

## **TRANSCRIPTION | Sunday, December 8, 2024 | Be Good | Good Tidings Series**

You know, we've been in some different message series. We started out a few months ago with a series called Good News. Then we went into a series entitled The Good Life. And now as we're arriving at the Christmas season, we're going to evaluate a series entitled Good Tidings. The anchor text for it will be Luke chapter two, verse ten.

And the angel said unto them, fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. So what is being declared is that there are some good things that are being brought to the earth through the announcement of this angel. The good news is associated to a fact that a child is going to be born in the city of David, a Savior.

He will be Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you. You'll find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. Now if we were to kind of summarize everything that we just read in that passage, you might say it this way.

What's being declared is that there are good tidings or good tidings from God. Result in goodwill toward men, which produces a good life for followers of Jesus. Meaning we experience peace and joy despite difficulties and challenges. Can I get an amen from somebody? So thank God for Jesus. That's why we're being told that Jesus coming to the earth has allowed us to be able to experience.

And so I've just been thinking about this term, good tidings in the context of the Greek. In the passage we just read, the visualization is given that basically in the same way that a news announcement would be given. So think about Fox News, CNN. There's an announcement that's being given almost like we now interrupt this broadcast or this regular programing to give you this announcement that when it talks about this angel making this statement, it is given in that context that there is a news announcement in ancient times.

Obviously, they did not have media as we have today. And so what would happen? Messengers would travel from village to village, tribe to tribe, city to city, courtyard to courtyard, and they would make announcements. And so that is the imagery here that this angel on behalf of heaven, has interrupted regular programing to give an announcement. And the announcement is good tidings is what this particular translation uses.

Good tidings. I can't say that word without thinking about an ocean and thinking about being just seated on the side of an ocean, or maybe kind of laid back. And you're there relaxing and you're there resting and, and there's these waves that are just sweeping over you. And they they bring encouragement and they bring restoration and they bring refreshing.

And I want you to understand something that Jesus coming to the earth has made all of that possible and more from a spiritual perspective, that God desires to wash over you with the

refreshing waves of his grace. Good tidings. But I want you to also see this. Look at this verse again. Luke 210 and the angel said unto them, fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.

So this is something to get excited about. This is something to have joy about, and it shall be for all people. So when when Jesus desires to release his good tidings in the earth, it's not just something that he wants a singular person to experience or an individual generation. It's something that he desires for all people in all times.

Then the question becomes, well, how is God going to do that? Well, when you take the full context of the New Testament, you discover that a major part of God's plan is that he wants to use people who have experienced his good tidings to bring those good tidings to other people. For instance, Jesus solidifies that in Matthew five verse 16, he says, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven.

Read it again so that they may see your good works, and glorify your father who is in heaven. So God wants to do a good work in your life, so that then you can go and begin to do good works in the earth, and people are going to see it and they're not going to glorify you. They're going to glorify God as a result of it, and then they're going to have their own experience with God.

Now, can I get a testimony from somebody in this room that God is a good God? Listen, I mean, wait, wait, wait. It's an old adage in the church that God is good all the time and all the time. God is good. Now the problem is the church did with that what we do with most things. We used it and overused it.

This point doesn't mean anything to us anymore. And so we just say it. But maybe we don't really mean it. But you need to understand he really is a good God. And the psalmist said, the Lord is good and his mercy endureth forever. But even when you're in the first pages of the Bible, you open up the book of Genesis.

And it's real clear that even when he starts making stuff, it's good. He made the sun, the moon and the stars, and he said, it's good. He made the planets and the universes. And he said, it is good. He made the living creatures and the fish of the sea. And he said, it is good he got to humanity.

And he said, it is very good. God is good, and he's good to the point that it overflows out of him. But now the question for you and me is, what do we do with that goodness? Hopefully the point's already becoming quite clear. You certainly don't keep it for yourself. You can experience it. You can celebrate it, but there's something that's meant to be done with it.

The first thing I would challenge you to do with God's goodness is to reflect it, to reflect it. What do you think about a mirror, and how that the sunlight might shine onto a mirror or a bright light

and you catch it, and you take that mirror and you know, you can then redirect that light into an angle, into a place that needs to experience it.

You understand that you're made in the image of God. He designed you to be a mirror that reflects his light into the places and the situations that need it. But what you and I have to understand is that we can start to realize that the Earth needs to experience some good things, and we have to be careful that we don't start trying to make ourselves the source of that goodness.

When you start giving away goodness, you have to make sure you're reflecting the goodness of God. Because if you make this about something that you're doing in your own mind, you're going to fail miserably. One of the reasons for that is because of what Paul said in Romans three. He said, there is no one righteous, not even one.

There is no one who understands. There is no one who does what is good. Not even one what seems to be said there, when you really study that out is Paul is making the point that even when humanity decides that they should do good, we wind up getting our own manipulative behavior involved in it, and somehow, some way, we always wind up corrupting it.

And so we do good. But in the back of our head we're thinking, well, because I did that, I'm probably going to get this, and so I'm going to do that. But it's really because I want to maneuver this situation in, in this particular way, because we don't even realize how deceitful our own hearts are. The prophet Jeremiah helped us with that.

In Jeremiah 17 he said, the heart is more deceitful than anything else, and it's incurable. Who can understand it? What Paul and Jeremiah are trying to remind us is that our hearts are wayward, and as a result, our actions are insufficient. So if we're going to bring long and lasting good into the earth, we can't be the source from which it arrives.

We must reflect the goodness of God as we are personally experiencing his grace that's transforming us, and his grace is going to justify us, and his grace is going to make us new. And his grace is going to release good tidings in our life. One of the good tidings of grace is unmerited favor. It means that you don't deserve the favor and the goodness of it, but God brings it to you as a free gift as a result of the works of the cross.

Unmerited favor. I was thinking about how, you know, maybe you're on the way to church and you're in a hurry, and maybe it's a morning where your kid's got to be on stage and you're really in a hurry. You know, we got to get there by a certain time. But you're speeding, and the cop pulls you over, and the cop walks up to the window and you're explaining, well, I'm on my way to church, and you know my kid, he's got a special thing today, and we just need to make sure we were there on time and.

And I just asked you to forgive me. And the state troopers, like, you know, it sounds like actually a good cause I'm going to let you go. And in this goodness, he allows you to drive away without

a ticket. That's mercy. That's mercy. Now, let's say that same cop pulls you over. You give him the same storyline. And this time, as you ask forgiveness, he tells you that he's not going to give you a ticket.

And then he asks for your Venmo because he wants to send you \$500 for your time. That's grace. And the human mind can't comprehend grace. We can somewhat begin to wrap our minds around mercy, but grace is incomprehensible because grace not only forgives you, grace gives you something you don't deserve. And so grace is not only going to bring unmerited favor in your life to set you up, to be able to have platforms and positions to do good works.

But it's also going to bring divine assistance. And that's one of the amazing things about the good Tidings of God is that he doesn't leave you alone to do this in your own power, but he brings the divine assistance of the Holy Spirit. And what happens is he will transform your weaknesses into his strength so that people will glorify him, which then tells us that we not only get to reflect God's goodness, but we actually are able to do it.

This look over at somebody and tell him, just do it. Just do it. Ephesians chapter two, verse ten says, we are his workmanship. We are created in Christ for good works. So God is working in your life. He is crafting you and the reason is for good works. Now notice that it says, and this is even something that God prepared at before time for you to do.

So. God has a plan for how these good works are supposed to unfold. These are one of the reasons that God can say all things work together to the good of those who love the Lord and are called according his purpose because nothing catches him by surprise. And there's things that he's setting up that he has desired for you to be a part of.

So you and I gotta realize that God has designed us for good works, not as a way to earn salvation, but as a response to it. I'm going to say it again because it's important. God designed us for good works, not as a way to earn salvation, but as a response to it. And so these works, they glorify him and they bring his love to others.

And so the context of the New Testament makes it pretty clear that every single believer has a unique gift that God has designated into their life, that you are a part of the body of Christ. You're a part of the Church of Jesus Christ. And as a result, he wants you to accomplish good works that no one else would ever be able to accomplish.

And what that means is, there are people that you are going to interact with that I will, I will never get to meet, and there's people I'm going to interact with that you will never have a relationship with. And as I allow God to bring good works through me, this particular person is impacted. And as you allow God to bring good works to you, that person is impacted.

And God's plan is that the whole earth would be able to experience that as his people yield to good works. Think of it like this a master craftsman is creating a tool that he can use to

accomplish his task and his work more efficiently and more effectively. God has designed you like a beautiful tool that he desires to use to get his work done in the earth.

And so when you start scrolling through social media, I mean, I'd say you're a lot like me. I mean, I start struggling, like with just getting all down and out and halfway depressed and like, is this really what the world has come to, like? Are our people really this dark in their minds to where they're thinking this way and they're doing this kind of stuff, and then you then you realize, wait a second.

All this is showing me is that the world needs God's goodness. And the way that Paul said it is this do not be, do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good. The more evil the world becomes, the more it needs the manifestation of God's goodness and the way that God is going to manifest, that goodness is through the followers of Jesus Christ.

And so in a broken world, it's full of hatred and injustice. God calls us to respond with goodness, and it doesn't mean that you ignore evil. It means that you overcome it with acts of love, acts of kindness, and acts of forgiveness. So, so think of it like this. One of the things Jesus said, he talks about this in the Gospels.

He preaches this, that when you do good works, it is the equivalent of allowing the light of heaven, his light, to shine through you. So think about this a dark room. I mean, we could turn off all the lights in this room, and then we could take one candle and light it, and everyone in this room would be able to find that candle and acknowledge it, because the dark, it is the last light it takes to make an impact.

And so some of you feel like you're in a very dark place, like some of you, even in your educational setting, it feels very dark. Others of you in your workplace, it feels very dark. Some of you, your family situation. It feels so dark that you dreaded Thanksgiving and you're now dreading Christmas. But I would challenge you. Don't hide your light under a bushel if I could be so bold.

Let your little light shine in such a way that the good works of God would be made manifest in the darkness. And when you do, you think about how to how to manifest this. Understand it's not something you got to conjure up. It's not something you gotta force. Well, I, I can see some of you maybe starting to have a conversation, looking at your spouse and saying, oh, honey, you be good today.

Some of y'all need that conversation, but it's probably not going to get the job done. Here's what this is supposed to look like. Galatians 5:23 but the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness. Stay with me. Goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. So a fruit of the spirit is goodness. So God's goodness is intended to flow through us like fruit through a vine.

That's important because if you went out to your garden, there has never been a moment where you have seen a tomato vine in travail trying to produce the fruit of a tomato. Has anybody ever walked out into your garden and seen a tomato vine trying to practice Lamaze breathing?

Does it ever need a midwife? Push? No. You go to bed. There's no tomato. You wake up the next morning, there is the fruit of a tomato. Why? Because the vine could no longer contain the life that was inside of it. And it just produced fruit. That's why the best definition of fruit that you will ever hear is excess life.

And God says in John 15 that Jesus is the vine, and you and I are the branches, and the Holy Spirit is the life force and the Holy Spirit has got so much life that the branch can't contain it. And that's why we are going to allow goodness to just flow through us. And we're doing it because it is flowing through us.

A Spirit-filled life bears the fruit of goodness, and it's not about just beginning to develop more behavior. It's a manifestation of God's character in our lives. One man said it this way goodness is a divine attribute made visible in how we live and love others. So in the further context of God's goodness, we're going to reflect it.

We're going to do it. But I also challenge you to dwell in it. Don't let it just be something that happens every once in a while. Don't let this yielding be something that is occasional, but let it be something that you dwell in. Romans two seven says it's even supposed to be connected to your eternal experience, to those who by persist in doing good, seek glory, honor, and immortality.

God will give them eternal life. Like living a life in sync with God's goodness has eternal implications. Here's the way I thought about saying, I think they can actually put it on the screen for you. Our perseverance in goodness reflects our faith in God's promises. I must say it again our perseverance in goodness reflects our faith in God's promises.

So. So we're going to be good when somebody else has been bad. We're going to be good when somebody else is treating us. Evil is. And the reason we're doing that is because we trust God's promises, and we believe he's the author and finisher of our faith. And we do believe that if God be for us, who or what could be against us?

And we do believe that all things work together to the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose. So there's there's this there's this belief system that I trust God's promise that if I do what he's speaking to me and I do what he's calling to me, and I don't lower myself to the nonsense behavior of this world so we can say it this way while our salvation is by grace, our good works demonstrate our trust and our obedience in God.

So a bottom line of everything I've said to you this point, maybe we can say it this way. True goodness begins with God's grace, grows through the Holy Spirit and is expressed through the

good works that we're called to do. So I was thinking about you guys and you know, how how are you going to leave this moment?

And I figured that would be some of you that would be like, what am I supposed to do? What that preacher told me. And I thought, well, maybe, maybe we could just have three things that this coming week, you can walk out of here and you could say, I'm going to put some emphasis on being good. Three things to think about.

I challenge, number one, ask yourself what good works has God prepared for me to do? What good works has God prepared for me to do? I will guarantee you there are good works that God has set you up for, and maybe you've missed them. Maybe you didn't see them, maybe you've been distracted. Maybe you've been hindered. Maybe you just haven't even been aware.

So I actually asking God, what good works have you prepared for me to do that I need to participate in? Number two, cultivate God's goodness by staying connected to him through prayer, scripture, and obedience to His Word. Remember, the source is not you, the source is God. And so you got to cultivate that relationship. So I saw a young man this week, and I'm telling you, you can tell God's hands on his life and God's got something special for this kid.

And and I've just been since. And every time I see him, so I just I walked up to him, I put my arm around him. I said, hey, man, how's it going? It's going pretty good. It's going pretty good. I said, you've been praying. He said, yeah, yeah. Have I've really gotten back to you? I think he even told me so.

I'm doing it a couple times a day. I was making sure I do this. It's great. I said, you read you reading the Bible? He said, I gotta be honest. No, but I pack it with me everywhere I go. I said, son, that's a start. That's a start. You gotta start somewhere. And you begin to cultivate and cultivate a prayer life.

Cultivate the scriptures, cultivate being obedient to God's Word. And the third thing I would say to you is fix your eyes on the eternal reward. The Lord says that what you do in secret, he will reward you for openly. And there are going to be things that you do in regards to manifesting the goodness of God that no one is ever going to see, no one is ever going to acknowledge.

And I'm going to tell you something. When you really buy into this thing, there will be moments where you will manifest the goodness of God at your own expense, and people will walk away thinking something about you other than the truth, but you are trying to protect a greater good and choose to take the wound for the cause of Christ.

You better hear me while I'm preaching. And what what happens? I had a had a conversation with somebody this week and they were somebody was just I mean, point blank is being evil and flesh starts to rise up. I'm going to get them and I know how to get them. And I'm and I was able to have a conversation with that individual and just say, wait a second.

We have to see the eternal. We cannot look at this through the eyes of the flesh. We have to choose the ways, the work and the will of God. And when we line up with God, he will take care of everything else. Anybody that's ever experienced that, could you just give me a big amen on a Sunday morning?

So, so step by step in the moments with confidence and know that God's equipped you and let the hope of eternity motivate you to just keep doing good, even when it feels like it's unnoticed or it's unappreciated because Paul was right. Ephesians 2:10. We are the workmanship of God. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works. So God wants to work on you so he can work through you.

Some of us need to step into kids church and sing it one more time. He's still working on me. Aren't you glad he's still working on you? I mean, I'll tell you straight up, I ain't what I want to be, but thank God I ain't what I used to be. There was a little situation unfolding recently. My wife just looked over at me in front of our kids and she said, Thank God you are saved. Because she knows who.

Can I get some help in here this morning? Like, sometimes you just need somebody to know how saved you are, and some of you have forgotten how saved you are, because it's been so long since you reflected upon how good God has been to you in transforming your life, renewing your mind and bringing you into a deeper and more mature level of discipleship.

Thank God. You're saved and thank God he's still working on you. You have an invitation to a godly and good life as we experience God's good things. But here's the thing it's great to testify he's still working on me, but make sure you can also still testify. He's still working through me. Don't just let him work on you.

Make sure you're yielding to him in such a way that he can work through you. So as I play some music, I give you one final statement. We experience God's goodness in us so that others can experience it through us, receive it, and release it, reflect it, do it, dwell in it. Heavenly father, we bow our hearts and our minds before you, and we just admit that we are sinners in need of a Savior.

But we admit that we need your goodness of grace in our life. Oh God, there's some of us that we've never had a relationship with you, and maybe we've flirted with you a little bit through attending a service or listening to a podcast or reading a verse here or there. But God, we we've never truly been born again.

And today, God, we just stop in our spiritual tracks and we lift our hand to you and we say, God, I surrender my life. I need to be saved. I ask you, Jesus, that you would forgive me of my sins. And Lord, we believe that you're willing to do it because of what your son did on the cross.

When he shed his blood to take heaven's wrath against sin. But at the same time, God, we believe that you can do it because he didn't stay in that grave. Three days later he got up. And



it's because of the power of the resurrection that our faith soars today, asking you for the courage that we would confess to anybody and everybody from this moment forward, that we are a follower of Jesus Christ.

We are all in God. Make us a disciple. Help us to live out your commands. God. God, help us to reflect good to do good, to be good. As we dwell in your goodness. And Lord, we pray. Even some of us said, I've been doing this a long time, that there's just a renewal and a refreshing and a revival of sorts in our soul that motivates us to flourish in the good tidings of Jesus Christ.

Lord, let us bring the rush of that tide to our spheres of influence, to our school, to our workplace, to our community, to our family. God work in us and work through us. We're yielded to you afresh in a new this day in Jesus name. This church said Amen. Amen.