

The First Baptist Church of Columbus
Dr. Paul Large, Pastor
Sermon Notes Outline for video posted May 9, 2021

T I T L E: STRUGGLING WITH THE GOODNESS OF GOD

T E X T: James 1:16-21

Do you ever struggle with the goodness of God especially in light of personal difficulty or great expectations gone awry?

I. A SOUND, BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AND HIS GOODNESS IS HELPFUL ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE STRUGGLING WITH HIS GOODNESS IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULT TIMES.

A. Whatever God is in terms of His nature and/or His attributes, one of which is His goodness, He is infinitely.

“...with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow...”

God is infinitely good is what we understand about Him from a biblical and theological perspective however, life in a world of corruption, turmoil, trials, and temptations often challenge our faith, stir our feelings, and give birth to our questioning of the goodness of God.

The Lord will not be any **gooder (excuse the English)** tomorrow than He is today. Nor will He be any less good tomorrow than He is today.

B. Questioning the goodness of God in light of one’s difficulties is to argue against the nature of Christ Himself not to mention His own theology regarding the goodness of God the Father.

Luke 18:18–19 ---- 18 A ruler questioned Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” **19** And Jesus said to him, “**Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.**”

James 1:16–17 ---- 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. **17** Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above,

coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

- C. The goodness of God (i.e. His character) should not be measured using our circumstances or by the blessings He may or may not bestow upon us but by His never changing nature.**

He cannot be anything less than what He is nor anything more than what He is. (...there is no variation or shifting shadow...)

God always, without exception, has your best interest in mind regardless of your circumstances because it is His nature to be nothing less nor nothing more than good. (Glorious Perfection)

II. ALTHOUGH THE GOODNESS OF GOD IS FIRMLY ROOTED IN HIS NATURE IT NEVERTHELESS IS EXPRESSED OR CONFIRMED IN INNUMERABLE AND TANGIBLE WAYS PERIODICALLY IF NOT DAILY AND CERTAINLY REDEMPTIVELY.

- A. The goodness of God is expressed and confirmed by His redemptive activity in this world involving His sinless life and His redemptive activity on the cross.**

John 17:17 ---- "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

James 1:18 ---- In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

- B. The goodness of God is expressed or confirmed in practical ways in our lives that go unnoticed or unrecognized by the Christian who is obsessed with his or her circumstances.**

1. The Christian obsessed with his circumstances will often measure the love of God or His goodness with his circumstances. (He or she is using the wrong measuring stick)

1 John 3:16 ---- Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

2. The Christian obsessed with his circumstances often fails to recognize the mercy of God which is His goodness toward them in terms of His pity and compassion for them as they face or experience the miseries of life in this fallen world i.e. as He feels for them, as He makes provision for their relief, and in many cases expresses His patience toward them especially those who are impenitent toward Him.

John 11:35 ---- **Jesus wept.**

3. The Christian obsessed with his circumstances often fails to recognize the graciousness of God which also is an expression of His goodness toward them as He attempts to communicate to them His favor, especially the favor of His grace in terms of salvation something they did not or could not merit in any form or fashion, i.e. His message is "I am for you not against you."

Psalm 103:8 ---- The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.

Psalm 145:8–9 ---- **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.

Conclusion: When encountering problems, some of us complain, rage, deny Him, and question His love and goodness, while others give thanks, praise and worship Him and with conviction believe without question even in the midst of difficult situations that God is good. Which best describes you?