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**Tearfund - Eco Church Sunday**

**In Our Small Corner: We Are God’s Creation Caretakers**

**By Pastor Chris Cleary**

**Psalm 8**

1. **Introduction**

Mark Carney, the former Bank of England governor, and now Prime Minister of Canada, recently issued a warning that climate change poses a huge risk to global stability. He warned that **“The current challenges posed by climate change pale in significance when compared with what might come.”**

**So - who is responsible?** Well, some may blame politicians for failing to act sooner, or some may criticise multinational corporations for exacerbating climate change through the exploitation of oil, gas and other natural resources, and we can easily think of many others we might think to blame!

Yet, we need to acknowledge that the Christian Church has, **to some degree, failed to fulfil its responsibility to care for creation**. The Church could have, and should have, done more to acknowledge that **creation care is integral to the Gospel.** Thankfully, in many churches, this is now changing.

**Yet this is an even deeper spiritual issue than you might think!**

In 2010, **John Stott**, the esteemed theologian and Christian writer, published his book, **The Radical Disciple*.*** In it hesays this, **“The Bible tells us that in creation God established for human** **beings three fundamental relationships.”**

* **“First, to himself (God),** for He made them in His own image,
* **Second, to each other,** for the human race was plural from the beginning,
* **Third, to the good earth, and its creatures over which He set people.”**

However, all three relationships were messed up by the fall of mankind. **First -** Adam and Eve were banished from the presence of the Lord God in the garden. **Second -** they blamed each other for what had happened. **Third** - the good earth was cursed on account of their disobedience. **In my thinking,** **it stands to reason therefore that God’s plan of restoration includes not only our reconciliation to God, but also to one another, and the restoration of the groaning creation as well.**

1. **Background and Thoughts**

So, does the Bible**directly** say anything about Green-house gases, Green Peace, the Green Party, or the Green movement? **Well, no!**

Yet, in its own way it does. It tells us that **we have responsibilities toward our environment,** and that we have **the obligation to use it wisely for the Glory of God.**

**We are supposed to use what God has given us - not misuse!**

1. **Psalm 8**

I believe that **Psalm 8,** one of King David’s collection, is as relevant today as when first written 3,000 years ago!

It is a short, yet powerful **Psalm**, that **C.S. Lewis,** the writer, literary scholar, and theologian described as **“This short exquisite lyric”.**

In **Verses 1 and 9** the **Psalm** begins and ends with the same refrain, **“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”**

This **Psalm** spans time and space. **It looks back** to creation of the heavens and the Earth. **It looks forward** to the re-creation and the New Heaven and the New Earth.

**And, In the middle, stands humanity and a mysterious prophecy of the coming of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ through whom everything will be restored.**

**Verses 1 to 3 - The Glory of God Revealed in Creation.**

**‘Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory  in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.
When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ………’**

There is something awesome about the heavens at night, with millions of stars and galaxies twinkling silently their message. **Here is a recognition of the majesty of God’s name and nature, which His works reveal in both heaven and earth.**

I can just see David looking up and pausing as he takes in the beauty and awesomeness of the heavens.

Then suddenly realising how small and insignificant we are in all of what he sees, Yet understanding how we become important as a result of God’s love for us and His desire to have a personal relationship with us. **Let’s read on!**

**Verses 4 to 6 - The Frailty of Humanity as Caretakers of the Earth.**

David moves on in his thoughts and declares, **‘what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?’ You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands, you put everything under theirfeet.’**

David asks the rhetorical question that sooner or later we all ask, **“Given the vastness of the universe, of space and time, and our relative insignificance, who am I?** I’m convinced that, at times, many of us feel life insecure about who we are, why we are here and where we’re going.

Do you know who you are in the eyes of God? Do you know God’s plan for your life? **Do you realise your destiny is to live as a Child of God, crowned with glory and honour?**

**Yet, as part of our relationship with God’s he requires us to do something for Him - Care for His Creation, His World, indeed Our World!**

We are required to complement rather than contradict. **For the earth belongs to God by creation and to us by delegation.** This does not mean that He has handed it over to us in such a way as to give up His own rights over it, but rather that He has given us responsibility to preserve and develop the earth on His behalf.

1. **Conclusion**

John Stott makes the telling point,**“…it would be absurd to imagine that He who created the earth would then hand it over to us to be destroyed! No, the dominion God has given us should be seen as a responsible stewardship, not a destructive domination.”**

Mankind has rebelled against God and treated the world as something to be plundered, exploited, and fought over **- as if it were ours by might and right!**

Yet, when we follow Jesus we take on God’s expectation that as we acknowledge Him, and His Spirit dwells within us, we will demonstrate our servant hearts as **Caretakers of His Creation.**

I know that today we are all more aware than ever of the threat to our environment, **but here’s the deal;** no matter what we are already doing to preserve our world - we need to ask ourselves - **what else can we do, in the role God has given us to be Caretakers?**

**What can you do? What will you do? What are we going to do as a Church?**

**For future generations! Yet, above all for Our Father in Heaven!**

**Amen.**