

That's a Good Man, part 2

(Proverbs 12:15-28)

11/1/17; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

In years past, sharing the gospel with people in the south is often a great place to learn about what people think about the gospel...

And the overwhelming view of salvation in this part of the world is that good people go to heaven...

I have asked numerous people over the years if they see themselves as a good person, and the overwhelming response in nearly every case is that most people see themselves as good..

I remember asking one guy to describe what a good person is and he said without hesitation..

He is guy that works but doesn't cuss, smoke, or drink..

And I think that answer represents the answer that most people would offer, especially in the south of what it means to be a good man...

And when you put a person's idea of what it means to be good alongside their idea of what it takes to get to heaven...

You end up with the common misconception that if I can just stop cussing, smoking and drinking that I will go to heaven..

And I would bet there are millions of people who have that view of salvation..

Now, I am not here to endorse cussing, smoking, or drinking, but I am here to warn us of the dangers of the false gospel of morality.

The false gospel of morality teaches that god men go to heaven and good men are those that are the most moral in their behavior.

You could also call it the gospel of the Pharisees who thought they could earn heaven by keeping the law of God...

And I have a passion to preach against that false gospel that has done much damage in the south...

Where there will be lots of good men in hell because preachers valued no cussing, drinking, or smoking over faith in Christ alone...

Now with that said, I also want to stress that morality and salvation do have a relationship...

And that relationship is quite simple...

A moral life flows from true salvation..

In other words, saved people are moral people.

And as long as you keep the cart of morality after the horse of salvation, you will be fine..

Because the Bible is clear...

Saved people have a desire to be good people...

And as we continue our look at the book of Proverbs this week, we see some descriptions of what it means to be a good person in Proverbs 12...

And as long as we remember that can't put morality before salvation like you wouldn't put the cart in front of the horse, we can learn much from Proverbs 12 in terms of morality after salvation...

Last week, we saw what I called 8 traits of a good man in verses 1-14 of Proverbs 12...

Trait #1 - A good man is teachable.

Trait #2 - A good man is immovable.

Trait #3 - A good man is faithful.

Trait #4 - A good man thinks and speaks righteousness.

Trait #5 - A good man is humble.

Trait #6 - A good man is compassionate.

Trait #7 - A good man works.

Trait #8 - A good man is rewarded.

Tonight, we will add to those traits in verses 15-28...

Let's begin in verse 15...

Trait #9 - A good man (or woman) listens and responds to truth.

Verse 15...

15

***The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.***

We touched on this last week a little bit, but we live in a very arrogant and proud culture..

And the reason for that is this...

Truth no longer matters.

Instead, the world now teaches that truth is really up to the individual...

In fact, if you desire something to be true, you just say it and believe it and it is true..

For the world, truth is simply relative and changeable...

For instance, it was once true that homosexuality was a sin...

Now, that truth has changed and caught up with the times and homosexuality in the eyes of the world and even in the eyes of many “so-called” Christians is no longer a sin...

The same could be said of so many other things in the world...

But the sinful mentality of so many in the world is this — Truth is what I want it to be...

Well, the Bible says that is the mentality of the fool...

Because the fool is the one who is right in his own eyes...

In other words, truth is not up to us...

Truth is not negotiable or changeable..

Truth stands forever and asks you to change..

And the good man of God understands this...

He doesn't demand his way...

He doesn't barge in a room and ask everyone to get on board with his way of thinking...

He doesn't stubbornly stand on his own ideas...

Instead, the good man is a man who listens and learns...

The wise man or the wise woman asks for advice and counsel and is willing to change and conform to the truth...

This is the essence of the gospel..

The truth of the gospel says that you are a sinner who needs to be saved by repenting and trusting in Christ.

And there are two ways to respond to that truth..

One is to stay wise in your own eyes, refuse to change your ways and never repent and trust Christ.

The other way is to listen to the counsel of that truth, see your need of salvation and repent and believe in Christ..

Good men and women are not know it alls..

They don't demand their own way..

They aren't wise in their own eyes...

Instead, they are people who listen to the counsel of God's word and change what needs to be changed in their lives..

A 10th trait of the good man is found in verse 16..

Trait #10 - A good man is self-controlled.

Verse 16..

16

***A fool's anger is known at once,
But a prudent man conceals dishonor.***

Anger has no place in the life of a believer..

Now the come back to that is always the same...

“Well, Jesus got angry in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers..”

And that is entirely true, but we forget the reason Jesus was angry in the temple...

He was angry over for the dishonor shown to the temple of God..

The temple was not designed to be a place of commerce but a place of worship..

And what drove Jesus to overturn tables was a passion for the righteousness..

Very rarely, if ever, are we angry over sin..

Most of our anger is not in an attempt to defend God's name but our own...

We get angry because someone cuts us off in traffic...

We get angry because someone mistreats us or we experience injustice..

Most of our anger is to defend our self, our time and our time and never a result of defending the Lord's...

Therefore, the anger that we see in Christ's actions is in response to his deep love of God..

Unfortunately, the anger we see in our lives is in response to a deep love of ourselves..

So good men and women don't get angry unless that anger is out of heart of defending God's name..

Instead, good men and good women show self control..

The end of verse 16 says that a prudent man conceals dishonor..

The idea is that when someone speaks an insult to a good man, he conceals it and overlooks it..

He doesn't lash back out at the person who was dishonoring to him...

He is in control and able to take it and move on without an outburst of anger..

This is such an important trait in the life of a believer...

Listen to James 1:19-20...

19 [u]This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Angry Christians do much damage to the name of Christ..

WE have no reason to be angry if we are saved.

God has forgiven us and redeemed us...

What is there to be angry about?

Anger does not accomplish anything but it will destroy much...

The next few traits of a good man is found in verses 17-22...

Let's read verses 17-22...

17

*He who [i]speaks truth tells what is right,
But a false witness, deceit.*

18

*There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of
a sword,
But the tongue of the wise brings healing.*

19

*Truthful lips will be established forever,
But a lying tongue is only for a moment.*

20

*Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil,
But counselors of peace have joy.*

21

*No harm befalls the righteous,
But the wicked are filled with trouble.*

22

***Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord,
But those who deal faithfully are His delight.***

23

***A prudent man conceals knowledge,
But the heart of fools proclaims folly.***

This whole set of verses from 17-23 are concerned with how a person speaks...

So, let's draw a few traits of good men and women from how they use their words..

Trait #11 - A good man is honest.

You see in verses 17, 19, and 22 the idea of being someone who speaks the truth...

In verse 17, the one who speaks truth is able proclaim what is right to the world..

In verse 19, the one who speaks truth is established forever...

In verse 22, the one who speak the truth faithfully area delight to God...

Needless to say, good men and women speak the truth that stands forever, while the fool speaks deceit that lasts for the moment..

We also see another trait of a good man related to speech, and that is what we see in verses 18 and 20...

Trait #12 - A good man is a peacemaker.

Look at verse 18...

There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword...

This is the person who kills with their words...

They bring trouble with their words...

They and slander and gossip and stir the pot in hopes of hurting others..

Their words are like the thrust of a sword....

This is the idea of a back stabber in terms of your words...

You see it repeated in the first part of verse 20...

Deceit is in the hearts of those who devise evil...

In other words, the fool speaks out of an evil heart that is looking to make drama and destroy...

Now compare this to the speech of the wise man...

Look at the second half of verse 18...

The tongue of the wise brings healing...

Look at the second half of verse 20...

Counselors of peace...

What is the characteristic of the speech of the wise?

Their words bring peace and healing to those who hear them...

This is the idea of “blessed are the peacemakers” of they shall be called the children of God..

This is such an overlooked trait today, but God is a peacemaker and so should His people be..

We never make peace by compromising the truth, but we seek peace before we seek trouble..

This would definitely apply to our words but also to our lives..

Our goal is to be at peace with all men..

Christians should not be known as drama queens who are always stirring the pot...

But as peacemakers who work to keep the peace,
and clearly our words are so important in this
process...

Moving on, we see trait #13 of a good man in verse
23..

Trait #13 - A good man is careful with his words.

This trait is always related our speech and this is in
terms of wisdom with our speech...

Verse 23 says that a prudent man conceals knowl-
edge but the heart of fools proclaims folly..

This is the idea of not saying everything that comes
into your head...

Wise men learn to conceal things that don't need to
be said...

While fools open their mouths and say everything
they are thinking..

Once again, I got real frustrated with people who
boast in the fact that they aren't afraid to say any-
thing..

Brashness and boldness are not always good
things...

Brashness is not commended in the Bible nearly as often as someone who thinks before they speak...

And the reason is this...

Brashness behavior and speech often has no regard of the feelings of others, but is often very self-centered...

People like this often say things like, "Well, like it or not, I just had to say it."

That is often a very arrogant person who has no regards for the feelings of others...

Wise people, good men and women understand when to speak and when to stay silent...

Just because you think it, doesn't mean you have to say it...

And if you do have to say it, it is often much better to say it in private than to proclaim it to the world..

There is as much wisdom in knowing what not to say as there is in knowing what to say..

And the good man and woman are careful and not carefree with their words...

Trait #13 is found in verse 24...

24

*The hand of the diligent will rule,
But the [j]slack hand will be put to forced labor.*

Trait #13 - A good man is diligent.

The trait is very much related to the the trait of a good man is one who works...

But diligence is slightly different in that diligence is the way we are to work...

We are to be faithful in our duties...

Whether that is a job that provides for our family or our area of service in the church or a household responsibility...

It amazes me the amount of diligence that people will pour into their careers while lacking diligence in their homes and in the church...

They will be on time to work, but late to church..

They will work over at the office, but run out of the door at church...

They will volunteer for their boss, but never volunteer at their church...

Don't they realize that what they do at work will eventually be destroyed but what they do for the Lord and His church will last forever?

Diligence is just the mark of a good employee, it the mark of a good member of your family and of your church..

Diligent people will be rewarded with more responsibility...

Here in verse 24...

The reward is the to be able to rule...

And in this context, the rewards of diligence in this life will be greater responsibilities for all eternity...

I will never forget my first summer job...

I was the grass cutter for a place where my dad worked...

And I did a good job keeping it all cut..

We got a week off at this business of the 4th of July, and every employee got a little bonus for their work except me...

I was part time and they simply didn't give bonuses to part time employees..

I was frustrated, but my dad told me to do my job right and maybe the boss would notice eventually...

Well, it turns out that after vacation, the boss noticed that I didn't get a little bonus myself...

So he gave it to me in the next check...

He said he just simply forgot to do it..

You know what?

You can work diligently for decades for a company and they may never notice your diligence..

But I assure you of one thing, God never forgets the diligence of His people...

Your diligence may never be rewarded here but it will be rewarded in eternity...

And good men and good women are simply diligent people...

A 14th trait of a good man is this...

Trait #14 - A good man is encouraging.

Let me read verses 25-26..

25

*Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down,
But a good word makes it glad.*

26

*The righteous is a guide to his neighbor,
But the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

I see a relationship between these two verses in that a good man is looking for ways to help his neighbor...

In verse 25, his neighbor is discouraged and anxious, and so his good word is a help to raise his spirits..

In verse 26, his neighbor is in need of direction, and the good man guides him in the right way while the evil man leads him the wrong way..

In general, good men and women are blessing to the people around them..

When we see people in trouble, we don't pass by...

We stop to help..

And it doesn't matter who they are..

Our hearts are simply wanting to be a source of encouragement to them...

If they are down, we seek to lift them up...

If they are unsure, we seek to show them the right way.

This is the one the marks of a true believer.

We have compassion for the people around us..

We aren't content to let them continue in their sin and on a destructive path...

So we plead with them in love...

We beg them to get saved..

We urge them to repent and trust Christ..

This is the mark of an encourager..

He does not come to the person in need from a place of power...

He doesn't come talking down to his neighbor...

No, he lifts up the one to whom he is speaking..

He pleads and begs..

He doesn't command or insult..

He wants to make a difference but he doesn't barge in the door...

He simply knock and waits and helps and supports..

That is the picture of verse 24 and verse 25...

The good man seeks to bring gladness to his neighbor and be guide for his neighbor..

Never overbearing...

Always encouraging and praying...

Our neighbors don't need Christians who make them mad and tell them what to do....

Instead our neighbors need more Christians who make them glad and serve as a guide to the truth..

Let me read the final two verses of Proverbs 12...

27

***A [k]lazy man does not [l]roast his prey,
But the precious possession of a man is diligence.***

28

***In the way of righteousness is life,
And in its pathway there is no death.***

In verse 27, we add another plea of God for his people to be hard working and diligent...

And then in verse 28, the summary verse of this chapter simply becomes the motivation of the good man...

Trait #15 - A good man is motivated.

Motivation is an important aspect of desiring to live as a good man or a good woman...

Temptation is everywhere.

Our sinful flesh is persistently pulling us to sin..

So why should we want to live a good life?

Well, verse 28 tells us..

The way of righteousness is life...

In other words, good men and good women find benefit in living right..

The first benefit is an earthly benefit in that their good life often leads to a longer life while blessing others and making God's name big in the world...

The second benefit is the their good and right living is proof that their faith in Christ is real and they will inherit eternal life at death...

Though good men men and good women don't earn their salvation with their right living, they certainly prove their salvation by it..

And therefore, they have the expectation of eternal life when they die and rewards in heaven because of how they lived on earth...

And that is certainly great motivation to live rightly now...

Conclusion

These are the 15 traits of a good man or a good woman from Proverbs 12....

These aren't the only traits of good living...

WE will continue to add to this list over the next few chapters as well..

But these 15 traits are certainly a good foundation for living a life that is blessed by God and will be a blessing to others...

As I look over this list, one thing comes to mind..

Thank God that He doesn't save based on our good works because no one would make it...

No one lives this all the time...

Do we always listen?

Are we always self controlled?

Are we always honest?

Do we always make peace?

And the answer to that is clearly no..

There is none of us completely righteous or even close to to this standard...

We all miss the mark of what it means to be righteous...

And though the world may see us a good people, we know the real truth about ourselves and it ain't pretty...

That is why we run to Christ, right?

That is why we believe the gospel offer of salvation.

Because we know that though we want to live right, there is only one who has ever accomplished that and we need Him..

It is good to want to live as a good man or a good woman, but may we never forget that only Christ is truly good...

Let us pray.