

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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Can We Trust in the Goodness of God?

We often hear a familiar saying quoted responsively among believing congregations, “God is Good... All the Time.” The saying is true. Psalms 118 begins and ends with nearly identical statements. They declare that we know Yahweh is good because His mercy never ends. It endures forever:

1 O give thanks unto Yahweh; for *he is* good: because his mercy *endures* forever. -Psalms 118

29 O give thanks unto Yahweh; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endures* forever. -Psalms 118

Through His ever-enduring mercy, He revealed His love for us when He offered His only begotten Son as the way to everlasting life for those who believe in Him (see John 3:16). His love is unshakable. His love (agape love) is so sure and so unselfish that it is also translated as unfailing charity:

8 Charity never fails: but whether *there are* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there are* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it shall vanish away. -1 Corinthians 13

Regardless of our circumstances, God still loves us. The love that He shows to us through Yahshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) is so sure that Paul was persuaded that nothing can separate us from it:

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in the Messiah Yahshua our Lord. -Romans 8

Once we become convinced of God’s unconditional everlasting love, which is revealed through His goodness and mercy, it is easy for us to forget that there is also another dimension to that love. In addition to God’s goodness, there is also His “severity.”

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *his* goodness: otherwise you also will be cut off. -Romans 11

Unless we continue in His goodness, Paul explains, we will experience His severity. We will be “cut off” like a branch is cut off from a tree. Unless we continue to listen

to Him, believe Him, and give glory to His name, He will even curse our blessings:

2 If you will not hear, and if you will not lay *it* to heart, to give glory unto my name, says Yahweh of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay *it* to heart. -Malachi 2

This may seem severe for a good and loving God, but He offers us His blessing if we obey His commandments or His curse if we refuse to obey them:

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

27 A blessing, if you obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I command you this day:

28 And a curse, if you will not obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which you have not known. -Deuteronomy 11

Many Christians believe they are no longer bound by His commandments because the law has been fulfilled. However, His law is now written in our hearts (see Romans 2:15) and His commandments are all summed up in one word, which is “love.” To continue in the “goodness” of God, we must love Him with all of our heart and all of our soul. We must also love others as much as we love ourselves:

27 And he answering said, You shall love the Lord *Yahweh* your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. -Luke 10

When our love for Yahweh is total and complete, there is no room in our hearts to share our love with anything else. Unless we love Him completely, He reveals His jealousy as a “consuming fire!”

23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of Yahweh your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any *thing*, which Yahweh your God has forbidden you.

24 For Yahweh your God *is* a consuming fire, even a jealous God. -Deuteronomy 4

As Yahweh was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness on their way to the promised land, He provided for their physical needs. In doing so, He miraculously provided them with bread each day. It was called “manna.”

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

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31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. -Exodus 16

Even though the manna met their nutritional needs, it was pale to look at and bland to taste. Instead of thanking Yahweh for blessing them with bread each day, the people grew tired of eating it day after day. They turned their hearts away from Yahweh and longed for the tasty food they had in Egypt:

4 And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

5 We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic:

6 But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes. -Numbers 11

They wept because they were tired of eating manna. They wanted meat to eat. Finally, God said, "Yahweh will give you flesh, and you shall eat."

18 And say you to the people, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and you shall eat flesh: for you have wept in the ears of Yahweh, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore Yahweh will give you flesh, and you shall eat. -Numbers 11

What a blessing! Their weeping had paid off! God finally promised them flesh to eat!

19 You shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; -Numbers 11

In fact, Yahweh said He would overwhelm them with more flesh than they could stand. They would eat it until it "comes out at your nostrils."

20 But even a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils, and it is loathsome unto you: because that you have despised Yahweh which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt? -Numbers 11

Yahweh sent them quail, lots of quail!

31 And there went forth a wind from Yahweh, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side,

and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. -Numbers 11

The people worked all day and all night and the next day to gather the quail. They were overwhelmed with quail! Each person amassed great quantities for themselves:

32 And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. -Numbers 11

However, the quail came all at once. Without refrigeration, the quail soon became a curse:

33 And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of Yahweh was kindled against the people, and Yahweh smote the people with a very great plague. -Numbers 11

They wanted the blessings from God on their own terms. They showed Yahweh that they did not love Him enough to trust in His provision. They still longed for the things of Egypt, that which satisfied their flesh. He answered their cries with a blessing. However, that blessing soon became a curse!

This reminds us of the young man who asked Yahshua what he must do to have eternal life:

16 And, behold, one came and said to him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? -Matthew 19

Yahshua reminded the man that God is good! Then He told him to keep the commandments:

17 And he said to him, Why call you me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments. -Matthew 19

After the man boasted that he had kept the commandments, he asked, in effect, "Am I all set then, or is there something else I must do?"

20 The young man said to him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? -Matthew 19

There is one more thing, Yahshua added. Sell everything you have, give it to the poor, and follow me. However, the young man loved his possessions more than he loved God:

21 Yahshua said to him, If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. -Matthew 19

Yahshua Himself, as He had explained to Thomas, was the answer to the young man's question:

6 Yahshua said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me. -John 14

Do we trust in the goodness of God and His provision enough for us to "come and follow" Yahshua into eternal life? Or do we also sorrowfully flee from His calling, because the "blessings" of our possessions are too great?

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