

**THE GOOD
THE BAD
AND THE UGLY**

- ✓ **Only God knows what is good. Everything consistent with Him is good and that which isn't is bad**
- ✓ **When we try to define good and evil apart from God, we end up with 'ugly'. This led to the Fall**
- ✓ *'So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate' (Gen.3:6)*
- ✓ **Satan doesn't mind which side of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil we eat from, as long as it is that tree**

- ✓ **God's 'good' is the Tree of Life = Jesus**
- ✓ **We must learn to call that 'good' which God calls 'good' and that 'bad' which God calls 'bad'**
- ✓ **This is what Paul did, *'...what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith'*
(Phil.3:7-9)**

- ✓ **When Adam and Eve partook of the wrong tree Paradise was lost**
- ✓ **Paradise was an ideal existence. There was a perfect world, and there were perfect people**
- ✓ **We have left the ideal. But don't lose sight of it, because God is going to restore it one day**
- ✓ **We no longer live in an ideal world, but in the real world. We live in an unredeemed body on a fallen planet**

- ✓ **The real world is a mixture of good and bad**
- ✓ **Life is a mixture of good and bad. Life outside the garden experiences love, joy, peace, happiness, material blessings, spiritual blessings. But also, sickness, conflict, war, stress, sorrow, disappointment, betrayal, unfaithfulness, death, etc.**
- ✓ **Christians too experience this mixture of good and bad. E.g. Heb.11:32-35a vs 11:35b-38**
- ✓ **People are a mixture of good and bad**
- ✓ **The normal Christian life is a conflict between the flesh and the Spirit**

- ✓ **The ugly will not accept the real. For example:**
- ✓ **It believes we can create a kind of utopia**
- ✓ **It has unrealistic expectations of life. It believes we can eliminate the pain, sickness, storms and trials. How do we know what is good?**
- ✓ **It has an unrealistic expectation of people. It splits the world up into the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys'. It separates from the 'bad guys'**
- ✓ **It has unrealistic ideal for personal holiness, resulting in either condemnation or hypocrisy**
- ✓ **The ugly leads to disillusionment**

- ✓ **So, how are we meant to live in the real world?
By the Tree of Life**
- ✓ **His divine power equips us for the totality of life
in an unredeemed body on a fallen planet**
- ✓ **What has His divine power given to us:**
- ✓ **1) Faith. We are conscious of our weakness and
failings but we walk by faith. We can live in the
real because God has met the demands of the
ideal in Christ. I am, *'...found in Him, not having
my own righteousness...'***
- ✓ **And we are being conformed to the image of
Christ. From faith to faith**

- ✓ **We don't have to pretend. We can come into the light where sin loses its power**
- ✓ **We know that the process of growing towards the ideal is a journey. Time is redemptive**
- ✓ **We face challenges every day but His grace is always sufficient. Sometimes it will deliver us from our problems, other times it will strengthen us to go through them**

- ✓ **2) Hope. We live in hope. Hope is the certain expectation of good**
- ✓ **Hope does not disappoint. We are not disappointed by the present because we are assured of the future. *'For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us'* (Rom.8:18)**
- ✓ **We don't yet see all things under Him but we see Jesus**

- ✓ **3) Love. We see imperfections in others but we no longer have unrealistic expectations. We don't have to separate from them. We learn to walk in love**
- ✓ **We know that the journey starts with faith and ends in love**
- ✓ **The NT summary of the Christian life is faith towards God and love towards others. *'...this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment'* (1 John 3:23)**
- ✓ **Paul looked for these things, and their growth, in all the churches**

'We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ....since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints' (Col.1:3-4)

'Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love' (1 Thes.3:6)

'We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other' (2 Thes.1:3-4)

***'I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints'
(Philemon 5)***

***'The purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith'
(1 Tim.1:5)***

***Love is the goal...and love never fails**

***But it can only come from faith**

***We will only love people unconditionally when we know that God loves us unconditionally**

***We are not called to change people, but to love them**

***We have to experience the bad in order to forgive it. Then we become like God**

***Love is tested by imperfect human relationships**

Summary:

God has a plan for us in the real world...and it can only take place in the real world

He is working in the midst of imperfections – ours and others – in the midst of heartache and pain, disappointment and even tragedy

Faith, hope and love shine in the midst of a broken world and broken people

**'So, ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in'**

(Leonard Cohen)