



The Good Deed

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM Assembly



Introduction:

Let's begin with a story. A Jewish man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. By chance, a priest was going down that road. When the priest saw the beaten man, he passed by on the other side of the road. Sometime later, a Levite was also walking down that road. When he saw the beaten man, he also passed by on the other side. Sometime later, a Samaritan, a man hated by Jews, came to the place where the man was. The Samaritan had compassion on this man who likely would have passed by had roles been reversed. He went to him, bound and treated his wounds using his own supplies. He set the man on his own animal and walked the rest of the way to the inn. He spent the rest of the day and night taking care of him. Then he gave two days' wages to the innkeeper to care for the man and promised to cover any other expenses when he returned. Having finished this story, Jesus turned to the lawyer that had been questioning and asked him who was the neighbor to the man who had been beaten? It was almost like he couldn't bring himself to say it was the Samaritan. Instead, he said, "The one who showed him mercy" (cf. **Luke 10:29-37**).

We are entering a month long focus on being "Zealous for Good Deeds." For many, this Good Samaritan is the epitome of good deeds. He is the touchstone by which many measure compassion, mercy, love, and good deeds. In fact, many of our lessons (not all) this month will come from this story. But before we jump to this story, I'd like to consider some other stories to help us figure out what The Good Deed really is. What is the ultimate good deed from which all others spring, by which all others are judged, and through which all others are motivated?

Discussion:

I. The story of an abandoned baby (cf. **Ezekiel 16**).

- A. This story is likely a little more disturbing to our modern sensitivities. However, I assure you it is a Bible story. In fact, it is a story God told the Israelites through Ezekiel when He was explaining their captivity. But it is the story of a good deed. It is the story of The Good Deed for the nation of Israel. This story should have prompted good deeds from them. Here is the story.
- B. An Amorite married a Hittite and together they produced a child. However, they hated the child. They abhorred it. So much did they despise this baby, they did not cut its cord, they did not clean it, they did not preserve it, they did not clothe it. They abandoned it. They left it covered in blood, languishing in its after-birth, and tossed it into an open field. Egyptians passed by and did nothing. Philistines came by and did nothing. Canaanites came by and did nothing. The parents didn't even do anything. No one took pity. No one had compassion. No Samaritan came to the infant's aid.
- C. But God came by, saw the baby laying in its filthy mess of blood and said, "Live!" Because of God's love and compassion, the baby grew and flourished. But as it grew to maturity, it was naked and ashamed. Once again, no one was there to have compassion on this shameful sight. The Canaanites left her in abandonment. The Egyptians just took advantage of her nakedness. But God passed by again and covered her. He clothed her, adorned her with fine clothing, precious jewelry, and a beautiful crown. He gave her fine foods to eat. He took her as His bride. This woman, who had been brought up in naked shame, became His wife. She advanced to beauty and royalty. All those who had abandoned her and left her for dead recognized her beauty, and she had renown among the nations.
- D. I trust you recognize that this is the story of Israel as a nation. It is the story God told them in **Ezekiel 16** to remind them of His ultimate good deed for them. When Abraham was called, he was the old husband of a barren wife. He was alone in a strange land. But God blessed Him with a son and grandsons. His great grandsons, Simeon and Levi, actually made his family anathema to the Canaanites by the slaughter of the Shechemites. They were in danger of being destroyed in the land. But God had made a covenant with them and brought them into Egypt to protect them. While there, they went after other gods (cf. **Ezekiel 23:3**). They were in a shameful state. But God brought them out of Egypt with plagues and riches. Though they rebelled, He eventually brought them into the Promised Land which was actually some of the most coveted land of the ancient world because it was on a trade crossroads between north and south and between east and west. The nation grew to great renown.

- E. Several times a year the Israelites were reminded of this in the feasts they were prescribed. The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread reminded them of their hurried deliverance from Egypt on the night God passed over the Israelites but slew the firstborn of all the Egyptians. The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) was to remind them of their slavery in Egypt and the power of God that brought them into their own homeland, allowing them to farm for themselves. The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) reminded them of the years in the wilderness as they lived in tents and God fed them and protected them.
- F. What was all of this to accomplish? The Good Deed of God seeing them in the field in their blood and breathing life to them was supposed to prompt them to good deeds. In fact, in **Exodus 20:2**, as God introduced the 10 Commandments to Israel, He prefaced it with “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (ESV). The purpose for which God separated Israel from the nations was so they would be His own special possession devoted to serving Him (cf. **Deuteronomy 26:18-19**). But Israel did not pursue good deeds. The Good Deed of God did not prompt good deeds from them. Rather, they rebelled again and again and again.
- G. **Ezekiel 16** demonstrates that they did not do good toward God or toward their fellow man. In **Ezekiel 16:35-37**, the Israelites pursued idolatry rather than serving the Lord. They worshiped the creature rather than the Creator. In **Ezekiel 16:49**, we learn that Israel went even farther than her younger sister Sodom. But notice the good they did not do. Though she had plenty, she did not help the poor and needy. For all of Israel’s existence as a nation, they were to look back at God’s Good Deed in delivering them from Egyptian slavery to the Promised Land as the motivation and standard by which they lived. But they didn’t. They took pride in all that God had given them as if it was their own making and turned from God (cf. **Ezekiel 16:15ff**). They even used God’s gifts as a means to commit spiritual adultery. God’s Good Deed no longer kept them safe because they no longer valued God’s Good Deed.

II. The story of The Good Deed.

- A. A man was walking home one day, minding his own business, when he was accosted by a robber who beat him, stripped him, maimed him, and left him lame and half-dead. The man tried to crawl to the nearest emergency room for help, but every time he thought he was going to get away, the robber would appear and beat him some more, dragging him back. By chance, a woman came down the road, but before she could help, the robber attacked her as well, leaving her half dead, unable to help. A little later, a Pharisee came down that very road. But when he saw the beaten pair, he was certain this could only happen to people who did not follow God’s law as well as he did. Afraid the robber might still be lurking by, he crossed to the other side of the street to protect himself. Just when the Pharisee thought he had escaped danger by his own strength, the robber shot him from his dark hiding place. A little later, a lowly Jew walked that way. He saw the couple and stooped to help. The robber, seeing his vulnerability attacked the Jewish man. He beat him, called him names, mocked him, but steadily the Jewish man worked to carry the people to safety, not succumbing to the robber’s attacks. Though he stumbled beneath the beating he received, he protected the people through these continuing attacks. Though his own lifeblood was leaving him, he continued to bear these half-dead people. He was gasping for breath as he faced the continuing onslaught of the attack. He brought them to the emergency room and delivered them into the care of the doctor. With his dying breath, he gave the doctor payment to heal the wounds of the ones he brought. He died so they could live.
- B. Do I even need to explain this parable? It tells the story of The Good Deed. It tells our story. We, like Paul in **Romans 7:7-10**, were walking the path of our life. But sin and Satan, using the law of God, attacked us, destroyed us, and dominated us. As Paul said in **Romans 7:21-23**, we determined to do right and save ourselves, but sin and Satan were close at hand, beating us and dragging us back into our sinfulness. No doubt there have been some who believed they could save themselves from this attack. They are the strong ones. They are the “Older Brothers,” if you will (see **Luke 15:25-32**). Because of their self-righteousness, they have no compassion, but treat others with contempt (see **Luke 18:9**). They provide no help, and in the end they die themselves without the aid of any to save them.
- C. But we have a Savior. We have a Savior that did not wait until we fixed ourselves, but offered Himself in our place while we were still sinners, weak, and ungodly (**Romans 5:6-8**). To truly understand The Good Deed, consider **Philippians 2:5-8**. Jesus, God the Son, sacrificed the glories of heaven. He let go of the appearance and form of deity that demands a worship response from any who come into His presence to come down to this world. Not only that, but He didn’t enter this world as royalty. He entered this world as a poor carpenter’s son in an enslaved nation. He entered under the cloud of the suspicion of immorality because everyone knew His mother got pregnant before she was married. He grew up in a town that everyone looked down on—the armpit of the enslaved nation, if you will. Though He did amazing things and amassed multi-

tudes of followers, in the end, the majority of His followers rejected Him and betrayed Him, demanding His death. Even those who didn't betray Him abandoned Him. They didn't understand. But a couple of them watched as Jesus was beaten, scourged, crowned with thorns, and tormented by these men that He could have squashed like bugs. Then He was nailed to a cross. He was taunted and ridiculed. The people who saw Him thought He was being punished by God. But as Isaiah promised, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed" (**Isaiah 53:5**, ESV). In those moments, I believe He was separated from the Father. Because of our sins, the Father looked away and the divine fellowship that Jesus enjoyed was severed. Can you imagine the spiritual agony that accompanied the physical?

- D. For whom did Jesus do this? Did He do it for people who deserved it? Did He do it for people who could pay Him back? Did He do it for people to whom He was obligated? No. He did it for sinners who have spit in His face. He did it for ungodly people who had rejected Him. He did it for weak people who had been complicit with His enemy. He did it for us.
- E. Why did He do it? Because like the Good Samaritan, He simply had compassion on us. He bestows mercy on us. Why? Because as **John 3:16** says, He loves us.

Conclusion:

Please understand what this is. This is The Good Deed. This is the Good Samaritan times infinity. This is the epitome of good deeds. It is the motivation for our good deeds. It is the standard by which our good deeds will be judged. It is the guide for our good deeds. When we consider how we should respond to God, we should see Jesus on the cross for us. When we consider how we should treat our brothers and sisters in Christ, we should see Jesus on the cross for us. When we consider how we should treat those who are still in the world, we should see Jesus on the cross for them. When Satan tempts us to withhold good from those around us, we should see Satan tempting Jesus to abandon the cross and leave us in our sins; and we should see how much we deserve for Jesus to abandon us instead of what He did. And we should see Jesus tell Satan to get behind Him. Everything else we ever learn about being zealous for good deeds comes right back to this, the supreme, the epitome, the ultimate, The Good Deed. We will be challenged this month. But remember, Jesus has not asked anything of us He hasn't already done for us.