



WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS FROM PASTOR LYLE WAHL

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Goodness

The fruit the Holy Spirit produces in believers includes goodness.

When people speak of good they generally mean something or some quality that is nice, pleasant, of acceptable or high quality. It often is used to describe a right or high moral quality. In all its uses it stands in contrast to that which is not good, that which is inferior, unacceptable, not nice, evil.

Goodness is the active expression of being good. The Bible tells us God is good. For example, Psalm 107:1, “Give thanks to the LORD for He is good, for His mercy is everlasting.” Jesus declared, “No one is good but God alone” (Mark 10:18). Only God is inherently good.

In our natural state we can be nice and do good or right things, but we are not naturally good. The apostle Paul tells us,

“There is no righteous person, not even one; there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks out God; they have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, there is not even one.”

(Romans 3:10-12)

And his own testimony, “For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.”

(Romans 7:18)

God’s goodness to us by His grace is good. Jeremiah gives us God’s word on this, “My people will be satisfied with My goodness” (31:14). Psalm 107 gives us some examples. In His goodness God guides travelers in distress, releases prisoners, restores health to the sick, and brings people in peril to safety. God’s goodness in us will produce the same kind of character and actions.

Since we accepted Christ as Savior, we stand righteous, good before God in the righteousness, the goodness of Christ. The Holy Spirit’s work of transforming our character includes making us righteous, good, which will be displayed in our thoughts, words and actions.



GOODNESS



There are examples of what goodness in action looks like in the New Testament. In his sermon to Cornelius in Acts chapter 10 Peter said that Jesus “went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (38). The parable of the good Samaritan, which I mentioned last time, displayed goodness as he stopped and cared for the half-dead man that everyone else rushed by. Dorcas, recorded in Acts chapter 9, Luke tells us, “was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.”

As the Holy Spirit grows goodness in us we will be active in living obedient, upright lives, in serving and helping others, speaking the truth in love, and, in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those who do not know Him. That is goodness in action.

As we think about how we grow in goodness, let me circle back once again to what I said in the first week in this series.

God is the source and the power of Christ-like character, including goodness. Remember the illustration Jesus gave of the vine and the branches. Fruitfulness, a character and actions of true goodness, flows from Him, not ourselves.

Our part is disciplined, obedient action as we work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12-13). That includes discipline to, as we have seen in our sermon series on Ephesians, to rid ourselves of the old self and put on the new, to be renewed by God.

Wherever you are at now in the character and actions of goodness, make this a priority, realizing that it is a life-long process. Paul testified, “I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not”, but he also forgot what was behind and pressed on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14). Make it a priority, hold yourself accountable to where you are, and praise God for each step of growth in goodness that He produces in you.

Pastor Lyle