

Fruit of the Spirit - 6, Goodness

11-16-16

Goodness, Easier to Recognize than Define

I. Slide1 Announce:

A. Slide2 Thanksgiving Eve:

B. Prayer: Lord, at our *new birth* you implanted w/in us a **seed** by Your Holy Spirit, that has sprung forth in our lives. Which now has grown into a *Multi-Grafted fruit tree*, bearing *Love, joy, peace. Longsuffering, kindness, goodness. Faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

II. Slide3 Intro: Goodness, easier to recognize than to define.

A. The fruit of **goodness** means for us to be **good**.

1. Slide4 A good person is **honorable** in conduct **without** being condescending toward those who act dishonorably; **righteous without** being self-righteous; urgent to **defend the truth without** leaving the impression that he knows all of it himself; and **separated from sin without** setting himself up as the judge of others' behavior. (Shelly 116)

III. Slide5a PAUL & GOODNESS

A. In the opening chapter of **Romans Paul** writes about the depravity of the world that has looked away from God.

1. By chapter 12 he writes to them, *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.* (12:21)
2. In chapter 15 he said, *I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness.*
3. And in chapter 16 closes with a list of widespread and affectionate greetings... basically that *the Roman Christians are good people.*
 - a) *That's the work of the Spirit.* Not that they have found *the good life* through **circumstances** **but** that **goodness** exuded/emitted from them.
4. Actually, **only Paul** uses **goodness** in the NT.
 - a) In Eph.5:8,9 he says, *So live as people of light! 9 For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.*

B. Slide5b So Goodness speaks to being good & doing good.

1. **Being:** You can't be good, be filled with goodness until you are a follower of Jesus. Goodness is a *result* of salvation rather than the source of it.
2. **Doing:** Gal.6:10 *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*
 - a) John Wesley famously said, *Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.*
 - b) The Spirit of God in us causes us to **do good things**, to **act with goodness**. Thus, we are becoming ever more like Jesus.
 - c) Goodness is when the Holy Spirit is taking the **old** and making it **new**. The actions follow, as a reflection of the heart.

IV. Slide6 GOD & GOODNESS

- A. Before we can talk about us bearing the fruit of **goodness** we must define it. To define it we start with **God & His goodness**.
- B. 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.
 1. God **is** good. God **does** good. God is the **source** of all good.
- C. Slide7a GOD IS GOOD. Psalm 34:8 *Taste and see that the Lord is good.*
 1. Lk.18:19 *Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.* Backstory...
- D. In Mark 10:17-22 we have the story of the rich young ruler. It comes right after Jesus blesses a little child...it was a perfect **contrast**. From a *helpless dependent child*...to an *affluent, powerful, self-made young man*.
 1. He was a man that had what most people **want out of life**, **but** not **the one thing** that **really matters**.
 - a) This man was looking for a **bargain**...*the best of both worlds*.
 2. But at **Golgotha/Calvary** **there is no bargaining**, just **Jesus** giving His all. **www**
 3. He was a **good man**, he was an **achiever**...**but** he had a **need**. He sensed something was still spiritually missing.

a) He thought he was just 1 payment away from heaven.

E. The Good Question (17)

F. Look how he came: **running** (earnest) & **kneeling** (respectful).

G. From his point of view he certainly had the **ability** & **will** to **do** whatever was asked of him...*he always did.*

1. His **greatest mistake then**, that is still made by millions today, **thinking that...**
a person could **earn acceptance** with God.

H. The Gripping Answer (18-21)

I. Jesus seeks to *cool his self-made jets w/o killing his engine.*

1. Jesus is seeking to **awaken him spiritually.**

a) **Why do you call me good?** – Calling Him **good** was calling him **God**, **yet** he didn't believe He was God. [That's as odd as someone **taking communion** w/o a relationship with Jesus]

2. Jesus **wasn't denying** He was God; **rather**, He was **affirming it.**

J. So, **God is good.** But He also...*does good...*

K. **Slide7b GOD DOES GOOD.**

L. Although we might discuss God's goodness in some abstract philosophical sense, in Scripture his goodness appears most clearly in His dealings with people.

1. He is not only good in general, **but** he is good to us.

2. Ps.119:68 **You are good, and do good.**

3. His Creation - Gen.1:31 **Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.**

4. His Children - Ps.84:11 **No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.**

a) We might discuss God's goodness in some abstract philosophical sense, **but** in Scripture His goodness appears most clearly in his **dealings with people.**

b) He is not only good *in general*, **but** He is good to **us.**

M. **Slide7c GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL GOOD.**

1. James 1:17 nlt *Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens.* [also see Ps.106, 107]
2. God does only good things for His children.

V. Slide8 THE BELIEVER & GOODNESS

- A. Slide9 I read [Wikihow.com](http://www.wikihow.com) 11 steps on *How to be good. #1 Define what good means to you.*
- B. No, God is the ultimate standard of good. *What is good? Good is what God approves.*
There is no higher standard of goodness.
 1. We **approve** what God approves **and delight** in things in which he delights.
 2. *Human goodness is modeled on divine goodness (Matt. 5:48 **be perfect...**).*
 3. For human beings goodness involves *right behavior, expresses itself in kindness and other praiseworthy qualities, includes avoiding evil, and springs from the inner person.*
- C. A note about God's attributes. They are not merely attributed to Him, but qualities inseparable from His very being. These attributes fall into 2 Categories: Unshared & Shared.
 1. Slide10 Unshared (only belong to Him)
 - a) Omnipresence. Omniscience. Omnipotence. Immutability. Eternality. Sovereignty.
 2. Shared (found in people in a limited way)
 - a) Spirit. Holiness. Love. Goodness. Truth. Justice. Righteousness.
- D. So, **goodness** is a communicable attribute, we should ourselves **do good** (that is, we should **do what God approves**) and thereby imitate the goodness of our heavenly Father.
 1. Paul writes, *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.* Gal. 6:10
 2. God's goodness is closely related to several other characteristics of his nature, among them *mercy, patience, and grace.*
 - a) Slide11 God's mercy is His **goodness** toward those in distress.
 - b) God's grace is His **goodness** toward those who deserve only punishment.
 - c) God's patience is His **goodness** toward those who continue to sin over a period of time.

- E. Human goodness is modeled then on divine goodness (Mt.5:48 *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect*).
1. For human beings goodness involves right behavior.
 2. It expresses itself in kindness **and** other praiseworthy qualities.
 3. It includes avoiding evil, **and** springs from the inner person.
- F. It is nearly impossible to think about *goodness* in the **abstract**.
1. In Scripture goodness always involves particular ways of behaving.
 2. When people are good they behave **decently** toward each other, based on God's goodness to them. Moses' invitation to Hobab expresses this emphasis: *Come with us and we will treat you well, for the Lord has promised good things to Israel.* Num.10:29
 3. The general biblical words for **good/goodness** include this idea of right behavior.
 4. Goodness involves not only right behavior but also avoiding its opposite, evil.
 - a) The choice between good and evil has lain before people since the garden of Eden.
 - b) **Slide12** Amos 5:14,15 *Do what is good and run from evil so that you may live! Then the Lord God of Heaven's Armies will be your helper, just as you have claimed. Hate evil and **love what is good**; turn your courts into true halls of justice.*
 5. For the Christian, as the faithful Israelite in the OT, goodness has never been a matter of *outward behavior* alone; it comes from **within**.
 - a) **An evil person** is evil within. In the same way **a good person's** good behavior shows a good heart (Matt. 12:33 *A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad*).
 6. **In the OT God's goodness** to His people **and their goodness** in response is based on the **covenant** between them.
 - a) God's appeal to his people to return to the covenant relationship finds expression in a call to simple goodness (Mic.6:8 *He has shown you, O man, what is **good**; And what does the Lord require of you. But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*
 7. **In the NT goodness** is *a fruit of the Spirit* (Gal.5:22), **while moral excellence** is one of the steps on the ladder of virtue (2 Pet.1:5).

VI. Slide13 DAVID & GOODNESS

- A. Surely **goodness** and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. Ps.23:6
- B. 1st He seals this promise with a **surely**...a verily.
1. One day you'll look back & see it was all goodness & mercy...even the valley experiences.
 2. Spurgeon called them, *Twin Guardian angels always at my back & my beck.*
 3. H.A.Ironside use to say, **that goodness & mercy are the 2 sheepdogs that help keep the sheep where they belong.**
- C. **All the days** - *The average person is being crucified between 2 thieves – The regrets of yesterday & the worries of tomorrow.*
- D. **All the days** – The **black** days as well as the **bright** days, the days of **fasting** as well as the days of **feasting**.
- E. **Goodness** supplies our **needs**...**Mercy** blots out our **sins**.
- F. **Life is full of changes**: Tender grass, to restful waters, to right paths, to dark valleys, to fears, to comforts, to exaltations, to plenty, to eternity.
1. Though **the world** throws everything at us for our **destruction**, **God** gives us access to everything **good** for life. (Dt 30:19 **choose life**)
- G. **Slide14** There's an old account of a **sculptor** carving an angel from a big block of stone. He was asked how he did it so perfectly. He answered "I simply chop off anything that isn't part of the angel".
1. **The character of God is within us. The fruit of the Spirit is that character. Goodness, along with all the other aspects, is within us.** It's simply a case of removing what isn't part of **the fruit of the Spirit** and "**letting the angel out**"!
 2. **Illustrations of living the good life:**
 - a) **Dorcas** was Always doing **good** (Acts 9:36)
 - b) **Barnabas** was **a good man, full of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 11:24). Who...sold land to help others (Acts 4:36,37). Who ministered to Paul (Acts 9:26-29). Who went to work with Gentile church in Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:22-26). Who worked with Paul on missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3).

H. Slide 15 So, what does it mean to live good?

1. Righteousness rather than lawlessness,
2. Love rather than Hate,
3. Truth rather than false,
4. Hope rather than despair,
5. Humility rather than Pride,
6. Peace rather than Fear
7. Perseverance rather than
8. Forgiveness rather than unforgiveness or bitterness
9. Thankful rather than selfish
10. Identity in Christ rather than one received or given by the world,
11. Merciful rather than demanding
12. Graceful rather than looking to destroy
13. Kind rather than angry.

- I. **Prayer:** Lord, You planted *this goodness seed* w/in us on our spiritual birthday. May goodness be who we **are** & define what we **do**.