



It was a relaxing group excursion to Springleaf Nature Park on 9th September 2018, organised by the Jurong Central Community Sports Club.

On one hand, it was a pleasant outdoor morning walk in fresh air. On the other hand, it was a sad reminder of our dwindling natural wealth as Singapore city becomes more and more built-up with the preservation of a rich ecological environment being given insufficient attention by urban planners.

In Genesis 1:1-25, the adjective “good” or “very good” was used more than five times to describe the things God created.



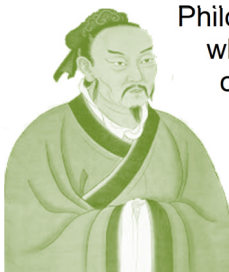
As of now, we just take whatever little comfort we have in whatever there is left of nature that is good as God created it to be and enjoy it as much as possible. More importantly, the simple morning walk brought observation to the

mind of the obvious ecological and environmental deterioration that people have no problem witnessing worldwide even though many may have a problem recognising it and acting to prevent it.

The prioritisation of artificial wealth over natural wealth on Earth presents one of the greatest crises and challenges to man. What does God want Christians to learn from the sight of diminishing nature?

What is “good” as in describing God’s creation is the great beauty in its original state for us to behold. Man builds concrete irreversibly out of limestone and sand that are in nature and, in the process, relentlessly wastes away the original beauty of flora and fauna that survived on the natural resources with which God provided in abundance.

Obviously, man has failed miserably in answering God’s call to protect all that He has created.



Philosopher Mencius came up with the expression 以邻为壑 which has become a Chinese idiom meaning “to shift one’s problems onto others”. Anything good, people find it hard to learn; but anything not good, people pick up the idea quickly. So, 以邻为壑 has become translated into

“Beggar Thy Neighbour” as an economic policy through which one’s country strives to deal with her own problems by shifting the problems or worsening them on others. We are all guilty of this “Beggar Thy Neighbour” attitude when we shift problems of environmental protection to others by neglecting our own responsibilities. We beggar our neighbours when we do these for our own convenience: (1) Excessively throw our money (because we have plenty) at products that lead to deforestation not in Singapore but in other countries, (2) Discharge wastes uncaringly so that these wastes end up causing air and soil pollution somewhere, but not

in our own backyards, (3) Pay no heed to conservation of water, electricity and exhaustible natural resources, causing the greenhouse effect and various climatic disorders, (4) ...

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Mark 12:31

KJV 1900

Mencius might be respected as a great philosopher; but 以邻为壑 (literally, “to use one’s neighbour as a drain”) was certainly not his word of wisdom. The word of wisdom from the Bible is “Love Thy Neighbour”, not “Beggar Thy Neighbour”; and our neighbour is everywhere around us and also includes the generations of our children and grandchildren who might lose out entirely on enjoying the beauty of God’s creation because we have made the Earth barren by our reckless usurpation of it.

Some people hold the cavalier attitude towards the destruction of nature: “Everybody is doing it, I am just a follower.”

Some others disdainfully say, “So what? The Bible is telling us not to love the world or anything in the world. (1 Jn 2:15)” ☹️

**Don’t love the world’s ways.
Don’t love the world’s goods.**

1 John 2:15 (MSG)

Obviously, wiser counsel for these people would do the Earth good.

It is beneficial from time to time to take a walk in nature. Even if it is just a diminutive nature park without an attractive abundance of God-

created beauty to behold, we can let our sight and mind behold a reminder of human responsibility for the state of affairs, a warning to prevent the following happening:

“The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish with the earth. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt.” – Isa 24:4-6a

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