

Saint Matthew AME Church Online Bible Study

20 February 2023

Reverend Leslie Wilson, Facilitator

The Fruit of the Spirit: Goodness

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.



The meaning of “fruit of the Spirit” is the attributes that surface and mature in the life of people who have truly surrendered their lives to God and have been filled with His Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is the result of allowing God’s Spirit to transform a person into His image. (Source: Christianwalls.com)

In Galatians 5, Paul, a missionary, and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, answers the question, “how should Christians live if we are no longer under the law of Moses?” He talks to us about freedom in Christ!

^{5:4} “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. ⁵ For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness (goodness) for which we hope.”

What Is Righteousness

The Greek New Testament word for “righteousness” primarily describes conduct in relation to others ... beginning with relationship to God. It is contrasted with wickedness, the conduct of the one who, out of gross self-centeredness, neither reveres God nor respects man. The Bible describes the righteous person as just or right, holding to God and trusting in Him.

The bad news is that true and perfect righteousness (goodness, moral, justice) is not possible to attain on our own; the standard is simply too high. The good news is that true righteousness is possible for humankind, but only through the cleansing of sin by Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

We have no ability to achieve righteousness in and of ourselves. But Christians possess the righteousness of Christ, because “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). This is an amazing truth. As we know, it was on the cross that

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Jesus exchanged our sin for His perfect righteousness so that we can one day stand before God and He will see not our sin, but the holy righteousness (goodness) of the Lord Jesus.

What Is Goodness - Generally?



Goodness is the ability to do the right thing in every situation, to be slow in avenging wrong. With goodness there cannot be a spirit of unforgiveness!

Goodness is the quality of being morally good or virtuous. Morally meaning “based on principles that you or people

in general consider to be right, honest, or acceptable”.

"Goodness is that virtue opposed to all that is mean and evil and includes uprightness, kindness, and beneficence of heart and life."

Good as an adjective is to be desired or approved of, pleasant or enjoyable.

Our focus for tonight’s Bible study will be on goodness!

What Is Goodness Biblically (ag-ath-o-soo-ney)

The sixth fruit of the Spirit is goodness. What exactly is goodness? The word ‘good’ is used so frequently in our everyday lives that it almost loses its meaning. For example, how many times a day do we say, “good morning” and “good luck” and “good work”? But the Bible tells us that the word ‘good’ actually means holy, pure and righteousness. Literally goodness is godliness.¹

Goodness is action; it's not something we do only for the sake of being virtuous (having or showing high moral standards). When we strive to be “good” only for our own benefit, it is not truly

• The Greek word translated “goodness,” *agathosune*, is defined as “uprightness of heart and life.”

• *Agathosune* is goodness for the benefit of others, not goodness simply for the sake of being virtuous.

¹ <https://www.ospreyobserver.com/2020/09/the-fruit-of-the-holy-spirit-what-is-goodness/>

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goodness that we possess. When we think of goodness we think of benevolence, of being part of something meaningful.

Psalm 103:8 (NIV) tells us, “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.” God is good because He loves us and wants what's best for us. His goodness is demonstrated through His actions toward us. In fact, we see evidence of God's goodness every day. We see it in the sun rising each morning, in the rain falling from the sky, and in the flowers blooming in our gardens.

God calls us to be filled with goodness from the inside out, being holy in what we do and say because Christians should have a heart that seeks goodness. We are not to just do good work, because doing good works without a good heart is empty.

Goodness is the manifestation of moral excellence. We bear the fruit of goodness when we allow the Word of God through the help of the Holy Spirit to shape how we think, speak, and act.

What Is Goodness – According To Paul

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

Paul wrote that Christ's death for sin changed the way he regarded people. Instead of looking at each person as a mere human being, he must view those who are in Christ as something entirely different. Those who are "in Christ" are those who have faith in Him... have become something they were not before. Their identity has changed from being the fallen version of themselves, to being associated with the righteousness (the goodness) of Christ.²

What Is Goodness – According To Jesus?

Jesus said, “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” Luke 6:45 (ESV)

Goodness characterizes our lives. It goes to the heart of what it means to be a Christian.

² <https://www.bibleref.com/2-Corinthians/5/2-Corinthians-5-17.html>

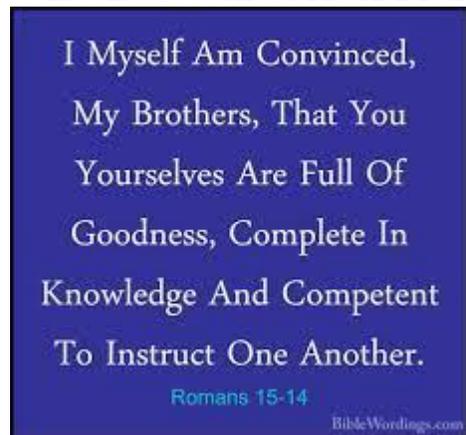
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What Is Goodness As A Fruit?



Goodness is a fruit of the Spirit. Goodness can seem like kind of a neutral word. “How was school?” “Good.” “How’s dinner?” “Good.” It’s a word we typically use to indicate something that is not especially noteworthy one way or the other. But God’s goodness is so much more than just “fine” or average! God’s goodness is a character quality that means He is always good. He gives us the gift of His overflowing goodness that allows us to plant good seed and patiently wait for a good produce/product, in Jesus’ name!

Of Note – Applying Goodness

Christ dying on the cross freed us to become the people God created us to be! We are no longer slaves to sin. What is freedom according to Christianity? It is not “a matter of doing what you want without restraint, but cultivating the right wants and living in obedience to God's will. In other words, freedom results when our wants align with God's will.”

In Luke 10:30-37 Jesus tells a story, the parable of the good Samaritan. In it, He shares about a man who showed goodness by stopping to help an injured man, even when the religious leaders wouldn’t stop to help.

On January 7, 2023, twenty-nine year old Tyre Nichols has an encounter with police officers in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was brutally beaten as others – officers, medical staff – stood



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by and watched. Mr. Nichols died 3 days later. Five officers have been fired and charged with second-degree murder. His mother, RowVaughn Wells said, “this didn’t have to happen!” Where was goodness?



Nearly 32 years ago, Rodney King’s savage beating by police in Los Angeles prompted heartfelt calls for change. They’ve been repeated in a ceaseless rhythm ever since, punctuated by the deaths of Amadou Diallo in New York, Oscar Grant in Oakland, California, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and so many others. George Floyd’s murder in Minneapolis in 2020

was so agonizing to watch, it summoned a national reckoning that featured federal legislation.

We are free in Christ to love and do good! Let us not take this freedom for granted but demonstrate goodness with an other-oriented attitude, showing consideration for others expecting nothing in return. Write! March! Call! Text! Post! Do something from the heart for righteousness, for justice!

Summary

We often say in church, “God is good all the time. And all the time God is good.” Does this mean that our lives are always good? No, of course not. It means that God is practicing the fruit of the spirit of goodness—godliness. God is good, and He wants us to grow in the fruit of goodness so we can live a fulfilling life full of righteous love.

Goodness is the ability to do the right thing in every circumstance. The term *agathōsynē* implies a moral decency: this describes someone respectable, honorable, and righteous.³

We are called as Christians to live in a way that reflects the character of Christ. Matthew 5:16 says, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

³ <https://www.bibleref.com/Galatians/5/Galatians-5-22.html>

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In goodness we are: in obedience with God; of good moral standing; able to discern good from evil; light that shines in darkness; able to perform gracious acts; righteous because God sent Him who was without sin for humanity; honoring the Lord; talking the talk and walking the walk; acting good out of the Spirit of goodness; modeling Jesus with love, humility and forgiveness.

Prayer

Loving Father, let us desire to reflect goodness, the nature and character of the Lord Jesus and to show forth the fruit of His Spirit in our lives. Prune away all those areas in us that are inhibiting the growth of spiritual fruit being produced in every household that is represented in this study and may we grow in grace and do only those things that are pleasing to You, for Your praise and glory. AMEN.⁴

NEXT WEEK

The Fruit Of The Spirit – FAITHFULNESS



7 DAYS A WEEK PRAYER LINE

6:00 A.M. and 9:30 P.M.

206-806-9984

⁴ Adapted from <https://dailyverse.knowing-jesus.com/galatians-5-22>