The LORD is Good

(A recollection of God's Goodness throughout 2010)
Psalm 34:8 and James 1:17
12/26/2010

Reflections of God's Goodness in 2010

See Psalm 34:

- **GOD did not <u>BLOCK HIS EARS</u> in 2010** (V. 4, 6)
- **GOD did not <u>LET YOU DOWN</u> in 2010** (V. 5)
- **GOD did not <u>LEAVE us ALONE</u> in 2010** (V. 7)

I. Psalms 34:8

O taste and see that <u>the LORD is good</u>: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

II. James 1:17

<u>Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above</u>, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

A. THE <u>SOURCE</u> OF ALL GOODNESS IS <u>GOD</u> (IT'S FROM ABOVE) (v.17)

B. THE <u>COURSE</u> OF GOD'S GOODNESS IS <u>LIFE</u> (v.18)

1. <u>GOD'S WORK</u> "His **<u>own will</u>**"

2. <u>GOD'S MEANS</u> "By the word of truth"

3. <u>GOD'S PURPOSE</u> "firstfruits"

CONCLUSION: No matter what we may think about our goodness, no one should receive the credit for our salvation but <u>God</u>.

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The working of God at FBC in 2010

My Daughter's weddings; Laura & Paul Fulks and Becki & Paul Tucker (in 2009) and Katie & Caleb Garraway (in 2010);
My Son's surrender to the Lord in 2010.

Ps 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
Ps 100:5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.
Ps 135:3 Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.
Ps 145:9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.
Jer 33:11 The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD.
La 3:25 The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.
Na 1:7 The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

Paul & Silas knew of God's goodness - Acts 16

Paul and Silas "prayed and sang praises unto God" (Acts 16:25)

There is power in prayer and praise!

We are guilty so often of being gloomy, silent, blah Christians, when we have every reason to be excitedly boastful about our God, to genuinely bubble over with praise!

See Psalm 34:

The title "psalms" means "praises!"

"Bless" = to kneel before God and praise Him. To adore God with bended knees (this is where kneeling in prayer comes from) (Ps. 103:1, 2).

v.1 - "At all times" - in joy and sorrow; in good times and seemingly bad times; on the mountain tops and in the valleys.

It's easy to praise God when things are going great.

The test of your maturity, is if you can praise Him when times are difficult, things are not going as you planned.

You can praise God while undergoing trials because you know that endurance (patience) is being learned in the school of affliction.

Praising God is more than the repetition of a few catch-phrases or mindless cliches like saying "Praise the Lord," or "Hallelujah" or "Amen!"

"Praise" = to vocally give a clear enthusiastic testimony of God's goodness. To be excited with joy! It's like the sound you give after you pass an exam, or your football team has just scored the winning point.

"I will tell your name to my brothers, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you" (Ps. 22:22)

"Continually" = always. Not just on Sundays.

v.2

"In the Lord" - stands first in the verse and is therefore emphatic.

Proud men boast (brag) about themselves. "I did this; I have this ability, etc." (inflated ego, "big heads" = little heart for God)

Even when God uses you, uses your strength or ability, etc., you should give Him the glory. He gave us our strengths and abilities.

The humble, because they see themselves as they really are, can be happy when they hear God getting credit where credit is due.

"Boast" - See Jer. 9:24

In verse 3 the exhortation to unite in praise is addressed to the humble of v. 2.

Don't you feel comfortable around humble people? Nothing is more repulsive than pride.

v.3

"Magnify" = make God big (we don't change the nature of God, we just display it)

True praise elevates God, not the speaker (it is telling what God has done for you, not what you have done for God)

--Moses sang: "I will publish the name of the Lord" (Dt. 32:3)

--David said: "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving" (Ps. 69:30)

--The virgin Mary said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Lk. 1:46) (NOTE: she would never want herself to be magnified)

"Exalt" - to lift up God and make Him high!

"Together" - praise is to be vocal and public. We should not be ashamed to tell others what God has done for us.

The difference between thanksgiving and praise is that thanksgiving is when someone prays and thanks God for His goodness and mercy; praise occurs when the person tells someone else about it.

ILLUS: In Minnesota, when the steering went out on my VW, we all praised God in prayer. But then the next day I gave testimony at College, so that others could benefit. Praise is constructive worship. It builds up others and blesses God.

The early Church had a unity that caused them to be "praising God, and having favor with all the people . . ." (Acts 2:47)

The Bible exhorts us to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God" (heb. 13:15)

SEE I Peter 2:9.

Praise is not merely feeling good inside; it is to know who God is and what He does, and then to let the world know about it.

Praise God for who He is:

Praise Him for His greatness (Ps. 86:10, 145:3), loyal love (Ps. 136), holiness (Ps. 99), goodness (Ps. 107:1), righteousness (Ps. 119:137), truthfulness (Ps. 138:2), great glory (Ps. 138:5).

Praise God for <u>what</u> He does:

Praise Him for His full-complete salvation; His answers to prayer, providence, protection, guidance, healing, sustaining, forgiving, satisfying, etc.

"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!" (Ps. 150:6)

Praise is a "Matter of life and breath"

GOD did not <u>BLOCK HIS EARS</u> in 2010 (V. 4, 6)

David gives a personal testimony.

David came close to death when he was in Philistine territory (I Sam. 21:10-15) (NOTE: superscription of Ps. 34), but he cried to God and God heard him.

GOD did not <u>LET YOU DOWN</u> in 2010 (V. 5)

"They looked unto Him" -
"They" - hypothetical situation
"looked" = to intensely look with hope and expectation. To look with pleasure.
EX: Lot's wife "looked back at Sodom with a look of affection, as she regretted to leave it, and couldn't possibly believe that it was being destroyed. She looked back with an expectation or a hope that nothing would happen to the city she loved.

Those who look to God with expectation and pleasure, being assured that He will come through - have a glow ont heir faces. They brighten up. The light of God is reflected on their faces.

EX: Moses whose face glowed after being in God's presence

"Not ashamed" = not disappointed because God did not fail to respond to their prayer.

If you pray to God and are confident that what you ask is His will, you will never be disappointed. He will not turn your bright face into a blushing face.

You will not go hide your face in embarrassment because of God being unfaithful.

GOD did not <u>LEAVE us ALONE</u> in 2010 (V. 7)

"The Angel of the Lord" = the messenger of Yahweh. A reference to Christ who appeared to men in the O.T. A Christophany (Gen. 16:7-14, 21:17-21; 22:11-18; 31:11, 13; Exod. 3:2; Jud. 2:1-4, 5:23, 6:11-24, 13:3-22; II Sam. 24:16; Zech. 1:12, 3:1, 12:8).

Hagar called the Angel of the Lord - "God" - "Thou God seest me" (Gen. 16:13).

Joshua called Him "Lord" (Josh. 5:15).

Both Moses and Joshua worshipped Him as God after He said, "Take off thy shoes, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground" (Ex. 3:6; Josh. 5:14).

Gideon called Him "Lord God" (Jud. 6:22).

Manoah said, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" (Jud. 13:22).

The Angel of the Lord went on ahead of Israel and defended them as they crossed the Red Sea (Ex. 14:19);

The Angel of the Lord fought for Joshua and was called "the Captain of the armies of the Lord" (Josh. 5:14);

And the Angel of the Lord protected Daniel in the lions' den (Dan. 6:23)

Psalms 34:8

O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

David is not calling for us to theorize or just know about God's goodness, but to "taste" or fully experience it!

Only as you personally step out by faith and throw yourself fully upon God can you really know what God is talking about.

"Taste" - cp. Heb. 6:4 - "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,"

cp. I Pet. 2:3 - "If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

You must taste God's salvation, power, faithfulness, etc., before you can know what it really is like.

Spiritual experience leads to genuine spiritual perception or knowledge.

ILLUS: I know what "Wheaties" cereal is like , not because of the TV commercials, but because I have tasted it.

I know what God's salvation can do because I have seen what it did for me. I know God can be trusted because He has never let me down yet.

V. 8 - **"Man"** = not the usual word for man. It is the Hebrew word "Geber" which refers to a man who has personal strength and vigor. God is saying to you who think you have strength, ability, etc. even you, need Him for refuge (shelter).

You are blessed if you trust God and not yourself.

We can be confident in our Lord!

One of Satan's tricks is to convince us (via the world's system) that our Father is withholding from us what we deserve to have. (ex. Satan's approach to Eve) Yet God only gives what is Best for us; and withholds what is bad.

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

THE SOURCE OF ALL GOODNESS IS GOD (IT'S FROM ABOVE) (v.17)

This verse proves that God does not tempt to sin, on the **contrary** He only gives good!

"Good gift" = good giving (describes the act of giving) (God gives generously, not sparingly)
The **way** God gives is good. (He doesn't tempt) God's giving is better than Satan's bargaining (in the end you pay for it dearly) ill. shop keepers in Israel enticing you.

"Perfect gift" = (describes the gift itself) (God gives quality not junk)
what He gives is good (it doesn't lead to death)

(Note: "perfect" [ ] maybe linked in thought to "finished" (same gk. word) (v.15) showing a **contrast** between what sin has to offer and what God has to offer.)

If you look at all that God has given you and swell on that, you won't be tempted to dwell on what He has not given you. Ex. Joseph Gen. 39:7 He focused on the fact that he was put in charge of all, but his master withheld only his wife.

Ill. of a child playing with 10 toys yet he (because of selfish sin nature) desires the 1 toy his friend has.

James by saying that gifts come from above is making the point now that they don't just drop out of the sky. Rather they come from the creater of the sky.

"Father of lights" - creator of the stars. (celestial lights; heavenly luminaries) Gen.1:14-16; Ps.136:7; Jer.31:35.
The stars reflect the glory of their creator Ps.19:1; 136:7.

"variableness" = a change in an establish course or pattern. The point is there is no variation with God. (Gal.3:28; Col.3:11)

"shadow of turning" = no shadow cast by turning. Unlike the "lights" (ex. sun & moon - the two great lights Gen.1) that move because of the Earth's rotation, God does not change in his giving.

THE COURSE OF GOD'S GOODNESS IS LIFE (v.18)

1. GOD'S WORK "His **own will**" = reflects God's activity in **contrast** to man's (v.14 "his own lust") God does not tempt to sin, rather He saves from sin! And He **does it alone! So He alone deserves the credit**.

"Begat He us" = He gave us birth. To bring forth. (same GK. word as "bringeth forth" v.15) Sin brought forth **death**! God brought forth **life**!

"Begat" - is aorist tense = shows salvation to be **one time** event. One time fact of conversion; One time spiritual birth.

To be born again = A higher birth which means a higher life. It is beneath our dignity to accept Satan's bait or to desire sinful things.

2. GOD'S MEANS "By the word of truth" (interesting: Jesus is called the Word (Jn.1:1), and the Truth (Jn.14:6).

Peter stated that the word was God`s mean to give us rebirth. I Pet.1:23 "being born again...by the word of God..."

"Faith cometh by hearing.. the Word" Rom.10:17.

Word of truth + in **contrast** to the lies that lust offered.

3. **<u>GOD'S PURPOSE</u>** "firstfruits" = from OT - first portion of the harvest that belonged to God, with a promise of a full harvest just ahead. (Ex.23:19; Lev.23:9-11; Dt.18:4).

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase (Prov.3:9).

2 Possibilities: 1) James (writing to Jews 1:1) is applying this term to Jewish Christians. The implication being: More fruit (saved people) will follow after you.
*2) Regenerated believers (in general) are regarded as the first stage of that ultimate renovation of that ultimate renovation of all creation, which presently resides under the divine curse since the fall. (Rom.8:18-23;30).

We as God's firstfruits should give ourselves totally to Him. (give Him your desires & let Him fill you His way!)

CONCLUSION: No matter what we may think about our goodness, no one should receive the credit for our salvation but <u>God</u>.