

Sermon 17 November 2019 on Climate Change: Genesis 1:26-31, Luke 5:36-38 – 8am & Bygrave  
**Dear God help us mirror your love for us by taking urgent action peacefully and truthfully to honour all your creation. Amen**

- Have Christians lost the connection that we humans are part of God's creation – just ***one*** part?
- If we look at the first creation story in the bible, it states humans were created on 6<sup>th</sup> day – everything else had already come into being- the sun, moon, land, sea, vegetation , creatures – that matches with evolutionary science too doesn't it?
- Then there came humans - perhaps the pinnacle of creation but with that comes responsibility
- Only humans have the power to manage the world and its riches for the good of all creation or to abuse and mangle it horribly – even to destruction if we don't act soon....
- Jesus brings a radical new way of looking at things – costly discipleship, but it brings joy, sense of belonging, friendships, strength, comfort , peace, value to life, engaging with the world rather than hiding from a truthful interaction with all of creation.
- Calling us to accountability but freeing us from guilt when we truly want to change both ourselves and our world.
- Putting Christ at the centre of our thinking surely means looking at what we do and asking ourselves more often about the decisions that we make– is what I am doing or saying only of benefit to me or is it something that I can enjoy/feel fulfilled by but which brings life, in even a small way, to another part of God's creation?
- I expect usually we just “live”, but being a Christian involves times of prayer too– confession and reflection, acceptance and readjustment.

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- Christians believe we were made in God's image. Man came into being to steward the earth and preserve it to hand on to future generations , to delight in it, to work with it, to understand and grow with it, to be thankful for its diversity, its intricacy,– animal, vegetable or mineral has its own uniqueness, its role in the bigger picture but greed and selfishness and power have distorted the delicate and evolving state of our world.
- The word Dominion doesn't mean we can greedily consume all the stuff we want while we let others starve or work in dreadful conditions , just so we can have cheap clothes or huge amounts of oil to make car and aircraft fuel or to make plastic till it begins to strangle our oceans and the creatures that live in them.
- Dominion translates better as stewardship or management for God– yes we are in charge, but with that comes kindness and responsibility to all, especially the marginalised and vulnerable.
- I expect many of you here will reminisce about paper bags and local produce, a slower pace of life and perhaps find it amusing that the younger generations are “discovering “ the benefits of these things now as if they were a huge discovery!
- And it takes radical action on our part to stand up against this sweeping tide of materialism which in our hearts we know is not sustainable and not Christ-centred.

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- If we are made in the image of God, we are made to live amicably and without prejudice with one another , to treat everyone with equity and value which means sharing the world's gas and oil and minerals, not chopping down the very trees that give us life –either on our streets or in the tropical rain forests.
- Most humans have failed miserably, though some manage to live by God's pure values for a second or 2 and we have hopefully all seen others doing this– and it is then that we get glimpses of the Kingdom of Heaven – of costly love, generously given , and we are inspired to try and increase these glimpses so that we too play a part in building the Kingdom of Heaven ***now*** here on earth, that one day we will see in all its glory and completeness in the heavenly realm.

- But we are in danger of getting further and further from the responsible stewardship that God entrusted us with. We continue to burn fossil fuels which release huge amounts of CO2, because the oil companies make profit from oil, so why should they stop? How else will they make money? But more CO2 leads to increased global temperatures leading to more extreme weather patterns, melting ice caps, rising sea levels and unbearable heat in areas near the equator – so much so that air conditioning is being pumped out into the streets of Qatar – one of the hottest places on Earth – , where summer temperatures now reach up to 46C,.....not just INSIDE the buildings.

Do we care if we let parts of our world become uninhabitable because of climate change that is burning up our planet ?

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- Isn't it time for middle of the road wishy washy C of E to stand up and shout - to tell the increasingly secular society that we actually are NOT in favour of man's "dominion over creation " being played out to create such inequality between rich and poor, between rulers and ruled , between countries sinking beneath increasingly warm and acidic oceans and those like Britain only occasionally touched by floods and extreme weather. Time to affirm we share a common humanity and a common identity but need those in power throughout the world to help preserve it and value it.

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- I chose 3 verses from Luke to link the Gospel with Climate change. Following Jesus calls for us to take radical, out of our comfort zone action , just as climate change is demanding of us, to honour the whole of God's creation.
- Jesus was God in human form , God incarnate, born into our world, calling us as Christians to reject the sins of the world and be born a new creation , bursting forth as new wine that cannot be contained in old wineskins.
- He turns the world upside down, he give us life in all its fullness if we believe and trust in him- he doesn't promise an easy life but certainly a life that transforms us – that helps us see the world through God's eyes of love and compassion and mercy and act on it. A life that is sustained by his Holy Spirit guiding us to make good choices, to find people whom we can trust and giving us a family – the church with Jesus as the head- we can turn to for help, for support and to share our joys as well as our sorrows and where together we can worship God in awe and wonder.

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- We are not living sustainably, we are destroying the planet's resources and ecosystems, we are putting the poorest nations and people in danger because of the effects of climate change. They are the ones contributing least to CO2 emissions, to atmospheric pollution from burning fossil fuels and yet they will lose their lands first under the rising sea levels, they will be forced to flee the desert regions in Africa because they can no longer grow food to eat, they will die in the earthquakes and typhoons because they can't afford to build strong houses or live in safe areas.
  - *Do we really care as long as we are ok here?*
  - If Jesus , who took our sins upon himself, died an innocent man because he loves us so much and wanted to open up the chance of salvation from God and the hope of eternal life,
  - **if he returned tomorrow what would he say to you and to me and what would we reply?**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Katrina Nice 17.11.19