

# God's Goodness

This has been an eventful year. The COVID-19 pandemic has swept across the globe, wreaking havoc in the forms of sickness, death, and devastated economies. A host of other difficult situations has also arisen this year, including humanitarian and refugee crises, civil unrest, political infighting, presidential impeachment, and various natural disasters.<sup>1</sup>

During times of disaster and difficulty, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that we serve a good, gracious, and loving God. Yet the Scriptures teach us not only that God is good, but also that He is the ground and source of all goodness and the standard by which goodness is measured. He is neither malicious nor malevolent, but always desires good for His creatures and generously bestows His blessings upon us.

With respect to God's goodness, we affirm the following:

- God's goodness is revealed in *common grace*: He bestows blessings of various kinds on all His creatures, not out of obligation or compulsion but simply because of His good and generous nature (Ps. 145:9; Matt. 5:45; Luke 6:35; Acts 14:16–17).
- God's goodness is revealed in *saving grace*: He is merciful toward undeserving sinners (Ps. 107:1; 118:1; 136:1); He is patient with us when we sin (Ps. 86:5); and He saves us by grace through faith in Christ alone on the basis of His substitutionary death and resurrection (Eph. 2:8–9; 1 Cor. 15:3–4).
- Despite the difficulties and disasters the world might face at any given time, God is always working all things together for His glory and our good so that we might be transformed into the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28–29; Eph. 1:11).
- The pain, suffering, sickness, sadness, and tragedy in our world are the result of mankind's voluntary choice to commit sin and rebel against our Creator (Gen. 3; Rom 8:20). Yet God is able to bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, and order out of chaos (Gen. 50:20), and in the end He will make all things new, eradicating sin, sorrow, and suffering forever (Rom. 8:21–23; Rev. 21–22).
- Our knowledge of God's goodness derives primarily from the Scriptures, not from our emotions, experiences, circumstances, or feelings (Exod. 34:6; 1 Chron. 16:34; Ps. 25:8, 34:8; 145:9; James 1:17).
- God's goodness is meant to lead us to repentance (Rom. 2:4). Thus, we must be diligent to repent of our sins and to call others to repentance in response to God's goodness.

In light of all these things, we proclaim the unfailing goodness of God, even during times of disaster and difficulty. We trust in our good and all-wise God with all our hearts, even (and especially) when this world offers little reason for hope or optimism. We commit ourselves never to take His goodness for granted, to thank Him every day for the goodness He shows us, and to worship and praise Him continually. Furthermore, we commit to showing His goodness to others to the best of our abilities and by His divine enabling, recognizing that *goodness* is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and that the children of God must reflect His good nature to the world around us (3 John 11).

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed list, see <https://disasterphilanthropy.org/our-approach/disasters/>.

*Resolved by the messengers of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting together in regular conference June 29–30, 2020.*