

Sunday 16 March 2025 HC 3

Hymn: TIS 585 I heard the voice of Jesus say

**I heard the voice of Jesus say Come unto Me and rest
Lay down, O weary one lay down your head upon My breast
I came to Jesus as I was Weary and worn and sad
I found in Him a resting place And He has made me glad**

**I heard the voice of Jesus say Behold I freely give
The living water thirsty one Stoop down and drink and live
I came to Jesus and I drank Of that life giving stream
My thirst was quenched my soul revived And now I live in Him**

**I heard the voice of Jesus say I am this dark worlds Light
Look unto Me thy morn shall rise And all thy day be bright
I looked to Jesus and I found In Him my Star, my Sun
And in that light of life I'll walk Till travelling days are done**

Sentence of Scripture

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Genesis 3:16

The Great Commandments

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 'This is the great and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Remember, O Lord, what you have wrought in us and not what we deserve, and , as you have called us to your service, make us worthy of your calling, through Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen

Genesis 3:8-24

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”¹¹ And he said, “Who told

you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" ¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me —she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, 'Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.' ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." ¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." ¹⁷ To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' 'Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.'"

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ²² And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." ²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Psalms 139:1-12

¹ You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

² **You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.**

³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

⁴ **Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.**

⁵ You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

⁶ **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.**

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ **If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.**

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰ **even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.**

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"

¹² **even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.**

Hebrews 2:13-18

And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil —
¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

John 8:42-45

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!

This is the gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Sermon -Genesis 3 - Good, Bad or Idiots

Question Time

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and the church

Response: Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Scripture Sentence

We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 1 John 3:2-3

The Confession

Knowing the goodness of God and our failure to respond with love and obedience, let us confess our sins, saying together:

Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done.

We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.

For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us and change us.

By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16

Greeting of Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn - TIS 131 Father of heaven whose love profound

**Father of heaven whose love profound
a ransom for our souls hath found,
before your throne we sinners bend;
to us your pardoning love extend.**

**Almighty Son, incarnate Word,
our prophet, priest, redeemer, Lord,
before your throne we sinners bend;
to us your saving grace extend.**

**Eternal Spirit, by whose breath
mysterious Godhead, Three in One,
before your throne we sinners bend;
to us your quickening power extend.**

**Thrice holy - Father, Spirit, Son,
mysterious Godhead, Three in One,
before your throne we sinners bend;
grace, pardon, life to us extend.**

Thanksgiving for Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things,

making us in your own image. We praise you for your son, our saviour Jesus Christ, who by his death on the cross and rising to new life offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people. Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, saying,

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

And now, gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit according to our Saviour's word, in remembrance of his suffering and death, may share his body and his blood.

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given you thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying 'Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you.

We who are many are one body in Christ,

for we all share in the one bread.

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying 'Drink from this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

We eat this bread and drink this cup **to proclaim the death of the Lord.**

We do this until he returns. **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Father, as we recall his saving death and glorious resurrection, may we who share these gifts be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and united in the body of your Son. Bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom, there to feast at your table and join in your eternal praise.

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise and honour and glory and power for ever and ever. Amen

The Holy Communion

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died

for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

After Communion

Gracious God, thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the body and blood of our saviour Jesus Christ. Thank you for assuring us of your goodness and love, and that we are living members of Christ's body.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Notices

Hymn - TIS 592 Stand up, stand up for Jesus

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus, as soldiers of the cross;
lift high his royal banner, it must not suffer loss;
from victory on to victory his army he shall lead
till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed.**

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the trumpet call obey;
forth to the mighty conflict in this his glorious day!
All Christians true now serve him against unnumbered foes;
let courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose.**

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in his strength alone:
the arm of flesh will fail you, you dare not trust your own.
Put on the gospel armour, each piece put on with prayer;
where duty calls, or danger, be never wanting there.**

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be long:
this day the noise of battle, the next the triumph song.
To those who are victorious a crown of life shall be;
they with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.**

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Sermon - Genesis 3 - Good, Bad or Idiots

Introduction

Are people good, bad or idiots?

As many of you know, I was on a Navy training course for the last few weeks. At one point, the instructor asked us whether we thought that most people were good, bad or idiots. Rather than embarrassing anyone, I won't ask what you think, but instead, put your hand up if you think most students thought most people were idiots? Bad? Good?

Actually, most students thought that most people were good, slightly less thought people were idiots, and very few thought most people were bad. You may not know me very well, but what do you think I thought?

In fact, I was the only one who said most people were bad, a couple of doctors and nurses (and a few others) thought most people were idiots, and just over half thought most people were good. What would you have said if you were on the course?

Over the last 2 weeks as we have looked at Genesis 1 and 2, we read time and again that God looked at the world he had made and saw that it was good. In fact, the only thing that wasn't good was for Adam to be alone, and even this was fixed once God made the woman. You will also remember that God gave Adam and Eve a huge amount of freedom - they could eat from any tree in the garden, but with few boundaries - they couldn't eat from the tree of life.

This week however, evil starts to creep into the world.

You might think that the eternal, all knowing, all powerful God who lovingly made this world might have a pretty good idea of how it should work. You might even think that the perfectly just and righteous God who made his perfectly good world would understand the difference between right and wrong, good and evil.

Yet it was as doubt was cast on God's goodness that evil and lies entered the good world, and we have been paying the consequences ever since.

The Fall

Things went south with the Serpent who *was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made*, said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The Book of Revelation says that the ancient serpent is called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. Revelation 12:9. The name Satan can be translated deceiver, and that is how he acts, both in Eden and ever since.

Note that he starts by simply laying doubts in Eve's mind: Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden. As I mentioned earlier, this is a half truth: God indeed did say it, but he also added - "except the tree of life." Eve knows this, and she replies:

'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" Genesis 3:3

Even this doesn't deter the serpent, who continued on, presenting disobedience to God as a favourable outcome, and compounding his lie by suggesting that God didn't have Eve's best interest at heart: "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:4-5 The serpent down played their death by suggesting that the only reason that God did not want them to eat it was because he didn't want them to become like himself, and to be honest, no created being, no creature is like God, and none should be.

Nevertheless, with this prompting, the woman decided that she likes the look of the forbidden fruit, she thought that it would make her smarter, so she ate and shared it with Adam. Do you see how just a few deceitful words, subtly twisted God's truth, made him out to be the bad guy led to Adam and Eve's downfall from the most perfect environment ever. Had they just worked within the very few boundaries that God had set, where streams watered the whole surface of the ground, all kinds of other good fruit trees grew, and good things like gold, aromatic resin and precious stones were plentiful. The little work they had to do was not harsh, and they ruled over livestock and wild animals.

Consequences

The consequences of disobeying God were immediate. The first to go was the perfect, shameless relationship that Adam and Eve enjoyed. They were now ashamed, hiding themselves behind fig leaves, and even worse, trying to hide from God.

Adam's response when God confronts him with his sin is telling. Adam clearly demonstrates the broken relationships that now exist between humanity, the rest of creation and God. When God asks: Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? " Genesis 3:11 he immediately tries to ship the blame from himself: Firstly showing the broken relationship within humanity, in fact within his marriage: "The woman you put here with me —she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Gen 3:12

Then Eve blames creation: the serpent deceived me, and I ate.

But did you notice how Adam subtly tries to shift the blame on to God himself, he didn't just say that Eve gave him the fruit, it was the woman - who you put here with me.

As with every sin, the consequences flowed beyond just the immediate consequences, the fouled relationships. God brought judgement into the world:

The serpent was cursed to crawl on its belly in the dust.

The woman now had to endure pains in child bearing and labour, which I am sure every mother here can attest to, and a conflicted marriage relationship - she desires her husband who often rules over harshly.

Adam now finds that the pleasant work he was created for has now become harsh and painful. There are weeds and thorns, and work requires sweat and pain, and disappointments.

Worst of all, from then on, all creation was subject to death. Every creature, including mankind will die and return to the ground from which they were taken. For dust they are, and to dust they will return. Thus they were banished from Eden, from paradise and the tree of life, which was protected by cherubim, terrifying winged creatures with flaming swords. Adam and Eve, and all creatures were driven out, left to endure the results of their broken relationships with each other, with creation and with God.

Hope

Despite this harsh judgment, did you notice the brief note of hope? Sin, as personified in the serpent, had caused them to be cast out, but in judging the serpent, God promises that the serpent, and ultimately sin, will one day be destroyed by an offspring of the woman. God said: ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring (or your seed) and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Genesis 3:15

In Romans 16, Paul encourages the Romans by saying that the God of peace will crush Satan under their feet, and in our reading from Hebrews, we read that Jesus shared in our humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil — ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Hebrews 2:14-15

Getting back to my original question, the Bible says in Romans that no one is good - there is no one righteous, not even one. We are all children of Adam and Eve in this respect. Rom 5:12 says that sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned. We are all bad, but we also have hope that Jesus, the offspring of Eve, has crushed the head of Satan. that we should no longer be slaves to sin — and if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. Rom 6:8

We may all be bad, but let us not compound that with the idiocy of rejecting God's good gift, the gift of eternal life in the perfectly restored paradise, in perfect relationship with each other, creation, and God through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the offspring of Eve, and truly be seen as good through him.