the moon. He didn't stop with the fragrance of the rose or the freshness of the dew. He didn't stop with the splendor of the sunrise or the majesty of a summer thunderstorm. He didn't stop with the sweetness on a baby's face, or even with the miracles of human love. He is truly seen in all those things, but as wonderful as they all are, God didn't stop there. He went on to show us exactly how good He really is.

Because even in a beautiful world, with every shimmering facet of its beauty revealed like a diamond sparkling in the sunlight, even with all that, there are some who observe all that beauty and do not think anything more of it. There are some who observe all this beauty and still do not see God's goodness. They still do not understand personally that God is good, and that His goodness is revealed in His creation of the world.

So that is why God went even further than that. That is why He took the Ultimate Step. That is why He sent His Son Jesus Christ. In His Son Jesus, God has revealed to all of mankind just how good He really is. Because you see, it was in His Son that God Himself came to man with a way out, an escape, an alternative to a life of sin and meaninglessness. God came with His message of grace so that all men could know and benefit from the goodness of God.

So not only is God's goodness revealed in His creation of the world, but most importantly is God's goodness seen in the creation of the New Birth through His Son Jesus Christ.

You see, God has no grandchildren! Either you are related to Him firsthand, as a child to its father, or you are not related to Him at all. Either you know Him firsthand or you do not know Him at all.

The Bible tells us that God's goodness toward us is so designed as to lead us to a life of repentance and a life of following Jesus. *"Do you presume upon the riches*

of His goodness, forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God's goodness is meant to lead you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4)

Yes, God is good, and His creation of the world is good, but you don't have to stop there. You can know today, perhaps for the first time in your life, that God is good because of the fact that He has redeemed you and set you free from your sin.

We can read in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "*Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.*" When men and women and boys and girls become Christians they are new creations. They have their past forgiven and their sins paid for by the blood of the Lamb of God. In fact, we have a promise from God that if we will remain up-to-date in our Christian experience, if we will stay fresh in our relationship with Jesus through daily living in His light and love, then not only do we *become* new creations in Jesus, but we *remain* new creations as well, regardless of how long we've been Christians.

The change that comes into a person's life is so drastic that that person is said to have been "born again." And he has! His old life, his old sin-nature, is dead and gone! He becomes a new creature, a new person, a new creation in Christ! That's what can happen to you if you come to Christ in faith today. You can know the goodness of God through your experience of the New Birth in Christ.

This is a promise that is offered to "*any man.*" "If *any man* be in Christ, he is a new creation." This is a promise that includes a new heart, not just a patch on the old one. This promise involves a new system of values, a new meaning, a new fulfillment, and a new joy that you could not have otherwise.

The world is full of the goodness of God! You can see His goodness in the wonders of nature, science, medicine, and inventions. In fact, it has been said quite accurately that the world is one big wonder.

Salt is a wonder. When we think that salt is composed of two poisonous substances, we are filled with wonder. How is it possible that salt, which is necessary to life, is composed of sodium and chlorine, either of which, if taken individually in sufficient quantities, could kill us? We cannot answer that question. It is a wonder!

Water is a wonder. Its chemical formula is H₂O. That means it has two parts of hydrogen for each part of oxygen. Both oxygen and hydrogen are flammable. Put

the two together to make water and we put out fires with it. That is another wonder!

But salvation through Jesus Christ is the wonder of wonders. An anonymous author has said that every day God makes silk purses out of sows' ears. Every day God takes poor, vile, hopeless sinners and transforms them into saints of God. That is the greatest wonder of this earth. And through it you can know the goodness of God in a way you never dreamed possible.

Perhaps you've experienced the thrill of watching a beautiful sunset, or of seeing the foaming waves dash against the shore, or felt the exhilaration of sniffing the first rosebud in the Spring. And certainly you know the delight of tasting bread fresh from the oven, or holding a sleeping baby. But have you experienced the joy and exhilaration and forgiveness of the New Birth in Christ? The psalmist said, "*O taste and see that the Lord is good*" (Psalm 34:8). Today, I invite you to taste the joy. Taste the forgiveness. Taste the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Taste it for yourself.

Today is the day you can know God is good, not just because I stood up here and told you He is, but because you've experienced the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for yourself. You see, the Lord is good, but His goodness is only known in a deep and lasting way by those who have made Jesus Lord of their lives. Nahum 1:7 reads, "*The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.*"

Are you ready to know and experience that goodness for yourself—today?