

## **“God is Good...Period”**

About ten years ago I was marked by something that would forever change my life and the way I viewed God. A lady on staff at the church I was working at had a son in Arizona who hit a semi-truck while on a motorcycle and without a helmet. He was in the hospital for a week fighting for his life. Many of the church staff went to Arizona to lay hands on him and declare supernatural healing. Unfortunately, he passed away. This lady asked to put a note in the bulletin that read, “Thank you all for your support and prayers. God is good.” You see, our church was walking through the revelation of the goodness of God during that time and this lady had the ultimate test to that belief. Her son was dead, but she declared God is good.

You and I live in the reality that life is hard, but God is good. It is so easy to look around our world and see so much evil and sin that it can cause us to doubt if God is really good. Just the other week there was yet another school shooting. On one of the magazines of the shooter’s guns were written messages. One of those messages said, “where is your God?” The phrase “where is your God” multiplied in the news and media. Many people were saying things like, “Enough of your thoughts and prayers, they aren’t working. We need real solutions.” Our current culture is already far from God, but there is an increasing belief that God is not good, that He is angry and ready to judge. But here is the truth. God is good (and we will talk about why in just a little bit). The main issue is that too many people are using the evil in the world, sin, and horrible circumstances to *define* God’s goodness. Rather than looking to the Word of God or standing on faith that He is good, we look at the world to define the attributes of God. What this world needs and what believers need to profess is that God *is* good and *does* good.

Today I want to preach a message to you titled “God is good...period.” I believe the church of Jesus Christ needs a fresh revelation of the goodness of God. Your perspective of God will determine your intimacy with God. If you see Him as an angry God ready to punish you, you will naturally separate yourself from Him. But if you see Him as loving and full of mercy, you will draw near. If you have your Bibles, go with me to the 145<sup>th</sup> Psalm. We are going to read the first 13 verses of Psalm 145:

***“I will extol You, my God, O King, And I will bless Your name forever and ever. 2 Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever. 3 Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, And His greatness is unsearchable. 4 One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts. 5 On the glorious splendor of Your majesty And on Your wonderful works, I will meditate. 6 Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts, And I will tell of Your greatness. 7 They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness And will shout joyfully of Your righteousness. 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. 9 The Lord is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works. 10 All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, And Your godly ones shall bless You. 11 They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom And talk of Your power; 12 To make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts And the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom. 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.”***

***-Psalm 145:1-13 NASB1995***

In my time of study, I like to listen to a few sermons online about whatever topic I am going to preach on. I stumbled on a sermon from Rick Warren on the goodness of God. Most of you should know who Rick Warren is. He wrote *The Purpose Driven Life* and just retired from a church he founded that now has 35,000 members. But in his sermon, he was talking about **Psalm 23** and how the Lord makes us lay down by streams of water. He focused on the words “Makes us.” He actually said, “Sometimes the only way God can make us lay down and rest, is to make us sick or give us a health condition.” No, God will use sickness for His glory, but He is not the author of sickness. Jesus gave us authority over sickness and disease. This kind of wrong thinking is all over the place. Even our insurance policies have coverage for what they call “acts of God.” A hurricane is not hurricane, it is an angry God.

The battle of understanding good goes all the way back into the garden. Remember that Eve was tempted with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I don't think she was tempted with evil. She was tempted with more understanding of good. The devil deceived her by saying in **Genesis 3:4**, “You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” It was only after she saw the tree was good and it would make her wise, she sinned and ate. It's sad because the devil tried to get her to get what she already had in God through sin. The devil said she would be like God. But Adam and Eve were already like God in that they were made in His image and likeness according to **Genesis 1:26**. In **1 Kings 3:9** the Lord appears to Solomon in a dream and basically says, “Ask Me for anything and I will give it to you.” Solomon answers saying, “Give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil.” Of all the things Solomon could ask for, he asked for wisdom to discern between good and evil. We see this even in the New Testament as the author of **Hebrews says in chapter 5:14**, “the mature because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”

When the world gets a better understanding of the goodness of God, it will be far easier to draw near to the good and loving God that He is. This morning I want to encourage you in the goodness of God and tackle some hard questions. Let me just say, this is not an easy topic to teach on. I don't have all the answers, but I am going to do my best to help us understand why life can be hard, but God is always good. If you are taking notes, I want to explain three reasons why we can trust that God is good. Please fill out reason number one:

### ***How Do We Know God is Good?***

#### **REASON #1 - Because the Bible Says So.**

If I were asked point blank “how do you know for a fact that God is good?” I would say, “Because the Bible says so. There are dozens and dozens of Scriptures that declare “God is good, and His lovingkindness is everlasting.” We are called to live a life of faith and faith comes by hearing the Word of God. **2 Corinthians 5:7** says that we “walk by faith and not by sight.” Walking by sight means looking at all the evil in the world and decided that God is not good. Walking by faith stands on the Word of God which is inerrant and believe that God is good and He has a plan. Our denomination stands on the Scripture in **Hebrews 13:8** that, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” That means if God was good then, He will always be

good for all eternity. If you are convinced the Bible is the Word of God, you should be convinced that He is good.

### **REASON #2 – Because of the Resurrection.**

I say this all the time, the Garden of Eden was like heaven on earth. Before the fall there was no sin, separation, sickness, shame, or sorrow. God manifested His presence and walked with Adam in the cool of the day. Everything was perfect and everything had the joy of the presence of God. Sin ruined all of that. But by the mercy and grace of God, Jesus was sent in our world and died in our place satisfying the wrath of God. Because of the resurrection there is hope in every area of our lives. If there is sin, there can be repentance/forgiveness. If there is sickness, there can be healing. If there is sorrow, there is joy in the presence of God. If there is separation, there can be salvation. The resurrection brought an answer to every one of life's problems. The resurrection brought hope in an evil world. The resurrection provided the way back to heaven and back to the Father's embrace. That means that no matter how horrible this life can be, the next life in heaven will be so glorious it will eclipse anything we suffered on earth.

### **REASON #3 - Because He is Omniscient, and I am not.**

Let me be the first to give you permission to be released from the burden of having to know all the answers. You don't have to know the reason why for everything in life. You just have to know that One that does. There are a lot of answers I have that prove God is good. But I still don't have an answer for why some people are healed when I pray for them, and others are not. I still don't have the answer for why God in his power didn't stop a child from dying or starving. I probably will never have that answer until I get to heaven. But what I do know from the Scriptures is that God is good and that He is all-knowing. I will continue to allow the Scriptures to define God and not the circumstances of this world. Psalm 145:7 says that God's understanding is beyond measure. 1 John 3:20 says that God is greater than our hearts that can condemn us and that He knows everything.

### *If God is Good, Why is There Evil and Suffering?*

### **REASON #1 - Because there is Free Will.**

Let me set up what I want to say here with a poor illustration. I was at the Family Dollar the other day buying aluminum pans for the church. I was wearing a Dallas Cowboys shirt. But I pulled my wallet out which has the Tennessee Titans logo on it. The 18-year-old kid at the register noticed and said, "I'm confused, what's going on here? I see Cowboys and Titans." I told him, "I'm a die-hard Titan fan but I love the Cowboys as my number two team." He said, "alright as long as there's love for the Cowboys, we good." I laughed and then I told him, "Either way both teams have been giving me pain for 25 years. And you know what? I'm ready to hurt again as we begin this season." If you are going to love something or someone, you are also signing up for the potential of feeling pain or disappointment. When God created us, He also created freewill because love must have a choice in order for it to be real. In that free will some *choose* to love God, and some choose to rebel against God. So a school shooting is not an angry

God judging a wicked nation. A school shooting is a horrible person choosing in their free will to do something tragic.

### **REASON #2 - Because the devil Still Has Influence.**

I say this ALL this time, the devil no longer has power, but he still has a voice. When Jesus died and was resurrected, He destroyed the power of the enemy and death taking back the keys of the Kingdom of God. So, since the devil can't destroy you, he works non-stop at distracting you. The enemy will lie to you, deceive you, and make you agree with him so that you will carry out his will on this earth not God's. We give such credit and power to devil. The way we react to sin, suffering and evil sometimes makes me wonder if we have more faith in the devils influence than we do the power of God and the believer's authority.

### **REASON #3 - Because Christians live below God's Standards.**

I was scrolling on social media a few days ago and listened to a quote from Pastor Erwin McManus. He said, "Someone once came up to me and said, 'I don't believe in God because of the suffering in the world.'" The pastor then said, "Let me ask you this, you believe there is no God, but suffering still exists in the world. So, if God doesn't exist who is responsible for the suffering?" The logical answer would be that people are responsible for suffering because they created it not God. There is evil in the world because people live below the standard of God's holiness and salvation.

2 Peter 3:9 says, "God is not slow in fulfilling His promise...not wishing that any should perish but that all would come to repentance." God's desire or God's will is that everyone on this planet would come to salvation. But as you and I know, there are thousands of people every day dying who have never given their lives to the Lord. Many are dying outside of the will of God.

Think about how much less evil and suffering would be in this world if all came to salvation. It doesn't matter what evil laws the government passes if the nation is in revival. People who walk in by the standards of God will never create evil in this world. Rather than pour all of our energy into finding an answer for why evil exists in this world, we should pour all our strength and energy into saving souls. What we are facing in our world is a heart issue. Would a school shooter kill innocent lives if they were saved, healed, and delivered...no.

Let me conclude with this from Corrie Ten Boom: Often I have heard people say, "How good God is! We prayed that it would not rain for our church picnic, and look at the lovely weather!" Yes, God is good when He sends good weather. But God was also good when He allowed my sister, Betsie, to starve to death before my eyes in a German concentration camp. I remember one occasion when I was very discouraged there. Everything around us was dark, and there was darkness in my heart. I remember telling Betsie that I thought God had forgotten us. "No, Corrie," said Betsie, "He has not forgotten us. Remember His Word: 'For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him.'" Corrie concludes, "There is an ocean of God's love available--there is plenty for everyone. May God grant you never to doubt that victorious love--whatever the circumstances."

