

**Title: The Goodness of God Leads to Repentance**  
**Series: Romans - Living Free**  
**Date: 1/10/10**

**NOTE TO LEADERS:** This is a slightly abridged version of Pastor Dan's sermon notes with the addition of possible discussion questions to use in your life group meeting. Please review these notes well in advance of your meeting, add your own questions and direct the discussion as you see fit.

**TEXT: Romans 1:18-2:4** (ask a group member to read the text or read verse by verse as you progress through the discussion)

**II. Romans 1:18** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*

**Sin causes its own wrath.** All forms of selfishness, self-absorption and self-delusion lead to death. Our faith in Christ delivers from the wrath to come (the final judgment) and the wrath of the present age.

**DISCUSSION:** Verse 18 is interesting in that it states that the wrath of God is something that is currently being revealed as opposed to something that is exclusively reserved for the final judgment. What do you think this means? How do we see this manifested in our world?

**Romans 1:21** *Because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

- *Hell begins with a grumbling mood, always complaining, always blaming others...but you are still distinct from it. You may even criticize it in yourself and wish you could stop it. But there may come a day when you can no longer. Then there will be no you left to criticize the mood or even to enjoy it, but just the grumble itself, going on forever like a machine. It is not a question of God "sending us" to hell. In each of us there is something growing, which will be Hell unless it is nipped in the bud.*

**C.S. Lewis in *The Great Divorce***

**DISCUSSION:** Read the C.S. Lewis quote above. Lewis presents an interesting perspective on "hell." He writes, 'It is not a question of God "sending us" to hell. In each of us there is something growing, which will be Hell unless it is nipped in the bud.' This is a sobering statement. What do you think Lewis means here? What insight might this give us regarding our understanding of the nature of "hell." How might this change our approach to sharing the Gospel with unbelievers?

**The cry of our day is freedom** but it is vital we understand that sin only results in bondage. A life of no restraint that gives way to addictions of all kinds is not freedom. Love focuses on the others. Sin focuses on "self."

C.S. Lewis said hell is “the greatest monument to human freedom”. It is freedom from Himself. Freedom from God has dire consequences.

**DISCUSSION:** Many people in our society reject Christianity, or religion in general, arguing that faith in God or religion is restrictive and limits their freedom. Can anyone share about a time in your own life when you had this same view? Tell us the story of how your view changed to what it is today? How would you share your perspective on this with an unbeliever today?

### III. *God gave them up* Rom 1:24,26,28

**Romans 1:24 Dishonorable acts** *Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness...to dishonor their bodies*

This is a result of worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. The principle of Scripture is you become like that which you worship.

**Romans 1:26 Unrestrained passion** *For this reason God gave them up to vile passions*

The book of Romans particularizes sexual sin as a sign of living apart from God. Adultery is wrong in every culture. Why? Because it is destructive. Sexual appetites are to be governed for good or they will govern you.

**Romans 1:28 Debased thinking** *God gave them over to a debased mind*

Paul lists all kinds of results of ‘sin following its course’. I want to point out a few: envy, gossip, strife and covetousness.

**DISCUSSION:** What does it mean that God “gave” sinners over to their sin? Some might argue that people are not fully responsible for their sin if God “gave them over to it.” How would you respond to this argument?

**Romans 2:1** *Therefore you are inexcusable O man, whoever you are who judge for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.*

Paul caps off the sin parade by singling out one final group: **hypocrites** – the apparent righteous who feel they are better than all those listed before. .

**Summary: There is a disease in our soul.** Some have it worse than others but it is terminal in everyone. In its final stage you become mad and push away all help. It eats you up by an every increasing desire for gratification at the expense of others and God.

### IV. **Romans 2:4** *do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*

**DISCUSSION:** How would you describe the goodness of God to someone who doesn't know Him? How have you experienced the "riches" of God's goodness and patience in your own life?

The Creator sees mankind's predicament, He sees our foolish choices and He knows our motives and by all rights He could say "*game, match, point – it's over for you*". But instead He is unbelievably kind towards us.

**A. The "goodness" of God is seen in the Creation.** Repeatedly, God pronounced everything which He created "good" in Genesis 1.

- A good meal, a beautiful sunset, a warm embrace all are common graces that were created 'good'.

**B. The goodness of God is a chief attribute of His manifest presence.** *Then Moses said, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!" And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, Exodus 33:19*

- Where the Lord is there is blessing: Creativity, fruitfulness and prosperity

**C. The goodness of God is the source of everything that is good.** *Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow James 1:17*

- The English word 'good' is actually derived from the word 'god'. *I said to the LORD, "Thou art my Lord; I have no good besides Thee" Psalm 16:2*
- God does not withhold anything that is truly good from His children. *No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. Psalm 84:11b*
- At the end of the book you will say "God is good"

**D. The goodness of God is seen in His discipline.** *For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. Hebrews 12:10*

**E. The goodness of God draws us to Himself** - woos us, convicts us, blesses us – all to get us into relationship with Himself.

- **Hosea 2:14** *Behold I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness and speak comfort to her*
- **Hosea 11:4** *I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love, and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them*
- *God makes it rain on the righteous and the unrighteous*

- Don't get mad when God blesses the nonChristian – the blessing is drawing them to the Father

**V. Leads to Repentance.** All these qualities of God's goodness are designed to lead us to **repentance**: Gk. *metanoia* - a change of mind resulting in a change of action, i.e. a turning away from where we are headed and a redirection toward God.

**DISCUSSION:** Share a personal example or story of how the goodness of God led you to repentance in some area of your life. How does this view of the motivation for repentance differ from the view of the world and other religions? How can this view impact our approach in sharing of the Gospel with unbelievers?

**A. Humility.** It seems to me, repentance always starts with humility: “*God, your right*”, “*I am at fault*”, “*I need you, God*”.

Repentance doesn't begin with some big heroic act but rather it is an act of faith. I put myself in the hand of a merciful God through Jesus Christ.

**B. Godly Sorrow.** *For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation II Cor 7:10*

**APPLICATION QUESTION(S):** Give the group time to ponder their responses to these questions and then ask each of them to respond in 2-3 sentences. What is one specific way God would have you meditate on or experience His goodness this week? What is one specific way you will demonstrate God's goodness to a neighbor, coworker or other unbeliever in the coming week?

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Pray for specific individuals that need a revelation or touch of the goodness of God in their lives.

**NOTE:** Pastor Dan was not able to get to point VI (below) in his sermon but will continue on next week from this section.

## **VI. Increasing Revelation of God.**

Paul teaches us that God's goodness is seen several ways in our world. These are known by general revelation. This leaves all men without excuse.

### **A. Creation -**

**Romans 1:20** *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made even His eternal power and Godhead, so they are without excuse*

- **Psalm 19:1** *The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork*

The order, complexity and beauty of Creation points us to the concept of a Creator.

- Paley's Watch. If you were to walk through a jungle and find a stop watch what does that say to you? Do you think that it came about through completely undirected processes or does it argue for a Creator.

## **B. Conscience**

**Romans 2:14,15** *for when Gentiles who do not have the law by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bear witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.*

There is a basic moral code in all people everywhere. It is called **natural law** and it could be seen as a function of our conscience. You don't need revelation on what to do it is in you and is accessed by reason alone.

- Paul talks about when we are turned over to sin that '*women give up their natural use for what is against nature*' **Romans 1:26**

Why is it that in all people there is a feeling of “I ought” to do so and so. The idea of justice, honesty and fortitude are the same everywhere.

No person is really an atheist – at a deep level all have a sense of the divine.

Our conscience is not a perfect guide to God since it can be hardened but it does awaken us to the idea that ‘there is Someone in who we are accountable’.

## **C. Commandments**

**Romans 2:12** *as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law*

This is a much clearer understanding of what God demands and who He is. The law is the gift of God to clearly lay out the requirements of God but also it describes the best life to live in this present world.

This is seen the best in the Ten Commandments.

Paul is saying that nature, conscience and God's Word all make man without excuse. Those that know the Law are judged by the Law and those without the Law are judged without the Law.

## **D. Christ**

The book of Romans teaches us that the gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation. Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God. He is the ultimate goodness of God for us. To know Christ is to know God.

Where does the goodness of God lead us? To Christ.

## VII. Closing:

The book of Romans says that Christ saves bad sinners (i.e. those God *gave up* to their sin), good sinners (those who only know God through conscience and creation) and religious sinners (those who attempt law-keeping as a means of acceptance by God)

- **Romans 2:11** *For there is no partiality with God*

Sin will eventually dehumanize everyone – the bad, the good and the religious. Christ is the ultimate answer for all of life. God’s mercy is here to day for all who come to Him – He shows no partiality whatsoever.

Today, you can discover with countless others that **His goodness leads us to repentance.**