

Sunday School Lesson: God Is Good

Basic Theology Series — Attributes of God

Main Idea: God's goodness means that everything God is, says, does, commands, and judges is perfectly good. His goodness helps us trust Him even when life raises hard questions.

Key Scriptures:

Psalms 34:8 "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!"

Psalms 100:5 "For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."

Mark 10:18 "No one is good except God alone."

Romans 8:28 "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

Genesis 18:25 "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

1. Opening Illustration: The Lens

"When you look through a lens, it affects the way you see everything else. If the lens is scratched, dirty, or colored, everything you see through it looks different. Today we are going to talk about God's goodness. God's goodness is like a lens. When we understand that God is perfectly good, it helps us look at everything else about God rightly."

"When we say God is good, we do not mean He is sometimes nice, sometimes helpful, or sometimes kind. We mean that God is perfectly good in everything He is and everything He does."

God is Good not because of what He does, but because of who He is.

Whole Group Question: When we say someone is a 'good person,' what do we usually mean?

When we talk about God being good, we mean something even greater. God does not merely do good things. God is good. Goodness comes from Him. He is the standard of goodness.

2: God Is the Standard of Goodness

Read: Mark 10:18 "No one is good except God alone."

When Jesus says this, He is not saying people can never do kind or helpful things. He is saying that God alone is good in the highest, purest, perfect sense. Human goodness is always borrowed, limited, and mixed with weakness. God's goodness is original, perfect, and complete. We often judge goodness by how something makes us feel. We might think:

"If it makes me happy, it must be good."

"If it is easy, it must be good."

"If I understand it, it must be good."

"If God gives me what I want, then God is good."

But Scripture teaches something deeper: God Himself is the standard of goodness. That means God does not measure up to some outside definition of good. God defines what good is.

Simple Children's Explanation: "God is not good like a cookie is good, or a toy is good, or a fun day is good. Those things can be good gifts, but God is good in Himself. He is always right, always pure, always loving, always wise, and always trustworthy."

Family Discussion: 2-3 min

For adults and older kids: "Why is it important to remember that God defines goodness, instead of letting our feelings define goodness?"

For younger kids: "Can God ever do something bad?"

Help children understand: God never sins. God never makes mistakes. God never does anything evil. Everything God does is right and good.

(Ask for a few responses)

"Our feelings are real, but they are not always reliable. God is always reliable. When my feelings are confused, God is still good."

3: God Is Good in Love, Mercy, and Grace

Read: Psalm 100:5: "For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."

This is probably the part of God's goodness we are most comfortable with. We see God's goodness in:

His love for sinners.

His patience with His people.

His mercy toward the guilty.

His grace in salvation.

His kindness in daily provision.

His faithfulness to keep His promises.

God's goodness is not cold or distant. He is generous, compassionate, and kind. Every good gift comes from God. Every breath, every meal, every friendship, every answered prayer, every act of forgiveness, every bit of strength in suffering is a testimony that God is good. But the greatest display of God's goodness is the gospel. God did not have to save sinners. He would have been just to judge us. But in His goodness, He sent His Son. At the cross, we see the goodness of God clearly. Jesus took the judgment sinners deserved so that guilty people could be forgiven and brought near to God.

The cross shows us that God's goodness is not sentimental niceness. God's goodness is holy love that saves sinners without ignoring sin.

Whole Group Discussion "Where do we see God's goodness in the gospel?"

"Why is the cross better proof of God's goodness than getting everything we want?"

Guide toward this answer: Because the cross shows that God gave us what we needed most, not merely what we wanted in the moment.

4: God Is Good in Judgment Too

Now we need to talk about a part of God's goodness that is harder for us to understand. God is good in His love, mercy, and grace. But God is also good in His judgments.

Read: Genesis 18:25 "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

Sometimes we are tempted to think God is good when He forgives, but harsh when He judges. But that is not how the Bible presents God. God's judgment is not the opposite of His goodness. God's judgment flows from His goodness. Why?

Because a good God must oppose evil. A judge who never punishes evil is not a good judge. A king who allows wickedness to destroy his people is not a good king. A father who refuses to protect his children from danger is not being loving. So when God judges sin, He is not acting against His goodness. He is acting because He is good.

A good doctor fights disease.

A good shepherd fights wolves.

A good judge punishes evil.

A good father protects his children.

A good God judges sin.

God's judgment is good because sin is not a small problem. Sin destroys. Sin corrupts. Sin separates people from God. Sin brings death. So God would not be good if He simply shrugged at evil.

God's goodness means He is kind to sinners, but it also means He is against the sin that destroys them.

Family Discussion: "Why would it actually be bad news if God never judged evil?"

For younger kids: "Is it good for God to stop bad things and punish sin?"

Parent Prompt: Help children see that judgment may sound scary, but it is good that God does not let evil win forever.

(Bring the group back and summarize)

"God's judgment is hard for us to think about, but it is part of His goodness. A world where evil is never judged would not be a good world."

5. God's Goodness Helps Us Trust Him with Hard Questions

“There are some questions in life that are hard. Christians should not pretend they are easy.”

Why does God allow suffering?

Why does evil happen?

What about people who have never heard the gospel?

Why does God judge certain nations or people in Scripture?

Why did God allow this painful thing in my life?

Although we may not know the answers to these questions we know the character of God. When we do not understand what God is doing, we must start with the understanding that God is good. We start with what Scripture has clearly revealed:

God is good.

God is holy.

God is just.

God is merciful.

God is wise.

God does not make mistakes.

God does not sin.

God does what is right.

I don't know why God allows suffering, but I know that God is good.

I don't know why evil happens, but I know that God is good.

I don't know have a great answer for people who never hear the gospel, but I know that God is good

I'm not sure why God judged certain nations or people in Scripture, but I know that God is good.

I don't know why God allowed this painful thing in my life, but I know that God is good.

God's goodness does not remove every mystery, but it gives us a firm place to stand when we face mystery.

Brief Side Note: This line of reasoning needs to be taught to Christians outside of tragedy. This line of reasoning may not be the best way to give an answer to a non believer or even a believer who is in the midst of personal tragedy.

6. Closing Review

When life is joyful, God is good. When life is painful, God is good. When God shows mercy, God is good. When God judges evil, God is good. When we understand His plan, God is good. When we do not understand, God is still good.

Family Discussion: What is the biggest thing that you got from the Sunday School Lesson?

Homework

Discuss at least two of these questions during the week:

Where did you see God's goodness today?

Why can we trust God when we do not understand what He is doing?

How does the cross show us that God is good?

Why is it good that God judges evil?

How can our family show God's goodness to someone else this week?

Memorize Psalm 34:8 "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!"