



Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 18, 2021

*“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, **goodness**, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”*

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

*Call to Worship

Great is our God, and worthy of praise!

God’s goodness knows no limit;

God’s faithfulness toward us is boundless!

God, your majesty and glory surround us here.

***We’ve come together to celebrate your presence,
and to offer songs of praise and worship.***

*We’ve come to rejoice in your mighty acts,
and to retell the story of your goodness
throughout history and in our own lives.*

***Move among us as we worship together;
may your Spirit guide and inspire our thoughts and actions
as we spend this time in your presence.***

In the name of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Opening Prayer

God of majesty and might, blow through this place like a mighty wind. Inspire us with your presence. Cover us with your love, that we might be your people serving others with care and compassion. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Share How You Can Present Your Offering to God

Make your offering personal...through a donation or an act of service...bring to God an offering of praise and gratitude!

Sing the Doxology Together

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer for God's Spirit to Inspire Our Acts of Goodness

Lord, we confess how easy it is in our day to be lulled into a routine of comfort and convenience. We can so easily become glued to our screens, our schedules, or our stuff. We become numb to the needs of those all around us. In the process, we lose the life You envision for us, we lose the adventure of partnering with You in daily life.

Forgive us, we pray. Send your Holy Spirit to awaken us. Stir within us a generous spirit to live our lives with the kind of "givenness" that Your Son lived with such grace. Inspire our hearts and minds with a delightful creativity, even playfulness, to be those through whom You can reach and touch others in the broken places of their lives. In the process help us to become attentive and responsive to the ways in which you seek to send us out into the world all around us on errands and missions of active goodness.

Along the way, Lord, grant us glimpses of the power of goodness when we partner with Your Spirit to shine light in this harsh and dark world. Use us as Your instruments, we humbly pray. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

God's Word

Matthew 5:16; Galatians 5:22 (NLT)

The Word of God for the people of God...Thanks be to God!

Message

"Goodness Is Active!"

Pastor Clark

See Message Below

*Hymn of Faith

"This Little Light of Mine"

UMH 585

Blessing

As you leave this time, remember that you do not go alone.

God is close at hand. He hears the cry of all who call on His name.

He honors those who honor Him, listening to their prayers and coming to their aid.

So go from here with joy and confidence, to love and serve God and one another.

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day!

2. All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
call us to rejoice in thee.

3. Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
love divine is reigning o'er us,
binding all within its span.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward,
in the triumph song of life.

This Little Light of Mine

*1 This little light of mine, I'm goin'a let it shine,
this little light of mine, I'm goin'a let it shine;
this little light of mine, I'm goin'a let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. (let it shine)*

2 Everywhere I go

3 All through the night

“Goodness Is Active!”

*“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, **goodness**, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”*

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

Introduction

I have long been touched by the writings of **Ann Voskamp** and especially her masterpiece entitled ***The Broken Way***. But even more than her words, the way she and her family live out what she writes. One year not too long ago, Ann and her entire family, decided to spend **her birthday** with a day of unrestrained goodness by gift-blitzing their small community. They spent the entire day sharing acts of kindness and goodness all throughout their community...

- They filled mason jars with gladiolas and took them to the local nursing home to share with every room on a wing of that residence...leaving some at the doorways but entering others for conversations and prayers...specifically Mr. Bender in Room 112 where they sing together hymns and songs he treasured.
- They pass a parked police car and leave a box of cookies on the hood for the officer...and later see him chuckling at the unexpected and anonymous gift.
- They grab a pie at Zehr’s Market and drop it off at their doctor’s office and thank him for catching babies.
- Next to the local coffee shop where they paid for the entire line of folk’s coffee orders behind them.
- They deliver a dozen donuts to the fine folks at the town office.
- Then across the street at the local diner, they arrange with a waitress to pay for the dinner of an entire family...in secret.
- Their boys take a whole box of new tennis balls and leave them at the local tennis courts.
- Ann slipped into the library to leave a stack of her favorite books at the desk as gifts to the library.
- Next, they go to the grocery store where they put away all the grocery carts scattered about.
- Then they grab a few bags of groceries and take them to the food bank.
- While they were at the grocery, they scope out the store to find just the right person and pay for their entire cart.
- They tuck parking fees into envelopes and slide them under windshield wipers at the hospital parking lot.
- While they are there, they take a box of chocolates to the nurses up on the pediatrics floor.
- They go into the dollar store and scatter dollar bills up and down every aisle.
- They pass out lollipops to any and every kid they see.

What a way to spend your birthday! Along the way they experience some amazing blessings and learn some deep truths, like this: *“learning the art of living is learning the art of giving.”*

“Now, given, while most of these expressions were simple acts of kindness and gifts of grace, they start a cascade of grace and goodness to fill a multitude of canyons in a hurting world. Maybe there’s no such thing as small acts of giving. Every small gift of grace creates a love quake that has no logical end. It will go to the ends of the earth and change the world and then it will break through time and run into eternity.”

Beautiful expressions of goodness. But, let’s stop there a moment and name that there’s a problem! A problem about the word **“goodness”** because of the image that this word evokes in our minds. When you think of goodness, what comes to your mind? When I think about goodness I think about Mom and Dad Brady from the *Brady Bunch*. They are nice. They always seemed to say and do the right things. These are nice images—don't get me wrong—but that's part of the problem, isn't it? In our world, "good" sounds like "nice."

That's the problem: in our world this word goodness has this tendency to sound lightweight, timid, weak. What good is goodness when we come face to face with the challenges in our real world? For many people goodness seems like an old-fashioned, sentimental ideal for people who are just slightly out of touch with reality.

We couldn’t be further from the truth! Goodness, at least in the NT, is a potent word. There is an astonishing power to goodness. **Goodness** is translated from the Greek word **agathōsunē**, and this word is closely related to kindness, but it is a more **active term**. *Agathōsunē* generally is described this way: **generous character energized, expressing itself in active good.**

The Source of Goodness

*“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, **goodness**, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”*

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

If there's any goodness, it can't simply be mustered up from within us. This kind of goodness finds its source in God. The Holy Spirit is the true Source of goodness. The Holy Spirit is the creative mind and *heart behind these* expressions that are intended to disarm the powers of this world. Share my experience at Great Clips...prompted by the Holy Spirit...

The Beauty of Goodness

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

God has a masterpiece He wants to create in and through you...in and through your acts of goodness. There is a beauty about them; they reflect the goodness of God.

If we would but be alert each day to the unique opportunities God places before us, the Holy Spirit prompts within us, we would be startled to discover the skill of the Master Artist to paint our acts of goodness on the canvas of life!

Joel Prusak was an employee at the ice cream chain Dairy Queen. One day, as he was serving customers their food, he noticed that a blind man had dropped a twenty-dollar bill on the floor. A lady standing in line quietly bent down and put the twenty dollars into her own pocket. Young Joey Prusak approached the lady, asking her to give the twenty-dollar bill back to the blind man. She refused, quite aggressively, claiming it was her own. And then Joey did something very generous. Quietly, he opened up his own wallet and handed the blind man a twenty-dollar bill of his own. The man took the money gratefully, and the Dairy Queen resumed normal business.

A customer in line observed the whole episode and sent an e-mail to the Dairy Queen management, informing them of Joey's act of generosity. The DQ management then posted about it on Facebook, and the event went viral. A couple of days later, Joey received a call from the billionaire Warren Buffet, a big investor in Dairy Queen. He thanked Joey for showing such integrity and asked him to come to the next Dairy Queen investors' meeting. As Joey was an employee and representative of Dairy Queen, Buffet wanted him to be there as an integral part of the fabric of the organization.

Joey's act of generosity inspired thousands of people to believe that they, too, could do something small to impact the world for good. It was a small act—with a huge impact. And so it is with God. He takes our small acts of obedience or kindness or goodness and multiplies them for his good, and ours. So don't wait until you can do big things; start small. Sometimes small seeds grow into large trees, and sometimes they fail to thrive. Source: Ken Costa, *Know Your Why*, (Thomas Nelson, 2016)

How beautiful is that!

The Subversive Power of Goodness

“And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”
Acts 10:38 (NLT)

Goodness energized by the Holy Spirit has the power to disarm the powers of evil in this world. While we will explore this morning next Sunday, consider that Jesus' ministry is the clearest illustration of this power. God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power. The impact of that anointing? Jesus went around doing good and healing...healing people who were oppressed by evil.

I would ask us to consider that in God's kingdom, our acts and expressions of good are potent with the same power. As we saw earlier, the Holy Spirit is the true Source of goodness in the hearts and lives of believers.

In a world that is cold and hard like ours, in a world that seems to demand that everyone look after his own interests, then small and seemingly insignificant acts of generous goodness can break through; among the bitter, hard, cold landscape, goodness can be seen for the power it possesses. As these virtues are shared in community, they contain the amazing power to soften the harshness of this world.

You've heard me mention what's called **Story Corp**. It's a traveling sound booth that is set up from one city to another. They invite people to come in off the street to step into the booth and record stories from their lives. One story they captured was of a man named **Julio Diaz**. Julio's a thirty-one-year-old social worker from the Bronx. Every night he has a regular evening routine. He ends his hour-long commute back from the city to his apartment one stop early so he can get off and go to a diner. This diner's become his home dinner spot.

One night Diaz stepped off the Number 6 train onto a nearly empty platform, and his evening took an unexpected turn. As he walked towards the stairs, a teenaged boy approached him and pulled out a knife. Julio gives the boy his wallet and says, "Here you go." As the boy leaves, Julio calls out, "Hey, wait a minute. You forgot something. If you're going to be robbing people for the rest of the night, you might as well take my coat to keep you warm."

He continues, *"All I wanted to do was go get dinner, and if you really want to join me, hey, you're more than welcome."* The stunned boy accepts Julio's offer, so they go to the diner Julio frequents. Once seated, the manager, servers, and other staff come by to say hi to Julio, and the boy is again surprised. He says, *"Man, you know everybody here. You're even nice to the dishwasher ... I didn't think people actually behaved that way."* So Julio asks the boy, *"What is it that you want out of life?"* The boy sits there not knowing what to say.

When the bill comes, Julio says, *"Look, I guess you're going to have to pay for this bill, because you got my money ... So if you give me my wallet back, I'll gladly treat you."* The boy hands the wallet back. Julio takes a twenty out and gives it to the boy, asking the boy for his knife in return, to which the boy complies. In Julio's words, *"I figure if you treat people right, you can only hope that they treat you right. It's as simple as it gets in this complicated world."*

You know, when I hear Julio tell that story, **I don't think he was just being nice**. I think he was tapping into the power of goodness, which is much stronger than nice. Goodness possesses the kind of strength that chooses to believe something can be gained when we respond to the harsh world not with greater harshness but with counterintuitive generosity.

Application

What's the most touching act of goodness you have ever received?

What's the clearest act of goodness you have done for someone in the past year? What happened as a result?

Who is someone within the Hope and Faith community who needs a gracious expression of goodness in their lives right now?

Who is someone in your sphere of relationships who needs an act of goodness come their way?

Who might be someone from the larger community who is desperate for a lifeline of goodness at this critical crossroads in their life?

What's your goodness-in-action plan for this coming week? Name it and take a moment to offer yourself to God to be an agent of goodness this week!

Conclusion

*"In the same way, let your **good deeds** shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."* Matthew 5:16 (NLT)

"Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon." Isaiah 58:10 (NLT)

As the Voskamp family came to the end of their day of unbridled giving and goodness, they paused to reflect on the impact it was having on them. This day of giving led them to experience what it felt like to be the gift the world needs! Here's one thought: *"Can I trust that God's enough in me to make me enough for others? The art of giving is believing there is enough love in you, that you are loved enough by God, to be made enough love to give."*

Ann's daughter declared, *"Don't you think all this giving is the greatest? I feel like my heart may burst!"*

"The greatest living always happens through givenness."

My favorite it this: *"The light feels warm. Dappled on faces. There's not much to say when you feel a holy change beginning: our broken night could become like the noonday. Light could rise in all this darkness—in the ache of unspoken brokenness, in all this busted world. We will begin here and trust that this will lead us: spending ourselves is how you multiply joy."*

Pray for One Another

- *Guy Cory, now at the Wexner Center in Bexley for dialysis*
- *Linda Vaughn, in the aftermath of Dean's passing*
- *Mary Evans, now in memory care at Winchester Trails*
- *Jan Smith from Faith Church continuing treatments*
- *Paula Prose, remarkably better, now at a rehab facility in Westerville*
- *Jan Yaple, is doing much better! Her numbers are good, no dialysis needed!*
- *Sarah Cory, has moved to the Bickford Senior Living in Bexley (2600 E. Main St. Columbus, OH 43209)*
- *Brady Martin, 10-year old struggling with leukemia*
- *Gary Stammler, doing well after pancreatic cancer surgery*
- *Eileen Moffo, mother of Carla Jay, as they found a mass on her liver*
- *Community Focus: Children and families who deal with food insecurities*
- *National Focus:*
- *World Focus: Another instance of mass child abduction in Nigeria*