

Articles and Sermons :: The Glory Of God Is His Goodness -poonen**The Glory Of God Is His Goodness -poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/6/25 22:53****The Glory Of God Is His Goodness***by Zac Poonen*

When Moses asked God to show him his glory, God replied saying, "I will make all my goodness pass before you" (Exod . 33:19). God's glory is His goodness. The New Testament makes clear that goodness is more than righteousness. In Romans 5:7, it says that even though no-one may be willing to die for a righteous man, yet for a good man, someone may be willing to die. The glory of God was seen in Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14) - that is, full of God's goodness. Goodness is not something that can be explained in words. Even the Scriptures themselves do not attempt to define goodness in words. But it was explained by the life of Jesus Christ. No-one has ever seen God at any time. But we can see the goodness of God in the life of Jesus (Jn. 1:18). It is by our lives and not by mere words that we too will be able to explain to others what God's goodness really is.

The goodness of God is seen in the way Jesus loved and served sinful men on earth. He was willing to pay any price - even death itself - in order to help, save and bless evil people. Anything less than this is NOT Divine goodness. The marvelous message of the incarnation is that Jesus came to earth in a flesh like ours (in which dwells nothing good) and yet manifested the perfect goodness of God in it. He was tempted just like we are, to think only of Himself and of His own convenience. But he denied Himself and lived to bless others. It was thus that He manifested the goodness of God. If Jesus had come to earth in a perfect flesh in which only good dwelt, then His life of goodness would not have been such a great wonder. The wonder however, is that He lived that perfectly good life in a flesh exactly like ours. And all of us know how lacking in goodness our flesh really is.

There is a difference between DOING good and BEING good - just as there is a difference between 'serving' and 'being a servant'. Many who are not servants still serve occasionally. And many who are not 'good' may still do good deeds. To BE a servant however means that we ALWAYS think of ourselves as servants of others. That was how Jesus constantly thought of Himself (as Philippians 2:8 makes plain). He knew that when He became a man He had to be a servant of all.

God is always longing to serve others because He is good. This is the nature that we are called to partake of. 2 Thessalonians 2:14 states that we have been called through the gospel "to gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ". This is our calling - to gain more and more of this glory - of God's GOODNESS - during the one earthly life that we have.

God desires that we get a thorough education during our life-time of earth - a thorough education in being GOOD particularly to 'evil and ungrateful men'. Thus, Jesus said, we would become SONS of our Heavenly Father (Luke 6:35). Here are two good questions then that we can ask ourselves, to ascertain whether we have indeed become SONS, according to the standard laid down by Jesus in Luke 6:35: "When was the last time I was kind to an evil man?" "When was the last time I was kind to an ungrateful man?" The only way that we can ascertain whether we have been kind and good and loving, in the right spirit, is by examining ourselves to see whether there has been any despising of the other person. A proud man despises others. A humble man esteems all men, even if they are evil and ungrateful. "God is almighty, but He doesn't despise anyone" (Job 36:5). That's because God is humble. The only right spirit in which to do good and serve others is with the humility that acknowledges that we are but sinners saved by grace.

THE FUNDAMENTAL MARK OF A TRUE MAN OF GOD IS GENUINE HUMILITY. When we are kind and good and generous to those who are kind and good and generous to us, Jesus said that we were no better than the sinners around us (Lk. 6:32-34). One mark of a true disciple of Jesus is that he is good and kind to those who are NOT good and kind to him. God causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good. He sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous (Matt. 5:45). We can be His sons only when we conduct ourselves with the same spirit towards all men. May this then be the longing of our hearts - TO BE GOOD DEEP DOWN IN OUR HEARTS; and from that source to DO GOOD - to our marriage partners, to our parents, to our brothers and sisters in the church, to unbelievers, to our enemies and to all men.

Sin has made us come short of 'the glory of God'. The gospel that we proclaim is that Christ has now made a way for us to partake of that glory once again, if we want to. We can partake of God's goodness in such a way that we no longer seek our own in anything but genuinely desire to lay down our lives, our wealth, our energies and our all, as Jesus did, in

order that sinful people around us may be blessed and delivered from their sin. It was thus Jesus glorified God on earth. And we can do the same now. It is when we see the impossibility of attaining to this goodness by human effort that we will become poor in spirit and cry out to God for help. That will be the first step towards our partaking of the glory of God's goodness in our lives.