

The Good and Beautiful God

Chapter 4 – God Is Generous

A FORWARD NOTE

This chapter's (Re)Cap is a bit different, in that we've considered a scope of thought and Scripture beyond what the chapter addresses. The chapter addresses God's Generosity; the (RE)Cap addresses God's Wrath and His Generosity. In one way, we might question having more than a summary of filler thoughts to expand on this month's discussion. On the other hand, this subject as a whole should burn in our souls, and it seems right to discuss it. Many have observed that we suffer a Post-Christian environment that threatens to strip us of our worship and joy in God, because it's easy to gravitate to the more attractive parts of His story that this environment selectively promotes.

If we're not very careful, every one of us, as mere humans, is prone to settle into the parts of His story that bring us a false ease in a grandfather-god – or an incorrect slavery to malicious-god. He is neither of these, but He is instead a Righteous God Who demands perfection, and Who offers incredible Love and Grace beyond measure to answer His demand of perfection.

And so, He offers His Son.

I perceive our group is rather rounded in the Wrath/Grace mix. This chapter (and perhaps this book) assumes the reader has been overexposed to Wrath, and so promotes the Grace. In this (Re)Cap we don't take either part for granted, but gaze beyond the Chapter's focus, looking to include the balance of Scripture's mix in an effort to consider how Gracious God Is. Proportions of anything that differs from God's Word only brings loss. My hope is that through considering this topic, we can grow in our reverence, hope, joy, faith, love and trust in God.

SUMMARY

I admire this book we are pondering. The author's works have brought relief to many people as he reveals topics on God. However, his book is not intended to be a complete work, but actually a nudge to awaken us to the basics of knowing, understanding, and trusting Father. This is a book bringing some core topics to study, engage, and pursue in the Word given to us. In today's Church, the problem of Biblical illiteracy is often woeful, and the Body suffers incredibly for it. This book is not intended to instruct on the Whole of God, but instead is a sampler platter to whet the appetite. Father wants us to dig deep, Jesus made the way, and the Spirit stands ready to teach. **(Psalm 27:4)** "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, **to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple**". The issue rests on our willingness to engage Him.

KEY POINTS

God is indeed Generous

A sense of His generosity through too narrow a view including only 'He loves me', or simply 'Jesus died for me' – without acknowledging the whole range of Truth He gives us in His Word – is a weak and incomplete foundation to build an appreciation of His generosity. How much more is a cup of water to a man who knows he is dying of thirst than to another who is just a bit parched? To have a better appreciation of His Generosity, we need to step back and seek full sight of His care, beyond a view of only our personal concerns that naturally occupies the majority of our thoughts. We are rightly concerned about our life and circumstances, but it is easy to make this the center and whole of our attention. Yet we are not the majority and center of God's Goals – there is far more at play.

Immutably Holy, God's Wrath towards sinners rightly burns, demands to be satisfied. His Wrath is inescapable, inevitable, necessary. As God cannot change – and as there is no reason to do so (great news) for He is complete and flawlessly Perfect, and as He is the Source and Basis for everything because nothing is above Him – everything under Him must be brought into agreement with Him. Sin must be purged, the sinner's right wage must be paid through death, His Realm must be purified, and everything out of His Perfect alignment, removed.

Hinge Verse: Rom 2:4 – Or do you presume upon the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

It's easy to miss what lies below the surface

Ice – both bergs and cubes – show only 1/7 of the whole in plain view. The majority of the reality lies hidden under the surface.



God's Word reveals the whole of reality He would have us understand, including that beyond what we would otherwise perceive. For this we are given His Word, reliable and true. It is not completely everything about God, but completely everything God would reveal to us.

His Word is reliable

So how can we hope to know the truth about God's Realm and His involvement, about the whole of what's in play, in Creation and beyond? God graciously has provided us with everything He knows we need to have, to understand His views, expectations and promises. Is the Word reliable? While there is an exhaustive number of reasons we can say 'yes', consider:

Of everything recorded during Mankind's history, Scripture is uniquely reliable:

- No parts of the Bible are found to be contradictory to the Whole
- It continues to be supported, not disproven, by history and archeology
- Later duplicates of original Scripture are found to be true to more ancient editions
- The Hebrew duplication processes was exhaustive, ensuring true accuracy
- The number of prophecies made prior to their fulfillment are numerous
- Mankind has realized a high degree of universal agreement, in accord with the effort and faith invested, of wisdom/guidance/peace/relationship. This is called Orthodoxy.

Another good starting point is Moody's Erwin Lutzer, who is one skilled scholar addressing this in '[7 Reasons Why You Can Trust The Bible](#)'.

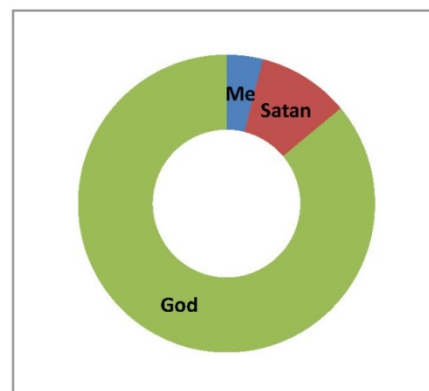
Biblical unawareness and its consequences

We willingly live with Biblical unawareness and disregard for God. This doesn't have as much to do with one's capacity to understand, but instead an unwillingness to strive to understand all one can in his capacity. God offers to teach and enlighten us, and the Holy Ghost is promised to always help us when we seek Father's Wisdom - *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (Jas 1.5)*, and *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (Jn 14.26)*, and *Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day. (Psalm 25.4-5)*. Our Enemy encourages disregard and unawareness, tempting on all fronts. Trials in our lives give opportunity to withdraw from God, to seek substitutes, to stoke our disregard.

We can agree that God is perfect, with no speck or blot. We can also find agreement He loves us in Christ, reconciled to Him. But what fills our understanding between Him and us? The more narrow our understanding His Word, the more unproportioned we see ourselves.



Is my focus more on my life with a small realization of what God is doing?



Or, am I growing in awareness of God's doings, seeing my part in view of His perspective?

Filling out the reality of God's perspective with Scripture

Does God possess anger? Is He right in having it? Who will receive it?

Directed towards His People, Israel:

Deut 32:22 For a fire is kindled in My anger, And burns to the lowest part of Sheol, And consumes the earth with its yield, And sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.

Isaiah 33:14 Sinners in Zion are terrified; Trembling has seized the godless "Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?"

Deut 9:7-8 Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord. Also in Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry enough with you to have destroyed you.

Warned of after the Cross:

Matthew 3:12 "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 ...dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power...

Shown to John, in the Revelation of Jesus:

Revelation 14:9-11a Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night...."

Revelation 20:10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:11,13-15 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them...The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Does God offer Grace? Is He generous in giving it? Who will receive it?

Conversely, consider Scripture of God's Realm and Grace:

Ephesians 6:10-13 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Eph 1:13-14 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Revelation 21:1-5 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.**" And he who was seated on the throne said, "**Behold, I am making all things new.**" Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

We all face inescapable Realities where God is concerned – and this is everywhere, because He is Sovereign. The great news is Jesus' offer to bring us into Father's family, fully recognized as His Children, with Christ not only as our Savior, but as our Brother.

God's patience and Jesus' forgiveness are the key issues, but we make a mistake when we view them as the sole issues

Paul explains through Scripture that the New Covenant replaced Moses' Law, providing the Pathway to reconciliation – yet remember, it does not make God wink at sin, but satisfies His Wrath. His intent – to cast out sinners, unrepentant – remains, and will happen.

Jonathan Edwards, on the unbelieving Israelites

In Jonathan Edwards' notable 1741 sermon on the Passage '*Their foot shall slip in due time*', "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" observes that the Hebrews were the people chosen by God, protected by Him, sustained by Him, and under miraculous display. Edwards illustrates the reality of their precarious situation, if not for God's generosity:

- They were always exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall.

- As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once without warning.
- They are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another.
- The reason why they are not fallen already and do not fall now is only that God has graciously upheld them.

One takeaway from Edwards sermon is this: Unsaved sinners are in a precarious, dangerous position. But, God graciously cares for us out of His Love and His commitment to His promise to do so through Salvation in Christ. We have a hard time seeing the true risk we face, but an easier time enjoying the general and specific results of His care – even to the point that we see the results but fail to recognize how much from God takes place behind the scenes. And even if Saved through Christ yet not understanding this, we risk becoming glad receivers of Grace who can fail to appreciate and worship the God Who is responsible – even contributing to Spiritual Idolatry and disregard. It is available to [read](#), or on [audio](#).

One final thought on His Generosity – Inclusion at someone else’s party

The Jews, The Church, and our Jewish Savior

Finally, consider that the Church has not replaced Israel, but the Church instead benefits from God’s Covenant with Abraham: [Gen 22.18](#) - In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.

Paul states in [Romans 11:11 & 14](#) – I say then, have they (Israel) stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.

We are the grafted branch, not the host tree, per [Romans 11:17](#): ...you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree... Verse 24 demonstrates that we, while equal in Christ, are subordinate to Jews per the Covenant with Abraham: [Romans 11:24](#) For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? All who receive Christ will have Salvation. The Gentile Church is a big part of His Plan. Yet, the Jews have the first seat, not the Church; they alone are the chosen people, saved by a Jewish Messiah ([Jn 4:22b](#) – (Jesus to the Samaritan woman) ...we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.) With incredible generosity, He has included us to their ‘party’.

God IS indeed Generous!

Can we grow to see the larger scope of what’s in play, and how His generosity is full from top to bottom – not just within a narrow view of the life we live and see? Knowing, understanding, and trusting God to our fullest ability stokes our Worship, and rightly belongs to such a loving and generous Father.