

Greatness of Goodness!

Reading: Acts 11:21-30

"You are my Lord; my goodness is nothing apart from You" (Psa 16:2)

When we talk about the virtue of goodness, there are two aspects—being good, and doing good. The first one leads to the other. Good people will do good, although all those who do good may not be good people. This was the logic of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: "A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit" (Mt 7:17, 18).

Goodness is a fruit of walking with God. God's goodness is the root of all goodness. Psalmist David confessed to God, "You are my Master! My goodness is nothing apart from You" (Psa 16:2). I believe this is the main reason why God testified of David that he was a man after His own heart (Acts 13:22b). Oftentimes David exclaimed, "O Lord, how great is Your goodness!" (Psa 31:19a).

God's goodness is associated with His patience. When He passed in front of Moses He proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, ... longsuffering and abounding in goodness" (Ex 34:6). This proclamation was made when God instructed Moses to prepare two stone tablets like the first ones (v1). It is the patience of God that manifests His goodness to us so He may give us a second chance! Referring to this nature of God, Paul rebuked the hardhearted, "Do you despise the riches of God's goodness, tolerance and patience, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Rom 2:4).

It was patience that enabled Jesus to do good to people all through His life. He was patient with folks in their slowness to understand. That was why He could continue to teach them (Lk 24:25-27). He was patient with the unbelief of people. That was why He could continue to heal them (Mt 17:17,18). He was patient with the thanklessness of the beneficiaries. That was why He could continue to bless the needy (Lk 17:17-19). He was patient with the forgetfulness of His disciples. That was why He continued to perform miracles for them (Mt 16:9,10). He was patient with the fearfulness of His associates. That was why He continued to encourage them (Mt 14:24-32). He was patient with the weakness of His disciples. That was why He could continue to support them (Lk 22:31-34). Even today He is patient with our weaknesses. That's why He is able to intercede for us to His Father (Heb 4:15,16).

*Do all the good you can, by all the means you can,
In all the ways you can, in all the places you can,
At all times you can, to all the people you can,
As long as you can! (John Wesley, 1703-1791)*