

Unless the Lord (Pt.2)
Psalm 127:1
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INTRODUCTION

We are looking again at Psalm 127.

Please take your Bibles as we look once again this morning at verse 1.

In our last time together, we considered two of God's attributes: His immutability and His faithfulness.

And we said when God decrees something it will come to pass.

If He has decreed in His sovereignty to build a house, whether it be the house of God or a family, or to guard a city, it will come to pass.

Because His ways are perfect there is no need for correction or addition.

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He is immutable and faithful.

That is what we see here in Psalm 127:1.

But I want to note before you another attribute and that is His goodness.

Listen to it as I read these 5 verses.

It says, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved even in his sleep. 3 Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. 5 How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when

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they speak with their enemies in the gate.”

When we think of *the goodness of our God* do we understand that it “prevents us from falling over dead when we commit sin”? (John MacArthur, *Our Awesome God*, 100).

Do we understand that it is “only because of His goodness are we able to keep breathing”? (Ibid., 100).

Or in the context of Psalm 127, “do we realize that it is His goodness that allows us to build a house and a family?”

God is the source of all good, and He and He alone, defines what is good and holy.

Thomas Manton said, “He is originally good, good of Himself, which nothing else is; for all creatures are good only by

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participation and communication from God. He is essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself: the creature's good is a superadded quality, in God it is His essence. He is infinitely good; the creature's good is but a drop, but in God there is an infinite ocean or gathering together of good. He is eternally and immutably good, for He cannot be less good than He is; as there can be no addition made to Him, so no subtraction from Him.”

And because He is good, He is the “summum bonum, the chiefest good” (A.W. Pink, *Gleanings in the Godhead*, 55).

As we look again at Psalm 127, I want us to see *the goodness of our God*.

Psalm 25:8 says, “Good and upright is the Lord.”

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Psalm 52:1 says, “The goodness of God endures continually.”

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus in Matthew 19, He said to Him, “Good teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? So He said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments’ (vv.16-17).

“No one is good but one, that is God, ” He said.

There is no higher standard of goodness that God’s own character.

And how we think of God will determine our greatness.

A.W. Tozer says, “Christianity at any given

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time is strong or weak depending on her concept of God” (The Attributes of God, vol.1, 41).

If we do not see God as *good* then our concept of goodness is distorted and our view of God is diminished.

“A local church will only be as great as its conception of God” (Ibid., Tozer, 41).

When you think of the word “good” what comes to your mind?

Do you think of it as describing something moral or virtuous or as something that is beneficial or meets approval?

Let’s begin with a *definition of God’s goodness*.

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The Definition of God's Goodness

When we apply the adjective “good” to God we are defining “the final standard of good” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 197).

Everything about Him is “good.” That is because “the goodness of God respects the perfection of His nature” (A.W. Pink, *Gleanings in the Godhead*, 55).

He cannot be more good because He is the highest “good,” and He defines what goodness is.

You and I can be good and show goodness to others because that is a part of God's image that He has imparted to us.

But our good is lacking. It is tainted by sin.

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Even the best intentions in our goodness is distorted in some way by our selfishness and pride.

But that is not so for God.

A.W. Pink says, “There is such an absolute perfection in God’s nature and being that nothing is wanting to it or defective in it; nothing can be added to it to make it better” (Gleanings in the Godhead, 55).

When we speak of any attribute of God, there are no defects; it is the best; it is the highest that it can be; it is perfect. Therefore, when we speak of the goodness of God it is perfect goodness.

Because the goodness of God is His very nature, He is “kindhearted, [and] gracious” (A.W. Tozer, *The Attributes of God*, vol.1,

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42).

In the Garden of Eden, we See the Goodness of God in Perfect Harmony with His Wrath

When God told Adam, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen.2:16-17), He gave Him a divine standard to be obeyed.

When that was not obeyed in chapter 3, God didn't kill them on the spot. Out of His goodness, He punished them and forgave them. It was 930 years later when Adam died (Gen.5:5).

In Exodus 33:18, Moses Requested to See the Glory of God and Saw His Goodness

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God responded by saying, “I will make all My *goodness* pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be *gracious* to whom I will be *gracious*, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’ But He said, ‘You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.’ And the LORD said, ‘Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. ‘So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. ‘Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen’” (vv.19-23).

After he is told to “cut two tablets of stone like the first one” he broke (34:1), he is told to “be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the

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mountain” (v.2).

Verses 5-7 says, “Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 6 And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and *gracious*, longsuffering, and *abounding in goodness* and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.’”

God is Good and Full of Lovingkindness

The psalmist proclaims exactly what Moses saw in Ps.86:5 when he said, “For You, Lord, are *good*, and *ready to forgive*, And *abundant in mercy* to all those who call

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upon You.”

In Psalm 103:4 he listed it as one of the benefits that he did not want to forget.

He said that God “crowns you with *lovingkindness* and *tender mercies*.”

The Lord said through Jeremiah, “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising *lovingkindness*, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord” (Jer.9:23-24).

A.W. Tozer said, “The goodness of God is the only valid reason for existence, the only reason underlying all things. Do you

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imagine that you deserve to be born, that you deserve to be alive?

Why were we created? Was it that we deserved to be created? How can nothing deserve something? There was a time when there was no human race. How therefore could a human race that hadn't existed deserve something? How could a man that wasn't yet created earn anything or pile up an merit? It couldn't be so. God out of His goodness created us. Why were we not destroyed when we sinned? The only answer is that God of His goodness spared us. The cordial, kind-intentioned God spared us.

Why would God the Eternal Son bleed for us? The answer is, out of His goodness and lovingkindness. 'Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy

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wings' (Psalm 36:7). Why would God forgive me when I've sinned and then forgive me again and again? Because God out of His goodness acts according to that goodness and does what His loving heart dictates that He do.

Why does He answer prayer? Let's not imagine that it's because somebody was good. We Protestants think we don't believe in saints, but we do. We canonize them: we have Saint George Mueller, Saint C.H. Spurgeon, Saint D.L. Moody and Saint A.B. Simpson. We get the idea that God answered prayer for them because they were really good. They would deny that fervently if there were here.

Nobody ever got anything from God on the grounds that he deserved it. Having fallen, man deserves only punishment and death.

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So if God answers prayer it's because God is good. From His goodness, His lovingkindness, His good-natured benevolence, God does it!" (The Attributes of God, vol.1, 45-47).

The Expression of God's Goodness

God's goodness is expressed in many ways.

In His Creation

Everything that God made was said to be "good" (Gen.1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).

David attested to God's goodness in His creating Him.

He says in Ps.139:14, "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my

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soul knows very well.”

A.W. Pink says, “Everything about the structure of our bodies attests the goodness of their Maker. How suited the bands to perform their allotted work! How good of the Lord to appoint sleep to refresh the wearied body! How benevolent His provision to give unto the eyes lids and brows for their protection! And so we might continue indefinitely” (Gleanings in the Godhead, 56).

In His Provision

Physical Provision

Psalm 145:8-9 says, “The Lord is *gracious* and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is *good* to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works.”

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He provides food

In Genesis 1:29-30, God said to the man, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so.”

Genesis 2:8-9 says, “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. 9 And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

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God not only provided food for Adam and Eve but He also made it “pleasant to the sight.”

A.W. Pink says, “The goodness of God is seen in the variety of natural pleasures which He has provided for His creatures. God might have been pleased to satisfy our hunger without the food being pleasing to our palates—how His benevolence appears in the varied flavors which He has given to meats, vegetables, and fruits! God has not only given us senses, but also that which gratifies them; and this too reveals His goodness” (Gleanings in the Godhead, 56).

He provides a home

Psalm 113:9 says, “He grants the barren woman a home, Like a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord!”

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He provides all our basic necessities
(Mat.6:25-34)

He provides companionship

Genesis 2:21-22 says, “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and *He brought her to the man.*”

Proverbs 19:14 says, “Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.”

He provides children

Genesis 30:1-2 says, “Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel

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envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" 2 And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

Isaiah 44:24 says that the Lord "formed you from the womb."

Psalm 127:3 says, "Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; The fruit of the womb is a reward" (NASB).

He provides for His children as well as those who aren't His children

Jesus said in Matthew 5:45 that "He makes the Sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust."

Paul said to those at Iconium after they

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sought to worship them as gods, that God “did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17).

Spiritual Provision

Christ’s death on the cross demonstrates the goodness of God like no other event in history

Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

This was the greatest expression of God’s goodness to man.

As a child of God, God’s goodness is seen in His continual presence in the believer.

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God has “sealed” us with the Holy Spirit (Eph.1:13).

He fills us with the Holy Spirit as we yield to Him (see Eph.5:18).

He “comforts us in all our tribulation” (2 Cor.1:4; see James 1:5, 17).

He doesn’t allow us to be “tempted beyond what you are able” to bear (1 Cor.10:13).

He gives us the Word of God that we “may grow thereby,” as Peter says “if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is *gracious*” (1 Pet.2:2-3).

A.W. Pink says, “The goodness of God is the life of the believer’s trust. It is this excellency in God which most appeals to our hearts. Because His goodness endureth

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forever, we ought never to be discouraged:
“The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day
of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in
Him” (Nah.1:7) (Gleanings in the Godhead,
57).

Worship

Our response to the goodness of God should
be worship.

Psalm 107:8-9 says, “Oh, that men would
give thanks to the Lord for His goodness,
And for His wonderful works to the children
of men! 9 For He satisfies the longing soul,
And fills the hungry soul with goodness.”

Psalm 54:6 says, “I will freely sacrifice to
You; I will praise Your name, O Lord, for it
is good.

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Psalm 106:1 says, “Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”

Psalm 107:1 says, “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”

CONCLUSION

As we have looked at *the goodness of God* as it is expressed in His provision, keep in mind that it is *the goodness of God* that “leads you to repentance” (Rom.2:4).

Because God is good and shows His lovingkindness to you through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, that should lead you to turn from your sin and turn to Him for forgiveness.

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When a parent disciplines his child, he uses the rod but not the rod alone, he also uses lovingkindness to speak to a darkened heart.

Will you praise God this morning for His goodness and will you from this day forward meditate on that goodness and never lose sight of the truth that you deserve *nothing*?

Praise Him for His goodness as we pray.