

## **RESTORING CHRISTIAN GOODNESS (Galatians 5:22-23)**

### **I. Definition of terms.**

- A. We need to understand our topic.
- B. First of all we need to understand the word restore.
  - 1. For our purposes, we will use the following definition: “to bring back into existence, use, or the like; reestablish”.
  - 2. If chaos has broken out and then calms down, we might say that order was restored.
  - 3. In many places, goodness is not existing in the lives of Christians, so it must be brought back into existence or reestablished.
- C. Second, we must remember that one who is a Christian is one who belongs to Christ.
  - 1. You and I, if we belong to Christ, are His servants (John 12:26).
  - 2. We are to emulate Christ in all that we do (1 Peter 2:21).
- D. Third, we need to understand the word “goodness”.
  - 1. The English word “goodness” can be found 9 times in the New Testament.
  - 2. The word translated “goodness” in the list of qualities possessed by one bearing the fruit of the Spirit is only found four times.
  - 3. It carries the idea of active good.
  - 4. It involves not only doing good acts but also rebuking, chastising, and correcting those who are in error.
  - 5. As you can tell, this is something that is definitely lacking in our America, and in many congregations of the Lord’s people.
- E. The word translated “kindness” in the list of qualities is the inner disposition of a person, while “goodness” is the active term.
- F. I found this description of “goodness”: In man is not a mere passive quality, but the deliberate preference of right to wrong, the firm and persistent resistance of all moral evil, and the choosing and following of all moral good.
- G. Goodness is doing right in the face of wrong and resisting wrong at every turn.

### **II. Demonstration of goodness.**

- A. You and I have a sin problem so we need someone or something that demonstrates goodness for us.
  - 1. We can’t know true goodness on our own because sin has blinded us in many ways.
  - 2. You can’t always rely on others to know what is good because our society is like that of Israel in Isaiah’s day (Isaiah 5:20).
- B. The ultimate Demonstrator of goodness is God.
  - 1. The Psalmist extolled the goodness of God numerous times but focused on it in Psalm 107 (Psalm 107:8, 9, 15, 21, 31).
  - 2. Zechariah wrote...(Zechariah 9:17).

- C. God demonstrates His goodness to man in many different ways.
  - 1. He has done so through His creation.
    - a. Every time the Lord exerted His creative powers in the beginning of time, He said it was good.
    - b. The world in which we live is marvelous and provides for us every good physical thing we need to survive in it.
    - c. God created beautiful places for us to see His creative power and they are good.
  - 2. God shows His goodness in His providential care of man, and especially of His children.
    - a. God makes the rain to fall on the just as well as the unjust (Matthew 5:45).
    - b. He takes care of those who are His providentially through answered prayers and His never leaving or forsaking us.
    - c. Every good gift, or thing, we have is from God (James 1:17).
  - 3. God has shown His goodness in giving us a book by which we can come to know and love Him.
    - a. God wants us to know Him and love Him and the only way that can be possible is if He has revealed Himself to us.
    - b. He has done that by giving us the Bible that reveals His love for us so that we can return that love by obeying His commands (1 John 5:3).
  - 4. He has most definitely shown His goodness by the plan of salvation He has devised for mankind.
    - a. There is nothing that forced God to provide a plan of salvation for sinful man.
    - b. We have done nothing, nor can we do anything, that would cause God to owe us salvation.
    - c. He demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son to die for us (Romans 5:8).
    - d. It purely out of His goodness that you and I can be saved.
- D. Jesus exemplified goodness in His life.
  - 1. Peter told Cornelius that Jesus went about doing good (Acts 10:38).
  - 2. When Jesus cast out the moneychangers and those who were selling animals in the court of the temple, Jesus was expressing His goodness.
  - 3. When He took a stand against the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus was showing His goodness.
  - 4. Remember, goodness is actively doing good and standing for right and against error and sin.
  - 5. Jesus was exemplifying goodness when He showed compassion on the publicans and sinners.
- E. Thankfully, there are humans who have set the example of goodness for us.
  - 1. The New Testament describes Barnabas as a “good man” (Acts 11:24).

- a. We can see his goodness in standing up for Paul when others wanted nothing to do with him.
- b. We can see his goodness in his missionary work.
- c. Notice how his goodness came out toward the brethren in Antioch.
  - (1) He encouraged the brethren there when he saw their faithfulness.
  - (2) He then realized he needed help in order to better help those brethren, so he went and found Paul.
  - (3) His goodness did not allow for ego to be involved.
- 2. We see goodness in female example as well when we look at the life of Tabitha, or as she is better known, Dorcas (Acts 9:36).
  - a. She was completely full of good works, not just occasionally.
  - b. What a great statement was made by her fellow Christians when they didn't just talk about her to Peter, but showed them the good things she had made and done for them.
  - c. Prayerfully, when we pass from this life, our goodness will be missed as was hers.
- F. Ultimately, though, if we are going to restore Christian goodness, we must look to the example of deity in order to do so.
  - 1. We are to follow in the steps of Christ (1 Peter 2:21).
  - 2. We are to live godly lives (Titus 2:11-12).
  - 3. We are to be holy people (1 Peter 1:15-16).
  - 4. We can exemplify goodness in our lives because of the Holy Spirit being in us through the taking in of God's word.

### **III. Determination to bring forth goodness.**

- A. As we know and stated earlier, we live in a world that has no idea what goodness is.
  - 1. We use good in so many ways.
  - 2. There are those that use the word good to describe evil things.
- B. The Bible is the only source of knowing that which is truly good.
- C. You and I, if we are going to be those that walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18), have to determine that we are going to manifest goodness in our lives.
- D. Remember our earlier description of goodness: not a mere passive quality, but the deliberate preference of right to wrong, the firm and persistent resistance of all moral evil, and the choosing and following of all moral good.
- E. If we are going to bring goodness back into the church and the lives of individual Christians, and our own lives, we must choose right all the time.
  - 1. Not what we think is right, but what is right and true.
  - 2. The knowledge of right and true only comes from God's word (John 17:17; Hebrews 5:12-14).
- F. This won't be easy will it?
  - 1. We know the world shouts us down.

2. We know the world encourages us to be involved in the works of the flesh and not bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.
  3. People are being fined for not accepting homosexuality.
  4. People are being killed for not bowing to Mohammedism.
  5. Individual Christians are shunned by others because, as Peter might say, they won't run to the same excess of riot as their non-Christian friends.
  6. Christian young people feel the force of giving in to the world to be like their classmates and made to feel as if they were weird for not giving in.
- G. You and I have to make up our minds that we are going to do right all the time, and when we fail, we will repent as soon as it is realized.
- H. The world around us is eaten up with wanting to feel good and look good, while the Christian is to be eaten up with being good.
- I. Doing right, though, is only half the battle.
1. We've got to take a stand against that which is wrong.
  2. Remember in our description of goodness there is also the firm and persistent resistance of evil or wrong.
- J. You might be thinking, isn't just doing right good enough?
1. Not if we want to be right with God.
  2. Remember that Jesus went about doing good.
  3. Some of that good, was standing against sin.
    - a. He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23).
    - b. Jesus rebuked Peter when he needed it (Mark 8:33).
    - c. His cleansing of the temple was doing good.
- K. As Christians, we've got to stand against the evil that is around us.
1. Doing right is most definitely standing against evil.
  2. However, there are times when our voices need to be heard.
  3. There are times when our actions need to be seen taking on evil head on.
- L. Have you noticed all the videos online that show people getting into fights or beaten up and all people want to do is video them?
1. Whatever happened to standing up for those that can't help themselves?
  2. Whatever happened to helping those who are being wronged?
  3. This is just a manifestation of the sad fact that goodness has been left behind in our society.
- M. What about all the lack of goodness in the Lord's church today?
1. Religiously speaking, those congregations that have left the path of righteousness have left the path of goodness.
  2. Are we speaking out against them or reaching out to them to encourage them to come back to the truth they so sadly have left?