

The Goodness and Severity of God

Romans 11:17-24

Introduction

- A. Man has struggled to understand the seemingly conflicting nature of God
- B. We see both sides of God in the Bible
 - 1. A God who holds life sacred & holy - Yet instructed His people to kill
 - 2. A God who lovingly calls all men to Himself - Yet "cuts off" those who reject Him
- C. It's logical that God would love all that is good & holy, but also logical that He would deal with evil
- D. In dealing with good, He's always kind
- E. In dealing with evil, He's always severe
- F. This Morning we want to focus upon two contrasting attributes of God –Namely His goodness and His severity - **Romans 11:22**
 - 1. In Romans 11 the apostle Paul dealt with various questions regarding the Jews, the people to whom the Law of Moses was given, and who had received superior advantages
 - 2. However, when the Lord went to them they, for the most part, rejected Christ
 - 3. True to Old Testament prophecy, the gospel was first preached to the Jews
 - 4. However, as time progressed the Jews as a people became less receptive to the truth
 - 5. Paul deals with that issue in Romans 11; he likened them to an olive tree whose branches were cut off due to unbelief
 - 6. Moreover, he likened the obedient Gentiles to the branches of a wild olive tree which were grafted in
 - 7. Then he made application in **Verses 21-22**

I. The Goodness of God

- A. Goodness Defined
 - 1. From the Greek word Chrestotes - goodness in the sense of what is upright and righteous
- B. Facts about the Goodness of God:
 - 1. God is infinitely good - **Matthew 19:16-17**
 - 2. God is immutably good - **James 1:17**
 - 3. God is eternally good - **Psalms 52:1**
 - 4. His goodness extends to all the works of His hands
- C. God's Goodness evidenced in:
 - 1. Creation – **Genesis 1**
 - 2. Creation of man - **Genesis 1:26-27**
 - 3. The rich provisions He made for all creation - **Psalms 104**
 - 4. The creation of woman - **Genesis 2**
 - 5. The laws He gave to guide man – **Romans 7:12**
 - 6. Sending His Son to die for us - **John 3:16**
 - 7. The gospel plan of salvation - **Romans 1:16**
 - 8. The spiritual blessings in Christ - **Ephesians 1:3**
 - 9. The glories of heaven - **Philippians 3:20-21**

II. The Severity of God

A. Severity Defined

1. From Apotomia, "steepness, sharpness." From apo (off), and temno (a cutting), literally "a cutting off."

B. God's Severity, like His goodness is infinite - beyond our ability to comprehend

C. Examples of His Severity.

1. The fall of man - **Genesis 3**
2. The Genesis flood - **Genesis 7:23**
3. The plagues upon Egypt - **Exodus 7-12**
4. Nadab and Abihu - **Leviticus 10**
5. Uzzah - **2 Samuel 6**
6. The Captivity of Israel - **2 Kings 17**
7. The Captivity of Judah - **Jeremiah 52**
8. Ananias and Sapphira - **Acts 5**
9. Hell - **Matthew 25**

D. It is a property of goodness to hate evil, and therefore a property of goodness to punish evil

III. The Balance of Goodness and Severity

A. He alone is the only righteous judge

1. He executes justice & mercy with fairness
2. Note Peter's words in **Acts 10:34-35**
3. He doesn't look at social position, nationality, or wealth
 - a. He looks deeper, at thoughts & intentions & actions - **Hebrews 4:12-13**
 - b. Then, He judges accordingly - **Romans 2:9-12**

B. Yet despite man's constant rejection of Him, He still offers salvation to anyone who'll accept it

1. In this we see His ultimate goodness Displayed so we do not have to experience His severity!

Conclusion

A. It is common for man to ridicule the idea of eternal punishment, for man cannot conceive of sending someone to a place of torment, to be punished forever

1. But man does not have infinite goodness, so man cannot hate sin like God can
2. Moreover, man is unable to comprehend the sinfulness of sin

B. But God, Who is also a God of severity, loves all mankind, and is not willing that any should perish

C. Invitation