

Adoring the God of Glory

November 19th, Class 10 – Adult Equipping Center
God's Goodness and Love – Teaching Notes

Recap

Q: Why is it important to understand God's jealousy and wrath?

1. God's jealousy and wrath – implications of God's righteousness, holiness. A good God must hate accordingly.
2. Be careful to think of jealousy, anger/wrath, hatred in divine terms, not human terms.
3. Sobering and necessary reality of God's wrath

God's Goodness

Umbrella term that includes many attributes: love, grace, patience, mercy, beauty, joy

- Definition: "...God is the final standard of good, and **all that God is and does is worthy of approval.**" (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 197)
- "...God's mercy is his goodness toward those in distress, his grace is his goodness toward those who deserve only punishment, and his patience is his goodness toward those who continue to sin over a period of time." (p. 198, Grudem)
- "The goodness of God is that which disposes him to be kind, cordial, benevolent, and full of good will toward men. He is tenderhearted and of quick sympathy, and his unflinching attitude towards all moral beings is open, frank, and friendly. By His nature He is inclined to bestow blessedness and He takes holy pleasure in the happiness of His people." (A.W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 82,
- Aquinas: "The essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable..." (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1)
- For humans there is a gap between who we are and what is desirable, but God there is no gap. God is ultimate goodness.
 - Bavinck: "In him 'idea' and 'reality' are one." (p. ???)
 - (JC) "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." (Lk. 18:18-23)
 - Mt. 5:48 – You must therefore be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.
 - Pink: "the creature's good is a drop, but in God there is an infinite ocean or gathering together of good." (p. 57)

Question from definition: who's approval? Circularity Problem (similar to righteousness)

Draw on board: God and Good. God is good (arrow). All good is defined by God (arrow) Circle

- God is good. How do you know?
- Good is anything God is or does. How do you know if it's good?

Read Frame, starting on p. 405, read thru p. 407.

- Draw a different box (not God) leading to "Good" and back—examples: nature, Fox News

Read Frame, starting on 408-409

God is good.

- Ps. 119:68 – "You are good and do good; teach me your statutes." Desirable actions flow from His good character.
- Ps. 34:8 – O taste and see that the Lord is good...
- Ps. 103:1-2, 106:1, 107:1 (Refrain in other places; Ps. 100:5, etc.)
- Charnock: "As it is the perfection of his nature, it is necessary; as it is the communication of his bounty, it is voluntary." (Existence and Attributes of God; 2:290, Works)

How is God good?

1. Creation: Creates good things: Genesis 1 – at it was good...turn to Psalm 104
 - a. This goodness includes goodness to enemies – Mt. 5:45, Acts 14:17
2. History: His goodness to people – Ps. 105-107/ v. 1 – repeated (generous, forgiving, merciful, rescues)
3. Generous Gifts: Gives good gifts and doesn't withhold good – James 1:17, Mt. 7:11; Ps. 84:11 – No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.
4. Camouflaged Gifts: Even difficult things that God does are good – Rom. 8:28, Heb. 12:10 – "For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our **good**."
5. God's promises and will are good – Rom. 12:2 – "good and acceptable and perfect", Josh 24:21 – not one of God's good promises failed
6. Non-Discriminatory: Good to enemies – **Mt. 5:43-45**, Acts 14:17
7. Jesus Himself: Lk. 2:10 (Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy..."

Pink: God's goodness, "...is lightly esteemed because it is exercised toward us in the common course of events. It is not felt because we daily experience it." (A.W. Pink, Attributes of God, p. 60) see also his description of God's creativity in creation as to accent his goodness to us, p 58.

God's Love

Exercise to define love and see its nuances

- Draw a stick figure and ask – what does a typical person love?
- Use an example: how might this person love _____ (family, country, music)?

Q: What does this tell us about the definition of love?

- It's complex – it means different things in different relationships / contexts
- It's sacrificial or costly in nature

Society's view: weak love – “a species of amiable weakness, a sort of good-natured indulgence; it is reduced to a mere sickly sentiment, patterned after human emotion.” (Pink, p. 77).

Definition: “...God eternally gives Himself to others.” (Grudem, 199)

- Love = self-giving for the benefit of others

Carson's 5 Categories of God's Love

1. Love within the Trinity (Jn. 3:35, 5:20, 14:31, 17:24, etc.) – God is love because God is community (1 Jn. 4:8). All true love derives from His love.
2. God's providential love over all that He has made. (Mt. 5:43-48; Psalms 103-107)
3. God's saving stance towards his fallen world (Jn. 3:16, Savior of world = 4:42; 1 Jn. 4:14)
 - a. “God's love in sending the Lord Jesus is to be admired not because it is extended to so big a thing as the world, but so bad a thing; not to so many people, as to such wicked people.” (Carson, p. 17)
4. God's particular, effective, selecting love toward his elect.
(Israel: Deut. 7:7-8, 10:14-15; Jacob I loved but Esau I hated; Eph. 1:4-6, 5:25-27)
 - God's love for His people is sure and steadfast (Is. 54:10; Rom. 8:38-39-no separation, as in hell).
5. God's love directed towards His own people in a provisional or conditional way on obedience. (**Jude 20-21, Jn. 15:9-11; Ex. 20:6, Ps. 103:8-11**)

Blanket statements about God's love: **how might these fit into the five categories we're working with?**

- God's love is unconditional
- God loves everyone the same way

Implications

1. ...
 2. Recognizing God's goodness and love. (Questions 1 and 2)
 3. Imitate goodness – Gal. 6:9-10 (Question 3)
 4. Taking in the love of God – (Questions, 4, 5, 6) – Rom. 5:5, Eph. 3:14-19
 5. Loving as God loved.
 - a. “How can we not love those whom God and Christ love? You cannot love Christ and hate his bride. You must love what he loves. You must love believers, even those who can be very unlovable. God's love led to action. God's love led to sacrifice. Our love must be no different.” (Jones, 133).
 - b. The evangelistic power of the love of God. John 13:34-35
-

Reacting and Reflecting on the God of Glory

1. How does your life point to God's goodness? List specific ways. What aspects of your life are you struggling to define as “good”?
2. What things in your past have you struggled to categorize as good? Are there things that you thought of as “bad” but now you view as “worthy of approval”? Ask God to help you see that He is always and only good towards you.
3. What might it mean to reflect God's goodness on a typical day in your life? Think through the rhythms you have and have God might help you infuse His goodness more in the way you live.
4. What delights or confuses you about the complexity of God's love?
5. Which category of love do you struggle most to believe or to experience? Why?
6. How does the love of God in Jesus Christ help you remedy your current fears or insecurities? Spend time dwelling on Eph. 3:14-19, phrase by phrase.