

When You're Ready to Listen: **Only God is Good**

Hi, this is Steve, with Thresher Media Group. Welcome to "When You're Ready to Listen"

This podcast is dedicated to exploring the truth about God: things you may not have understood, may not have been taught, or quite frankly, had a very hard time believing.

And since our entire relationship with God rests on "believing," it is important we learn how to separate the truth from the many lies and fictions that abound within the religion of Christianity.

So, when you're ready to listen – tune in and discover a pathway to freedom, encouragement, life, and hope.

One of the most important truths that I want to communicate to you, and which you will hear quite often if you continue to tune in, is that **Only God is Good**. In **Matthew 19:17**, Jesus says, "There is only one who is good;" and in **Mark 10:18**, He says that "no one is good except God alone."¹ These are exclusive statements with no exceptions.

The implications of this truth are mind-blowing, religion shattering, and are intended to revolutionize our relationship with God.

We Literally Have Nothing to Offer

If only God is good, there is simply no good in us to offer to God, no matter how hard we try or how sincere our intentions.² We may be convinced we are good, we may truly believe we have something to offer to God in terms of our commitment, our service, our obedience, our sincerity, our worship, our love, and so on, but truth be told, we do not even have the capacity for doing anything which God would consider to be good. Even our ability to believe comes as a grant from Him.³ In fact, He is the one responsible for any goodness that comes from our lives.⁴

Spiritually speaking, human goodness is a myth, a fiction, a complete lie. All our so called "good" is tainted with a rotten sickness imbedded within our humanity—a sickness that is obsessed with advancing the "ME". Truth be told, we are all mercenary through and through, with every thought and intention of the heart fixated on our own needs, our wants, our desires, and our perspective of what is good and bad, right and wrong, and so on.

¹ See also **Luke 18:19; Psalm 16:2**

² **Romans 3:10-12; Psalm 14:1-3, 53:1-3; Isaiah 64:6**

³ **Philippians 1:29, 2:13**

⁴ **Isaiah 26:12; Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 1:11; John 15:5; Galatians 2:20**

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In contrast, the Spirit tells us that “There is none righteous, not even one...There is no one who does good, there is not even one.”⁵ Again, we have another one of those exclusive statements which is not just hard to accept, it is extremely hard to believe. After all, we are so deeply convinced of our own goodness—it is the foundation of how we find our value and worth as people.

Yet, the Spirit says that everything within our being (our heart, mind, soul, and strength) is tainted with what the Bible calls our *flesh*, our old sinful nature—that part of us that cannot please God, stands in opposition to God, is never willing to obey Him, can't obey Him, and always sets its desire against the Spirit of God.

He also tells us that our hearts are sick, and more deceitful than all else; **yes, all else!**⁶ Comments like that are so hard to wrap our brain around because we love our goodness. Oh, we get it, we know what He is saying, but we don't really get it. These becomes one of those religious clichés, for we don't live as if this is a truth, much less our truth.

And to top it off, He adds that all our good deeds are like a dirty menstrual cloth.⁷ The imagery is a bit shocking; but it makes the point which most of us, in our delusion of goodness, wants to ignore. Hence, Jesus said that we do not even realize that the light we think we have (the goodness we think we are capable of) is darkness, and how deep that darkness runs in and through our being.⁸

And so, we are adamantly warned, “Who among you fears the Lord and obeys his servant? If you are walking in darkness, without a ray of light, trust in the Lord and rely on your God. But watch out, you who live in your own light and warm yourselves by your own fires. This is the reward you will receive from me: You will soon fall down in great torment.”⁹

When we are convinced of our own goodness, when we are convinced God owes us something for what we have done for Him (a belief which usually lies not in our cognitive brain, but deep in our emotional construct), and when we believe our “good” behavior and our “good” choices to serve God and honor people are, well, “good,” then we are deeply delusional and are warming ourselves by our own fires. Torment is our destiny.

Accordingly, there is absolutely nothing we can ever **do** for God, ever, that matters to Him, the operative word being “**do**”. No matter how hard we try, how disciplined we become, how

⁵ **Romans 3:10-21; Psalm 14:1-3, 53:1-3**

⁶ **Jeremiah 17:9**

⁷ **Isaiah 64:6**

⁸ **Matthew 6:23; Luke 11:34**

⁹ **Isaiah 50:10-11**

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obedient, how much we fight against sin, how much time we spend reading our Bibles and praying, how sincere and well-meaning our efforts are, or how caring and loving we act. It is all worthless to God.

The Source Matters, the Source is Everything

Unless God, the only one who is capable of good, is the one who is doing His work in and through our lives, every aspect of our work, all our offering to God, is corrupted by our sin and selfishness and is therefore worthless. This is the reason Jesus said, “**apart from me, you can do nothing!**”¹⁰ He meant it, literally, nothing!

By way of example, in **Revelation 3**, Jesus wrote a personal letter to the church at Sardis.¹¹ This church had a grand reputation in the community, and amongst the other churches in Asia, for being alive, but Jesus said they were dead and dying. But the most **radical** and **mind-blowing** comment He made was “I have not found your deeds “**completed**” in the sight of my God.” Now, that may sound too mind-blowing to you, but we have to dig in just a little bit to understand this comment.

And keep in mind, this was a vibrant church, highly active, and everyone was convinced they were doing great things for God. But the verb we have translated as “**completed**,” is rendered in the Greek *perfect passive participle*.

The *perfect* speaks of something that occurred in the past that still has implications to the now. The *passive* means that some 3rd party is doing the action on behalf of the person in question. And the *participle* just speaks of it being an ongoing event.

I know language lessons are hard to grasp over the airwaves, sorry about that. But let me just say that this should have been translated as follows: “I have never found your deeds being done by me.” Jesus is that 3rd person, and He is saying that going back to the beginning all your work that you have been doing was never done by me.

Can you imagine? Nothing, absolutely nothing about their great reputation for being alive was a product of Jesus, the only one who is good, living in and through them. It was all a product of their religion, of their trying extremely hard to be good for God.

**THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PERSON WHO LIVES FOR
GOD AND THE PERSON WHO HAS GOD LIVING IN AND THROUGH THEM.**

¹⁰ **John 15:5**

¹¹ **Revelation 3:1-6**

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If it is God at work through our lives, then what we do is good, because He is good. But if we are trying in any way to be good for God, again, whether it is reading our Bibles, praying, serving, giving, doing missions, worship, or any manner of “church worthy” deeds, then, by definition, it is not good, no matter how “Christian” it seems or feels.

And the results of our “good deeds,” what God does for people, does not alter the condition of the source or the quality of the work.

Jesus made this truth about the source abundantly clear when He said, “Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. **Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.** On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who practice lawlessness.’¹²

This is gut wrenching. People can do supernatural deeds, casting out demons, miracles, and prophesying, all in His name, deeds which we know ministered to people who were desperate and in need, but still they are deemed lawless, or unauthorized. Simply said, they were not done according to the will of the Father. He even tells them, “I never knew you,” which is similar to what He said to those in Sardis, in effect: “I never did any of your deeds.” And “never” is pretty significant and poignant word.

As hard as it may be, we must come to accept the truth that goodness is not determined by our actions, or our intentions, or by the outcome of those actions, but only by the source.

THE SOURCE MATTERS, THE SOURCE IS EVERYTHING!

The delusion of our own personal goodness is one of the biggest deceptions in which most of us live, and it is at the heartbeat of the religion of Christianity. Yet, if only God is good, then only God can do good; we cannot!

This truth is so extreme and exclusionary, that practically we cannot fathom it to be true. It just can't be. After all, we tried so hard, we meant well, and we were only wanting to please God and obey Him. **But the source matters, the source is everything!**

¹² *Matthew 7:21-23*

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I have found within myself that I have loved my goodness; it has been such a deep part of my personhood—my identity. It is how I have found my value and worth. In fact, we have all been trained to love our goodness. We are taught from the youngest of ages that if we want to get anywhere in this life, to be treated right, to get the relationships and the things we desire, we need to do what is right, we need to do what is good, and by all means stop doing what is bad. We get rewarded when we are good and we get punished when we are bad. And this is common across all humanity; accordingly, we have all learned to delight in our own fires, and to use our goodness to require of others. After all, if we were good to them, we fully expect them to be good to us. It is the way of the world.

Furthermore, we must understand that the delusion of our own personal goodness is extremely nuanced; thus, we are easily deceived by the nature of our deeds, by our intentions, and by their result, especially when there is significant ministry outcome that blesses other people. Thus, it becomes extremely hard to know if God was the one doing the work or if we were doing the work.

And then we have the religion of Christianity where people are compelled by others, and by their own understanding and conscience, to serve God, use their gifts for God, to give for God, to obey God, and so on. It's the Christian thing to do, and it is how church functions. Sounds reasonable! Sounds right!

But to help us discern the source, we need to ask ... why?

Do we engage in our "good" works to be right with God, to honor Him, to find favor with Him, to ensure His blessings, to avoid judgment or punishment, to not sin, to find meaning, purpose, identity, and fulfillment, because serving God feels so good and others are legitimately helped by our service, or because it is the right Christian thing to do, and so on. These seem like all good motivations, but they reveal that we are still focused on the **ME**.

And just because we do things in His name, does not make it a work of God. After all prophesying, working miracles, and casting out demons all done in His name did not alter the quality of the work. They were still considered to be lawless, unauthorized, not the will of the Father because they were not sourced from the Father.

Further, we must come to realize that it does not matter if what we do is considered "biblical" and not blatantly sinful, for just like goodness, **sin is determined by the source of the act, not the act in-and-of itself**. Let me say that again, **sin is determined by the source of the act, not the act. In and-of itself, the act is just the fruit of what we believe**.

And this has radical implications, everything we do, every word we say, every breath we take,

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every move we make, that is not derived from Jesus living His life in and through our lives, is sin, because of the source.

We have a sin condition that is proved out by our sinful behavior. The behavior, well, it is just the fruit of our condition, it is not the problem. And that is why trying to fix the behavior, control it, manage it, hold it accountable, does not change our condition, no matter how many rules and controls we try and implement in our lives. Our seemingly never-ending battle with sin is driven by the source.

AGAIN, IF ONLY GOD IS GOOD, THEN, BY DEFINITION, ONLY GOD CAN DO GOOD. THE SOURCE MATTERS, THE SOURCE IS EVERYTHING!

I would bet few people would logically disagree with the idea that only God is good, still most do not bet their lives upon that truth, when it comes to their personal relationship with God. In other words, it may be a Biblical truth, but it needs to become our personal truth.

ONLY GOD IS GOOD MEANS THAT WE ARE ABSOLUTELY 100% IMPOVERISHED, NEEDY IN EVERYTHING, ALL THE TIME, FOR WHAT GOD CAN BE FOR US.

The Standard is Perfection

The reason we must both understand and accept this truth, that **Only God is Good**, is because the Father's standard for all things is perfection. Literally, He is the standard. And we are commanded to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.¹³ And like the Holy One who "called" us, we are to be holy as He is holy.¹⁴ Yet perfection and holiness are things to which we can never live up. Only Christ in us, the perfect one,¹⁵ can do perfect works in and through our lives.¹⁶

Well then, what then Does God Expect from us?

Our job is always only about faith—actively believing the truth. Or said another way, it is about our willingness to now and continually, bet our lives on the truth. For without faith, it is impossible to please God.¹⁷ These truths of the Bible must become our personal truth, by which

¹³ **Matthew 5:48**

¹⁴ **1 Peter 1:15**

¹⁵ **Hebrews 5:9, 7:28**

¹⁶ **Isaiah 26:12; See Psalm 16:2, 73:28**

¹⁷ **Hebrews 11:6**

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we live, by which we bet our lives, by which we stand and die upon. or we will remain in a religious delusion, doing unauthorized works, lawless deeds.

For instance, we are urged, by the mercies of God, to present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice.¹⁸ Clearly, sacrifice is not a pretty image, it is not something of which we jump up and down and say, “yay” sacrifice, for it speaks of a bloody death, and in this case our volitional death.

Thus, to bet our lives on this truth, to offer ourselves up as a living sacrifice, we must be willing to let God put that mercenary part of our soul, our wretched heart, our *flesh*, our old sinful nature, we must let Him put it to death such that it no longer rules our thoughts, emotions, and our actions, but He does. Yet, we will only offer ourselves up to God in this manner if we feel safe, if we feel protected, if we feel loved, if we actually believe that **He is good**, and, will therefore, only do good to us and through us.

But we all know that sacrifice means suffering, and suffering means exceedingly difficult circumstances that impact our heart, mind, soul, and strength and disrupt every part of our lives. We have seen people go through long, intense, and dramatic forms of suffering. We have seen their *flesh*, their old sinful nature, in full glory, and we don't want any of that.

If we were gut wrenchingly honest, most of us do not actually believe that God is good. Oh, we can profess it, but that is different than believing it. The level of suffering, disruptions, sin, and terror just does not fit our definition of a good and loving God. Therefore, we may agree with the concept, but we do not bet our lives upon it. Can you imagine actually saying this to God?

“Go ahead and destroy every part of my being, known and unknown, that stands in opposition to you and in opposition to the Father's will being done in and through my life; and do not stop until it is finished!—Amen!”

That is such a scary prayer. Yet, this is how we, by faith, we bet our lives on the truth and be that living sacrifice. It is how we come to be possessed by the living God. **Our job, in belief, is to offer ourselves to Him trusting that He will care for us through the process of death. His job is EVERYTHING else!**

And this “sacrifice,” our death, does not happen overnight. It is a process; as Paul says, a crucifixion.¹⁹ A long, slow, and painful death that continues until we can cry out, “it is no longer I who lives, but Christ in me.” Therefore, God does not rush the process, we could not handle it. Rather, He takes us one step at a time, and transforms our heart (our emotions), our mind (our

¹⁸ **Romans 12:1**

¹⁹ **Galatians 2:20**

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thoughts), our soul, and our strength (our physical bodies), such that we come to know, and be thoroughly convinced, of **WHY** He is good, and that only He is good.

In this sacrifice, He asks us, again step-by-step, to let go of our love for our own goodness, to let go of our need to find validation in ourselves, such that we start to live 100% dependent upon Him for all things all the time. Now, we don't just wake up the next morning and say, ta da, I'm going to live 100% dependent upon God. That does not happen. But again, as he puts each area to death, one piece at a time, we learn proportionally to live dependent upon Him for all things, until He completes this work and we do live 100% dependent upon Him for all things all the time.

This means we learn how to be His bondservant, volitionally, willingly, doing only what He tells us (or leads us) to do, saying only what He tells us (or leads us) to say, and going only where He tells us (or leads us) to go. After all, that is how Jesus lived; it is how He and His Father got along here on earth. And we are commanded to walk in His steps, for only then do we know that we are actually in Him—in Christ.²⁰ This may be a shock, but saying the “sinner’s prayer” does not make you “in Christ,” but living as He lived, dependent upon His Father for all things, all the time, is what makes a person to be “in Christ”.²¹

This is true Christianity—abiding in Him. The source is all that matters! The source is everything! For apart from Him, we can do nothing!

If we believe there is anything we must do or can do for God, other than believe, then we are delusional, and do not believe that He alone is good and He alone is our one and **only** provision for life and godliness.²²

THIS MESSAGE IS EXCLUSIONARY, AND IT SEPARATES THOSE WHO STAND ONLY ON THE GOODNESS OF GOD FROM THOSE WHO ARE TRYING VERY HARD TO BE GOOD FOR GOD.

The difference and the implications are staggering. As for me, I do not want to hear the words, “I never knew you, depart from me you who practice lawlessness,” for “You’re deeds are not completed in the sight of my Father.”

This one simply truth, that **Only God is Good**, busts every religious delusion that has bound believers in chains of legalism leaving them trying so hard to do it right, to not fail, to not sin, to not blow it, to honor Him, to please Him, and so on. Thinking we could have done it better, we need to do it better, and next time, we will do it better. It is all a lie. Just saying it is exhausting. These are burdens we were never meant to carry.

²⁰ **1 John 2:5-6**

²¹ **John 4:4** (He was literally bound by the Father to go to Samaria), **34; 5:19, 30, 36; 8:28; 12:50**

²² **2 Peter 1:2-3**

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Jesus was clear, only those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven.²³ And it is the Father's will that all who are now and continually see His son for who He is – Yahweh, the only one who is good – and are now and continually believing on Him, or betting their lives on what they have seen, will now have eternal life—they will now have Jesus or be found “in Him.”²⁴ They will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Yet, Jesus told those who were following Him, “But I say to you, you have seen me and yet do not believe.” May this never be said of us.²⁵

They did not believe that only God is good just like they did not believe that He, Jesus, is the one who is good. They remained convinced that they could please God by what they did. Tragically, they were dead wrong. **The Source Matters, the Source is Everything!**

As we close this first podcast, I want to leave you thinking about the implications of betting your lives upon this truth, of what it means to live 100% dependent upon His goodness only. Again, it is mind blowing, religion shattering, and can revolutionize your relationship with God.

²³ **Matthew 7:21**

²⁴ **John 6:40.** Note: “see” and “believe” are both rendered in the *present active participle*

²⁵ **John 6:36**

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