



Living in the Goodness of God

Recognizing How God's Goodness is Running After You

The Goodness of God

Part 4, Not Willing That Any Should Perish

This month we've been considering the GOODNESS of God and we'll climax this month's theme with this wonderful thought: **God is not willing that any should perish!** Peter communicated this wonderful truth in his second epistle, chapter 3, verse 9: *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* Ironically, this beacon of hope is planted in the middle of a chapter that warns of scoffers and mockers, and God's sure-to-come judgment against *ungodly men* (just see verse 7). Yes, there are many—even a majority—that scoff at Scripture, at God, at God's judgment, and at Christians who believe what God says!

There are two words there in v 9 that we must clearly understand: they are *perish* and *repentance*. The word *perish* obviously means to die, and there are several instances in the New Testament scriptures where that is the simple and obvious meaning: physical death. But *perish* is also used in contexts where the obvious meaning is what the Bible calls *the second death*. Because of the sin curse, every human being will die at least one time. This is the physical death (Hebrews 9:27). But no one—absolutely NO one—must die *the second death*, which is the meaning of “*perish*” there in 2 Peter 3:9! God is not willing that any human being should die the “*second death*”!

So, what is this “*second death*”? Jesus tells us in Revelation 20:14: *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* The *second death* is a conscious process of eternal “dying” that will be experienced by all who refuse to “repent”. Those experiencing the eternal *second death* do so in a specific place the Bible calls *...the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death* (Revelation 21:8). And so... the second death is an eternal separation from God, and all of His goodness, in a place the Bible calls “The Lake of Fire”, and it will be experienced by those who had no use for God in this life, for those who, according to Peter, will not *...come to repentance*. God sends no human being into perdition; it's certainly not His will! We have to push aside a pleading Holy Spirit, trample upon the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and climb over a bloody cross to get there!

The second word that we must understand is *repentance*. The meaning of this word is to change one's mind and direction. It aptly pictures humanity, proudly and arrogantly traveling down that broad way *that*

leadeth to destruction (Matthew 7:13), insisting that our own goodness will most certainly tip the presumed “scales” of God’s justice in our favor, thereby EARNING us entrance into God’s Heaven. But God pleads, “REPENT”, i.e., “Change your mind! Turn around! You can’t earn your way into my Kingdom! You must be born again (experience a Divine, spiritual re-birth, John 3).”

Yes, *repentance* is changing our minds about how we get to Heaven. Satan’s greatest successes have been to convince men and women that our good works, our self-righteousness, or our works of religion, will earn our admission to God’s Heavenly Kingdom. But Jesus warns through Peter, you had better change your mind! Paul was very clear in Ephesians 2:8, 9.

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Like that praying publican in Luke 18 we must “A”, ADMIT that we are all sinners, and as such, totally separated from God (Romans 3:23). Then we must “B”, BELIEVE that Jesus is THE incarnate Son of God, sent as a Substitute to shed His own perfect, precious blood to make us redeemable. Jesus took our place on that rugged cross (John 3:16)! Finally, we must appropriate Jesus’ blood sacrifice by “C”, CONFESSING or CALLING OUT just like that praying publican: *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner* (Luke 18:1).

Paul was very clear in Rom. 10:10-13, *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth **confession** is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall **call** upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

God is good! He is not willing that ANY should **perish**! Have you **repented** (changed your mind about how to gain admission to Glory) and come to God by and through His WAY, i.e., through the blood of Jesus? Jesus warned in John 14:6 *...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Friend, if you are still clinging to your “good” works, your own innate “goodness”, or to your works-based religion, then repent, i.e., cast it all down at the feet of Jesus and admit, believe, and call upon Him today to appropriate His substitutionary payment to your account!

God bless and consider!