

“You Can Rest Now!”

02-10-13

Our world revolves around things good: good food, good game, good book, even a good sport. Maybe some of you have even used this very unusual blessing before a meal: “Good food, Good meat, Good God, let’s eat!” I’m not so sure that when God says something’s good that what He meant!

God wants us to be and do good. Listen to these words from Galatians 6:10, *“As we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”* God even tells us to *“fight the good fight of the faith.”* With all this emphasis on good, that begs the question, *“How good?”*

Max says it this way, *“Most people embrace the idea that God saves good people. Still no one can answer the fundamental question: “what level of good is good enough?”* The reason being good is such a concern to us, is because sometimes we feel like our eternal destiny is on the line! We’re trying to work our way into heaven!

Our society and even we ourselves many times say that no matter how good we might feel about ourselves, it’s never good enough, and we’re not good enough! When we’re hit with words and thoughts like these, the only thing it does is make us feel weary and frustrated!

Listen to these words from Hebrews 13:9, *“Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by things, which have not benefited those devoted to them.”* When our focus is internal, and how the world sees us, rather than on how God sees us, we’re at a dead end!

Open to Galatians 3. Another trouble with trying to be good enough in God’s sight is that it doesn’t lead to more faith! Look at verses 10-14, *“For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.”* His death is really our death because of our sin!

But rather than us trying to live a good life to receive eternal blessings, God had the best idea! Here it is: We contribute nothing! He contributes everything! This is totally God’s grace! Ephesians 2:8, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”*

Open to Romans 3. We really didn’t do anything to receive the gift. We receive it only through faith in what Christ has done for us! This gift comes to us out of the goodness and love of our Almighty God! Look at verses 24-25, *“You are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.”*

Listen to what God says about Himself and what He's done, 2 Timothy 1:9, *"(He) saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began."* This has been God's plan since the beginning of creation!

God created mankind perfect and desired us to be in perfect fellowship with Him forever. But man fell away and we continue to fall away because of our sin, and that perfect relationship was lost! Jesus told us how we were to be in Matthew 5:48, *"You therefore must be perfect, as Your heavenly Father is perfect!"* On our own, we don't even have a chance to make it! But God in His grace and mercy sent His One and Only Son, Jesus Christ, to restore that relationship again!

Because of faith in Jesus Christ alone, we can have a true certainty of His grace! That certainty replaces our own effort in trying to make it on our own and we can rest! This rest was something God talked about with the people of Israel as He had led them out of captivity in Egypt and was taking them to the Promised Land. The Israelites acted much like we do and didn't think God was doing enough and they had to do it all! They also thought that because they were faced with struggles around them, God had forgotten about them and really didn't care!

But God responds to them as He does to us. Exodus 33:14, *"My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."* Open to Matthew 11. Jesus continued this same thought as He came to earth and saw the struggles and difficulties of mankind. He sees yours too and in His love and grace asks you to come to find your rest in Him. Look at verses 28-29, *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

You're special in God's sight! He loves you so much! When you believe and trust in God and His gift of grace, you can put all anxiousness away and just rest in His everlasting arms. Max concludes Chapter 4 with these words, *"There is no fine print. A second shoe is not going to drop. God's promise has no hidden language. Let grace happen, for heaven's sake! No more performing for God, no more clamoring after God. Of all the things you must earn in life, God's unending affection is not one of them! You have it! Stretch yourself out in the hammock of grace. You can rest now!"*

Follow Him with all your heart, and leaning on Him alone you will find true and eternal rest!