

An abstract image featuring a large, dynamic splash of blue ink or paint against a light, off-white background. The splash is composed of various shades of blue, from deep navy to a lighter, misty blue, creating a sense of movement and depth. The ink appears to be spreading outwards from a central point, with some areas being more concentrated and others more wispy.

IN THE FACE OF JESUS

Sermon Growth Guide

July 20, 2025
There is Goodness



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Luke 9:1-6; 10-17

Key Verse: Luke 9:11 “...and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing.”

Big Idea: In the face of Jesus, there is goodness.

Foundations

In the face of Jesus, we see goodness. We all know what it's like to live in a world where kingdoms are infected by evil. But in Jesus, the good kingdom of God has come.

In our passage, Jesus shows us true goodness. Demons are cast out. Diseases are healed. The disciples have everything they need for their journey, and are cared for when they return. The crowds are not rejected when they intrude, but are welcomed. Jesus taught them, cured them, and fed them in both body and soul. Everyone is satisfied, and yet an abundance remains. (Luke 9:17)

However, our passage makes one more thing very clear. The followers of Jesus are being prepared and sent out to do the good things that Jesus himself does. The twelve are sent out to proclaim the kingdom of God, to cast out demons, and to heal. When the disciples grow concerned about the hungry crowd, Jesus tells them, “You give them something to eat.” (Luke 9:13) The disciples hardly have anything to give, but after saying a blessing Jesus multiplies their small gifts more than they could ever have imagined.

What happens when we go out into the world? Do we speak about the kingdom of God? Do we free people from demons and heal the sick? Are the hungry crowds welcomed? Do we feed them in body and soul? In the face of Jesus there is goodness. As followers of Jesus, we are sent out to show the face of Jesus to the world.

Understanding God's Word

Read Luke 9:1-6; 10-17 together. Do you agree that this passage reveals Jesus' goodness? And if so, why? How do you reconcile Jesus' command to “shake off the dust from your feet” with his goodness?

Jesus gives his disciples the authority to cast out demons. What questions do you have about this? Do you believe this? What do you think it looks like to cast out demons in our culture and time?

Applying God's Word

Read John 5:19. Jesus seems to be training his disciples to imitate him the way he imitates the Father. In what ways do you imitate Jesus in your life? In what ways do you go your own way?

Think through various ways Jesus' goodness shows itself in this passage. What are some practical ways you and your community show Jesus' goodness to others?

Witnessing God's Word

There is sometimes a debate about whether the gospel is best proclaimed by words or in deeds. In this passage, Jesus gives his disciples clear instructions to preach the Gospel in both word and action.

When you think about your own proclamation of the Gospel, is one or the other of these two sides missing? How can you grow in proclaiming the Gospel in both word and deed?

Some people see goodness in everything. They have a positive aspect, optimism. Dishwasher breaks down, it's just a chance to get one that matches the kitchen. Get rear ended, you can finally replace that old bumper! Drop your ice cream, you get to try another flavor! It has a lot to do with perspective. Are you looking for the good or only seeing the bad? Here's a quick exercise. Take a minute and notice everything in the room that is green. Take it in. I'm going to ask you to close your eyes in a second. Close your eyes. Now, imagine everything in the room that is red. You can't. Open your eyes. See all the red stuff? It just wasn't there when you weren't looking for it. Can you see the goodness? Are you looking for it?

We have seen so much of the goodness this week. This was Vacation Bible School! There is something so good about seeing kids be kids. The joy as they dance and sing. The wonder they have walking into a church that has made the whole place just for them. The games that allow laughter and friendship and fun. This is the good stuff. As you have heard me say before, this is one of the brightest weeks of the year for our church as the whole church, all of us, get down on one knee to tell the kids of this city that Jesus loves them. There were even some Roman Soldiers roaming around. A lot of seeds were sown. This is the goodness. Do you see it? Jesus wants us to see the goodness.

So, what are we doing, church? We are looking In the Face of Jesus this summer. If we are believers in Christ, we are being formed into the likeness of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is at work in us making us more like Jesus. And we know this: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) So, if that's what becoming like Jesus looks like, we will find those same qualities in the face of Jesus. We have seen that in the face of Jesus there is love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness. Today, in the face of Jesus, There Is Goodness. Can you see the goodness?

Jesus wanted his disciples to see the goodness of the outbreaking of the Kingdom of God. "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." (Luke 9:1-2) He told them to travel light. Jesus doesn't want his followers confused about the source of the goodness. It's not your equipment or your planning or your frantic and frenzied doing that will make it break out. God does it. But he did give them two things. Did you notice? He gave them power, and he gave them authority. Power. The power of the Holy Spirit. The same power Peter later preached describing Jesus, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him." (Acts 10:38) Up to now the disciples have watched Jesus in his power. Now they feel that power within them. And authority. All authority is God's authority. We don't grab it; but Jesus does give it in trust. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18) Therefore go. You need both. You don't want power to do something and no authority to do it. You don't want an assignment with no power. Jesus fills them with power and authority to go and do as he did, not only to see the goodness.

Jesus sends them to be the goodness. “So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.” (Luke 9:6) Can you imagine?

They come back to tell Jesus all about it. “Jesus, you are not going to believe it!” Try me. “When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida.” (Luke 9:10) They saw it. They saw great things happen. They saw the goodness of God. “Jesus, listen to this!” Now, I know this is not in the text, but imagine the look on Jesus’ face. Celebrating the goodness. There is goodness in the face of Jesus. But then they were interrupted by the crowd. “But the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.” (Luke 9:11) We think the needs of the people interrupt our ministry, but meeting the needs of the crowd with the resources of the Lord is the ministry. Still, how frustrated they felt. “I want to finish my story!”

“Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, ‘Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.’” (Luke 9:12) Get these people out of here. What does Jesus say? “He replied, ‘You give them something to eat.’” (Luke 9:13) It seems almost mean. But then comes the miracle. Five loaves. Two fish. Five thousand men. More than ten thousand people. Jesus doesn’t want them just to see the goodness, he wants them to be the goodness, so it ends like this. “Taking the five loaves and the two

fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.” (Luke 9:16-17) Why? Why the overflow? Twelve disciples. Twelve baskets. Each one standing before Jesus with a heavy basket of stinking, uneaten, leftover fish bits.

There is a big difference between hearing about the goodness of God and experiencing the goodness of God. There’s a difference between thinking everyone is eating and getting their fill and holding a smelly basket of leftover fish. There is a difference between hearing that something tastes good and actually tasting it. Jonathan Edwards once preached, “Thus there is a difference between having an opinion that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness.” Don’t just see the goodness; be the goodness. Share the goodness. And, again, can we deploy our sanctified imagination? What is the expression on Jesus’ face when he sees his friends knee deep in God’s goodness, knee deep in stinky fish, wondering, reveling, laughing? As we grow in the likeness of Jesus, we grow in goodness. The spiritual fruit of goodness. You don’t just see it, you get to share it, to be it. Knee deep in the goodness of God.

It’s hard to pair that with the badness we see in the world. The pain. We joyfully celebrated VBS all week. In

Texas there are families waking up each day with the overwhelming feeling of absence and loss. Our sister church, Highland Park Pres in Dallas, lost five children and two counselors they knew in their community. The Executive Pastor, Jay Lee, officiated services for two nine-year old girls this week. Why Lord? If God is good then how...? God is good: God is great. Philosopher David Hume asked what most of us wonder, how does that square with things like the flood of Camp Mystic? Either God is not good and doesn't care if we suffer, or God is not great and can't do anything to stop it. This is the problem of evil. How can God be good and powerful and we still experience evil? We can't answer that fully. There are responses, but no full answers. At no point will we say to one another, "Oh that makes sense. That's why the flood took all those lives." It's not like that.

God is good. God is great. And still there are moments when darkness and pain break into our lives and overshadow everything, and it takes everything you've got to look over that mountain of grief and strain to see just one glimmer of the light of hope in God's goodness. Still that very hope teaches us something. We were made to believe in that goodness. We were wired up to expect goodness. Otherwise, we wouldn't ask the question. We wouldn't ask, "what is wrong" because it wouldn't seem wrong to us. But it does. Why? Because we were made to see the goodness of God.

David wrote, "I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." (Psalms 27:13) Not just, "I see a Kingdom coming and one day we will know goodness." Not just, "I think and I believe the goodness will

win in the end." I know that I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. I will. Where does your confidence come from, David? Our confidence comes from the risen Lord, Jesus. He wasn't scared of the evil; he took it to the cross and he died wrapped up in it on our behalf. And he rose again from the dead. I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. This is our confidence. There is goodness in the face of Jesus.