

God Wants Us to Be Good

(August 2, 2020, By Rev. Anthony Menzel)

***How does the Lord Jesus want us to be good?

It is clear from the Bible that the only being that is totally good is God...

Matthew 19:16-17

16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good[d] Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

17 So He said to him, [e]“Why do you call Me good? [f]No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

So how can we be good?

***Love everyone.

Matthew 5:43-48

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 [o]But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your [p]brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the [q]tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

We may have to love some people from a distance...

Matthew 7:6

6 “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

But we should never wish anyone harm...

Proverbs 17:5

He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker;
He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

We should also make it a goal to wish that people would only be judged if they refuse to change...

Matthew 7:1-2

“Judge[a] not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what [b]judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

We should always strive to make people feel the way we would want to feel...

Matthew 7:12

12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

There is a very powerful saying:

“People don’t always remember what you say, but they remember how you make them feel...”

We should try our best, as the Holy Spirit leads us, to make people feel loved and welcome...

***The second way we can be good:

Repent and not look back...

1 John 1:8-10

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

The Christian life is one of continual repentance...

We should repent not only for sinful actions and words but also for sinful thoughts and feelings...

Matthew 5:27-30

27 “You have heard that it was said [i]to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to [j]sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to [k]sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Sin is a very serious matter for the Lord Jesus...

Song of Solomon 2:15

Catch us the foxes,
The little foxes that spoil the vines,
For our vines have tender grapes.

If we let little sins go, they can grow into big problems...

James 1:13-17

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

When we don't get rid of evil desires, then we allow them to grow into even more serious sins that can eventually kill our relationship with the Lord Jesus and others, as well as possibly resulting in our own death...

Not looking back, asking God to take out any desire to go back to the sin of which we are repenting, is extremely important...

2 Peter 2:20-22

20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21

For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Lot’s wife’s mistake was looking back at the material things she was leaving behind in a sinful environment...

Sometimes we also just wish we could be surrounded by what we’re used to.

It reminds me of how many, even in the body of Christ, want their conveniences restored. They don’t care about the sin in our society. They just want COVID gone so that they can be comfortable again...

I don’t want COVID gone unless it is replaced by spiritual awakening...

Our society deserves to be disciplined even more than what the Lord for all the wickedness that has been done...

Genesis 19:12-26

12 Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take them out of this place! 13 For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, “Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!” But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

15 When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, “Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city.” 16 And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. 17 So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that [b]he said, “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be [c]destroyed.”

18 Then Lot said to them, “Please, no, my lords! 19 Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. 20 See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.”

21 And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. 22 Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there."

Therefore the name of the city was called [d]Zoar.

23 The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. 25 So He [e]overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. 28 Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. 29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.

***I really in my spirit that the Holy Spirit is saying that there is still time...

I feel that we are at a turning point...

God allowed the devil to bring COVID upon the world so that God could stop the uncontrolled sin in the world...

He became like a parent who sends their children to their room for punishment...

Worldly people were getting too wild...

The church was getting too comfortable, focusing too much on personal needs and not enough on helping to establishing God's Kingdom on earth by sharing and living according to Christ's norms in society...

The church's prayer focus also has been too much on getting blessed and not enough on interceding for the salvation of souls and the destruction of sinful influences on our society...

But if we get serious about praying to God to get rid of the sins of our nation, I believe we still have a chance of turning things around before we force God to judge because of the sin of the people outside of the church and the apathy of the people in the church.

2 Chronicles 7:13-22

13 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, **14** if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. **15** Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer *made* in this place. **16** For now I have chosen and [d]sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and [e]My eyes and [f]My heart will be there perpetually. **17** As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, **18** then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail *to have* a man as ruler in Israel.'

19 "But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, **20** then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have [g]sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

21 "And *as for* this [h]house, which [i]is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and this house?' **22** Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.' "

We have to stop embracing idols...

An idol can be defined as anything or any person that is more important to us than God.

There are people who actually worship what we would traditionally consider to be idols, which can be statues associated with the demonic powers related to heresies.

Heresies can be defined as false religious practices and beliefs.

However, there are some idols today that are a bit different from these traditional idols...

One of the most common idols today is the god of self...

People who worship themselves make themselves, including their convenience and personal desires, more important than God. One of the root causes of the materialism and the selfishness that is destroying the United States spiritually and morally is that people put pleasing themselves first before pleasing the Lord Jesus or other people, even their loved ones.

Worshiping oneself is also one of the causes of abortion. People who kill their babies in the womb often place more importance on their convenience and their finances than being used by God to bring a new life into the world. Worshiping oneself is also a root cause of divorce.

God hates divorce.

Malachi 2:13-16

And this is the second thing you do:

You cover the altar of the Lord with tears,
With weeping and crying;

So He does not regard the offering anymore,
Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your hands.

14 Yet you say, "For what reason?"

Because the Lord has been witness
Between you and the wife of your youth,
With whom you have dealt treacherously;
Yet she is your companion
And your wife by covenant.

15 But did He not make *them* one,
Having a remnant of the Spirit?
And why one?

He seeks godly offspring.
Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.

16 "For the Lord God of Israel says
That He hates divorce,
For it covers one's garment with violence,"
Says the Lord of hosts.

"Therefore take heed to your spirit,
That you do not deal treacherously."

But many people don't care that God hates divorce; if they aren't getting along with their spouse, they just get a divorce without any thought of whether or not they have hurt God's heart.

Another idol that has to go is sex.

Sexual perversion according to the Bible is any kind of sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage between two adults that are not close relatives.

Pornography and infidelity, which destroy marriages and subsequently damage families, have worshiping sex as their root cause.

Another idol is science...

Many people believe more in science than in the Lord Jesus...

Instead of praying first and going to the doctor second, they don't even pray about the problems that come up in their life.

Another idol is the temporary pleasures that come from evil addictions, such as addictions to drugs and alcohol...

An alcoholic, for example, often puts more importance on drinking than not only on the Lord Jesus but also on providing for their own family...

Another issue that we also should pray about is violence...

One of the root causes of violence is not valuing human life...

That's a big part of why some people feel the elderly can be abused and the terminally ill can be euthanized...

That's a big part of why bad police officers can hurt and kill the people they are supposed to help and protect...

That's part of why young people can be gunned down in schools and people of any age can be gunned down in the street...

Another issue we should pray about is prejudice...

The devil loves to divide and conquer

Mark 3:22-25

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebub,” and, “By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.”

23 So He called them to *Himself* and said to them in parables: “How can Satan cast out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

If the United States is not going to fall like other great civilizations, it is important for us to be united, at least in some important ways...

It is important that the distrust that many of us have of other ethnic groups be addressed in a deep way that can bring healing and more understanding between ethnic groups...

Even if some of us worship within a given ethnic group due to language or cultural considerations, every Christian should do their best to love everyone, regardless of their ethnic background...

Galatians 3:26-28

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

