

That's a Good Man

(Proverbs 12:1-15)

10/25/17; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

I think y'all have heard enough of my preaching to know how I feel about the phrase, "he's a good man," or "she's a good woman."

Personally, I think these phrases are some the most unhelpful phrases in a person's vocabulary in terms of Christianity and the gospel...

And the reason they are unhelpful is that people come to believe that being good gets you into heaven..

And nothing could be further from the truth in terms of what the Bible teaches..

Salvation is not based on a whether a person is good in our eyes but whether or not he is good in terms of how God sees him...

And the only way to be good in God's eyes is by repenting of your sin and trusting in Christ...

At that point, Christ's goodness is credited to your life and you are declared good by God...

But many times, we get that confused by calling people good who aren't Christians, and in doing so, we lead people to think that God wants us to be good instead of putting our trust in Christ...

When I got saved and began to understand the gospel more and more clearly, I struggled with the thought of so many "good people" I knew who weren't saved..

Yet, I could not find anywhere in the Bible where it says that good people go to heaven...

So I had to make peace with that reality and beg God to save good people as well as bad people...

Now, I also want to be balanced in this by saying that being a good person is not a bad thing.

In fact, Christians should be known as "good people" in the world's eyes...

We should be kind peacemakers...

We should help our neighbor..

We should seek to do good in the world..

We should desire for the world to call us good men and women...

In fact, the Bible speaks of the believers as being “good people”...

So as long as we realize that goodness doesn’t save, we are fine to seek to be good people as we live in the world...

With that in mind, I want us to begin our look at Proverbs 12..

And I have entitled this chapter, “That’s a Good Man” because chapter 12 describes what it means to be a good man or good woman in the world..

And so as we move through this chapter, I want us to identify some traits of the good man or woman in terms of how we are to live in the world once we are saved..

Let’s simply begin in verse 1, and see trait #1 of a good man...

Trait #1 - A good man is teachable.

Verse 1..

***Whoever loves [a]discipline loves knowledge,
But he who hates reproof is stupid.***

We have seen the idea of being a teachable and correctable person so many times in the book of Proverbs...

And we see it again here in verse 1 and the simple truth is that good people accept instruction and correction from others..

The good man loves to be disciplined...

Now why is discipline so hard for most people to take?

Well, discipline goes after our pride...

Discipline tells us that we are wrong and then offers consequences for our wrong behavior or thoughts...

So many people today reject discipline and correction..

They are only interested in being right, not in learning or being corrected...

Good people listen to and learn from correction..

Good people know that they can be wrong and accept correction when they are...

On the other hand, the evil man rejects any discipline and correction...

He is always right and never wrong...

He is the know it all who listen to no one but his own way of thinking...

Unfortunately, this kind of person knows nothing and the Lord calls him stupid...

And the Hebrew word here is the idea of a beast..

Stupid actually means one who eats in the field or grazes in the pasture...

It is the picture of an unreasonable beast...

That is the person who can't be reasoned with...

For instance, you can't talk the horse into running fast, instead you have to pull out the whip and strike him..

The same is true for the unteachable man..

You can't train him or help him understand....

Trait #2 of the good man is found in verses 2-3...

Trait #2 - A good man is unmovable.

Let's read verses 2-3..

***2 A good man will obtain favor from the Lord,
But He will condemn a man [b]who devises evil.
3 A man will not be established by wickedness,
But the root of the righteous will not be moved.***

In verses 2 and 3, you see the common idea in Proverbs of contrasting the righteous and the wicked..

In verse 2, the the righteous is blessed, while the wicked is condemned...

And the reason for this blessing or cursing is what we see in verse 3...

The reason the wicked is condemned is because his life is established and founded on doing evil...

The reason the righteous is blessed and obtains favor is because his life in established and founded on doing good...

And because he has established his life on right living, he has a strong foundational root...

This is the idea of Psalm 1 where he is like the tree who lives near the water and therefore has deep and strong roots...

He is also like the man who builds his house on the rock...

His foundation is not shaky but sure....

Here is the general principle of a good man's life...

He is unmovable because he is committed to and lives by the truth...

Good men are not wishy washy and unsure but consistent and committed to the truth...

Now, this is not the idea of stubbornness or being unteachable..

This is the idea of not compromising on matters of truth...

Good men know the word of God, live the word of God and stand upon the word of God...

There roots are deep in the things of God and they will not be moved...

Let me tell you something...

It is good to be humble and gracious and kind and teachable and loving, but it is not good to be push over on matters of truth...

Build your life on the word of God and you can stand firmly against the world if necessary..

I never want to be arrogant or proud, but there is a confidence I have in God and His word that makes me able to face the strongest of opponents..

We are going to look at Martin Luther and his life a little bit this Sunday morning in Sunday school. but Luther was a man confident in the word of God..

He was quoted as saying that he would stand against a hundred popes and cardinals and bishops...

If he could stand on the word of God...

And stand he did 500 years ago, and the church and God's people have been blessed by his deep roots in the word of God..

Let us move on to the next trait of a good man..

4

***An [c]excellent wife is the crown of her husband,
But she who shames him is like rottenness in his
bones.***

As is often true in the book of Proverbs, we rapidly change subjects in verse 4 with a bit of wisdom to wives...

And Solomon points to a the wisdom of wife who brings attention to her husband like a crown on his head...

And she contracted to the wife who destroys her husband from the inside like rotten bones..

Now what is the characteristic here of a good man or a good woman...

I would simply offer this...

Trait #3 - A good man is faithful.

I think it is clear here that good people are faithful to their spouses...

In the case of the good woman, she honors her husband like a crown on his head...

And even in the case of the good man, he honors his wife with his faithfulness...

You cannot describe someone as a good man or good woman who isn't faithful to their spouse...

Now, they can recover from these sins, but if they are honoring their vows now, there isn't anything good about them...

God expects his people to be faithful to their spouses..

Let's move to verses 5-8, where we find a 4th trait of a good man...

Verse 5...

5

***The thoughts of the righteous are just,
But the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.***

6

***The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood,
But the mouth of the upright will deliver them.***

7

***The wicked are overthrown and are no more,
But the house of the righteous will stand.***

8

***A man will be praised according to his insight,
But one of perverse [d]mind will be despised.***

Trait #4 of a good man is this..

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

If you look at verses 5-8, they contrast the righteous and the wicked in terms of their thoughts and words...

And this is helpful because our thoughts become our words...

If you think rightly, you will speak rightly and then act rightly...

If you think evil, you will speak evil and act wrongly...

Now here the idea is that the righteous think rightly and then right advice...

While the wicked think wrongly and then give deceitful advice...

And then in verse 8, you see the end result of right thinking and right advice, which is honor and praise among men...

While the wicked person think evils, offers bad advice and then is despised for his counsel...

There are a number of way to apply this, but I will give you two..

The first is this...

Don't look for biblical wisdom from unbelievers...

Look, you may unbelieving family and friends that are part of your life and a great help to you personally, but don't expect them to offer the best advice...

Their mind is blinded by their sin...

Their way of life reflects their lostness...

So why in the world would you ask them what they would do?

They don't have the Spirit of God...

They don't care for the word of God...

So they aren't going to be equipped or able to tell you what to do...

The only thing they can rely on is their own experience or the words of man....

So why in the world would a person of the light ask a person of the dark for advice or counsel?

And worse yet, why are you surprised when what they told you doesn't work out?

That is like walking up to a street corner and asking a blind man when it is safe to go...

But I see Christians all the time approaching unbelieving family and friends and going to unbelieving therapists and counselors and psychologists for advice and counsel...

The second application here is this..

Fill your life so much with the word of God that if someone cuts you, you bleed good advice and counsel from the word of God...

I have not taken but 2 counseling classes in my life and they both were in seminary...

One was introduction to biblical counseling and one was family and marriage counseling...

And though there are many more I could take, I have found that the best counseling class in reading and studying the Bible...

Though there are complex problems in the world that more require intense counseling, most issues can be solved in a matter of time looking at what the Bible says about our problems....

And then practicing some simple biblical solutions to these problems....

We get so confused when we step away from the word of God and look to lost people for help...

Some of the best counselors and advice givers are simply those men and women who study and know the word of God...

So a good man thinks and speaks righteousness.....

Verse 9 gives us a 5th trait of a good man...

9

***Better is he who is lightly esteemed and has a servant
Than he who honors himself and lacks bread.***

Though this is another repeated theme in the book of Proverbs, we must see that...

Trait #5 - A good man is humble.

The reason for humility is this...

We came into this world only by the grace of God....

We live and survive in this world by the grace of God..

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

We know our standing in the world is all by the grace and mercy of God, so pride must go...

And I want you to notice something here in this proverb too....

Some people are so prideful that they will go without bread before asking for help..

I urge tonight....

Let go of your pride and humble yourself before God...

Stop talking about all you have and instead talk about what the Lord has given you...

Stop pointing to your possessions and start pointing to the cross...

Stop patting yourself on the back and raising your nose in the air and start lowering yourself in the eyes of the world...

Your pride is not an attraction for others to come to Christ but a reason to stay away from Christ..

Good men and good women are filled with humility...

A 6th trait of the good man is found in verse 10...

Trait #6 - A good man is compassionate.

Verse 10..

10

A righteous man has regard for the life of his animal,

But even the compassion of the wicked is cruel.

I think this is a most interesting verse to highlight the compassionate side of person...

No, we know that animals are not the height of God's creation...

They are without souls...

They were created to serve the needs of man as he ruled the earth...

Yet they are part of God's creation and we are not to mistreat them as we are not to mistreat other parts of the created order..

So Solomon reminds us here that righteous men have regard for the life of their animals..

They are to show compassion for them as they would for other parts of the world created by God..

Clearly, we wouldn't sacrifice human life for the life of an animal...

We wouldn't feed the dog before we fed our child...

But we are called to show mercy to the animal as much as possible...

On the other hand is the wicked man who shows compassion to no one or nothing but is cruel to all...

Now, what can we apply here?

Well, we are called to be compassionate not just to animals but to all other people as well...

Compassion is simply concern over the trials and sufferings of others...

And Christians often forget that we must stay soft hearted to people in the world..

Jesus was the model of compassion...

Though he was on a mission in the world, he never forgot the people in the world...

On his way to the cross, he still had time to sympathize for the conditions of others....

Compassionate people are always the ones to stop and help, while hard hearted people keep on moving...

It is often not seen as manly to be compassionate, but I would remind us all that the model of being a man was Christ..

The world needs our compassion and love, and good men are compassionate men...

Let's look at trait #7 of a good man....

Trait #7 - A good man works.

Verse 11..

11

***He who tills his land will have plenty of bread,
But he who pursues worthless things lacks
[e]sense.***

12

***The wicked man desires the [f]booty of evil men,
But the root of the righteous yields fruit.***

Once again in the book of Proverbs, we see the wisdom of work..

This time, we see it in the diligence of a farmer who plants this fields and enjoys the bread of the harvest..

I even love the play on words here that the root of righteous man yields fruit...

If you work, you all enjoy the fruit of work..

And the main fruit of work is that will go on vacation and have many hobbies..

The main fruit of work is that it will allow you to eat...

So the good man works...

On the other hand, the wicked man pursues worthless things...

This could be in the form of hobbies or personal pleasures...

But the idea is that the wicked don't spend the majority of their time working...

They spend the majority of their time playing and doing useless things....

Though relaxation and hobbies are not sinful, they have a time and a place in a person's life...

However, when they become the focus of a person's life, there is always trouble...

So wicked people waste time when they should be working...

We also see that wicked people steal...

They desire the booty or treasure of others, but instead of working for it, they take it without permission...

It has often been said that if people spent as much time working as they do of thinking of ways to get money dishonestly, they can make as much money in an honest fashion...

But that isn't the case and never will be...

Wicked are lazy and steal, but good men work and provide for their needs...

Let's finish up tonight with one more trait of a good man...

Verses 13-14...

13

[g]An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips,

But the righteous will escape from trouble.

14

A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his [h]words,

And the deeds of a man's hands will return to him.

Trait #7 - A good man is rewarded.

WE have talked about this principle before, but generally speaking, good men are rewarded for their lives..

Verse 13 teaches that evil words tend to come back on the head of the evil men who speak them...

While a good man and his good words are rewarded by God..

In general, good men and women who live good lives enjoy the good things of this life...

While evil people who live bad lives often experience the sufferings of this world...

I am often amazed how people who lived in sin expect it all to go away when they call on the Lord..

And many people will come to Christ and expect him to take all the consequences of sin away when they get saved...

However, the promise of the gospel is not a better life now but a better life to come..

If you live sinfully, expect consequences for that sin....

That is why it is much better to live obediently to the Lord....

Not only will there be blessings at death, there will likely be blessings in this life as well....

Conclusion

Well, let's stop right there for tonight and we will pick up in verse 15 next week...

Let me end with a quote by one of my favorite preachers, Charles Spurgeon...

Spurgeon was a preacher in England in the 1800s and he battled the idea of morality being all that God required for salvation...

In other words, many people in and around London had made morality the standard for salvation...

In their wrong view of God, they felt that good men and women went to heaven regardless of their view of Christ..

Well, Spurgeon did much to resist this idea and helped turn many back to the true gospel...

But Spurgeon never left morality out when it came to preaching to people how to live after salvation...

He once said this and I couldn't agree more...

The best morality in the world will not prove a man to be a Christian, but if a man has not morality, it proves that he is not a child of God.

That is well said....

God doesn't save good men and women, but men and women that God does save live good lives for him...

Let us pray.