

Climate Sunday Sunday 5th September 2021

Opening Prayer Before service: Tearfund Scotland video 1 minute and prayer: Sunday Prayer or Intro Prayer: <https://youtu.be/f3Bws1tw1dg>

(? Spoken Word video: <https://youtu.be/cY1-cMzLZm8> ?)

Reading after 1st song of worship: Psalm 104:1, 10-26

One thing that has revived in me the past 12 months is the beauty of God's creation. Over lockdown I explored Saline hill and my awe at the beauty of God's creation was brought alive. Since then I've travelled Scotland, climbed 30 Munro's and helped others explore the wonder of God's creation here in Scotland also.

1. God delights in His Creation

The psalmist in Psalm 104 also appreciated the beauty of God's creation in v24:

"O Lord, what an amazing variety of all you have created!
Wild and wonderful is this world you have made,
while wisdom was there at your side.
This world is full of so many creatures, yet each belongs to you!"

The author of Psalm 104 has taken time to observe and appreciate God's creation. He is intimately aware of the clouds, the mountains, the valleys, springs, wild animals, birds, trees, grass and livestock. He mentions the stork, fir trees, high mountains, wild goats, rocks, rock badgers, the moon and the sun and darkness, young lions and their prey, the sea and its innumerable creatures, both great and small. He has taken time to appreciate and notice how God's creation is essential for feeding livestock, for food to grow and wine to be produced. He has taken time to appreciate that creation is essential for bread to be made from what has grown from the earth.

Creation and all its glory has inspired the psalmist to worship with awe and wonder the creator God.

V31 says:

"May God's glorious splendor endure forever!
May the Lord take joy and pleasure in all that he has made."

Other translations say May the Lord rejoice in his works. The NLT says: The Lord takes pleasure in all he has made!

God enjoys his creation. He takes pleasure in it. He gets much joy from His creation and wants all His children to also enjoy and take pleasure in it.

Jesus, as God's son understood creation in great detail. He uses crops for his parable of the sower showing understanding of what can hinder the growth of crops, how droughts cause plants to wither and rocky ground prevents roots from growing. Jesus was a carpenter by trade yet understood how crops need nutritious soil for growth.

This shouldn't surprise us because Col.1:16 tells us:

“For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.”

If all things were made by Jesus and for Jesus, do you think Jesus would want his followers to deeply care for and protect the things he cares about? Ruth Valero says this in her book *Lifestyle*:

“The point is obvious, isn't it? In Genesis 1:31 we are told that God looked at what he had made and said, ‘It is very good.’ It's fantastic! This world is amazing! This world is God's creation, and he loves it. So therefore don't we also want to love it and look after it? How does God feel when we wipe our ecological footprints all over it and leave it damaged and wrecked?”

‘C is for Creation’ is one of my favourite chapters in this book (you'll have to guess which my other ones are). Over the years, I have become increasingly convinced just how important God's creation is to him – not only the human part of his creation, but the whole of it – and that living in a way that takes care of that creation is an absolutely fundamental part of what it means to follow Jesus, as integral to our Christian faith as evangelism and reading the Bible, helping people in poverty and praying.

When I look in the Bible, I see four basic reasons as to why that is.

First, as we have already seen, because God made this world and he loves it.

Second, God has created us to look after the rest of his creation.

Third, the world has gone wrong because of us.

Fourth, God has a future for this world.”

Valero, Ruth. L is for Lifestyle (pp. 19-20). IVP. Kindle Edition.

Jesus not only knows his creation deeply and intimately but Jesus also knows we can learn much by observing creation. Jesus uses creation to teach us about His father and the kingdom through stories about weeds, how birds are cared for or through the power of a tiny mustard seed.

God's creation is a gift to us for our pleasure and survival and thriving. God has imprinted into creation his fingerprint with lessons to teach us if we can slow down long enough to observe, enjoy, appreciate and listen to the lessons of Father through creation. The writer of proverbs tells us, 'Go to the ant... consider its ways.'

We see throughout the Bible how creation can teach us more about Father and inspire us to worship. We see how God takes pleasure in and enjoys all He has made and invites us to do that also.

In Gen.2:15 we see that the Earth has been given to us not as something God no longer cares about, but as a gift we are to treasure and look after:

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."

Gen.2:15 NIV

2. Man is Damaging Creation Causing the Poor to Suffer More

The sad news is that man is damaging the creation that God loves so dearly. How we live and work and consume today across the globe is pushing the earth towards breaking point.

Ruth Valero says in Lifestyle:

"And we live in a world in which there has been a 60% decline in the size of populations of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians. Each of these creatures has been created by God and is loved by him, so how can we not be active in working to see change?"

Valero, Ruth. L is for Lifestyle (p. 7). IVP. Kindle Edition.

How is man damaging creation? You are probably well aware from our newspapers and news channels. Plastic pollution is littering our seas, species are going extinct rapidly due to human behaviour and global temperature rise known as the climate crisis making droughts, floods and storms more frequent and severe. Wildfires are becoming more intense due to climate change. Watch this explainer video:

The climate science behind wildfires: why are they getting worse?

<https://youtu.be/4oJ0j1OZSTU>

Humans are misusing and damaging the beautiful gift God has given us. While we are feeling some of the effects in the UK such as more flooding the impacts are hitting people in poverty the hardest and that should concern Christians very much as they are our global neighbours. It's hard to grasp how these are connected: it's big and abstract so let's watch a story to help us understand. Let me introduce you to Orbisa.

Watch video: <https://vimeo.com/462660499#>

Around the world, millions of people like Orbisa are being pushed back into poverty because of climate change. In 2016, world hunger started to increase for the first time in a decade and has continued to increase every year since. And that's because of climate change and conflict, with climate change increasing the risk of conflict.

The science is clear: the climate crisis is being caused by us, especially us in developed nations, and the impacts are accelerating. We are running out of time to prevent the worst effects. We have to act fast and change the way we live, and governments have to be much more ambitious. But right now, we have a unique window of opportunity. This year, the UK is hosting the UN climate talks in Glasgow in November. This is a crucial moment for our leaders to take climate change seriously.

Why should we bother about climate change? Jesus is coming back and will decide how the world will end so what's the point of caring or trying? We can't think like that though. God has given us a human body and we must care for it or we can damage the quality and quantity of our lives. The same is true for our world. Yes, Jesus is coming back to renew creation completely but He wants us to love and care for the body, the creation He has given us. Our highest priority is to love God and love our neighbour. May I suggest to love God includes loving what He loves and we have learned today how much He loves his creation. To protect and care for His creation is to love and honour God the creator. Loving our neighbours includes loving our global neighbours, the poorest who are hit first and worst by what is now a climate emergency.

3. We must live in and spread hope

In Jesus we find hope not only for human beings but for creation also.

Colossians 1:19–20 says this:

'For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him [Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.'

'To reconcile to himself all things, things on earth and things in heaven...' Our world is broken, but God is at work reconciling and restoring.

We believe God has always been interested in mending broken things. Jesus as a carpenter I'm sure mended broken furniture. As the Son of God he mended broken souls in front of angry crowds and with a woman at a well. Our earth is broken but God invites us into the ministry of reconciliation (to mend that which is broken) and restoration.

Let's watch this video on Theory of Poverty: <https://vimeo.com/451780056/841556a0a7>

Jesus didn't just come to reconcile human beings but all things in heaven and earth. This includes to restore the earth to how God intended it to be. Jesus invites us to join his mission and we can help bring restoration and reconciliation to ALL things and participate in

mending that which is broken. This includes reconciling people to their Father but also reconciling people to the creation we've been given to care for to see it restored. This is not just a side issue but the fullness of the gospel.

It's not worthless. We can make a difference. Human decisions and priorities can make a massive difference. Here's just one example:

"Research has found that the ozone-wrecking CFCs once commonly used in refrigerators would have driven 2.5 degrees C of extra global heating by the end of the century if they had not been banned. The Montreal Protocol was a global agreement to protect the earth's ozone layer by phasing out the chemicals that deplete it. The landmark agreement was signed in 1987 and entered into force in 1989. The Montreal Protocol provided a set of practical, actionable tasks that were universally agreed on. The Protocol successfully met its objectives and prevented a 2.5C of extra global heating by the end of the century."

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/19/saving-ozone-layer-has-given-humans-a-chance-in-climate-crisis-study?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

4. How to Respond

"In the words of Jürgen Moltmann, 'From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present.'²"

2. Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (SCM Press, 2010), p. 2.

Valero, Ruth. *L is for Lifestyle* (p. 8). IVP. Kindle Edition.

As people of faith and courage we should respond with stubborn optimism.

The case for stubborn optimism on climate

https://www.ted.com/talks/christiana_figueres_the_case_for_stubborn_optimism_on_climate?referrer=playlist-countdown_session_1_urgency

<https://youtu.be/KVW5eGiETI>

The book of Esther gives an example how to respond with faith and courage in times of crisis. Esther responds with prayer and action. Esther also teaches us we have a responsibility to speak up against injustice and to respond to injustice through faith and courage, through prayer and action.

To address the injustice of climate change and its impact on the poorest people around the world we need to respond with prayer and action.

On your seats is a couple of information sheets and a booklet about Tearfunds Reboot campaign. You can sign up for **Prayer updates via SMS text**. You can sign up to receive prayer points directly to your phone every one to two weeks, to inspire prayers for justice

and restoration for those living in poverty. This year the focus is on the climate emergency. To sign up:

1. Add our Tearfund Action Prayer Feed number +44 (0)7916 874441 to your phone's contacts
2. Using your phone's SMS messaging app, text the word 'PRAY' to us on the number above
3. You will be added to our list, and we will send you prayer points every 1-2 weeks via SMS.

We will not use your number for any other purposes and it will not be visible to others. Replies will be received by Tearfund only

Action: for ideas for how to live responsibly and how to make small but significant changes to our lifestyle see : <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Lifestyle-revised-updated-Christian-Living/dp/1783599960>

30 Ways to Be More Eco Friendly in 2021

<https://www.greenmatch.co.uk/blog/how-to-be-more-eco-friendly>