

The Good—Not the Bad, and the Ugly in Pergamum

By: Dan Jenkins

In our culture, we sometimes use the expression the good, the bad and the ugly. This is the third time we have used this phrase to describe various congregations in the first century. We have looked at Ephesus and Smyrna, and this week we turn our attention to the church at Pergamum.

The church at Pergamum, a city devoted to paganism. We would likely not even know about this church or this city unless it had been included in the letter John wrote to the seven churches in Asia. It had many members who remained faithful in a city given over to pagan gods. We have no details of how it began, but likely Paul knew and may have preached there.

The city of Pergamum. Towering over the city was a mountain peak that was 800 feet above the city. On top of this was a 40-foot altar where sacrifices were made to Zeus day and night. In 29 A.D., the city built a temple where Augustus Caesar was worshipped. There were many other temples to various gods scattered throughout the city. Jesus described the city as the city “where Satan dwells.” All of this resulted in severe persecutions for the church.

The church at Pergamum and the good found in it. The Lord told this church that He knew what was happening and how that they had remained faithful in the midst of the trials they were facing. He mentions specifically the greater persecution that happened when Antipas, a member of the church, had been killed. We know nothing about his death, but the Lord described him as “My faithful martyr.”

Three things we do know about him and that is all that matters. (1) He belonged to the Lord for he was *My* witness. (2) He was faithful. He was *My faithful* martyr. (3) He made the absolute greatest sacrifice of love. He was *My faithful martyr*.

The church at Pergamum and the bad in it. Read the letter from Patmos in Revelation chapter two and you will see areas where it could have done better. There were those who taught sexual acts in worshiping the gods, like Balak and Balaam in the Old Testament, and the Christians were tempted by this. It was part of a doctrine taught by the Nicolaitans, a doctrine hated by Jesus.

The church at Pergamum and the ugly. We use this word ugly to describe what lay in the future of the church there if it did not repent. Jesus would come quickly and fight against this doctrine with words from His mouth. On the other hand, the future was far from ugly for those who remained faithful. We may not fully understand all that is meant by “hidden manna” and a “white stone,” but this figurative language was immediately understood by them and was a powerful motivation to faithfulness!

What Does a Rubber Duck Resemble?

By: Selected

In your imagination right now, visualize a rubber duck. What does it look like? Certainly its head is distinct from its body, sitting erect on the front edge of the body. It has an orange beak and two eyes. It likely has a tail-like feather sticking up in the back and even a wing-like protrusion on each side. It is molded to float perfectly on the surface of the water, just like a duck would. When you look at a rubber duck, it is obvious what it resembles. It is not designed to look like a horse or a monkey or a fish. You know immediately that it was fashioned to look like a duck.

But, let me ask you another question. When you see a rubber duck, is it actually a duck? You're not fooled into believing that it is an actual duck. Just because something resembles something else does not mean that it actually is that other thing. Resemblance does not equal reality.

What does this have to do with us? Think for a moment about the fact that looking like a Christian and actually being a Christian are not the same thing. Resemblance does not equal reality. Let's see if we can think through this a bit.

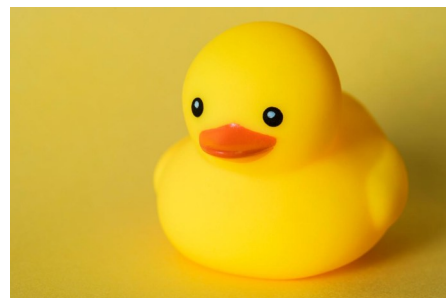
If I go to church, which is something a Christian would do and may make me resemble a Christian, does that mean that I am actually a Christian? If I treat people kindly, which is something a Christian would do and may make me resemble a Christian, does that mean that I am actually a Christian? If I refrain from using foul language or refrain from engaging in sex outside of marriage or refrain from drinking alcohol, which are things a Christian would do and may make me resemble a Christian, does that mean that I am actually a Christian?

A rubber duck may have an appearance that

resembles an actual duck, but that does make it a duck. The same is true for someone who resembles a Christian. First, to be a Christian, one must do what the Bible teaches to become a Christian. Jesus taught that disciples are made by being baptized (Matt. 28:19). A disciple is a Christian (Acts 11:26); therefore, one must obey God's plan of salvation to become a Christian, which includes faith, repentance, confession and baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:9; Gal. 3:26-27).

Second, to be a Christian, that person must then present his body as "a living sacrifice" to the Lord (Rom. 12:1), and choose to "conform" Himself to Christ and His standard of living, rather than that of the world (Rom. 12:2; 8:29; Gal. 2:20). The outward behavior must not only be in sync with the teaching of Scripture (Col. 3:17), but one's outward conduct must be a true reflection of a heart that is deeply devoted to Christ (Matt. 22:37; John 14:15; 15:14).

Are you a real Christian, or do you just resemble one?



Upcoming Events

Sunday, Aug. 2: We will have a guest speaker from Home of Recovery and Restoration, Aaron Anderson. We will also have our monthly potluck luncheon after morning service with a 12:45pm service to follow. Please bring a dish/dessert to share with visitors.

Area events:

Area events/details are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. Please check them out.

Prayer List

Prayer Requests:

Our sister Jerri Jeffres passed away July, 16th. As of this publication, there were no funeral service details listed.

Willie Williams, Genesis’ father, who will be having some tests run.

Rieke Bass has completed her radiation treatments and is now cancer free.

Randy and Mandi D’Herde’s daughter, Anne, who is having complications during her pregnancy/delivery.

Summer Series Wednesday Night Classes

Every Wednesday night during the Summer session, the Adults will be learning about “Questions Jesus Asked” and the Children will be learning about “Biomimicry: God invented it First”. Please join us at 7pm.

Service Roster

Week of July 26, 2026

Sunday Morning

Scripture Reading.....Caleb Lehtinen
Song Leader Doug Jobs

Opening Prayer..... Genesis Williams
Closing Prayer.....Bryce Dolan

Lord’s Supper & Offering

Bread.....James Cammock
Cup..... Jake Jacobs
Offering.....Barry Lehtinen
Assist..... Lupe Escojido
Assist..... Willie Fossati
Assist.....Kanin Jacobs

Sunday Evening

Song Leader Jeff Cannady

Opening Prayer..... Doug Jobs
Closing Prayer..... Benny Horton

Lord’s Supper & Offering.....Clifton Rutherford/
Bryce Dolan

Wednesday Evening

Adult ClassKevin Sheeran
Song LeaderRandy D’Herde
Devotional Kevin Sheeran

Other

Prepare Communion for Aug.....A. Sneeringer

Congregational News This Week

Birthdays

Mike Atkinson.....July 26
Bryce Dolan.....July 31

Anniversaries

Tam & Pam Archer.....July 28

If you have any prayer requests, upcoming events to be announced, or updates/corrections please contact our secretary, Nina Siegel, at (361) 573-0030 or email office.midtownchurch@gmail.com

Our Elders

Mark FitzSimmons
Ron White

Our Deacons

James Cammock—Evangelism
Lupe Escojido— Benevolence
Doug Jobes—Safety, Men's Encouragement &
Winter Youth Retreat
Kevin Sheeran—Worship Organization and
Communication
Bryant Siegel—Education and Finance

Our Minister

Cody McCoy

Weekly Reading

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your
life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor
about your body, what you will put on. Is not life
more than food and the body more than
clothing?
Matthew 6:25 NKJV

Service Times

Sunday Morning Bible Class.....9:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship.....5:00 P.M.
Wednesday Bible Class.....7:00 P.M.

Attendance Records

Week of July 19, 2026

A.M. Bible Class.....80
A.M. Worship.....80
P.M. Worship.....48
Wednesday Worship.....53

*Financial information is located on the bulletin
board in the hallway.*

Supported Works

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