

1. If you are able, I encourage you to take notes today.
2. I also encourage you to write down the scripture reference and read those verses later.
3. And as a reminder, if you want a copy of today's notes contact the church office.

**TEXT:** **Mark 10:17-18** As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone.

**Psalm 119:68** You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.

**TITLE:** **The Goodness of God.**

### INTRO:

1. As a boy growing up we used to sing a little chorus several times a month. This little chorus doesn't have many words and it basically repeats the same phrase over and over again.
2. It's titled, God is so God. (Sing) God is so good. God is so good. God is so good, he's so good to me. Sing it with me.
3. In spite of the fact that that little chorus is simple and doesn't contain more than seven words, I must tell you it contains some pretty heavy and pretty profound theology.
4. Because no matter how you slice it, God truly is good. Would you say that with me? God is good.
5. The writer of Psalm 119 made a very powerful statement when he said you are good and what you do is good. He was describing God. He was describing how he had come to know and love the creator of all the universe.
6. I think it is highly important to understand that he did not make this declaration of God's goodness during a time in his life where everything was just peachy. He wrote those words in the midst of some pretty tough circumstances.
7. In verse 69 he tells of someone's attempt to smear him with lies and how that has been painful for him.
8. But in the midst of this pain the writer declares **Psalm 119:71** It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.
9. After viewing his situation from every angle the writer concluded that not only is God good but what he does is good. And when God takes me through something it is always for my good.

10. The bottom line for the author of Psalm 119 is that in everything God is good.
11. Now again, that is some pretty heavy theology. In fact it is such heavy theology that some people reject its validity and truth. We live in a time, and for sure, because of the things we are experiencing in our world today, I'm certain there are people who question the goodness of God. Maybe you are here today, and you are questioning the goodness of God.
12. May I encourage you, you are not alone, nor is this a new dilemma. In fact this questioning of the goodness of God began almost as soon as the earth was created.
13. In the Garden of Eden with every good and perfect thing around them Satan caused Eve to question the goodness of God. Satan convinced her that the reason why God didn't want them to eat of the tree in the center of the Garden was because God was selfish. That God was just holding out on them. That God didn't want them to be as smart as he was.
14. In other words the lie was, God is no good. But how did Satan get Eve to swallow that deadly lie? Satan caused Eve to focus on what she didn't or couldn't have instead of focusing on all the abundance she already did have.
15. That same thing happens almost every Christmas. The kids make out a list to give to Santa. You being Santa get them nine out of the ten things they asked for, but when they realize that you missed one thing they act as though you have somehow mistreated them.
16. They stop focusing on all the gifts that they do have and instead focus on the one they don't have.
17. Now if we will be completely honest with ourselves and with God we'd have to admit that we've gotten that way with God a few times ourselves.
18. We complain about the few gizmos and toys and luxuries that we don't have instead of praising him for all the wonderful things that we do have.
19. We lose sight of the goodness of God. Now to help us fight off that problem in our life I want us to consider several things this morning that will hopefully help us put our focus back on the goodness of God.
20. The first thing we need to know is that...

**The standard for goodness rests in God.**

1. In other words, we only know what is good and what isn't because of the goodness of God.

2. We see this teaching in Mark chapter ten. A rich young ruler approached Jesus to ask him a question. This rich young ruler had just about everything a person could ever want.
3. He had wealth, he had youth, he had power and all the things that most people would fight for but he still had a hole in his heart. There was still something missing in his life.
4. So he comes to Jesus and he asks him in **Mark 10:17** "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
5. But in verse 18 Jesus responds, why do you call me good. No one is good except God alone. I've often wondered. Why would Jesus respond to him this way? This young man wanted salvation. He wanted to be saved.
6. More than likely Jesus spoke to him this way because this young man had a distorted view of what goodness was. He had lived the "good" life but Jesus wanted him to understand what goodness really was.
7. Basically Jesus was challenging him, how do you know I'm good? What standard are you using to measure goodness young man? You need to understand that the only thing that is good is God.
8. But there was also another point. Jesus was also trying to get this rich young ruler to understand and recognize his deity. His lordship.
9. Jesus was saying to him if I am good then I must be from God, because goodness can only come from God.
10. That my friend is the standard that we must use to measure goodness. If anything does not come from God, or does not agree with his nature then it cannot be good. It has to line up with his perfect nature to be good.
11. For example. Certain drugs have a way of making a person feel good, in the moment, for a while, but we all know that drugs are not good for you.
12. Studies have shown that nicotine causes a release of endorphins in the brain that cause a temporary good feeling, but studies after studies have shown that nicotine is hazardous to your health. It's addictive. If something is addictive then it can't be good.
13. People live today by the mantra, if it feels good do it. In other words, if something makes you feel good in the moment then it must be good for you.
14. There is even a country song that asks the question, "How can it be bad when it feels so good?"
15. Others justify doing whatever they want because they reason, well if God didn't want me to have it then it wouldn't be here. How many understand

however that just because something exists doesn't mean that it has high moral value and it certainly doesn't mean that it is ultimately good for us.

16. The only thing that can be called good is that which has its source in God, because nothing is good but God.
17. You see the issue of goodness has nothing to do with how good something tastes, or looks, or feels or what kind of emotional experience it brings, it has to do with the source of that goodness and the bible teaches us that good things can only come from God.
18. **James 1:17** Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.
19. God only produces what is good. If it isn't good then it didn't come from God.
20. A person was overheard saying, "How can there be a good God when he allowed six million Jews to be slaughtered by Hitler. Another standing nearby said OK, let's suppose you are right. Let's suppose there is no good God. Now tell me, who killed those six million Jews.
21. You see the fact that six million Jews died in the Holocaust doesn't prove that there is no God; it just proves that that sinful slaughter didn't come from God.
22. Yes God is sovereign and sure he allows things to happen that we don't always understand, but that doesn't mean that he isn't a good God.
23. Make no mistake; our God is a good God. How do we know that he is a good God?

### **We know he is good by His actions.**

**Exodus 34:5-7** Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. **6** 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, **7** maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

1. How do we know that God is a good God? Because in a world that is anything but good. In a world that is as sinful as it can be. In a world that is as messed up as it can be, God still pours out his love and forgiveness to all who are willing to accept it.
2. God told Moses I am compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, a forgiver of wickedness, rebellion and sin. Tell me that a God who would be willing to forgive billions upon billions of people who have sinned against him is not a good God.

3. We see a picture of his goodness in the book of Genesis. God told Noah to build an ark. He told Noah he was going to flood the world and destroy it and everything on it. But did God do what he said the very next day?
4. No. He gave the world 120 years to repent and get their act together. Friend I call that a good God. A God who gives us every chance to make things right.
5. Someone might question, well how can a good God send people to hell. Well the answer to that is simple. Because he has begged and pleaded and convicted people of their sin. He sent his one and only son to die for our sin and still people ignore him.
6. I'm here to tell you the issue is not God's goodness; the issue is our rejection of his goodness. God is good we just have to accept his goodness on his terms. God is a good God.
7. How do we know God is a good God?

### **We see God's goodness in his provision for us.**

**Genesis 1:27-31** So God created man in his own image...**28** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." **29** Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food...And it was so. **31** God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

1. God is so good that he not only created us but he created everything for us. He didn't create plants and animals and fish just so we could have zoos and botanical gardens, he created them for our benefit.
2. The earth was created so that we could have a wonderful place to enjoy.
3. Oh but wait a minute pastor. What if I get up and it's raining outside and because it is raining outside the traffic is bad and there are accidents and my hair gets wet and I can't go out and do all the things I need to do that day.
4. None of that is good. Can I tell you, if it didn't rain there would be no vegetation and if there was no vegetation there would be no vegetables, no fruit, no grass for cows to eat and if there were no grasses or grains for animals to eat then we would all starve.
5. That rain may mess up your plans for the day but that rain is very good because it is a product of God's goodness and provision for us.
6. In fact God is so good that he provides for those who don't even love him.
- 7. Matthew 5:45** He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
8. God is so good he even lets it rain on the yard and on the field of the atheist. Even sinners enjoy the goodness of God.

9. We see evidence of God's goodness in everything he provides for us. But unlike some who worship nature, we are not to be one with nature we are to be one with God. Seeing God's goodness should cause us to want to love and serve him.
10. As a believer in Jesus Christ God has provided you with the ability to enjoy his goodness in ways that an unbeliever never could.
11. **Romans 8:31-32** What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?
12. I am here to tell you that just because you are a believer in Jesus Christ doesn't mean you can't enjoy and have fun in God's goodness.
13. I know that may make some nervous. Oh we better be careful, we don't want to have too much fun or it will be a sin.
14. Church it is not a sin to enjoy the goodness of God just as long as what we enjoy comes from him and we give him thanks for it.
15. Where in the bible is it written that sinners have to have the most fun? Where in the bible is it written that we have to be all crusty and serious all the time? My bible says that the joy of the Lord is my strength.
16. We don't have to live empty, boring, purposeless and dull lives. Believers should be enjoying nature and relationships and a good meal and flowers and creation more than non-believers should because we know the creator of all those things on a personal level.
17. Now I'm not advocating doing whatever you want, whenever you want because some things are just no good for you whenever you do them, but let me tell you, God has placed us here to, among other things, enjoy life and I believe we should take him up on it.
18. Are there a lot of bad things out there in life? Sure there are. Does our life and the circumstances we find ourselves in sometimes feel like the pits? You better believe it. But we have to believe that...

### **God's goodness is greater than all the negative stuff of life.**

1. My friend. Do you truly believe that God's goodness is greater than all the negative stuff of life? If you don't then what you are saying is that the God you serve is weak and powerless.
2. The God I serve is not weak and powerless. The God I serve is strong and powerful. And I believe that he gives that strength and power to me and to you though his goodness.

3. Everybody loves to quote the scripture from Romans chapter 8. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
4. Now that is a good scripture. I believe it is true and I love the message. But I also love how the apostle Paul ended this great chapter. **Romans 8:35-39** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
5. Paul didn't deny the existence of contamination and sin and hardship in this life and in this world. He readily admitted that it existed. We know it exists too. We live in a messed up world.
6. Every day we have to take a shower because we get dirty, it's the same spiritually. Because of sin we live in an extremely painful world full of disease and personality conflicts and attitude battles and racial strife and hunger and darkness.
7. There are a lot of things about our world that are not good. But it's not because God isn't good it's because mankind isn't good.
8. How then can God be good when negative circumstances make up so much of our lives in this world?
9. Because his word says that he causes all things to work together for good for those who love him.
10. God's goodness is not only seen when he doesn't allow bad things to happen to us. **Repeat.**
11. God's goodness is seen in that even when bad things happen, God's goodness is greater than those things and God can ultimately work those things out so that they not only benefit our life but bring glory to Him.
12. I am convinced that God is good even in the bad times. That's why I allow him to be my savior and be the Lord of my life. I am convinced that even if the world starts falling apart that it's not the end of the story until he says it's the end of the story.
13. It's not over until he has done all he can do with it.
14. Now sometimes he doesn't do all he is going to do right away. Sometimes he allows us to go through things that we can't immediately see as being good, but we have to believe that he can ultimately cause it to turn out for our good.

15. And if we truly believe that God can turn those things around for our good then it will cause something amazing to happen.

**God's goodness will motivate us to worship him.**

**Psalm 107:1-2** Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. **2** Let the redeemed of the LORD say so.

1. Let me give you the Jeff Cox version of that scripture. God is good so let's talk about it. We talk about everything else under the sun.
2. We babble on about everything else, but the only thing really worth talking about is how good God is.
3. Why not let our voices be heard about how awesome and wonderful God is. Well pastor, God already knows how I feel. He knows I'm grateful. Well, that's true, but just because he can read your mind doesn't mean he wants to.
4. God loves to hear it from us. He loves it when we express it to him.
5. It's like the story of the man and woman who had been married for many years. One day the man arrived home and she just blurted out, do you love me.
6. This fellow looked up at her almost with indifference and said, well I told you on the day we got married that I loved you and that if I ever changed my mind I would let you know.
7. God wants to know that we love him. God's goodness ought to cause us to say so. **God's goodness** ought to motivate us to be more than a bump on a log; it **should motivate us to be vibrant worshippers of the one true God.**

**Conclusion:**

1. Sure it's easy to let our minds become consumed with all thing things we don't have instead of all the goodness we do have.
2. Sure we go through trials and difficulties. Do you have everything you ever wanted? Probably not.
3. Is all going perfectly well with you? Absolutely not.
4. Does all the world camp at your doorstep waiting every morning to praise and exalt and lift you up? I don't think so.
5. But take your life, slice and dice it any way you want, and if you will be honest with yourself and with God you will have to conclude that God has been good to you, and he is worthy of you telling him so.
6. God is a good God.



7. Have you received him as your savior? If not he's waiting for you. He's waiting to pour out his goodness on your life. Salvation call.
8. Worship team come forward to worship the Lord.