

God is Good
Psalm 119:68

Good morning! God is good? (All the time) All the time? (God is good). We're on the second to the last part of our 10-part series on the Attributes of God we're calling "God is". I think someone is thinking "God is good. We're almost done." Yeah, it's quite a long series and I'm glad you all are still here. God is good. I just hope that as we study the attributes of God, we are getting a better understanding of who God is and his importance in our lives.

And today, as you may have guessed already or you have taken a peek on your bulletin, the title of my message is, and let us say together "God is Good!" Please say that to your neighbor, "God is good!" You can also say "You look good! Don't take off your mask."

The word "good" like love is such an overused and abused word. We say "good morning", "good weather", "good person", "good food", "good job", "good looking", when someone asks how are you, you respond with "I'm good". And you can put just any word before or after good and it still sounds good. Unless you say, "good riddance" or "good luck" which, as Christians, we should avoid saying although I understand it has become a common expression.

So, what does it mean when we say that someone is "good"? What words come to mind? Nice. Kind. Loving. Moral. Righteous. Noble. Do you know anyone, apart from God, who is like that all the time? It seems like we can apply that only to God, right? That's why Jesus says, "No one is good—except God alone". (Mark 10:18)

So, we say that "God is good". And we declare "All the time". Do you believe that? I hope you do. And that you will never waver from that belief. Truth be told, we waver at times.

When the doctor says you have a terminal disease, or your marriage is in shambles, or your child is in a serious accident, or you suddenly lose your job, or you couldn't find a job, or when people criticize you, or when you are molested. Is God really good?

I read a news article last week where it says that in Afghanistan, a 9-year old girl was sold to a 55-year old in marriage by her father. When I saw the headline, at first, I was shocked because although it was acceptable in their culture, still it was unbelievable. Why would a father do that? But as I read on, I saw that the father had no choice in order for his family to survive. His family which consisted of seven children had been living in a displacement camp in Afghanistan and their situation worsened when the Taliban took over the country. By marrying his daughter off, he got paid a big sum of money which would help him, his wife, and their remaining children survive for a few months. BTW, that was the second daughter he had given away in marriage to an older man. The first one was his 12 yo daughter. It broke my heart as I was reading it. What if I was in his shoes and I had to give away Ally and then Eza so that Eze and myself and my wife could survive? Could I still say God is good all the time?

This is the kind of predicament that Chuck Templeton found himself in many, many years ago, in the 1940's. Templeton was a contemporary of Billy Graham and was considered to be the better of the two. He was the better speaker and more intelligent. His star was rising. People were listening to him, and many were coming to Jesus through his preaching. Then, one day, he got hold of a copy of Time magazine. On its cover was the picture of a skinny African woman holding her malnourished son in her arms in the midst of an arid land. That image affected Templeton so much. Suddenly, he questioned the goodness of God. If God is good, why does he allow such things to happen? Why is there evil and suffering in the world if God is good? Templeton stopped becoming an evangelist.

He entered a seminary instead to learn more about God but unfortunately the seminary was liberal which further alienated him from God. In the end, he became a businessman and faded into oblivion.

If there is anything that will make us falter in our faith, it is this doctrine of the goodness of God. I mean, even though we may not understand fully the Self-Existence of God, the Sovereignty of God, the Omnipotence of God, the Omnipresence of God, they don't affect us as much as the Goodness of God. If we don't understand his goodness, then we can become like Templeton.

In Psalm 119:68, Ezra says about God, "You are good, and what you do is good". That is what the Bible tells us about God. It is an attribute of God that has far-reaching implications in our lives. In the rest of this message, I'd like to share with you why God is good and then why we can trust the goodness of God.

1. Why God is Good.

A. Because it is his nature.

To say that God is good means that God always acts in accordance to what is right, true, and good. Goodness is part of God's nature, and He cannot contradict His nature. You see, When God revealed Himself to Moses and the nation of Israel, it was in these terms: "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." (Exodus 34:6 KJV).

And that's why the goodness of God is mentioned whenever they sing songs or proclaim it whenever they worship him or when they gather together. Some of these verses are:

1 Chronicles 16:34, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Psalm 25:8, "Good and upright is the Lord."

Psalm 145:9, “The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”

Nahum 1:7, “The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.”

God is good because it is his nature. He is also good

B. Because of his common grace.

What do I mean by common grace? First, when we talk about grace, we talk about the undeserved kindness of God. It is a blessing that God gives to us anyway although we don't deserve it. Paul is a prime example of a person who is a recipient of God's grace. We're familiar with the verse in 2 Cor. 12:9-10 where he says, “But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” And then, there's the grace of God that is involved in saving us, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”. Somebody said that Grace is an acronym that stands for God's Riches at Christ's Expense. So, it seems like it applies only to Christians. Or does it?

The Bible says that God's grace is also available to unbelievers. We call this kind of grace “common grace”. John Murray, a theologian, says that “Common grace is every favour of whatever kind or degree, falling short of salvation, which this undeserving and sin-cursed world enjoys at the hand of God.”

It's a term to refer to the fact that even those who are not followers of God can also receive the goodness of God. In short, every person in this world is a recipient of this outpouring of God's grace. However, not all experience it in the same degree or in the same manner.

For example, the common grace of God is seen in Genesis 39:5 where “The Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field.”

Then, in the book of Acts, Paul says to his unbelieving audience that God “...has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” (Acts 14:17). And Jesus himself says that God “...causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Matt. 5:45).

So, the Bible is clear that God is good because of his nature and because of his common grace. Now, we look at the reasons

2. Why we can trust the goodness of God.

And for this, we turn to the book of Job. Let’s look first at Job chapter 1, verses 1-12. Please turn to this passage in your Bibles. We’re not going to read it for the sake of time, but I just want you to open it for reference.

Many of us are familiar with what is happening here. So, this chapter introduces us to Job who is wealthy and has 10 children. More importantly, he is an upright man who serves God and offers sacrifices to God for his children. Then, one day God calls a general conference in heaven and the angels were invited but one person gatecrashes and that is Satan. Well, God grants his common grace to Satan anyway and allows him to attend and even converses with him. Satan then tries to trick God by saying that Job worships God only because God blesses him. He challenges God to take away his blessings and then it will expose the true colors of Job. God accepts the challenge.

From this passage, I’d like us to know the reasons for trusting the goodness of God.

A. God does not cause evil.

Actually, first off, these verses show us something even more fundamental, which is, **evil exists**. It is personified in the person of Satan, the adversary, who shows up in verse 6. That’s an important truth to note.

Before he became a Christian, author C. S. Lewis was a confirmed atheist. We all know who C.S. Lewis is, right? If you don't maybe you've seen the movies he wrote, you know, the "Chronicles of Narnia"? Anyway, he saw all the pain and injustice in the world as evidence *against* God. He looked at the evil and suffering in the world and concluded there couldn't be a God who is both good and all-powerful. But then, he said, that argument "threw me back into another difficulty":

*My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 38).*

Lewis not only wrote fantasy novels, but he is an apologist and wrote books defending the Christian faith. Lewis realized, of course, that **calling something evil is only possible if there exists a standard of good and evil that is objective and universal. That standard, of course, is the goodness of God.** Just as crookedness is a departure from that which is straight, so evil is a transgression against the goodness of God. And that reality is clearly shown to us in this ancient book of Job.

The author of this book shows us a heavenly scene in which Satan, the evil one, the fallen angel who rebelled against God, appears before God's throne to impugn Job's righteousness. And notice carefully what happens in that exchange. Satan says to God, "*Stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.*" (Job 1:11)

But God doesn't agree to that. He says, "*Everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.*" (Job 1:12) Here, right in the beginning of this 3,500-year-old book, we are shown that God does not cause evil.

We live in a fallen world. The first chapters of the Bible show us that everything God created was good, until the serpent messed things up. And so, it is now, today, in our lifetimes. **There is evil in this world, but it does not come from God—never has.** There is suffering in this world, but that was not part of God’s plan in the beginning, and it is not in His plan for the conclusion.

But there’s more to discover in this fascinating story. Look what happens next, from chapter 1, verse 13, to the end of the chapter. First, Job learns, in wave after wave of bad news, that his herds, his flocks, and his servants—his wealth, his livelihood—have been destroyed. As if that wasn’t bad enough, he learns soon after that his sons and daughters were tragically killed—a loss no parent should ever have to face.

Even then, Satan was not finished. In the next chapter, verse 3 says:

Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”

“Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”—Job 2:3–6 (NIV)

Those verses lead to the next reason:

2. My perspective is limited.

As the heavenly drama unfolds between Satan and God—Satan coming and going, God on the throne, Satan taunts, God places limits on Satan’s activity—Job, who is the central figure in the story, knows nothing about it. He hears nothing of this. He sees nothing. He knows only the earthly fallout of the heavenly battle.

Job has no idea of the part he is playing in a cosmic contest! He has no concept of what Satan is up to ... or what God is up to. He simply knows that evil has befallen him, that he is hurting badly, and that the lights of heaven have seemingly gone out.

And our situation—your situation—is much like Job’s. Some of us are suffering right now. Some of us are going through unimaginable trials. Some of us are not sure we’re gonna make it ... or that our faith will.

And I could spout all sorts of platitudes for you ... but platitudes don’t cut it when a soul is suffering. In fact, explanations and justifications will always ring hollow in the face of evil and suffering. Which may be why the book of Job doesn’t offer any. It simply shows us that **our perspective is limited**.

*None of us can know why so-and-so gets cancer ... because our perspective is limited. None of us can explain why children suffer ... because our perspective is limited. None of us can understand why tornadoes and earthquakes and tsunamis and floods strike when they do, where they do, as often as they do ... because our **perspective is limited**.*

God, here in His Word, doesn’t even pull back the curtain of heaven to show us why ... He does it to show us that our perspective is too limited to fully understand the why. It’s not a very satisfying answer, I know. But it’s a truthful one, a biblical one.

Which leads us to the third reason why we can trust God’s goodness.
Because

C. God is at work.

After chapter 2 in the book of Job ends, the next thirty-five chapters are filled with the opinions and philosophies of men, trying to answer the question, Why is Job suffering? It’s some of the finest poetry—and lousiest philosophy—in history! Because ... our perspective, as humans, is limited.

Then, in chapter 38, God speaks. And guess what? He never gives Job one word of explanation. Not ... one ... word. But what God does, in those final chapters of Job, is to establish the fact that, while Job felt like life was spinning out of control, God never did. **God never lost control.** He was never worried. He was never flustered. And He was always at work.

Let me call Kuya Rey as he gives his testimony.

“I was a religious person when I was growing up and then became involved with the Mormons way back in 1986. But on Dec 1998, I accepted the Lord Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Being a new Christian, I thought everything would go on smoothly going forward, but what I learned is that you're not exempted from life's problems even if you are a Christian. You will still be experiencing hurt, pain, rejection, failures, disappointments, and sicknesses. You see, two months before I became a Christian, in October 1998, I was diagnosed with a stage C-3 "Colon Cancer". When I became a Christian, I was hoping for a miracle, but God did not heal me instantly. I asked questions like "Why me?" "I'm now a Christian, why am I still sick?" And the hard part was the kids were still young, Joseph was only 2 years old and David was about 5 months old. But you know what, after several weeks of struggling with the pain and my doubts and questions, I did not feel like I was going to die, but instead I was looking forward to surviving the Cancer in my body. And I knew and believed that the Lord our God is the One who put that peace and confidence in me, that everything was going to be all right. You know HE promises us that He will not leave us nor forsake us, and that His mercies are new every morning. God is always working behind the scenes. He delivered me from cancer. But then, about 10 years ago, my wife Rose was diagnosed with Uterian Cancer. Rose herself started to ask questions. She wondered why it happened to her when she was faithful to God. But once again the Lord showed His never-ending mercies to my family. She was healed. God is good!”

As you've heard from Kuya Rey, even in the darkest moments, God never deserted him and his wife the way he never deserted Job. His presence brings joy and purpose and strength even in the midst of our toughest times. And many who have suffered most deeply would say they wouldn't trade their suffering for anything in the world, because it was there—in the darkness—that God did some of His best work in their lives.

And so, I think it was with Job.

The book ends like this, in chapter 42:

The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters. ... Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.

After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so Job died, old and full of years. — Job 42:12–13, 15–17 (NIV)

Now, not everyone's suffering ends so completely, so happily ... on this earth anyway. **But everyone's suffering ends. And someday, God promises, so will evil.** And while we may often get impatient in the meantime, the Bible says that God is at work ... all the time ...

and His purpose is far more, far greater, than making our lives happy and easy ... or even making our lives livable.

His purpose is bringing about His glory and leading us all into His kingdom, ultimately into a new heaven and a new earth that will so far surpass this one that it will make Job's latter prosperity look like poverty.

God is good. Ultimately, the reason why God is good is because he sent his own Son Jesus to die for our sins. He was crucified on the cross so that we may find forgiveness for our sins. Then, on the third day, he resurrected. To be saved then, we need to confess our sins and repent of them. Then, receive Jesus in our hearts as our Lord and Master. Then, we too can conquer sin and death forever. We will receive the gift of eternal on the moment we ask Jesus to come into our hearts.

Yes, we receive God's common grace everyday of our lives. But it will not save us. What will save us is the grace of God by putting our faith in what Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross.