



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: NOVEMBER 2023

by Lee Shipp

GOODNESS IN THE FLESH

What would *goodness in the flesh* look like? It would look like Jesus! Exactly like Jesus. Jesus went about doing good. He spoiled funerals and made widows rejoice. He fed hungry multitudes. He elevated women and valued children. He received sinners. He healed the sick. He defeated Satan. He rescued multitudes from torment.

And ... there was something else ... oh yes, He died for us on the cross: He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the Righteousness of God in Him; He became poor that we might become rich. Oh, and one more thing – He rose from the dead, assuring us of the hope of happy, joyful eternal life with Him.

Jesus is the perfect expression of God. To see Jesus is to see God. God has revealed His state of being, His essence, through His one and only Son, Jesus. Everything you read about Jesus is the full disclosure of God. The Father in heaven personally anointed Jesus with supernatural power to be the expression of His person. The amplified Bible says: *"... God anointed and consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with strength and ability and power; how He went about doing good and, in particular, curing all who were harassed and oppressed by the power of the devil, for God was with Him"* (Acts 10:38).

Hebrews shows us that this anointing on Jesus was that of gladness. God was glad to be good to us. The anointing on Jesus was not a reluctant goodness. God was not in Christ grudgingly being good to bad people. Instead, God was in Christ, showing goodness to bad people with great happiness. He was glad to be good to bad people. The oil of gladness means exultation and extreme joy. Being good to humanity gave the Lord extreme pleasure. Is that not beautiful? Does that not enrich and inspire you to hope in the Lord? If you are bad or unworthy, God takes extreme joy in showing His goodness to you.

Even the angels celebrated the birth of Jesus with the announcement of good things to come as they rejoiced and said peace on earth and goodwill towards men. When the *good God* became flesh and walked among us, it says that He went about doing *good*.

What a superior and monumental day it was when a young Jewish man entered the synagogue in Nazareth and took the scroll of Isaiah. He carefully read the words: *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD ..."* (Isaiah 61:1-2). As He finished reading the prophecy, He sat in the chair and declared that "this scripture is fulfilled today"! What a glorious day.

Isaiah saw this day: *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth"* (Isaiah 52:7)!

The joy Jesus caused, He set multitudes free. He offered sinners redemption. He gave hope to the hopeless. He perfectly demonstrated God. God's heart is poured out upon the desperate, the weak, and the helpless souls. He cannot ignore them. He yearns for their cry for help. He rejoices to be their refuge in an evil day!

He shows Himself to be the God of tender mercy. He condescends to notice someone who has never deserved any good from His hand. When I flee to God, His compassion ignites within Him to draw near to me. He will never leave me prey to anxiety! When persecution overwhelms my life, I have a strong tower to run into!

By the comforts of His Spirit, He bears me up, holding me securely within His loving hand, assuring me of His powerful hope, thus filling my life with joy and peace by believing in Him. The indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost assures my soul of the hope I have in Jesus! He confidently guarantees me that Jesus routed every foe, breaking all the weapons of the enemy by His finished work of obedience. By His triumphant resurrection and ascension, He completely overturned the hopes of hell, leading captivity captive, making a show of our enemies openly, and triumphing over them by His cross.

Every arrow of guilt Satan shot at us is broken! Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Jesus nailed every accusation against us to His Cross! What could Satan bring up? Where is the evidence of your crime; the blood has washed it all away! Beloved, rejoice! When you take refuge in His name, He rejoices over you with loud singing! He has extreme joy in being good to you.

THE HEAVENLY INTRUDER

For those who are broken and abused, Jesus came for you and lives for you. Though despair has darkened your life, Jesus is the light who dispels your darkness. Perhaps you cannot see any hope, but hope sees you! Jesus, who is hope, will come to you. Jesus is the intruder of this cursed and broken world. He intruded into our bondage with freedom. He intruded into the curses we were born into with blessings and the gift of new life: life where there are no curses. He is not afraid to come to where you are. Actually, He is already there. Your weakness, your struggle He cannot ignore; His compassions compel Him to draw near to you.

Everything: your sin, your brokenness, your ugliness, your diseases were designed to keep the Holy God away, but He intruded. He showed up where no one expected. There He was in Samaria with a sinful woman. There He was delivering a demon-possessed man in a graveyard. No one expected God to show up in a graveyard or Samaria, but there He was; He intruded on Satan's lies and destruction.

Can the pieces of your life be put back together? Can your heart be mended? Can the person who has known such horrible pain and suffering rise up from the ashes of depression and find a new and more powerful way of life? Yes! Absolutely yes! And if not, then God's Word would be a hoax, and God Himself would be a liar.

"What a wonderful God we have—he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of every mercy, and the one who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us in our hardships and trials. And why does he do this? So that when others are troubled, needing our sympathy and encouragement, we can pass on to them this same help and comfort God has given us. You can be sure that the more we undergo sufferings for Christ, the more he will shower us with his comfort and encouragement" (2 Corinthians 1:3-5 TLB).

It is God who comforts us. It is God Himself who joyfully shows Himself to be the God of tender mercy by His compassionate comfort. His acts of goodness are not predicated upon something good in us. Our merit

does not inspire His goodness. He is good whether we are good or bad. Goodness springs forth from the heart of God all the time. God is good! God does not show us goodness because we deserve it. He shows us goodness because it gives Him great joy to love those who do not deserve His love.

If God is good, then you would expect God to provide comfort. God takes delight in sheltering the very ones who once aggressively stood against Him. Those who once persecuted Him become the ones He protects. Whenever one runs to God for refuge, they will find the door wide open into His secret place: He will not leave them prey to anxiety, persecution, or temptation. God will bear them up in His arms and lift them above the enemies who seek their destruction.

When Jesus expressed the Father's goodness, He declared, *"The Father ... in heaven ... maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"* (Matthew 5:45).

His goodness is for all. God shows His goodness to all men, the righteous and the unrighteous. Every prisoner of infirmity, every soul that needs comfort, every heart that mourns. If a single one was left out, He wouldn't be the God of *all comfort*.

THE CHURCH IS ANOINTED

Jesus went about doing good; therefore, His Church should also. Jesus has not changed. He lives in His church. The Church should continue demonstrating the goodness of God. I want to see the goodness of God in our city and the joy of His fellowship among His people. We do not need another church, some clever preacher, or some false apostle/prophet merchandizing the people. We need the move of the Holy Ghost.

The one thing that makes the Church unique and good is the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. He is the difference-maker. God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost, and He went about doing good. We have also been given this same Holy Spirit. *"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed"* (Acts 19:11-12, 18-20) If God can take handkerchiefs and heal the sick, He can take our testimony bags and rescue people on the university campus. He can take our tithes and advance His kingdom. He can take our shoeboxes and declare His goodness to the nations. God has worked through donkeys, stones, sack lunches, axe heads, fiery furnaces, jaw bones, rods, fish, and men, to reveal His glory and power; He can work through us.

Oh, let us believe. Let us fill the city with joy by the power of the Holy Spirit and His gospel. Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ. The people believed because they both heard and saw the miracles that he did. People were delivered from devils. Many who were sick received miraculous healing. And there was great joy in that city. Oh, Church, let us see that happen again.

And I believe we are seeing this happen. I recently received a letter from a dear friend living in another state. She writes, "A testimony I have to share with you. I listen to almost all of your studies and sermons they have been and still are so life-changing. Just so encouraging and challenging and faith-building. Your studies on the gifts (the Lord used those studies so much to open up my eyes to things and increase my faith) And believing and asking the Lord to give me this gift in this moment. Well, my daughter Angelina (who is every day nearer to salvation) recently

got diagnosed by her primary Dr. with rheumatoid arthritis. It is an autoimmune disease and can be very crippling.

She is only 19. All the bloodwork her primary did showed her inflammation levels double a normal person. It was very discouraging, she's so young. She suggested a rheumatologist for treatment. So, we went. I prayed and believed often prior to that appointment that the Lord could and would heal her.

Before that appointment, the Lord told me to lay hands on her and pray and believe He would heal her through me, do a miracle, and heal and touch her body. So, I asked if I could. She said yes. So, I did. And I truly believed God more than ever that He was able.

I thought if He can change my heart there is literally NOTHING He can't do. Even if it looks impossible. He can. My faith was so strong. So, we prayed and went in. The Dr. wanted to do all her own blood work (many of the same tests the other Dr. did) and x-rays and the test result has come back negative/normal!

The Dr. messaged us today. No autoimmune. Everything is normal. I'm still just in awe of His goodness and faithfulness. He touched her body. She has had no joint pain since the appointment. She used to get it all the time, the reason we went in the first place. He is so awesome. It's so amazing, a miracle. Thank you so much for your ministry, Lee. Us Maddens love you and your family so much."

I believe the anointing of the Holy Spirit in our life brought joy to that family. Because of Jesus, I believe that that family experienced God's goodness. They experienced the power of God's Word. They saw the Lord heal their daughter. Praise God. Let us do this everywhere.