



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: PRAYER RESPONSE (DOWNWARD) •

PSALM 100:1-5 • 1/21/2024

MAIN POINT

God is good, and He is working everything out for good in the lives of His children. We can respond to that goodness when we seek His face vs. His hand.

INTRODUCTION

Spend a few minutes discussing the news stories from the headlines this week. Of these stories, how many are related to evil or suffering?

What kinds of spiritual questions do people ask in the days after a tragic event? What about you? Did you ask any questions of God during those times?

Can you think of another season in life when your circumstances have made you skeptical about the nature and character of God?

Because we live in a world broken by sin, all of us will encounter seasons of pain and difficulty. During those times, we can often call into question God's goodness. However, Scripture tells us that despite the temporary sufferings and evils of this world, God is good, and He is working everything out for our good too.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 100.

What reasons does the psalmist give to praise God? Which reason most motivates you to praise Him?

Who might not think God is good (v. 5)? Why might someone feel this way? How should Christians respond to such an attitude?

Psalm 100 is an expression of praise to God. This psalm praises God by exalting His nature and His relationship with His people. One of the specific characteristics of God the psalmist points out is His goodness (v. 5). While the statement, "The LORD is good," may seem obvious, and even simple, not everyone believes that He is good. Some people who experience the difficulties of this life, the consequences of their own sins or the sins of others are not convinced of God's goodness. Even those of us whose lives seem to be in good shape sometimes wonder why God allows certain things to happen in the world. Yet the basis of our faith is bound up in this brief affirmation of God's goodness. We could not trust a God who was not good.

READ GENESIS 1:31; EXODUS 18:9; PSALM 34:8; AND PHILIPPIANS 1:6.

Each of the passages we just read point to God’s goodness on display. What action of God is praised in each of these passages?

What evidence of God’s goodness do you see when you look at creation?

What evidence of God’s goodness do you see in your own life?

The biblical concept of God’s goodness focuses on concrete experiences of what God has done and is doing in the lives of His people. The goodness of God is experienced in God’s creative work (Gen. 1:31) and in God’s saving acts (liberation of Israel from Egypt, Ex. 18:9; personal deliverance, Ps. 34:8; salvation, Phil. 1:6). When we confess that the Lord is good, we affirm by faith that all goodness comes from God. He is the source of all that is positive and meaningful in human life. Both God’s character and His actions are good.

READ JAMES 1:16-18.

What do these verses tell us about God?

Since “every good and perfect gift” comes from God, how should we respond to the good things in our lives?

James cared about his readers and did not want them to be led astray—likely by the false notion that God was the source of temptation (see James 1:13-15). The exact opposite is true: God is the source of every generous act and every perfect gift. God’s spiritual, physical, and emotional provisions for believers are exactly what they need.

Read Ephesians 2:10 and Colossians 1:10. God’s greatest “good and perfect gift” is salvation. What is the evidence of the change God’s power makes in our lives?

One of the results of God's gift of salvation in our lives is that we would produce good works. Why do you think God wants us to produce good works?

The greatest of all God's gifts is salvation. He took the gracious initiative (by His own choice) to offer salvation to people. His purpose always has been to provide redemption. The message of truth is the gospel—the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Christ. People who respond positively to the gospel become God's children and His representatives in the world. As such, God desires for the way we live our lives to be evidence of and a response to His grace, power, and love.

While Scripture attests time and again to God's goodness, this characteristic of God can be difficult for people to believe because of the presence of evil in the world. People often question how a "good" God can allow suffering. We can't claim to know the answer to this question, but we do know what God promises—that all things work together for our good.

READ ROMANS 8:28.

God is working all things together for good. What does this truth tell you about God? When has it been hardest for you to believe this truth?

How have you seen God bring something good out of a bad situation in your life?

This verse often is misused. It does not say that all things are good, for all that happens certainly is not good. Also, this is not a blanket promise to everyone that "everything will turn out for the best." God promises to work all that happens to His children into a pattern that results in good for them. Furthermore, the promise does not mean God directly causes all things, for that would mean He causes evil. For example, for Joseph's brothers to sell him into slavery was not God's will; it was an evil act. God chose to work through that evil act to accomplish His good purposes and

to do good for Joseph as well (Gen. 50:20). God promises to use even the worst things that can happen to us for good.

APPLICATION

Reflect on some of the difficult times in your life, especially in your faith journey, that you later found God used for good. What did you learn about God from those experiences? How was your relationship with Him impacted?

What is one way you can reflect God's goodness to the people in your life this week?

PRAYER

Thank Christ for walking with you through your pain, and ask Him to help you see how He is using it for good.

COMMENTARY

PSALM 100:1-5

Psalm 100 is a doxology, an expression of praise to God. As a doxology, the poem is not about praise; it is praise. As we read or sing these familiar words, we actually praise and thank God and confess His place in our experiences. This psalm praises God by exalting His nature and His relationship with His people. Some psalms praise God by recounting His mighty deeds. In Psalm 100 God is presented as the Creator and Ruler. He is to be approached as people would approach their king.

The kingship idea is appropriate because Psalm 100 follows a small collection of psalms dealing with God as King (see Pss. 93—99). The superscription, or heading, of Psalm 100 does not indicate its connection with any specific individual. The focus on kingship may indicate that Psalm 100 was written while God's people had an earthly king. On the other hand, the psalmist may have lived after the exile when Israel had no king. Although God's people were under foreign domination in exile, they knew that God remained their true King.

Regardless of when Psalm 100 was written, this worship hymn has a distinctly corporate nature. Its words are addressed to the many, not to the individual. The testimony comes from "us" and "we." Although Israelites worshiped God individually, in this psalm God's poet directed attention to the great times when God's people came together to praise and thank God through worship.

The Hebrew word translated know in Psalm 100:3 carries different connotations and meanings just as its English translation does. The word know is used in some Old Testament contexts to refer to mentally gaining knowledge or information as when we grasp some fact or truth (Gen. 27:2). The verb's meaning includes being able to distinguish, or to discern, between good and evil (Gen. 3:5b).

The Hebrew term, as well as its English translation, also refers to personal acquaintance in some contexts (Gen. 29:5). The Hebrew verb is used to describe sexual relations (Gen. 4:25). In Hebrew the term translated "had relations with" in Genesis 4:25 is the verb literally meaning "knew."

The Hebrew verb translated "know" carries the meaning of recognizing someone's authority. To know a ruler meant to recognize his status and to give him proper respect and obedience. For example in Exodus 5:2, Pharaoh stated that he did not know the Lord. He refused to acknowledge God's authority.

Finally, the Scriptures emphasize that God wants people to know Him. He wants them to experience a personal relationship with Him in which they worship and obey

Him alone. The prophets lamented the reality that Israel did not know God (Isa. 1:3; Jer. 4:22). In the context of Psalm 100:3, the meaning of know includes acknowledging that the Lord is God and accepting the responsibilities involved in that relationship.