



gracefellowship

Everything
September 8, 2019
Growing in Goodness

:: 2 Peter 1:3-5

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith *goodness*

As we are going deeper into this series called “*Everything*” we are growing in our understanding of what it means to be godly. Peter tells us that a godly life is possible because God has given us everything we need for that life as we grow as disciples of Jesus. Last week we discussed the fact that faith is the base ingredient for a life that pleases God. But Peter tells us that faith is like the foundation of a godly life, to build a life of godliness we add to our faith.

The first quality Peter tells us to add to our faith is goodness. This is a natural first step for a person to take once they come to faith in Jesus. Our faith in Jesus results in the Holy Spirit coming into our lives and shaping us to be like Jesus. The first and easiest thing for a Christian to do is display good works in keeping with the example of Jesus.

:: Acts 10:37-38

37 You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—

38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

When Jesus’ ministry began he was noted as being someone who went around doing good. The power of the Holy Spirit in His life resulted in continual displays of good deeds toward people. He taught the truth of God’s Kingdom, He healed the sick, He spent time with outcasts, and He drove out demons- giving freedom to those who were spiritually oppressed.

When we follow Jesus the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our lives, not

only to act as a seal and deposit guaranteeing our salvation, but also to produce the work of Jesus in the world through us.

Do you remember what Jesus said to His disciples when He told them it was necessary for Him to return to heaven?

Look at John 14:

:: John 14:12-14

12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

- We do greater works than Jesus because the power of Jesus lives in each one of us rather than being isolated in a single individual. Now the Holy Spirit does the work of Jesus all over the world through all who yield to Him.
- The things we do in the Name of Jesus under the power of the Holy Spirit brings glory to God. We are not gaining personal glory through our deeds, nor are we doing any good work out of a sense of obligation. We desire to bring glory to God.
- In context we can ask God for anything that exemplifies the work of Jesus in the world and He will do it.

Through the centuries Christians have been doing the work of Jesus in this world and bringing Kingdom impact all over the globe.

- No group in human history has contributed more to education and healthcare than Christians. As far as providing hospitals and medical care, especially in poverty stricken areas of our world, the church has no rival.
- Christians, more than anyone, have contributed to the care of children. In the High Middle Ages, abandoning unwanted children finally eclipsed infanticide. Unwanted children were left at the door of church or abbey, and the clergy was assumed to take care of their upbringing. This practice also saw the birth of the first orphanages.
- Christians have fought more than any other group to end slavery and we continue to do so in the modern forms of slavery- child labor, sex trafficking, and forced slave labor.
- Organizations like the Red Cross, Compassion International, Samaritan's Purse, Habitat for Humanity, World Vision and countless others began and are maintained as Christian based organizations bringing the love of God to the world through the generosity and goodness of Jesus-followers.
- In some of the world's darkest moments, such as during the spread of the Black Plague, when 5,000 people were dying per day in Rome and

everyone was running in fear, Christians were staying with their sick neighbors and even going to places impacted the worst to care for the sick, risking their own lives to show people the love of God. This goodness allowed for the spread of Christianity even though the Roman Emperors were blaming the Christians for the plague. Their love and kindness showed the glory of God.

These are the kinds of things Jesus meant for us to be part of when He said we called us the light of the world. Look at Matthew 5:

:: Matthew 5:14-16

14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The good that you do in the Name of Jesus shines a light that penetrates the darkness of this world and shows the power of God.

Peter tells us to add goodness to our faith because the good we do demonstrates that our faith is genuine and that God is truly at work in our lives. While good works and good deeds do not save a person, they certainly demonstrate that a person has been saved. Listen to how James encouraged Christians to demonstrate a living faith:

:: James 2:14-19

14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?

15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food.

16 If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

James is not arguing that faith plus works saves a person. All of Scripture makes it clear that salvation is a gift of God’s grace accepted on the basis of faith.

Romans tells us clearly it is not by works, so no one can boast that they were good enough to earn God’s favor. What James is saying is that our faith should have a tangible expression through the good we do as a result of being saved in order to show there is life to our faith!

In James’ illustration we see a person in great need coming to a Christian asking

for help and the response is: Go in peace; keep warm and well fed. In other words- “good luck!” Saying you have faith that God will take care of their needs and doing nothing to help a person by meeting those needs shows a dead faith.

True, growing faith will always have a tangible demonstration showing spiritual life.

But we are not meant to simply go about doing good for the sake of being known as a good person or having a good reputation in our community or even out of a sense that we are supposed to do good to prove that God is changing us. We are to do good as a way to open doors for the spread of the gospel. When the first Christians were finding hope and salvation and freedom in Jesus it changed how they lived, but it also gave them a bigger mission.

:: Acts 2

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.

45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

“Their good deeds led to good will among the people, which allowed an openness to the good news.” - Jay Johnson

The door to be evangelistic was opened through the good the Christians were doing in their city.

That should cause us to look at our lives, our church and our city and ask the question: What am I doing to activate my faith in my home, my church and my city to demonstrate God’s redemptive love?

The early church started by taking care of the needs of others within the family of believers. How can we meet one another’s needs?

- If you are in a Life Group, try to care for one another. Our Life Group Leaders almost act as Deacons in our church because when someone is sick in their group or something difficult hits a group member, they are right there ministering and serving. There are many times I don’t even find out about a need someone has because the LG has helped to handle it! That’s how we should function. The body helps care for one another.
- Our Staff and Elders are here to help meet spiritual needs and to serve people in various ways.

As Christians in Jerusalem were demonstrating their faith through good deeds among themselves, the community around them saw how attractive Jesus was through this demonstration of His power among His people and it drew people in to find the love of God and to be changed to a relationship with Jesus.

This week where has God opened a door for you to do good in the Name of Jesus? How can you do good in your home? Your workplace? Your school? Your neighborhood?

Let's do something crazy! Let's have some interactive time in church! I want you to throw out some ideas of things we can do to express our faith through goodness. I'll start with a few ideas and then you shout out some things to help us.

- Take a meal to someone.
- Buy someone's groceries.
- Babysit for a couple that needs a date night.
- Mow your neighbor's yard.

What other ideas can we share with one another to be a biblical model of God's love through our good deeds?

Doing good to others will require sacrifice. You will have to sacrifice time, energy, or your money to meet the needs of people around you. But that's exactly why God has called you into His family. Serving others to express God's love is high on Jesus' priority list! In fact, Jesus said about Himself: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many."

- If anyone ever deserved to be served, it was Jesus! God walked around in human flesh with His creation, but unlike other Kings and rulers who lorded it over people and wanted everyone to do things for them, Jesus demonstrated the goodness of God by serving us. Now He calls us to do show our faith in the way we do good in this world in His Name.

Prayer: Ask people to gather in groups of 5-6 and pray with one another asking God for opportunities this week to show His love through the actions of our lives.

Life Group Questions:

This week we talked about goodness and how that is a natural first step of adding to our faith.

Take a few minutes to discuss anything that may have stood out to your group members from the sermon before transitioning to the story.

In our Life Group this week we want to look at a story Jesus told about a man in need and how different people responded to the need. This is a familiar story to many people, but try to look at it with fresh perspective about what it means to do good and show God's love.

Read Luke 10:25-37

Head Questions

- How has your life been a reflection of this story at different times?
(Leaders: Depending on how people answer the question, lead your group to think about when they have been able to do good to someone and when they have needed someone to do good to them. Other people may feel like the religious elite who passed by and did nothing.)
- What do we learn about doing good to others in this story?
(Leaders: doing good can be costly, dangerous, time consuming, etc...)

Heart Questions

- How do we see Jesus doing good in Scripture? In other words, what specific ways did He demonstrate this for us?
- Why is growing in goodness important in our journey following Jesus?

Hands Questions

- What types of opportunities exist for you to practice doing good in your life at the moment?
- Why is it important not just to do good for the sake of being a good person, but as an avenue to share our faith with others? (Look at Acts 2:42-47 if you want to explore how this worked in the early church. Sunday an challenge will be made about sharing our faith- this may be a good tie in for this question and to challenge your group with who God wants them to share the gospel with.)

Reread the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.

Leave time for prayer and ask if anyone in the group can quote any of the passage from 2 Peter 1:3-11.