

 **Fruit of the Spirit: Goodness**

Lesson 6: Wednesday, April 27, 2022

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**TEACHING NOTES**

Good evening church family. Turn with me in your bibles to Galatians chapter 5.

I have the privilege to teach on **goodness** tonight. Look with me at our theme passage …

**Galatians 5:22-23** …the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control;

**1. Fruit of the Spirit**

When the holy scriptures talk about **Fruit** it is talking about **character!**

While the evidence of fruit is seen on the exterior of one’s life it is not just an exterior action but something that comes from within. It is evidence that shows off on the outside what is true on the inside.

This is why it is ultimately about character. It is who someone is, at their core.

It is the **fruit or the character or the attributes of a person.**

So with that in mind, consider these characteristics, these attributes..

 **Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

What is unique about these is that these are NOT things sinfulled, selfish, fleshly humans do on their own accord. We don’t produce these things on our own because our flesh is not these things naturally. Quite the opposite as our flesh is full of selfishness, hate, sadness, impatience, meanness, sinfulness, unfaithfulness, harshness and out of control!!!

**People don’t produce these things, only God does!!** Because people are not these things naturally, God is!! This is why they are called ***“the fruit of the Spirit”*** *a*nd NOT *the fruit of Joshua* or put your name here.

You either have God and are being transformed and sanctified by God in these ways or you are not!!

This is because the fruit is not the result of what you are good at or natural at.

 **It is the result of Christ in you!!!**

The other thing I want to remind you is that You don’t grow fruit. God grows fruit through you.

Therefore Christian growth, the thing that we are focus on is not what we are producing but instead it is our cling to Jesus himself. To treasure him, grow in Him, trust Him, honor Him, he satisfied in Him.

When we do, when we cling to the vine, then God changes us from the inside out to grow the FOTS.

**2. Goodness:**

Let’s first: Define Goodness!

**Goodness** is defined as "uprightness of heart and life”. It is virtue and righteousness but not just for the sake of virtue but for the benefit of others.

Goodness is virtue and righteousness in action.

We could mind down further and ask… **What is good?**

And just like the origin of love and joy and peace, the answer is the same… **God IS good!!!**

**King David spoke of the goodness of God so well and so often in the Psalms!!**

**Psalm 100:5** For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

**Psalm 106:1** Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

**Psalm 34:8** Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

**Psalm 31:19** Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you

and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!

David is singing. He is celebrating the goodness of God again and again. God’s goodness is cause for high praise. It wells up in him and overflows in sing and exaltation.

Let me ask you: **Is this your regular disposition towards God?**

**Do you regularly madidate on his marvelous goodness. On His perfection and purity???**

He is right in all that He does. He is Good in all that He does!!!

May one of the regular and relentless meditations of our heat and testimony of our words be the goodness of God!!

Many people love to say that God is good when things in their life go well. And this is true. When we are blessed in this life it is ultimately because God’s goodness abounds in steadfast love and kindness towards us.

This is James famous teaching in…

**James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

EVERY GOOD GIFT is ultimately from God who is the Father of lights.. meaning is he is the author and sustainer of ALL things… meaning if you are enjoying something it is ultimately because God ordained that day to happen, you to be there and that thing to exist. To be thankful for a good gift and not find your way in your gratitude of heart or words to God himself is to cheat him of the credit He is due.

-When a loved one gives you a generous gift- You thank them but Ultimately praise God for this good gift.

- When your boss gives you a generous raise because of your hard work- You thank them but Ultimately praise God for this good gift.

- You win the sport you trained so hard to succeed in.. You thank your coaches and team, you even can testify of your hard work to get there but Ultimately you praise God for His good gift.

Because none of it exist, happens, comes to fruition without His sovereign decree!!

Because if the Father of Lights doesn’t light the sky then you wouldn’t have even been able to see what you were doing!!! Praise God for all of His good gifts!!!

Ok, Back to our love for the phrase, “God is good” when something wonderful happens or even miraculous happens. This is great. We should give him high praise for these things and proclaim His goodness in them.

But, here is the thing. “God is good” when something goes terrible wrong and you lose the love of your life to a tragic accident or you are persecuted or even trampled over by someone or something.

God is good ALL THE TIME… **WHY?** because God is good!! Because it is who He is.

Because everything He does is good and righteous and holy and perfect!!

It is an essential understanding of God that He is holy, that His nature is holy, that He is infinitely and perfectly just, that He is morally flawless and perfect. That He is perfection. Everything in Him and of Him and for Him and from Him and by Him is perfect.

*“We must not think that God does a thing because it's good and right, but rather the thing is good and right because God does it."  -William Perkins*

If GOD does something, it is good and right because HE IS GOD!   Because He IS GOOD!

All of this helps us because when we think of what is good, we need to ultimately think of God!!!

King David not only blesses us with many clear references to the goodness of God but also scriptures clearest diagnosis of mankind’s goodness or lack thereof because of our sin. Listen to..

**Psalm 14:1-3** The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”

They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; **there is none who does good**. 2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. 3 They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; **there is none who does good, not even one.**

Something is only good, pure, righteous **if it honors God**.

Please understand: If it dishonors God it cannot be good.

Even if that thing is beneficial for someone on the horizontal.

Biblically speaking, goodness involves both the external act and its internal motivation.

God measures us not only by how we obey His law but also according to the intent of our hearts (1 Sam. 16:7). Thus, a deed is only truly good only when it is motivated by a desire to please the Lord. Remember, Jesus had harsh words for those who “acted holy and righteous” but not for the right reasons.

**Matthew 23:25-28** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

This means even the good things we do “outside of new life in Christ” are still not good in the sense that they honor God and are truly righteous because the heart of man in sinful and self- serving in its motivations. Unbelievers do not do “good” things out of a love for Christ, or the glory of God. Therefore these “good” things are ultimately sinful and wicked.

No, We must be born again and have the Holy Spirit producing the fruit of the Spirit if we are to truly do what is “good”. If we are to practice goodness!

We don’t practice goodness outside of God. God alone is good!!

Mankind only does was is good if God is at work in them through the power of the Holy Spirit!

Consider how Jesus highlights this in his interaction with a man in…

**Mark 10:17-18** And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

This man’s idea of good is that it is attainable for common man.

So, he highlights the horizontal good he sees in Jesus and calls him “good teacher”.

Jesus challenges his calling him good based on the premises the man has formed and says only God is good. Remember, Jesus is not promoting that He is God yet in these interactions so as far as this guy understands, Jesus is just another Rabbi of that day.

So when Jesus says ““Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.”

He is not saying that He has sin and therefore is not GOOD.

Jesus is emphasizing the failure and flaw of the man’s idea that good is something mankind can do on our own outside of God, when we cannot. Goodness is a characteristic not of man but of God.

Only God is truly GOOD!! Good is truly who God is. He is perfectly good.

We can only practice goodness when and if the fruit of the spirit is in us and produces goodness!!

Only God’s regeneration and the power of the Holy Spirit in us do we do anything good that glorifies God. Paul says this so well in…

**Titus 3:3-7** For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. 4 But when **the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared**, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Paul also states this magnificent and game changing shift in us in..

**Romans 6:17-19** But thanks be to God, that you **who were once slaves of sin** have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, **have become slaves of righteousness**. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

This is marvelous news!!

True God honoring goodness can be our reality in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Church, see with me again as I mentioned at the top of the lesson. We don’t work hard to produce “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”

These are attributes of God that only God can produce in his redeemed people.

***If you want to be a good person. If you want to produce goodness in your life.***You must know and belong to Christ. You must have the HS at work in and through you.

***If you want your kid to be a good person. If you want your kid produce goodness in their life.***They must know and belong to Christ. They must have the HS at work in and through them.

Therefore, what they need more than anything is the gospel of Jesus and the truths of God at work in them. Ever present and at work, calling them to repentance and faith. Ready and waiting on God to do His work to save, and transform and renew.

All those outside of Christ are slaves of wickedness. All those in Christ are slaves to goodness!!

This is truly good news. For the Spirit of God is at work in us to produce what is truly good!!

**What does goodness in action look like?**

**1. Goodness doesn’t look like evil**

Meaning, you can’t call something good that is not good.

Mankind is often guilty in our sinful flesh of calling things that are against God and or His law good that are NOT good but evil.

**Goodness in action are always and only things that honor God and are righteous and holy.**

**Goodness is never sinful, selfish or dishonoring to God.**

**Isaiah warns of those who are guilt of this..**

**Isaiah 5:20** Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,

- This means we don’t endorse abortion because our culture has found a way to *call it good and legal* or your own logic seems says a woman’s right to choose is greater than the right of the child in the womb to live.

**NO, we fight our flesh and our culture’s agenda to obey God’s word and defend all life!**

**This is doing what is good!**

- This means we don’t endorse homosexuality because our culture has found a way to *call it good and right* or because your son or daughter feels they are homosexual. No, we fight our flesh to call what God calls sin, good, and instead we obey God’s holy word and we love and lead those who struggle with these fleshly tendencies to what is righteous, holy and truly good!

Paul is clear in…

**Romans 12:9** Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

We are to hate what is evil and cling to what is good. That seems simple but **why is it that we all to often cling to what is wicked and sinful and detest what is good and right?**

**To “DO what is good” is to “do what is righteous”**

**1 John 3:9** No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

John’s emphasis here is on the sovereign work of God to give new birth which then equals a new will in us, a new purpose, a new ability to do life righteously. To practice “goodness’

Consider the change this brings about in us, *“We are not foolish any more like a little child that takes a nickel instead of a dime because it's bigger.”* We are no longer ignorant of God's infinite worth and Holiness. And we no longer live for sin… NO, now we live for righteousness. To practice goodness!

This is so big!!!! We were once totally blind to the value of God.

Only in Christ are we able to assess things for what they really are.

Only in Christ do we see that the holiness of God is the supreme value in the universe.

So we no longer conform to the madness of the World. We conform our lives to the Holiness of God!

Jesus promised this would be His work in us in..

**John 16:13** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth

**The Spirit is illuminating the hearts of the redeem with His truth.**

Church this is why… this is how we are able to practice goodness, practice righteousness!!!

This is why goodness is a fruit of the Spirit!!

**2. Goodness blesses our relationships**

**Galatians 6:10** So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Paul is saying, as often “as we have the opportunity” we are to “do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Christian, this is to be a major maker of our lives. That we live righteously especially in how we interact with others. This is the testimony of how God’s gracious and transforming work us is put on display. The fruit of God’s character that is unseen in those who remain in their sin is now seen in those in whom God has redeemed. So we now “DO good” to others.

This is truly game changing in a society where people don’t do what honors God, what is holy and righteous, but instead they do what honors themselves.

The redeemed people of God want to glorify and honor God and so we will surprise people when we choose not the thing that serves us best but the thing that honors God most. This is especially surprising when that thing works against what we personally want or worked towards.

So when the cable installer says, I can set you up with a hacked access to services you are not paying for. The company will not know. The fruit of Goodness in our lives causes us to say, no thank you.

To the world that is madness to reject something you would benefit by. But to God that is stealing and he is trying to give you something that is not His to give. It is stealing from that company.

Again, this affects our relationships too. When you see a guy treat someone else in a mean or ugly way and then walk away and drop a $100 bill from his pocket. The world says, and your flesh says, you are in serious financial constraint and would be very helped by $100 so grab it up and be on your way. We justify this in our flesh because that dude is a punk anyway.

But Goodness at work in you by the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit causes you to be sure that the mean guy gets his $100 bill back. And even when he is a jerk to you as you hand it to him.

Goodness doesn’t cause you to rethink whether you did the righteous thing of not. It causes you to know that you did what was righteous. What was good. What honored God!!

**3. Goodness makes much of Christ in our testimony**

**Matthew 5:16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus tells His disciples that they are light bearers. Meaning they bear the light that is Christ and that they are to not hide the light of Christ by putting int under a basket but let it shine bright.

How do we let our light shine before others.. By our good works. By goodness going to work in our lives. When they see us do what is right, what is holy, what is God honoring they will see the work of God in us and they will give glory to God. This is a major part of our witness in a dark sin filled world.

They need to see the ongoing evidence of God at work in the world. A major way God’s work in the world is revealed is thorough us, the church. It is through the Holy Spirits work in and through us.

It is through the Holy Spirit’s producing goodness in us so that they see God at work and give God the glory!! In other words so that many of them too will be saved in God’s time and give God all glory!!

When we are at a practical crossroads of doing what serves us or what our flesh sinfully wants to do and doing what is good and God honoring we are at a crossroads of testimony too.

When we serve ourselves or tend to our flesh we put our light under a basket. We remove that opportunity for others to see God at work in and thorough us.

But when we do what is good, what is righteous, what honors God, then they see God’s graceful work in us and our gospel testimony is at work!!!

Church this is the purpose of our days in the here and now. To make much of Him.

To be a bright light and testimony of the gospel and the work of God!!

See this as us staying on mission all throughout our day and night. See that …

when we *confront someone about a sin it demonstrates goodness.*

when we *give to the poor it demonstrates goodness.*

when we *provide for our family/children it demonstrates goodness.*

when we *visit the sick it demonstrates goodness.*

when we *volunteering to clean up after a storm it demonstrates goodness.*

when we *and pray for an enemy it demonstrates goodness.*

when we *pay the laborer his fair wage it demonstrates goodness.*

when we *work hard and diligently for our employer it demonstrates goodness.*

And when we demonstrate goodness we put God and His gospel on display!!!

Church, let your light shine. Bear the fruit God is producing in you! Don’t keep it to yourself.

Let your good works be used by God to cause many to glorify Him!

Before we close tonight I want to give you a personal encouragement for God’s work of good in our life.

**4. The promise of God’s goodness in the life of the redeemed!**

**Two great verses reveal and remind us of God’s will to give goodness to His redeemed children.**

**Psalm 23:6** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

**The terms "goodness" and "love" are almost interchangeable here.**

They refer to God's disposition to act kindly toward people who realize they are undeserving.

*🡪 Goodness, or Love, is God's prevailing tendency, his inclination, to do good for us even though we deserve only his anger.*

This becomes clear when we inquire into the phrase "follow me."

**Psalm 23:6**  Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

The Hebrew word translated "follow" signifies a very active kind of following, a pursuit

—not the passive kind of following like a shadow follows me as I ride my motorcycle down the highway,

or an easily distracted kind of following like when Roman is supposed to follow me into the bedroom so I can help him get ready for bed.

I think that's the way we sometimes think about the goodness and love of God following us.

Either it never quite catches up to us, or somehow God has gotten distracted by some other concern.

But that's not what DAVID means here. 🡪 He means an **active pursuit.**

The heart of God our Shepherd is brimming with goodness for his sheep.

**Psalm 31:19** Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!

**Psalm 109:21** But you, O GOD my Lord, deal on my behalf for your name's sake; because your steadfast love is good

God refuses to contain himself when it comes to doing good for his sheep.

To be sure, there are times this side of heaven where he strategically allows us to go through difficulties where his goodness and mercy seem to be fleeing from us rather than pursuing after us.

**But according to verse 6 that's only a mirage.** He has never left us! Nor will he ever for we are His forever. Here is fresh and feel the goodness of God wrap you up and secure you forever.

**Psalm 23:6** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Even when we are struggling and or life if not going our way we can be confident that God is at work for our good!! This leads us to Paul’s famous words in…

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

We who love God, who belong to God, who are loved by God and adopted into His eternal family, have this promise that “all things” will work together for GOOD.

Church, good is our reality in Lord. God who is good has everlasting goodness stored up for us.

What a blessing it is to belong to Him. To have the Spirit produce such wonderful fruit in our lives.

May Goodness be a growing reality for us all as we abide in Christ in these days he gives us under the son. May Many who do not know what is truly good come to know it as God saves them into all that is truly good!

Lets pray.