



PRAYER MEETING

July 19

The Fruit of the Spirit: Goodness

A close-up photograph of a hand with fingers spread, reaching upwards, symbolizing prayer or reaching for heaven. The hand is positioned in the lower center of the frame, with the fingers pointing towards the top of the image.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Call to Worship

Galatians 5: 13-14, 16-24

New International Reader's Version

My brothers and sisters, you were chosen to be free. But don't use your freedom as an excuse to live under the power of sin. Instead, serve one another in love. The whole law is fulfilled by obeying this one command. "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. The desires controlled by sin do not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit does not want what the desires controlled by sin delight in. The two are at war with each other. That's why you are not supposed to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of the law.

The result of sin's control in our lives is clear. It includes sexual sins, impure acts and wild living. It includes worshiping statues of gods and worshiping evil powers. It also includes hatred and fighting, jealousy and fits of anger. Sinful desire is interested only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little groups. It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties. It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who live like this will not receive God's kingdom.

But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful desires to his cross. They don't want these things anymore.

Today, Lord, we thank you for the Holy Spirit's fruit of goodness.

Music

Quiet your hearts and minds as you listen to today's music. Open to God and listen to what the Holy Spirit might say to you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfvKUfd8naY>

The Goodness of God, Bethel Music

Prayers of Praise Congregation

Congregational Reading from the Psalms

Read Together

Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.

Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. *Ps 25:4-9*

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!

Ps 84:10-12

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am godly; save your servant, who trusts in you—you are my God.

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace. In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God

Ps 86:1-2,5-8,10

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
whom he has redeemed from trouble
and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south. *Ps 107:1-3*

Reading about the word of the day

“The goodness of God refers to the perfection of His nature. He is originally good, good of Himself; all creatures are good only by participation and communication from God.

He is essentially good; not only good, but goodness itself. He is infinitely good.

He is eternally and immutable good, for He cannot be less good than He is; and there can be no addition made to Him, no subtraction from Him.”

Arthur Pink, The Attributes of God

“When the Bible speaks of goodness as a fruit of the Spirit it doesn’t simply mean that a person is a model citizen, polite, respectful, tolerant, and just nice. When the Bible tells us that God is good, it means that God is holy, perfect, morally pure, and the utter antithesis of anything bad, corrupt, evil, or inferior. In order for us to be good like God, we need to be more than nice. We need to be holy and righteous.

Some people put on a good show, yet they are not good. God calls us to be filled with goodness from the inside out, being holy in what we do and say because we have a heart that seeks goodness. We are not to be merely polished with goodness, but we are to be filled with it. Goodness is akin to holiness. To experience the fruit of the Spirit called goodness is to show forth the holiness of God through a transformed heart ruled by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Brent Barnett, Relevant Bible Teaching

Scripture reading

Jesus said, “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Luke 9:27-36, 43-45

Reflect

Scripture Reading repeated

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Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.

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Individual Silent Prayer

A time to pray and talk to God about what you heard and noticed. Pray for your needs. Pray thanks. Confess sin. Ask for help. Pray for others, for direction, for guidance, for God's glory.

Response

Congregational response saying a word or phrase that the Spirit has brought to attention

Responsive Reading

Leader: Almighty God, Eternal Goodness, to whom all hearts are open and all desires known, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts through the power of your Holy Spirit, that we might walk in your goodness and grace.

People: You are good, and from You all good things proceed. We are imperfect and need you to cleanse us and grow us in holiness, that we may reflect your goodness.

Leader: Lord, you alone can make us good.

People: Lead us in paths of goodness, for your name's sake.

Leader: We agree with you that in ourselves dwells no good thing, but through Jesus Christ, we have been set free from sin and darkness that we may walk in newness of life.

People: Lead us in paths of goodness, for your name's sake.

Leader: You chose us to be your representatives in this broken world, that your grace and goodness would be seen.

People: Lead us, transform us, flow through us, that your goodness would be known.

Together:

Help us overcome evil with good, to hold fast to what is good, and to not grow weary of doing good, but continue in the good way which you, Lord, have prepared for us through Christ Jesus, our Savior.

Prayer for the World

Leader: Lord, we pray for God's love to be the foundation of our hope

People: We pray for God's mercy in stopping the spread of this virus

Leader: We pray for God's healing of those who are sick throughout the world and for those whose mourn all who have died

People: We pray for God's strength for medical personnel serving tirelessly

Leader: We pray for God's insight to be given to researchers seeking solutions

People: We pray for God's wisdom to guide and direct civic leaders, world leaders, and health officials

Leader: We pray for God's peace to guard us from fear or anxiety

People: We pray for God's provision for those whose livelihoods and income have been affected by this crisis

Leader: We pray for God's creativity to make us agents of love and compassion, that all believers would display the character of Christ

People: We pray for racial reconciliation, justice, compassionate civil dialog, understanding, and true unity

Together: Lord, we pray for healing for our nation, that Your righteousness and truth and justice would be known, and that the Holy Spirit would draw people everywhere to the saving power of Jesus.

Lord's Prayer

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader

Our Lord and Savior, we thank you for your goodness, which you have poured out on us, and indeed, which you pour out upon the whole world.

Holy Spirit, pour goodness into our hearts, our minds, our wills, our behavior, and our strength, that we may work the works of God.

We are grateful for your perfect wisdom and guidance in leading us and making us like Christ, our Good Shepherd. Blessing and honor and glory to you, Eternal Goodness.

Closing Prayer

God, of your goodness, give me yourself; for you are sufficient for me. I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of you. If I were to ask less, I should always be in want. In you alone do I have all.

Julian of Norwich 14th century