

## The Fruit of the Spirit: Goodness

### i. Prayer

### ii. Scripture introduction

- A. This morning we resume our study on the fruit of the Spirit
- B. Our readings:
  - 1. Old Covenant readings: Genesis 1:1-5; Micah 6:8
  - 2. New Covenant readings: Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:8-21
    - Keep Bibles open to Eph. 5
- C. By way of review I want to show you how the order of this list is important:
  - 1. **love, joy, peace, patience:**
    - a. *Internal* qualities – foundational
    - b. These happen deep in our heart
  - 2. **kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness**
    - a. *External* qualities
    - b. Out workings of the internal qualities
  - 3. **Self-control:** self-mastery of the whole package (all the qualities)
- E. **Goodness – what we're considering today**

### iii. Reading

### iv. Introduction

- A. Question: **If I had a glass of dihydrogen monoxide, and I dared you to drink it, would you?**
  - 1. I hope you'd say "yes"
  - 2. *Dihydrogen monoxide* is simply another way of saying *water*
  - 3. Good old H<sub>2</sub>O
  - 4. Expressed differently, though, it takes on a whole new angle
- B. **I want you to see the quality of GOODNESS in the same light**
  - 1. Like water, we use the word *good* everyday
    - a. Good morning (good afternoon, good night)
    - b. Oh my goodness!
    - c. Be good today!
    - d. South: "Them is good people"
  - 2. What do we mean when we use the words GOOD and GOODNESS?

### 1. What is Goodness? (my quest this week)

#### A. Oxford English Dictionary:

- 1. Virtue; moral excellence
- 2. Beneficial or nourishing element of food
- 3. (Pretty generic definitions)

#### B. Went to the Greek

- 1. Word in Greek is: *agathosune*
- 2. Pronounced: ágatha-SOON-aye (root: *agathos* - good)
- 3. Positive moral qualities of the most general nature (Louw & Nida lexicon)
- 4. (Very disappointing)

#### C. So I went to the experts: the children of Providence

- 1. Hassenfritz family:
  - a. Will: being kind and good to others
  - b. Emerson: Grace, forgiveness, support, caring, helping others, taking care of someone, loving someone
  - c. Finley: Love, when you help people, God
  - d. Rye: ice and milk
- 2. Daniel Dove: When mommy gives me chewing gum
- 3. Owen Trapp: Goodness is non-badness; good means nothing bad
  - a. I love it: like a good philosopher, Owen uses the antithesis to define the word
  - b. I'm going to start calling him Dr. Owen
- 4. Haggan kids
  - a. Jack: Goodness is doing things that are helpful
  - b. Tommy: Goodness is being nice to someone else
  - c. Katie: Goodness is giving somebody a present
  - d. Luke: **Goodness is going to the pool** (he's 2.5 yrs old!)

#### D. These are a lot better than the academic sources

- E. In defining goodness, we need to understand what the Apostle Paul meant when he used this word

#### F. Here are some statistics (may interest you):

- 1. Word GOOD: used 672 times in the bible (very prevalent)
- 2. Word GOODNESS: *agathosune*
  - a. Used only 7 times in the Bible
    - 3 x in the LXX (Greek translation of the OT)
    - 4 x in the NT (all by Paul)
  - b. Used no where else in ancient Greek literature (not in Plato, Socrates, Homer, etc.)
- 3. So how does Paul use it?

- G. **I believe we get to the heart of the meaning in Eph. 5**
1. Look again at v 9
  2. ...*the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true*
  3. Paul uses the word *goodness* here (would sound weird in English)
- H. Point:
1. **First: Paul aligns the word *goodness* to light (vs darkness)**
    - a. Goodness is that which is full of light
    - b. Light was the first thing God created
    - c. "Let there be light"
    - d. God saw that it was good
  2. **Second: Paul aligns *goodness* to what is right & true**
    - a. As opposed to that which is wrong & false
    - b. Goodness is something that's full of truth
- I. Put all this together; what do we get?
1. **Goodness: (that which is) properly fit, properly complete, or properly right**
  2. "Square hole for a square peg"
- J. **Examples:**
1. **Trying on clothes** (shoes): you look for a good fit
  2. **Family pictures**
    - a. Why do we take several?
    - b. We want to make sure one is good
    - c. Eyes closed, crazy expressions, etc.
  3. **Why do we recommend a book or a movie?**
    - a. Because it ends with goodness
      - There is resolution; there is redemption
      - A certain character made it right in the end
      - Good overcame evil
      - Light overcame darkness
      - Truth and justice prevailed
    - b. Have you ever read a book or seen a movie, and the ending didn't wrap things up? Conclusion was dissatisfying
  4. **Prov 15:23** – *A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word!* (saying right thing at right time)
- K. **Goodness: (that which is) properly fit, properly complete, or properly right**
- a. Luke Haggan: goodness is going to the pool
  - b. Luke nails it: it's the summer, it's hot...
  - c. I need to jump into a cool & refreshing pool filled with dihydrogen monoxide

2. **How does God want us to bear the fruit of goodness?**
- Here is where Ephesians 5 comes into play
  - Look there again: 3 applications
- A. **Walk as children of the light**
1. Verses:
    - a. v 8 (**READ**)
    - b. Repeats in v 15 (**READ**)
    - c. Echoes Micah 6:8 (He has told you...)
  2. What does this mean?
    - a. Look back to 5:1 (**READ**)
    - b. We should look like God; we should love like God
    - c. What God says is good, we say is good
  3. We don't walk in darkness, we walk in the light
    - a. Look at v 11 (**READ**)
    - b. We should rejoice in what is good
    - c. As God said, Let there be light
    - d. Our lives should echo: Let there be light
      - When you walk into a room: God wants your life to declare: "Let there be light!"
      - When you walk into your workplace...
      - Kids, when you walk into your schools & classes...
      - Wherever we go...
  4. Consider Isaiah 5:20: *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.*
    - a. We're living in a time where there's a draught of goodness
    - b. Things in our world/culture aren't fitting properly
      - We are the most medicated country in the world
      - Pervasive feelings of fear, worry, anxiety
      - We may have abolished slavery, but now there's sex-trafficking
      - And then yesterday in Charlottesville, VA
        - White supremacy group starting a riot
        - Protesters retaliating (not good!)
      - And then in the American church
        - God is being pushed out of culture
        - Truth is being replaced for lies
        - Absolutes that God has established are being replaced with folly
  5. All this to say we should daily walk as children of the light

6. Illustration: Tara and me on our 10th Anniversary cruise
  - a. One morning at breakfast sitting with a table with about 3 other couples and a single man
  - b. Every one there celebrating something
  - c. The single man said:
    - I'm here celebrating my divorce
    - Oh, but it's been a great experience for my ex & me
    - We have 2 kids, and I bought a house 2 doors down
    - My wife and I are still good friends, and it's been all amicable
    - But the divorce was final, and I'm here to begin a new chapter
    - The whole family is happy; it's all good
  - d. What he said seemed to make sense, and all the others congratulated him
  - e. Then Tara spoke up
    - Sir, I mean no disrespect, but I caution you. Don't fool yourself
    - My parents divorced when I was 5, and while, it too, was amicable, it's still hell for the children
    - Not a day goes by that I don't wrestle with was this somehow my fault
    - Your children may seem okay with this, but I can tell you their world has fallen apart, and they will try everyday to pick up the pieces
    - Divorce is hell, and there's no sugar coating it
  - f. What Tara said was amazing
  - g. It was light exposing folly!
  - h. It was truth exposing lies
  - i. What this man said didn't sit right; it wasn't "proper"
  - j. What Tara spoke was goodness
7. Living as a child of light means seeing what's wrong with the world and exposing it

## B. Walk as children wanting to please their Father

1. Verses
  - a. v 10 (**READ**)
  - b. v 17 (**READ**)
2. Our lives should be marked as those who want to please their heavenly Father
  - a. Parable of the talents
  - b. What will the Master say to those who did his will?
  - c. "Well done good and faithful servant"
3. Simple question: who are you living to please? Whose will

are you following?

- a. Yourself?
- b. or Jesus?

4. Illustration: Mia at Chardon Christian Fellowship (a Downs Syndrome young lady singing off key, singing loud, but all she wanted was to please her Jesus)

## C. Walk in the fullness of the Spirit

1. Paul closes this section in Ephesians with these instructions
2. vv 18-20 (**READ**)
3. Bottom line is this
  - a. There is no goodness in us
  - b. Romans 3:10-12
    - 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;*
    - 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.*
    - 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."*
4. **Only God is full of goodness**
5. So if we are to have any goodness within us, it must come from God
6. Which is what Paul goes on to explain in Romans 3:21-24:
  - 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—*
  - 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23*
  - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...*
7. How are you filled with the Spirit?
  - a. Ask for it
  - b. Ask for it daily

## v. Conclusion

- A. Luke Haggan is right: goodness is going to the pool
- B. On a hot day the best remedy is jumping into a pool
- C. Is this not the Gospel?
  1. When I feel wretched
  2. When I feel the weight of my own sin and folly
  3. When I feel the heat of temptation
  4. When I feel powerless
  5. When I feel like navel-gazing instead of helping
  6. When I don't feel like praying
  7. Those are the times I need to jump into the pool of God's amazing grace