DON'T BE DECEIVED (Part 3)
"…about the Goodness of God"

INTRO: Deception is real and we are all susceptible. Satan is a liar and a deceiver. Paul warns us to watch out as we move toward end times (1 Tim. 4:1). Being deceived is a real and present danger. Scripture specifically warns us not to be deceived in several areas. Jesus warns us not to deceive ourselves about our salvation (Matt. 7:21-28). Our next ones all come from James 1.

TODAY: Don't be deceived about the Goodness of God (Jam. 1:16-18). God is good no matter what and no matter what God is good. Jesus boldly proclaimed that God is good (Matt. 19:17). He is always good and always out for our good, even when we can't see it.

FIVE TRUTHS ABOUT THE GOODNESS OF GOD:

I. GOD IS GOOD IN HIS NATURE AND IN HIS ACTIONS (Psa. 34:8; 119:68)

God is good in who He is—His character—and in all He does—His conduct says Psalmist.

A. Consistent with Scripture: Psa. 25:8; Jer. 33:3; Nahum 1:7; Mark 10:18b… over 50 references.

B. The Bible describes His goodness as great (Neh. 9:35), rich (Psa. 104:24), abundant (Psa. 31:19), satisfying (Psa. 65:4), universal (Psa. 145:9), enduring or eternal (Psa. 23:6), etc.

C. To declare God is good in all He is and does is NOT to say God will always appear to be good, especially in some circumstances. Our view of God and His absolute goodness is distorted and limited. We can't apply human standards to God's.

ILLUS—Imagine your dog…

II. DOUBTING GOD'S GOODNESS LEADS TO SIN (Gen. 3:1-19)

Larry Crabb… From birth we are all doubters. Questioning God's goodness could be the foundation of our fallenness. Our inclination to sin is rooted in the suspicion that God is not perfectly good. That doubt causes us to take personal responsibility for our own comfort and well-being. Sin is often our effort to supplement what we think are shortfalls in God's goodness—start to trust self rather than God for our needs. This is further confirmed when bad things happen—even more so if God appears silent. Such times can cause me to doubt His goodness, not fully trust Him, and drag my feet to obey His will. We must allow nothing to shake our belief in God's absolute goodness—nothing! God is good no matter what. Don't ever doubt that (enemy at work).

III. EVIL AND SUFFERING NEVER CONTRADICT GOD'S GOODNESS (Psa. 119:71; Rom. 8:28)

Natural evil is result of a cursed earth (Gen. 3:17-19). *Moral* evil is the result of bad choices. To eliminate evil & suffering in this life God would have to destroy our freedom of choice and us, too. God does have an ultimate if not immediate solution. In the meantime, according to Paul in Rom. 8:28-29, will use evil and suffering to achieve a greater purpose of conforming His children to become more Christlike in our lives. Joseph's story (Gen. 50:20)… Like our pet, we see good as what makes us healthy and happy; God sees it in terms of what makes us more like Jesus. Besides, where does God promise us that being good or godly will avoid suffering? Jn. 16:33

IV. GOD'S GOODNESS TRANSFORMS OUR LIVES (Rom. 2:4-5)

The cross of Christ is the supreme expression of God's goodness, where we find forgiveness of sin and salvation. His goodness to us is shown in two specific ways: God only gives good gifts (Psa. 34:10; Jam. 1:17) and His will is good (Rom. 12:2; cp. Jer. 29:11). How then should we respond? Rom. 2:4-5, we should repent and conform so we can be transformed. This should be seen in our doing good all we can (Acts 10:38; Gal. 6:9-10; 3 Jn. 11).

V. THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN THIS LIFE IS BUT A SAMPLING OF HIS GOODNESS TO COME (Rev. 21:3-4)

One day God's ultimate solution is to reverse the curse and shower His perfect goodness on His own for eternity (Rom. 8:18-25). So, hold on. Trust in His goodness no matter what!

ILLUS— English missionary Allen Gardiner's story… "I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God." How did he have such a perspective and draw this conclusion? You believe God is good no matter what!

CONC—One verse to close, Psa. 34:8 "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the person who takes refuge in Him!" Experience His goodness today.