

## ARE WE GOOD OR EVIL?

### *As A Nation*

Some years ago while visiting a mission point in the nation of Russia, I came to know a man who was a Christian. As we talked, I learned that he had shared an apartment with his father. On returning home from work, he found that someone had broken into the apartment and killed his father. When he called the police to report the crime, the officer looked at him and told him to confess. He insisted that he was innocent, that his father and he were close; but this was to no avail. He told me that while he was scheduled to have a trial, it would never reach that point. He told me that he knew what would happen. They would come for him in a few days and put him in prison. Some prisoners were given privileges if they could beat a confession out of those accused of crimes. He further told me if they could not get a confession they would kill him. Several weeks later, after returning home, I received word that they found him dead in his cell. What he told me was true.

We do live in a country where, in theory at least, one is presumed innocent until proven guilty by real evidence. While our country is not perfect in legal matters, I do believe that for the most part it tries to do what is right, for there is much that is good in our nation. Few countries throughout history have shown as much concern for the poor and those that are hungry, not only in our nation, but in other countries.

There is much evil in our land as well. Thousands of unborn children have been murdered through abortion. Our nation accepts and teaches our children so many ungodly things, but we need to remember that our role is to be obedient to our government unless required to commit acts that are sinful. The Bible teaches us in Romans 13:1-2

*“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed....”*

While government serves a purpose, it is obvious that government can and does do much that is evil. When Paul wrote that passage in Romans he was speaking of the Roman Empire which did much that is evil.

### *As Individuals*

Mary’s aunt walked into the crowded room and was wearing the most hideous hat you had ever seen. She walked over to you and asked, “How do you like my new hat?” What would you say? Many would not want to hurt Mary’s aunt’s feelings and say something like, “It is beautiful.” But would that be something good or evil?

To answer this question, we need to determine what is “good” and what is “evil”. There is only one source that will clearly identify that which is good and that which is evil. That is God’s word, the Bible.

**3 John 1:11** *“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”*

**Isaiah 5:20** *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”*

In the case of our illustration, we would need to determine if the Bible had anything to say on the subject of telling lies. We find in Revelation 21:8 the following reading.

*“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”*

While we might not think such an “innocent” lie would endanger our soul, we must understand that the phrase in this text is “all” liars. This would include what many would call “just a little white lie”. If we want to reach heaven, we must accept God’s definition of good and evil.

The greater question is, are we good or evil? It is the individual that will stand before God in judgment. 2 Corinthians 5:10 reads, “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*” Therefore, it is how God will judge us, not how the government treats us.

While it is true that no man can stand justified by God in his own right, Romans 3:23 tells us, “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*”. It is also true that if we use God’s definition of good as found in the Bible, we can stand before God and find peace.

But to find that which is “good” Biblically, we need to be obedient to all that God asks of us. Satan’s talent for deception is incredible. We are told he deceived Eve (Genesis 3:13 ...*The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*) One of Satan’s great ploys is to deceive. Remember, that was his approach to destroying Eve. 1 Timothy 2:13-14 “*For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*” He is still deceiving many today by a very sneaky method. He has convinced so many that they can be saved without obedience. Yet we see what the writers of the New Testament spoke concerning obedience.

**Romans 6:16** “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of **obedience unto righteousness?**”*

**2 Thessalonians 1:7-9** “*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, **In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of***

*our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”*

**THEREFORE TO BE GOOD WE MUST OBEY WHAT GOD’S WORD TELLS US:**

**John 8:24** “*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*”

**Luke 13:5** “*I tell you, Nay: but, **except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**”*

**Luke 12:8-9** “*Also I say unto you, **Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.**”*

**Mark 16:16** “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*”

**Revelation 2:10** “*... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*”

On June 26<sup>th</sup> we had corresponding lessons on this topic. Check our website for sermons titled “Are We Good (Mark 10:17-22)” from the AM service and “Are We Good - We can be (2 Corinthians 5)” from the PM service. Also, you can find our worship services on our Facebook page.