

Good Leadership; Great Leadership – Romans 2:1-4

I. Introduction:

- A. Let's assume we are here in the house of God this evening because we are all children of God.
 - 1. We have all been saved by grace, and our hearts yearn for fellowship with our Saviour and other believers.
 - 2. If that is true, then **verse 4** doesn't really apply to us except as a matter of spiritual history.
- B. The Bible tells us that it was the goodness of God **which led** you to **repentance** and **faith** in Christ Jesus.
 - 1. It was God's goodness which **put up** with those **years of rebellion** against His rule.
 - 2. It was God's goodness, despite your horrible sins, which **led Him** to **loved you** and **draw you** to Him.
 - 3. It was His goodness which led you down **the rocky path** to the point of total emptiness, surrender, and repentance before Him.
- C. In writing to his Jewish countrymen, Paul rebukes them for their **pride** and **inability** to see God's goodness.
 - 1. It was even worse than that: they **scorned** and **laughed** at the divine, good patience and mercy.
 - 2. **"DESPISEST thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"**
 - 3. And for us, whether or not we were aware of it at the time, it was God's goodness which brought us to salvation.
- D. This evening I'd like to take Paul's Spirit-inspired initial thought to take it in a couple other directions.
 - 1. They may have been inspired by my own imagination, but I believe they are consistent with God's Word.
 - 2. I'd like to apply them to you and me, who have already been lead by the goodness of God to repentance.

II. It is the goodness of God which should lead us today to **WORSHIP** Him.

- A. Likely it is due to lack of proper instruction, but most of us do not think highly enough of the Lord's goodness.
 - 1. Yes, God is holy – He is righteous, omnipotent and omniscient. Jehovah is loving, gracious and merciful.
 - 2. I often remind you of many of those attributes which are uniquely God's.
 - 3. Most Baptist theologians recognize up to two dozen divine attributes.
 - 4. But when they write of them, God's **"goodness"** is usually toward the end of the list. Why is that?
 - 5. There are some attributes which are uniquely His own, like omniscience, but some He shares.
 - 6. Sometimes He shares Himself with us, enabling us to love and to be merciful, in limited reflections of Him.
 - 7. And one of those transmittable attributes of the Saviour is **"goodness."**
 - 8. We can be good people, when we become like Christ, our God.
- B. In **John Gill's major theology book**, which he called, **"A Body of Divinity,"** chapter 16 begins with the words,
 - 1. **"Having treated of the love, grace, mercy, and longsuffering of God,**
 - a. **it will be proper to take some notice of his GOODNESS from WHENCE they all proceed;**
 - b. **for that God loves any of His creatures, in the manner He does, (and)**
 - c. **bestows favors upon them, shows mercy to them, and bears much with them,**
 - d. **is owing to the GOODNESS of His nature."**
 - 2. After studying the immutability, infinity, omnipresence and omnipotence of God, Gill says, **"Oh, and by the way, when any of these wonderful attributes touch sinful men, it is because God is FIRST of all "GOOD."**
- C. At Sinai, when the Lord was beginning to reveal Himself to Moses and Israel,
 - 1. **"The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.**
 - a. **And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed,**
 - b. **The LORD, The LORD God, merciful & gracious longsuffering, & abundant in GOODNESS and truth..."**
 - 2. And what did the **Lord Jesus** tell the man who came to Him saying, **"Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I might inherit eternal life?"**
 - a. Didn't Christ say, **"There is NONE good, but one, and that is GOD."**

3. David said in **Psalm 86** – “For **THOU, Lord, art GOOD**, and ready for forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”
 4. I like the way the in which the Holy Spirit worded **Exodus 33:19**.
 - a. In essence He defined a major part of the goodness of God.
 - b. To Moses, “He said, I will make **ALL my goodness** pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the **LORD** before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”
 - c. God’s goodness is seen in His grace and mercy.
 5. Then in **Psalm 52**, David said, “Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The **GOODNESS of God endureth continually**,” and I’ll add to that “and that goodness leadeth thee to repentance.”
- D. I have read in many places, although I have also heard some rebuttals, so I won’t emphasize this too hard...
1. But Gill and others say that the early English word “god,” was in fact a contraction of the word “good.”
 2. Like a lot of blasphemies used throughout the years, “Good God,” is based in reality. **He really IS good.**
 3. And referring to John Gill one more time, he used the word “diffusive” when talking about God’s goodness.
 4. He meant that it has been diffused throughout His creation.
- E. And this reality should **lead us to WORSHIP** Him.
1. “Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul. Thank you, Lord, for making me whole.”
 2. Your salvation from the judgment of your sin, flows out of God’s goodness, through His grace, through His mercy, and through the blood of the cross.
 3. It was God’s goodness which led you to repentance.
 4. Therefore, here is an excellent reason to bow your knee before Him; to worship Him; to praise His name.
 5. We need to praise God for the ministry of the “Good Shepherd.”
- F. God is good. In fact, when you think about it, **if God was NOT good**, he would **NOT be God**.
1. If we worship Him because we have tasted of His mercy, we should also worship Him because He is good.
 2. Goodness is **AS essential** and **elemental** to the Lord as His omnipotence and His eternity.
 3. Jehovah is **AS infinitely good** as is His understanding and knowledge are infinite.
 4. He is **unchangeably** good; He is **immutably** and **eternally** good.
 5. I read somewhere that the goodness of God is like an ocean without banks or bottom.
 6. And as God was **infinitely powerful before** creating and displaying His power, He has **always been good**, before any sinner ever tasted of that goodness.
- G. These are aspects of the Lord, and aspects of His relationship to us, which should draw our awe, our reverence and our love.
1. And in turn each of these should be a part of our worship.
 2. The goodness of God leadeth thee to worship.

III. And God’s goodness also leadeth us to **GREATER FAITH** – to trust in him.

- A. Here’s a silly illustration:
1. If my wife was going off to a women’s retreat in Oklahoma, I would have no fear of any misbehaviour on her part.
 2. I would trust her to listen and learn; to grow in Christ; to keep herself holy, and to return to me.
 3. I would trust her, because I know that she loves me and that she, by God’s grace, is good.
 4. Yes, there is none good in his, or her, own fallen nature, but goodness is one of those attributes that God shares with us.
 - a. We are loving because God has enabled us to love.
 - b. If we are gracious towards others because He has been gracious to us.
 - c. And goodness is another of those “**communicable attributes**” of the Lord.
 5. Because Judy is good, I have explicit trust in her.

- B. And returning to the Lord, we can **trust Him as well**, because He is infinitely and immutably good.
1. He will not let us down. He will not deny His own nature.
- C. As I've told you before, for several months while in Calgary, I ministered every week to a man in a tuberculosis hospital. It was called a sanatorium at the time – Baker Sanatorium.
1. Through the centuries, **tuberculosis**, formerly known as “**consumption**,” killed more people than COVID.
 2. But week after week, I went into that restricted facility to encourage and witness to man with the unforgettable name, “**Pearly Hill**,” and I did so without any fear. I was on the Lord's errand.
 3. First, with proper precautions – as simple as washing my hands and maintaining my own health – it was unlikely that I would contract the fatal disease.
 4. But before that, I entered that fortress-like building without fear because of God's goodness.
 5. He led me to trust Him for protection, and the Lord is good; He wasn't exposing me to unnecessary risk.
 6. And if Pearly was in fact dying, the goodness of God propelled me to continue my witness to him.
- D. If the Lord stripped you of your life savings, forcing you to live from day to day, trusting Him for your care, the Lord's goodness should ease your mind.
1. Isn't that what happened to Elijah when he hunkered down there by the Brook Cherith.
 2. The goodness of God sent ravens with fresh food to meet the prophet's needs.
 3. *“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”*
- E. The Lord is **good – not bad** – and that goodness should lead us to trust in Him.
1. *“But this pain wracking my body, and my macular degenerating blindness, and the death of my dog. What about them?”*
 2. These things are not the eye-glasses through which we are to look and judge the goodness of God.
 3. God's goodness becomes most evident over long periods of time, and we might not see certain aspects of it until eternity occupies our view.
 - a. It could be that a plague of rabid bats was coming your way, arriving after your dog died.
 - b. Not only was he spared that terrible disease, but so were you. God is good.
 4. If blindness gives us more time to concentrate and meditate on the Lord's goodness, then it is good.
 5. And if physical pain reminds us that there are heavenly, spiritual and eternal blessings awaiting us, then our pain is good too.
 6. God is sovereign and God is good – always good.
- F. Concluding where we began – with Paul's statement about the goodness of the Lord leading to repentance...
1. Not only had God been convicting, punishing, teaching and leading Israel for many very painful centuries...
 2. And today, Israel may be crying out in pain, even shaking her fist in the face of God in the midst of her current problems...
 3. But Babylonian captivity, Roman occupation, and Palestinian/Hamas terrorists are nothing to what is going to befall that nation during the upcoming seven-year tribulation.
 4. O sinner – O Israel, despisest thou the goodness of God which leadeth thee to repentance?
 5. **Psalm 34:8** exhorts us: *“O taste and see that **the LORD is GOOD**: blessed is the man that **trusteth in him**.”*