

## The Secret Place of God's Presence

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### Scriptures:

Mark 10:17-22

Psalm 119:68

Exodus 33:18-23

Psalm 145

Psalm 31:19-20

*"Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God."*

Jesus spoke these words in answer to the rich young ruler who began his question by saying "Good Teacher". The question, seemingly, had nothing to do with goodness, the young man had asked about eternal life and how he might gain that. But when we look at the rest of Jesus' conversation with him, if we open our hearts to look beyond the words and gaze into the depth of what they mean, we may see that it is all about goodness.

Psalm 119 verse 68 reminds us of God's goodness, in two ways. Firstly that, by very nature, God is good. A dictionary definition of "good" is "morally excellent, extraordinarily beautiful, deeply glad, extravagantly bountiful", but this is God whose abundant generosity of spirit goes far beyond anything we can fathom, so His Goodness is limitless. He is the original and true definition of Good in and of Himself, He is the absolute Best, He is Goodness.

The rest of that verse describes the character of God defined by what He does. There are so many verses in scripture about God's kindness, His mercy, His faithfulness, His generosity, all extended to those who do nothing to deserve it. In all our mundane circumstances, God loves to pour out in extravagance everything that is best for us. We are told that His thoughts are constantly toward us, revealing His plans for us, longing for us to enjoy His overflowing abundance of Love that He has for us.

This is what the rich young ruler failed to grasp. Leaving all he had would not have taken anything from him, rather, it would have given him an eternity to be in the presence of the One whose goodness never ceases to be poured out over us. Sadly, he just couldn't see that keeping all the commandments boiled down to one thing, to lay aside his understanding of how to obey them and let the goodness of God flow through him in glorious generosity to all, honouring and reaching out to those around him.

When Moses had that wonderful conversation with God in Exodus 33, declaring that he would go nowhere unless God's presence went with him, he then asked God "Please, show me Your Glory". I wonder what he was expecting. Maybe the heavens opening before him, filled with light and beauty beyond imagining, and the host of heaven worshipping the all powerful, almighty God.

But God hid Moses in the cleft of a rock, telling him that He, God, would cause all His Goodness to pass before him. Not the wonder of the creation, the power that created all things, the majesty of the One who holds all the universes in their place, but His Goodness. How amazing is that.

Behind all that this earth is, all that the myriad of galaxies are, all that we, His created beings, are, lies the beautiful truth that none of this would be unless the Goodness of God, which could not be held in check, had overflowed in creative power and glory. The Glory of God could not be curtailed because He is Good and He only does Good.

All that is, that ever was and that ever will be stems from the incomparable, everlasting, limitless Goodness of God, whose fervent desire is for us to be hidden within His Goodness, the secret place of His Presence.

**Prayer:** Abba Father, we surrender to You, lay down our lives and cry, with Moses, please show us Your Glory. May You open our eyes to see that You alone are Good, to see the greatness of Your Goodness, to see that this is indeed Your Glory. Through the power of Holy Spirit, hide us in Your Secret Place, wrapped in Your Goodness. Amen.

*Oh, how great is Your goodness,  
Which You have laid up for those who fear You,  
Which You have prepared for those who trust in You  
You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence  
From the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion  
From the strife of tongues.*