

---

NOVEMBER 8, 2023

---

# Wednesday Worship & Study

---

God is Good!

---



# God is good — all the time!

- The exclamation, “God is good, all the time” is probably one of the most familiar and frequently stated affirmations about God. In many churches, it is declared by the congregation as part of worship every Sunday.
- The exhortation to “give thanks to the Lord for He is good” can be found frequently in Old Testament worship; it was, like our expression about God’s goodness, an important part of congregational liturgy, and one that was expressed across generations (cf. Ezra 3.11).
- What exactly do we mean when we say, “God is good”?



# More Than Good Things

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

—James 1.17

- Is God good because of what He does? In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presented God as a father who loves to give good gifts—

*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 7.11

- So is God good because He gives—or does He give because He is good? Would the average Christian say that God is good even if God did nothing?



- Within the statement of James, the context of Jesus' sermon, and the liturgy of OT worship, we find this understanding about God and His goodness:

*God is not good because of what He does; God does because He is good.*

- In fact, Jesus wanted this truth about the goodness of God (that is, His nature and character that is absolute goodness) to be so clearly understood that to the wealth-obsessed young man (who was certain that he was good because of his own actions) He said –

*“Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.”* MARK 10.18



- So while most Christians, in affirming God's goodness, are probably thinking of what He has *done* for them, the fact is, God *is* good; that is, goodness is *what* He is; it is His immutable (unchangeable) character.

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is **no variation or shadow of turning**.* JAMES 1.17

**NOTE:** At each stage of creation, God viewed His work and saw that it was good (cf. Genesis 1.10, 12, 18, 21, 25). We read that, when finished, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1.31). The Apostle Paul wrote, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1.20). God's "good" creation was a projection and manifestation of His divine nature; God saw that it was good because it revealed that He 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.*

—Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*

- Because God **is** good, He can be impartial in His “good-giving”— He causes the rain to fall and the sun to shine on both the righteous and the wicked (Matthew 5.45); He causes crops to grow even for the ungodly (Acts 14.17).



# A Revelation of God's Nature

*Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."*

*And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."*

—Deuteronomy 33.18-20

- This moment is the culmination of Moses' adamant insistence that Yahweh's presence must accompany Israel – no substitutions or alternatives (see Exodus 33.2-3, 15-16). Moses further insisted that Yahweh show His glory to him.



- “Glory” can be defined as “the sum of God’s infinite perfections.” It is all that God *is*—the totality of each infinite aspect of His character and nature.
- In response to Moses’ insistence, Yahweh said that no one could see Him and live.<sup>1</sup> But, the LORD said: “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence.”
- In biblical terminology, one’s name is representative of one’s character (e.g. Jacob, whose name meant “deceiver.”) When Moses asked to see the glory of God, the LORD responded by connecting His goodness with His name.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Apostle Paul also emphasized this same truth about God’s glory: “God . . .who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.” 1 TIMOTHY 6.16

<sup>2</sup> This connection between goodness and the Lord’s name is found frequently in the psalms; for example: 52.9; 100.3-5.



“Then the LORD said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

—Exodus 33.21-23; 34.5-7



- In response to Moses' desire to see the glory of Yahweh, the LORD covered Moses with His hand, proclaimed His name (just as He had in their first encounter, Exodus 3.15), passed by Moses, and took His hand away so that Moses would see His back.
- "Name" and "back"—both were connected by Yahweh to His goodness as the manifestation of His nature and character. Furthermore, He gave definition to His name and to what Moses was seeing when the LORD had said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you"—merciful, compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love, forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin."



# God *is* Good

*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. 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.*

—2 Peter 1.3-4

- Theologically, the goodness of God refers to the ideals that characterize God: holiness, righteousness, truth, as well as, love, benevolence, mercy, and grace. These last four characteristics are known as communicable attributes: those traits by which He manifests himself in relationship to His creation.



- This is what Peter is endeavoring to convey to his readers when he wrote:  
*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. 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.*
- In the New Order (or new covenant), the manifestation of the Covenant One dramatically changed; the glory of God was now revealed in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4.4, 6); God, the Word, became flesh, made his dwelling among us and the glory of God was revealed in Jesus, the fullness of grace and truth (John 1.14). God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Christ and through him to reconcile all things to himself (Colossians 1.19-20).



- Because of His love, God gave His Son, the greatest gift He could give; within that gift was the love that would reconcile us, the mercy that took pity on us, the grace that would provide merit as a basis for forgiveness and justification. *"For in Christ dwells the Fullness of Deity in bodily form, and you have been given the fullness of Christ."* In Christ we have been given the full revelation and benefit of the goodness of God.
- It is because of Jesus, that we can truly say, God is good and His love endures forever – Jesus is the proof of God's goodness!