

REPENTANCE:

EVIDENCE OF GOD'S GOODNESS

by Elder Bob Allgood

God told Moses "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee -- I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy". The Goodness of God is bestowed upon whom God chooses to bestow his goodness. David said, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want -- Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life --" (Ps 23). David also wrote, "O taste and see that the Lord is good --" (Ps 34:8). This implies that The Goodness of God can be EXPERIENCED - that is seen and felt.

The goodness of God is seen in the creation. When God created the earth; the heavens, the mountains, the seas, the land; the grasses, herbs and fruits; the sun, the moon and stars; the fish, sea creatures and beast of the fields - when God created what man calls NATURE - God saw that it was good. God's goodness can be TASTED or EXPERIENCED (seen and felt) in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ our God and Saviour. Jesus said to Thomas "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and My God". Thomas had experienced the Goodness of God ! (John 20).

The Goodness of God is experienced in HIS creative work done in the lives of HIS elect children. His goodness is experienced through the witness of of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16). His goodness is experienced through our spiritual understanding given to us by HIM (Luke 24:31-32, I Cor. 9:9-16). His goodness is experienced through LOVE (I John 3:1, 4:8-11, 5:12). His goodness is experienced through the good works HIS grace allows us to do, (Eph. 2:8-10, Titus 2:11-15). His goodness is experienced in the HOPE we have in our hearts (Romans 8:24-25, I Cor. 15:19, I Thess 4:13-18). His

goodness is experienced through FAITH which is a gift from God (Gal 5:22, Eph 2:8-9, Heb 11:1-3, 6). His goodness is experienced in a yielded and devoted life in the kingdom of God (Rom 12:1-2, 14:16-19).

God said to Jeremiah, "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock - and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord" (Jer 31:10-14). Much of Jeremiah's ministry was spent declaring judgement on Israel because of their rebellious and idolatrous ways. "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewn them out broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer 2:11-13). Israel had been scattered from the paths of righteousness by pastors who were not concerned for the welfare of the children of God. God said, "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture" (Jer 23:1). But it was more than the fault of the "prophets [that] prophesy falsely" and "the priests [that] bear rule by their means" - for God said "my people love to have it so" (Jer 5:30-31).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is that fountain of living water (John 4:10-14). When God's people leave their first love, they change their glory for that which doth not profit. Paul warned of such a time when "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Tim 4:1) and when "they will not endure sound doctrine" - but "shall be turned unto fables". When the sheep get scattered from the fold by wolves or by hireling pastors "the good Shepherd - the chief Shepherd" calls for them to come back to the fold. Because of His goodness and mercy, He calls for them to repent and return to the old paths of truth and righteousness, lest He come quickly and fight against them.

In the midst of the cry of judgement we also hear the good news of God's goodness. "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: and I will give you pastors according to mine heart which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer 3:12-15). "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock -- and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness".

Paul tells us, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of this world worketh death" (II Cor 7:10). Godly sorrow is a sorrow of the heart, that causes a mourning over sin. The sorrow of this world is only sorrow that causes one to be sorry one got caught in the act of sin. It is "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" and only God can give "repentance to the acknowledging of the truth". Without the goodness of God there could never be any repentance, and without repentance there can never be any time or gospel salvation.

The gospel message preached by our Lord was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". Peter preached "Repentance" on the day of Pentecost. Paul had gone "preaching the kingdom of God, the gospel of the grace of

God - testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ". Repentance is evidence that the goodness of God has been bestowed upon the sinner. When there is no repentance for sin, it is evident that the goodness of God has not been bestowed upon the sinner, or that the sinner is not yet satisfied with the goodness of God. The goodness of God is embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ, and God says "my people shall be satisfied with my goodness". Dear child of God be satisfied with the goodness of God: Jesus Christ, the Truth, the Way (THE OLD PATHS WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY), and the Life.