

Series: **God is...So What?**

Today's Title: **"God is Good"**

October 30, 2022 – *Select Passages* – Sermon 11 of 16

Objective: To help people know God is good and that His goodness would motivate us to do good.

We had a visitor this past week on campus – I thought you might like to see who was here...

- Video of Desert Big Horn Sheep

Opening prayer

Ligonier Ministries and LifeWay Research partnered to find out what Americans believe about God, salvation, ethics, and the Bible. (<https://thestateoftheology.com/>)

Every two years, they take the theological temperature of the United States to help Christians better understand today's culture and to equip the church with better insights for evangelism and discipleship.

They survey 2 groups: U.S. adults & U.S. Evangelical adults. Among U.S. Adults a definite trend is seen in regard to the public's view of the Bible.

Is the Bible just another book? 53% agree

Statement No. 16 - The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true.

U.S. Adult Finding:

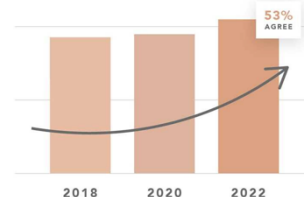
2014: 41% agree

2016: 44% agree

2018: 47% agree

2020: 48% agree

2022: 53% agree



IS THE BIBLE JUST ANOTHER BOOK?

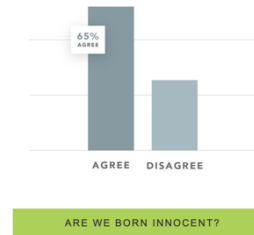
These are some of their key findings in 2022 **from among Evangelicals in the United States...**

Does God change? 48% agree

Statement No. 4 - God learns and adapts to different circumstances.

U.S. Evangelical Finding:

48% agree



Are we born innocent? 65% agree (U.S. Adults = 71%)

Statement No. 15 - Everyone is born innocent in the eyes of God.

U.S. Evangelical Finding:

65% agree

Nearly 2/3 of U.S. evangelicals now believe that humans are born in a state of innocence, showing that the biblical teaching of original sin is not embraced by most evangelicals. This truth is foundational for an accurate understanding of the gospel and of our absolute need for the grace of God in salvation.

Do we choose our gender? 37% agree (2016: 32% agreed)

Statement No. 27 - Gender identity is a matter of choice.

U.S. Evangelical Finding:

2016: 32% agree

2018: 30% agree

2020: 22% agree

2022: 37% agree

More than 1/3 of American evangelicals affirm the “right” of an individual to choose his or her own gender identity despite one’s biological sex. This increase of unbiblical views among American evangelicals on gender and sexuality show the secular / cultural worldview is making greater inroads into the church.

God – paths to God

Statement No. 3 - God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

U.S. Evangelical Finding:

2016: 48% agree

2018: 51% agree

2020: 42% agree

2022: 56% agree

Jesus

Statement No. 7 - Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God.

U.S. Evangelical Finding:

2020: 30% agree

2022: 43% agree

Truth

Statement No. 16 - The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true.

U.S. Evangelical Finding:

2016: 17% agree

2018: 23% agree

2020: 15% agree

2022: 26% agree

Religious belief

Statement No. 31 - Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth.

U.S. Evangelical Finding:

2018: 32% agree

2020: 23% agree

2022: 38% agree

Homosexual behavior

Statement No. 28 - The Bible's condemnation of homosexual behavior doesn't apply today.

U.S. Evangelical Finding:

2016: 19% agree

2018: 20% agree

2020: 11% agree

2022: 28% agree

Conclusion

The 2022 State of Theology survey reveals that U.S. Adults increasingly reject the divine origin and complete accuracy of the Bible.

With no source of truth to conform to, the culture will continue to embrace unbiblical / untrue worldviews – as we are increasingly seeing – possibly the more blatant example is the view of human sexuality / gender.

In the American Church – U.S. evangelicals, doctrines including the deity and exclusivity of Jesus Christ, as well as the inspiration and authority of the Bible, are increasingly being rejected – ***or are unknown***.

This rejection affects more than theological beliefs as more evangelicals are embracing a secular worldview in the areas of homosexuality and gender identity.

These results convey the ongoing need for the church to be engaged in apologetics, helping believers and unbelievers by providing a well-reasoned defense of the Christian faith.

This is something we've been working on – for the past several months – even before I was aware of this survey.

Starting on **Sunday, January 8, 2023** (11:00 hour) – you will have the opportunity to be part of a new Sunday morning group.

STR Outpost - <https://www.str.org/outposts>

This group will be led by Josh Tabor and Marty O’Shea – and will help you better understand the Christian faith – and will help you strengthen your commitment to Christ as you better understand the facts and reasons behind the truths we profess.

This survey also highlighted why our current sermon series is vitally important.

American Evangelicalism – at times – in some churches – can be theologically shallow.

This is not due to a lack of Biblical support or content.

The shallowness tends to be sermons which often lack theological depth and shy away from applying Biblical truth to our present culture.

When your faith is theologically shallow you will not be able to defend your faith – or apply your faith to the current issues in life.

I hope we are growing our roots deeper into the soil of Christ.

“Deeply Rooted” – 2022 Theme

Now, the sermon title today: **“God is Good”** can seem like a light and fluffy topic.

A topic of children's Sunday School songs and stickers and plaques in the Christian bookstore.

But don't be fooled.

The goodness of God is one of the deep truths of Biblical teaching.

The goodness of God is one of the most important attributes / perfections of God for you to fully embrace.

If you don't know – or you doubt His goodness – you will abandon your faith as soon as pain, difficulty, and loss enter your life.

What does it mean when we say, "God is good"?

"The goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval."

(Systematic Theology, by Wayne Grudem, p. 197)

It means He is good in every way – and His goodness is not defined by some standard outside of Himself.

God is essentially good in His nature – in His being.

Since God's nature is goodness, this means that all of His other attributes / perfections are aspects of His goodness.

- His power is good.
- His wisdom is good.
- His love is good.
- His righteousness and holiness are good.

“God possesses goodness not as a quality but of His very nature, ‘not a habit added to His essence, but His essence itself...’”

(God Is, by Mark Jones, p. 136, quoting Charnock)

His goodness is one of His communicable attributes, meaning that we have a measure of goodness due to being created in God’s image.

However, our goodness is not comparable to the perfection of God’s goodness.

Psalm 31:19

“Oh, how abundant is Your goodness...”

Psalm 34:8

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!”

Psalm 119:68

“You are good and do good; teach me Your statutes.”

Luke 18:19

And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.”

So, how do we know what is good?

Who defines – or sets the standard for what is good?

This is truly an important question – not just philosophical musings.

- Is it good for unmarried couples to live together?
- Is it good to change one’s gender?
- Is it good to enforce laws?
- Is it good to live for yourselves without regard for others?

- Is it good to kill a baby in the womb – or after it is born?
- Is it good to discriminate based on ethnicity or religious belief?

These are all issues that our culture is at odds over.

One side calls these things ‘good’.

The other side calls these things ‘bad’.

Who is right? How can we decide?

Are you gonna wash your hands on these things and be content to let others figure this out?

Is that good to do?

Something is good – if it aligns with the character of God – or if God has said it is good – or if it is something God has done.

This is because God – in His nature – His being – is good.

He alone is able to define for us what is good.

“...there is no higher standard of goodness than God's own character and his approval of whatever is consistent with that character.” (Systematic Theology, by Wayne Grudem, p. 197)

We know something is good – or not good – based on God’s character – what He has said – and what He has done.

There are many ways – and many areas of life in which we see God’s goodness – but I want to focus on 4 of them today.

1. We experience and see God’s goodness in His creation.

We see this testified in the 1st chapter of the Bible – a judgment God made about the creation.

Genesis 1:31

“And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”

We see God’s goodness in how He supplies every living thing with what they need for life.

Psalms 33:5

“...the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”

Psalms 145:16

“You open Your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.”

His goodness is seen in the beauty of His creation – which is a source of pleasure and enjoyment for all of us.

It is seen in the variety of foods and flavors we enjoy. I’m sure He could have created a functioning planet without the beauty of the flowers, rivers, meadows, beaches, mountains, sunsets.

But He did – and we are blessed by these things in so many ways!

2. We experience God’s goodness in His patience.

“The goodness of God is seen in that when man transgressed the law of his creator a dispensation of unmixed wrath did not at once commence.”

(The Nature of God, by Arthur W. Pink, p. 71)

When Adam sinned, God did not remove the goodness of His creation.

He did not remove the pleasure of life from the human experience.

“Instead, He ushered in a regime of a mixed nature, of mercy and judgment.”

(The Nature of God, by Arthur W. Pink, p. 71)

If we step back and take in the whole measure of our life, almost all of us can say that the ‘good’ outweighs the ‘bad’ of this life.

Despite our sin – despite our rebellion against God – He still blesses us and gives us time to come to faith in Him for salvation.

2 Peter 3:9

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

Romans 2:3-4

“Do you suppose, O man--you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself--that you will escape the judgment of God?”

Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?"

God's patience to us – waiting for us to repent – is an expression of His goodness.

3. We experience God's goodness in His mercy.

This is related to His patience toward us.

Mercy is not giving us the punishment we deserve.

We see God's goodness as He is merciful to the unjust – blessing them in a general sense just as He does those who are just.

Mathew 5:45

"For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

Unjust people can enjoy all the pleasures of the creation – and the pleasures of marriage, family, friends, work, and recreation.

But God is patient with them in regard to their sin and rebellion against Him – and He does not give them what they deserve in the moment they deserve it.

Exodus 34:6-7a

The LORD passed before him (Moses) and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."

There are lots of things we could talk about here – but I just want to focus on God’s mercy toward sinners.

He is “merciful” “gracious” “slow to anger” (patient).

He is “abounding in steadfast love” “faithful” “forgiving”.

But this doesn’t mean God won’t judge – that He won’t punish sin according to His holiness and justice.

vs. 7b - “...but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

“Would God be ‘good’ if He did not punish those who ill-use His blessings, abuse His benevolence, and trample His mercies beneath their feet?

It will be no reflection upon God’s goodness, but rather the brightest exemplification of it, when He will rid the earth of those who have broken His laws, defied His authority, mocked His messengers, scorned His Son, and persecuted those for whom He died.”

(The Nature of God, by Arthur W. Pink, p. 71)

4. We experience God’s goodness in His salvation.

We see the goodness of God most brilliantly in the sending of His Son – to reveal Himself to us – and to pay the price for our sins – for our salvation – by His willing sacrifice on the cross.

Psalm 107:8

“Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”

Nahum 1:7

“The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knows them that trust in Him.”

Titus 2:11

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people...”

“There would be no manifestation of God’s grace or true goodness, if there was no sin to be pardoned, no misery to be saved from.” *Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)*

(Source: <https://biblereasons.com/goodness-of-god/>)

The greatest expression of His goodness is in the salvation He provides in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Apply it... So What?

Because God is good, we must do good.

I mentioned earlier that God’s goodness is one of His communicable attributes.

Even unbelievers can practice ‘goodness’ – but as believers we are more capable – *due to the Holy Spirit’s presence in our life* – to practice goodness as it is one of the “fruit of the Spirit”.

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

When we put our faith in Christ, Paul tells us we are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

An aspect of our new creation is we should do good to others.

We should be known for doing good.

Galatians 6:9-10

“And let us not grow weary of doing good...

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Titus 2:7

“Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works...”

One of the reasons God has saved us is for us to display His goodness.

Ephesians 2:10

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works...”

God is good, even when you suffer.

Even when you don't experience God's blessing.

- When your car doesn't start...
- When the roof leaks...
- When the a/c stops working...
- When the Dr. says you have cancer...
- When there is a crisis in your family...
- When you lose your job...

These times are not a lack of God's goodness.

God is still good. He is still with you – still your Savior – still loves you – still has a plan for you. When Job lost everything – he still blessed God even though he was no longer experiencing the blessing of God.

(Job 1:20-21 “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”)

The cause of our suffering is not a lack of God’s goodness.

It’s because of our sin – because of the fallen state of the planet – and the sinful state of the human condition.

God is good because He loves us – despite our sin.

God’s creation displays His goodness.

God is patient with us and instead of judgment, He gives us His mercy – which is new every single day!

Yes... Our God is good!!

Close in prayer