

## **The goodness of God**

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. (Psalms 145:8 NKJV)

The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. (Psalms 145:9 NKJV)

### **Introduction**

I believe that if the world or the sequence of circumstances or Satan and his legions or yourself or a theologian or anyone can convince you that God is not really, really good, intrinsically good and that His tender mercies are not over all His works as the Scriptures reveal you have lost a great battle, and you will sooner or later begin to dive into sin, embrace sin in your life or be consumed by sin. I've seen how people have been devastated when family members try to convince other family members because of unemployment or apparent suffering or injustice they experience, and say God doesn't "care" for them (e.g. in Springs I recently encountered an alcoholic with this problem) or even suggest that there is no God because if God is good He wouldn't allow "these things" to occur.

After preaching in 2009, a similar sermon on the topic on the goodness of God in Umhlanga, a friend defrauded me and cheated me. He never gave the money back he owed me. This incident could have convinced me that God is not good because if he was good, this thing would not have happened to me. But attributing to God the evil and wickedness of man is not good theology, is it? The world and Satan will challenge your belief in the goodness of God in various circumstances throughout your life, and you must be ready to stand firm in God when this happens because it will happen.

### **1. What do we mean when we say "God is good."**

**Oxford definition:** having the right or desirable qualities; expedient; morally correct or right, kind; well-behaved; beneficial. By saying that God is good we mean God has the best interests at

heart for all people. To be good means that you always want the best for others. And that involves being just and fair. In other words, if God is not just He wouldn't be good, because if God doesn't give justice to evil doers and criminals and to those who inflict cruelty on others, He would not be looking to the best interests of all people. Therefore there must be a judgment day. If wicked, rebellious, God-haters are not getting justice from God, God wouldn't have the best interests of all people in mind and of those who seek to be good.

In other words, to be good means you seek the best interests of other people and that is their salvation. Receiving eternal life and spending eternity with God is the best thing in the universe. That is because God is the best and most wonderful Person or "thing" in the Universe. That is why Jesus Christ had to come to this earth. He came so that anyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). God sent His Son Jesus Christ to this world to remove all obstacles, including our sins, our guilt, our condemnation, God's wrath and provided forgiveness of sins and eternal life so that He can be eternally good to us. Being good also includes wanting the best interests for God's creation, his animals, the environment and innocent lives, for generations to come. To be good is the opposite of being selfish, self-centered and being preoccupied with self. If we say God is good, then we mean that God wants to give the best to us, and that is Himself, the abiding Holy Spirit.

Our text reveals that God is good to ALL and that His tender mercies are over ALL His works. This is an awesome revelation. That means God has the best interests not only of all people in mind, but also the best interests of animals and all living creatures and things in mind. But is this text an isolated case? What does the rest of Holy Scripture reveal?

## **2. Scriptural evidence for the goodness of God.**

This is not an exhaustive list, but a few select Scriptures. "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was

VERY GOOD! So the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Genesis 1:31 NKJV) God made the world very good!

‘And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in GOODNESS and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” (Exodus 34:6, 7 NKJV). Do you see the link here between the goodness of God and His justice?

"Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way"(Psalms 25:8 NKJV). The goodness of God propels Him to help poor sinners like us!

"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing" (Psalms 34:8-10 NKJV).

"You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes" (Psalms 119:68 NKJV).

"Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness "(Psalms 143:10 NKJV).

"The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Psalms 145:9 NKJV)

“They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with

all My soul.' (Jeremiah 32:38-41 NKJV). In this text, we see that the goodness of God will never end for those who are in the new covenant, united to Jesus Christ through His shed blood. Jesus said: "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:44, 45 NKJV). God remains good to good and evil people regardless of how they treat Him.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:7-11 NKJV).

"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4 NKJV).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22 NKJV).

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth, had passed away. Also, there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4 NKJV). We

see the full unleashing of the goodness of God in the new heavens and the new earth where the people of God will only experience the blessing, love, and goodness of God.

The Miracles of Jesus Christ demonstrated the goodness of God. The exorcisms, the healing miracles, and other miracles demonstrated the goodness of God towards the people of Israel.

God is good to those who hate Him, despise Him and turn their backs on Him. But only for a season. There will come a time for the unbeliever that the goodness of God will be detracted. Now is the time of grace. As Isaiah the prophet said: "Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near." (Isaiah 55:6 NKJV). "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:7, 8 NKJV). Today is the day of salvation!

God even gives the sinner his wages as Proverbs tells us. God cares for all. Not only for human beings. Plants, insects, birds, fish, animals, reptiles and amphibians experience the goodness of God although they don't have consciousness like us. Everything created is there for a purpose, and God sustains all things on earth for the good of his people. Every living thing on earth is being taken care off by God. God's tender mercies are over all his works.

### **3.Two reasons people believe that God is not really good.**

I believe one of the biggest reasons people don't believe in God or God's goodness is because when they see injustice, suffering, cruelty, crime, wars and natural disasters like famines, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, cyclones, etc. in the world, they can't reconcile it with a good God. But the Bible gives us the reason for all these things, and that is the fall of man, which modern man deny.

The fall of mankind and the subsequent curse that it brought on humanity and the impartation of our sinful natures through the ages and from generation to generation via Adam and Eve is the reason why we see suffering and so much evil in the world (Romans 5:11-

21). The fault is not with God. God gave creation over to corruption as Romans 8:19,20 says, but for a time. "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him, who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:20, 21 NKJV). This evil world will be liberated one day! So if people deny the historical fall of mankind the result in many cases will be the denial of and disbelief in the goodness of God. Ironically, many people who disbelieve in the existence of God or the goodness of God believes in the inherent goodness of man!! The Bible emphatically teaches, on the other hand, the depravity of mankind, of all mankind! "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." (Romans 3:10-12 NKJV). The finger should not be pointed at God for our corporate misery, but to ourselves!

Another reason people deny the goodness of God is because of personal suffering or disappointment e.x. Divorce, the death of a loved one, extreme suffering someone may be experiencing e.x. Cancer, Aids, etc. They would point the fist to God and say: "Why me God? Why did you do this to me? As if God is the primary cause of the evil, cruelty, and suffering in the world! Many people who experience these things become embittered against God instead of seeking God and getting comfort from God and deepening their relationship with God. Does this describe you, friend? Are you embittered against God?

#### **4.What will probably happen if you believe God is unjust or not intrinsically good?**

-- You will probably not worship God or serve Him. Who wants a God that is evil and cruel and that delights in people's destruction and pain? If you believe God is cruel or evil in any way you won't worship Him, although some people worship the devil.



-- You will probably start accusing God when things don't turn out your way or when you experience suffering, or when you see suffering that other human beings may experience like natural disasters in the world. You will be like a little child throwing tantrums when he/she can't get the sweets or the toys he/she wants. You may even be on the lookout to find "evidence" all around you that prove that God is not good. You will probably have a vendetta against God and His people. You will persecute Christians and insult them for being stupid, intolerant, old school, stuck up, old fashioned, etc.

-- You will probably go your own sinful way and seek for answers for philosophical dilemmas (e.x. Origins, Morality, Justice, destiny, meaning in life, the existence of personality, etc.), not in the Bible but elsewhere. E.x in false religions or the evolution theory or the occult or the New Age Movement or Hedonism or Nihilism.

-- You may even forsake God and become an agnostic or an atheist or a Buddhist. But where will you end? With bitterness and hatred against God, you will live for sinful pleasure and sin, and you will eventually end up in hell. The place of Gods eternal judgment and justice. But friend this doesn't have to describe your life! You still have time to turn to God if you read this.

### **1. What will be the result if you do believe that God is intrinsically good? Good to all?**

- You will most assuredly trust God that He has a plan when things go tough and rough. The suffering and sickness and evil in the world will make sense to you, (although the existence of it, is madness in a way) because God ordained it to be there according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:10), although it is against His moral will.
- You will most assuredly believe the truth and trustworthiness and reliability of the Bible and what it affirms about creation, the fall and why the world is what it is.
- You will most assuredly believe Romans 8:28 "God works ALL things for the good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose." You will believe that there is purpose in your own personal suffering. You will believe that God uses

suffering for His glory and wise purposes (See 2 Corinthians 1:2-11).

- You will believe that in the end God will win, and goodness will triumph. You will believe that the new heaven and the new earth is real because you trust in the word of God.
- You will most assuredly repent of your sins and follow Jesus Christ. You will love God in spite of trouble, sorrow, tribulation and suffering you might experience.
- You will most definitely love God, worship God and admire Him. God will be your treasure. You will follow Him with your life. You will take risks for Him to extend His kingdom. You will do what He tells you to do because you trust in Him.

Meditate on theses verses: **God is good to ALL, and His tender mercies are over ALL His works!** (Psalm 145:9). But this goodness is only for a time if you don't believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord. But for those who believe in Jesus Christ, the goodness of God will never end. As God said in Jeremiah 32:39,40 "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good".

Have you found the goodness of God in the new and everlasting Covenant? Have you found the goodness of God as a living reality in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit? Today is the day of salvation! Come to Jesus and bask in the blessing of God's goodness in Christ Jesus the Lord!