

The Pursuit Of God

Session Five / July 20, 2016

The Attributes Of God

An attribute of God is anything that is true of Him. In this session, several of His attributes including His goodness and His justice.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

1
2
3 **Psalm 119:68 Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.**

4
5 **Psalm 106:1 Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for**
6 **his mercy endureth for ever.**

7
8 **Psalm 118:1 O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy**
9 **endureth for ever.**

10
11 **Psalm 100:4-5**

12 **Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful**
13 **unto him, and bless his name. [5] For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and**
14 **his truth endureth to all generations.**

15
16 **Mark 10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none**
17 **good but one, that is, God.**

18
19 **1 Chron. 16:34 O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth**
20 **for ever.**

21
22 In a crisis time in Moses' life, he cried out to God to see His glory. God spoke to him:
23 **Exodus 33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will**
24 **proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be**
25 **gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.**

26
27 Darlene usually signs her emails or letters with this: *"...in His lavish love."* It would
28 seem unnecessary to attempt to prove the goodness of God; yet there are multitudes of
29 people who have a real chip on their shoulder when it comes to Him. Something has
30 happened in their lives – such as God not answering their prayers in the way they thought
31 He should or crises within their family. Such issues are common place among us.
32 However, they do not negate truth. Such hateful conclusions on their part are subjective,

1 that is subject to their life experiences.

2
3 Let us consider God's goodness in two aspects:

- 4
5 • God's character, His nature, is good.
6 • His actions are good.

7
8 It can be surely observed that GOD IS THE ORIGINAL DEFINITION OF GOOD. Our
9 concept of "good" can be severely shrunken. For example we might say, "My car is
10 good" or "boy, this steak was good!" Or "that was a good film." Such adjectives are
11 not to comparable when we consider the goodness of God. Tozer points out that God is
12 "*kind, cordial, benevolent and full of good will toward humanity. He is tender-hearted*
13 *and of quick sympathy, and His unfailing attitude toward all moral beings is open, frank*
14 *and friendly. By His nature He is inclined to bestow blessedness and He takes holy*
15 *pleasure in the happiness of His people."* THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY / TOZER / PAGE 88
16 / CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS
17

18 The goodness of God is demonstrated to us faithfully in these regards:

19
20 **1. The Love of God**

21
22 How often have we heard that glorious third verse of the song "The Love of God," which
23 was borne out of a Jewish poem from a thousand years ago and recreated into the song by
24 Herbert Lehman in 1919:

25
26 *Could we with ink the ocean fill; and were the skies of parchment made;*
27 *Were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade;*
28 *To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry,*
29 *Nor could the scroll contain the whole though stretched from sky to sky!*
30 *O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!*
31 *It shall forevermore endure, the saints' and angels' song.*

32
33 The scriptures testify to God's love: 2 Cor. 13:11 **Finally, brethren, farewell. Be**
34 **perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and**
35 **peace shall be with you.**

36
37 **1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 16 And we have**
38 **known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth**
39 **in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.**

1 There is, of course, the classic verse known to be the favorite in scripture: John 3:16
2 **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever**
3 **believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**
4

5 As followers of Jesus, WE SHOULD LOVE THOSE THINGS THAT GOD LOVES and,
6 vice versa, loathe those things He hates. We know that God loves Jesus: Matthew
7 3:16-17 **And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water:**
8 **and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending**
9 **like a dove, and lighting upon him: [17] And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is**
10 **my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. God loves Israel: Deut. 7:6-8 For**
11 **thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee**
12 **to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the**
13 **earth. [7] The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were**
14 **more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: [8] But**
15 **because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had**
16 **sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and**
17 **redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of**
18 **Egypt. God loves righteousness: Psalm 11:7 For the righteous Lord loveth**
19 **righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright. And to faithfully round out**
20 **the entire picture, God loves judgment: Isaiah 61:8 For I the Lord love judgment, I**
21 **hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will**
22 **make an everlasting covenant with them.**
23

24 **2. The Benevolence of God**

25
26 Henry Thiessen defines God's benevolence as "the affection He feels and manifests
27 toward His creatures." And he adds: *God cannot hate anything that He has made, only*
28 *that which has been added to His work. Sin is such an addition."* LECTURES IN
29 SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY / THIESSEN / EERDMAN / PAGE 131
30

31 How is it that non-believers are so often the recipients of God's benevolence? Jesus
32 Himself answered that query: Matthew 5:45 **That ye may be the children of your**
33 **Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good,**
34 **and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**
35

36 **3. The Mercy of God**

37
38 Ephesians 2:4 **But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved**
39 **us,**
40

41 Other terms we might use for "mercy" would include compassion, pity and loving

1 kindness. Mercy is not earned; it is “freely given” because of the love of God. Luke
2 1:72 **To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy**
3 **covenant;**

4 4. The Grace of God

6
7 We sing “Amazing Grace,” for God’s grace truly is amazing. It is totally undeserved.
8 For example: consider how many times people have been deserving of justice for their
9 crimes or inhumanity and yet God has withheld that punishment at least for a season.
10 Romans 2:4-5 [The Message] **Or did you think that because he's such a nice God,**
11 **he'd let you off the hook? Better think this one through from the beginning. God is**
12 **kind, but he's not soft. In kindness he takes us firmly by the hand and leads us into a**
13 **radical life change. [5] You're not getting by with anything. Every refusal and**
14 **avoidance of God adds fuel to the fire. The day is coming when it's going to blaze hot**
15 **and high, God's fiery and righteous judgment.**

16
17 But it is in salvation that we see, at least in part, the enormous love of God for us: Titus
18 2:11 **For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,**

19
20 And because of God’s amazing love, the followers of Christ who have overcome in life
21 will be presented in glory to the Father God Himself: 1 Peter 1:13 **Wherefore gird up**
22 **the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be**
23 **brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**

24
25 There may be one who ponders his or her own possibility of redemption through Christ,
26 asking themselves, “If I do come to God through Jesus, will I be accepted? Or have I
27 already crossed some invisible line in the sand of my life?” As Tozer wrote, “*The*
28 *hypocritical, the basically insincere, will find Him cold and aloof; but the penitent will*
29 *find Him merciful. To the frightened He is friendly; to the poor in spirit He is forgiving,*
30 *to the ignorant, considerate; to the weak, gentle; to the stranger, hospitable.”*

31 THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY / TOZER / CHRISTIAN PUBL. / PAGE 90

32
33 Such is the astounding love of God.

34 35 THE JUSTICE OF GOD

36
37 It almost goes without saying that we mortals know precious little about justice. For
38 example: Some years ago Israelis hanged Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi who helped kill
39 several million Jews in the gas chambers. Someone said, “Justice is served.” Really?
40 One Nazi for millions of honest, hard-working Jews? We moan when courts release

1 people we believe are guilty of murder. Or to bring this home: a man faithfully works
2 for his company only to be summarily fired shortly before his retirement. Where is the
3 justice? Proverbs 28:5 **Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the**
4 **Lord understand all things.**

5
6 We will never know true justice until the Prince of Peace rules the Earth. And let us not
7 make any mistake about it: God will mete our proper justice. Let's take a look at some
8 scriptures:

9
10 Jesus taught in Matthew 12:36 **But I say unto you, That every idle word that men**
11 **shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.**

12
13 Paul taught in Acts 17:31 **Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will**
14 **judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he**
15 **hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.**

16
17 To the Apostle John it was revealed in Rev. 6:15-17 **And the kings of the earth, and**
18 **the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and**
19 **every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of**
20 **the mountains; [16] And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us**
21 **from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: [17]**
22 **For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**

23
24 He also wrote: Rev. 20:11-13 **And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on**
25 **it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no**
26 **place for them. [12] And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the**
27 **books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the**
28 **dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to**
29 **their works. [13] And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell**
30 **delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man**
31 **according to their works.**

32
33 One of the most colorful men in American history was the agnostic Robert Ingersoll. He
34 gave dramatic lectures across the country debunking the existence of God. One night in
35 New York state, he proclaimed very loudly that he did not believe in a future judgment or
36 hell. At that point, an old drunk stood up in the rear of the hall and said with slurred
37 words, "I sure hope you're right, Mr. Ingersoll - I'm counting on that!"

38
39 The Bible warns that "evil men do not understand justice." (Proverbs 28:5) It is easy
40 to understand why we do not want to believe in God or His justice for if He exists and is

1 truly just, then we are all ACCOUNTABLE. People today are not much interested in
2 accountability.

3
4 LET'S DEFINE "GOD IS A GOD OF JUSTICE"
5

6 Remember that an attribute of God is something that is true of Him. Justice is certainly
7 one of God's attributes. It is derived from his holiness. It is doubtful that anyone can
8 come to grips with this subject without first considering SIN.
9

- 10 • GOD CONSIDERS SIN AS LAWLESSNESS. 1 John 3:4 **Whosoever**
11 **committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the**
12 **law. Daniel 9:4-5 And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my**
13 **confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the**
14 **covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his**
15 **commandments; [5] We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have**
16 **done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and**
17 **from thy judgments: Micah 2:1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work**
18 **evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is**
19 **in the power of their hand.**
20

21 As a rule, human beings do not consider sin as an assault on God's holiness. Famed,
22 late psychiatrist, Dr. Karl Menninger (who founded the Menninger Institute in Topeka,
23 who died in 1980, wrote a very famous book with the title, *Whatever Happened To Sin?*
24 He made a pungent series observations about our human race including: *In all the*
25 *laments and reproaches made by our seers and prophets, one misses any mention of*
26 *"sin," a word which used to be a veritable watchword of prophets. It was a word once*
27 *in everyone's mind, but rarely if ever heard. Does that mean that no sin is involved in all*
28 *our troubles – sin with an "I" in the middle? Is no one any longer guilty of anything?*
29 *Guilty perhaps of a sin that could be repented and repaired or atoned for? Is it only that*
30 *someone may be stupid or sick or criminal—or asleep? Wrong things are being done, we*
31 *know; tares are being sown in the wheat field at night. But is no one responsible, no one*
32 *answerable for these acts? Anxiety and depression we all acknowledge, and even vague*
33 *guilt feelings; but has no one committed any sins? Where, indeed, did sin go? What*
34 *became of it?*

35 WHATEVER HAPPENED SO SIN / MENNINGER / HAWTHORNE PRESS / PAGE 13
36

37 We are in serious trouble, according to Scripture. Consider: Proverbs 24:12 **If thou**
38 **sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and**
39 **he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man**
40 **according to his works?**

1 During each trip to Israel I try to visit the ruins of Sodom near the south end of the Dead
2 Sea. It is a dreary place where a mountain of salt 150 feet high and extending for
3 several miles stands as mute evidence of God's wrath against sin. Sodom was warned:
4 Genesis 18:20-21 **And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is**
5 **great, and because their sin is very grievous; [21] I will go down now, and see**
6 **whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me;**
7 **and if not, I will know.**

8
9 Yes, God is a God of justice, an impartial One There is no malice in His acts. He
10 weighs matters in the balance. Revelation warns us of books of records to be opened on
11 Judgment Day.

12
13 1. GOD HAS TO BE JUST. Why? Because of His righteousness. His holiness
14 would never permit Him to do anything that was not right. Just as God could never be
15 unholy, He could never be unjust.

16
17 2. WE KNOW THAT IN THE PERSONALITY OF GOD HE HAS WILL - OR
18 VOLITION. That will is wise, it is good. He would never decide on any edict that
19 would not stand the eternal test of "rightness."

20
21 3. GOD COULD NOT, NOR WOULD NOT, EVER COMMIT ANY ACT OR
22 DECISION THAT WAS WRONG FOR HIS CREATION. The truth is, God's mercy is
23 a prevalent characteristic of His justice. Ezra 9:13 **And after all that is come upon us**
24 **for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast**
25 **punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as**
26 **this;**

27
28 4. GOD'S DECISIONS DO NOT PERMIT HUMAN DEMANDS FOR
29 ACCOUNTABILITY. Romans 9:20 **Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest**
30 **against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made**
31 **me thus? [The Message version: Romans 9:20 **Who in the world do you think****
32 **you are to second-guess God? Do you for one moment suppose any of us knows**
33 **enough to call God into question? Clay doesn't talk back to the fingers that mold it,**
34 **saying, "Why did you shape me like this?"]**

35
36 5. For you and me there will be two ways in which God's justice is meted: REWARDS
37 and PUNISHMENTS. He will reward the Godly at the Judgment Seat of Christ just as
38 He will punish the ungodly at the Great White Throne Judgment.

39
40 NOW HERE IS A STRANGE REALITY: The wicked, the ungodly, historically have

1 been used at times to do God's work. Case in point: the Book of Daniel tell as well as
2 2 Kings illustrate this point: 2 Kings 25:8-12 **And in the fifth month, on the seventh**
3 **day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of**
4 **Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of**
5 **Babylon, unto Jerusalem: [9] And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's**
6 **house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with**
7 **fire. [10] And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard,**
8 **brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. [11] Now the rest of the people that**
9 **were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the**
10 **remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away.**
11 **[12] But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and**
12 **husbandmen.** This was God's punishment to Jerusalem - often pre-warned through
13 Jeremiah and others - for continuous idolatry.

14
15 God also used the Persian king Cyrus to do His work on a positive side: Ezra 1:1-2
16 **Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the**
17 **mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of**
18 **Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in**
19 **writing, saying, [2] Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath**
20 **given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an**
21 **house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.** As one historian observed, "Though some
22 may not design God's glory, yet they may promote it."

23
24 6. WHILE IT MAY SEEM THAT GOD ALLOWS THE WICKED TO PROSPER
25 WITHOUT PUNISHMENT, HE MANY TIMES IN HUMAN HISTORY HAS STRUCK
26 STRONGLY AGAINST THE WRONG-DOERS. Psalm 9:16 **The Lord is known**
27 **by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own**
28 **hands.**

29
30 We see that happen rather often in the case of Moses leading the people of Israel to the
31 Promised Land. Yes, He may allow evil doers to prosper for a period of time, yet His
32 vial of wrath is filling to the brim. The longer God takes in delivering His judgment
33 against them, the heavier it usually is. Someone has well said: **AS LONG AS THERE**
34 **IS ETERNITY, GOD HAS TIME ENOUGH TO RECKON WITH HIS ENEMIES.**

35
36 7. GOD DOES NOT HAVE TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF OR HIS
37 ACTIONS TO MANKIND. Eccles. 8:4 **Where the word of a king is, there is**
38 **power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?**

39
40 He is the Potter; we are the clay.

1 8. WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER? Scriptures teach that in God's
2 providence there is sometimes suffering as our lot. God defines us. It is not unjust for
3 God to purify His gold, which we are, in the heat of the furnace.
4

5 We have been studying just some of the attributes of God - and will had several more in
6 this series. NEXT WEEK: THE WORKS OF GOD, including creation.
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