

Creation Time Resources 2014

God, Whose Farm is All Creation



Week One – September 7th 2014

Bible Readings

Job 37: 14-24

This passage proclaims God's majesty and greatness. Job's friend Elihu observes the wonders of God's creation, asking questions to try to understand the Divine work in nature, making special reference to the climate. His questions lead to wonder as God cannot be explained. When Job was written human understanding of how the natural world worked was very different to today. Their reaction to being overwhelmed by the might and power of God was to respond with worship.

Psalm 130

Psalm 130 is a cry for help, made with a sense of hope rather than despair. Hope is found in the patient waiting in the darkness, always confident that hope will come. Waiting is a community rather than a solitary activity. The requests made to God are bold, based on a deep faith that God will hear the supplications made to Him. The person making the request for help is aware of his own shortcomings and failures, but is confident in the forgiveness and acceptance that God has promised.

Revelation 4

A vision of the worship of God in Heaven. God is in the centre, in the most important position. God gets all the glory because he has created all things and sustains all things by his will.

Matthew 8: 23-34

The story of Jesus stilling the storm from the boat shows God's power evident by Christ in control of the forces of nature. It is a sign of Jesus' divine nature. God is in control of the weather. Jesus "rebukes" the winds and the waves. Christ's sleep in the storm contrasts with the alarm of the crew. He was too tired to keep awake, or to be disturbed by the tumult. His fatigue is a sign of His true humanity.

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Sermon starter thoughts

Climate change is regarded as one of the greatest threats to the well-being of our planet. More than 2,000 scientists contributed to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. They predict that by 2100 the average temperature of the earth will rise between 1.5 and 6 degrees Celsius, with consequences for all living creatures. They found that most of the warming in the past fifty years could be attributed to human activities and in particular to burning fossil fuels. We are all aware of the symptoms; the unexpectedly rapid rate of the melting of the polar ice-caps, huge-climate fluctuations, causing drought in some areas, and increased cooling in others, the acidification of the oceans and the erosion of our coral reefs, and rising sea levels which are projected to cause a refugee crisis. Small farmers across the world are suffering as a result of climate change.

God's creation includes humans who have a role of stewardship. Sinfulness, particularly the sins of pride, gluttony and covetousness, have led to gross over-consumption and waste. We have ignored the consequences of our actions. An unregulated market economy dependent upon ever-increasing consumption no longer makes sense. We'd need the equivalent of four planets to continue to live as we are. Western-style agriculture, especially agribusiness, is unsustainable for the earth. Land use has a significant impact on the world's biosphere. Small farmers all over the world have been using land sustainably for hundreds of years and they are feeling the worse effects of climate change.

Example from Christian aid - Dairy farming is the only way many of the poorest and marginalised people in Bangladesh can make a living, yet extreme weather and a lack of animal care can be detrimental to their produce.
<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/partnerfocus/improving-the-lives-of-dairy-farmers-in-bangladesh.aspx> Climate change will disproportionately affect those least able to cope. Part of our Christian response is our care for our fellow human beings in other parts of the planet. What kind of a legacy will we leave for future generations?

The message of the psalm is apt for this theme. We take responsibility for our actions, repent, changing our ways in a spirit of hope and confidence. God is in control, but the history of the twentieth century shows how human activity can have demonic and devastating consequences (eg the WW2 holocaust or the killing fields of Cambodia). God intervenes most often in the world by inspiring people to do what

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is right though costly.

Prayers

Approach

Let us consider the wondrous works of God.
You are worthy, our God, to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things and by your will they existed. *(based on Job 37 and Rev 4)*

Collect

God the creator
who made the earth and sustains all that is
guide us in our care for your world
that people everywhere may share in its abundance
through Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen

Praise

We bring our praises to God
Aware of the vastness of creation and our tiny place in it.
Aware of the hidden power of God that sustains all that is
and the puny efforts of humans in comparison.
We offer praise for the marvellous world God has made:
from the mighty mountains to the deep seas,
from the forests to the deserts, the ice caps and the gardens:
we see in all parts of the creation the marks of the Creator.
We praise God for the human world that seeks to investigate and understand
all the parts of the cosmos.
We praise God for sending Jesus into the world to show us how to live and love
without limit
Amen

Confession

We confess that we have not cared for the earth so that
children starve, rivers are polluted, forests are destroyed
farmers displaced and the climate is messed up.
We confess that we have not always spoken out as we should

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nor have we shown care for those suffering or in need.
We repent for our part in causing the current environmental crisis that has led to climate change.

We are sorry for the times when we have used your gifts carelessly, and acted ungratefully.

Forgive us we pray and help us so to love our neighbours as ourselves
that we may respond with deep love to those in need
in a way that mirrors the love shown by Christ himself.
Father, in your mercy:

forgive us and help us

Amen

Thanksgiving and Intercession

Creator God, We thank you for the beauty of your Creation, and for the privilege of caring for it.

For the colour and forms of your creation and our place within it,

We give thanks for family farms and farmers that have nurtured the land for generations

For our daily food, and for those whose work and skill bring our food to us,

We give thanks for those who campaign for the well-being of others and of the earth
For the changing seasons, their variety and dependability and for new life springing forth annually from barrenness and decay;

We give thanks for the blessings we have received and the life we have been given,
and for all those whom you have given us to share it. Amen.

Today we pray for

people whose lives and livelihoods are affected by climate change

We pray for farmers especially on small family farms all over the world

We ask that you help those who work on the land.

We pray for all who suffer from lack of water through drought, or selfish exploitation
and those who suffer the ravages of storm and flood;

For all who depend on the earth for their daily food and fuel, whose forests are under threat or being destroyed

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We pray for the courage to change our habits that are accelerating climate change

We pray for those who do not have enough food or the means to support their families

We pray for initiatives that reduce degradation of fertile land and promote a fairer distribution of the earth's resources.

We pray for those who are so burdened that they cannot see beauty in God's creation.

We pray that we may never cease to wonder and to praise, and to be good stewards of all that God has given into our hands. Amen

Collect

God of all the earth,
you have given us the heritage
of this good and fertile land;
grant that we may so respect and use it
that others may thank us
for what we leave to them;
through Jesus, the Christ,
Amen.

Children's talk

If you have a glass kettle you can watch water as it gets hotter. What happens to water as it is heated? - it bubbles slowly at first and then faster and faster until at boiling point there are continuous fast moving bubbled producing lots of steam.

A scientist would tell you that part of this is because molecules move about faster when they get hotter. The earth's atmosphere is like that. Every little fraction of a degree that the atmosphere is warmed, the air moves a fraction faster. As it moves faster, it becomes less predictable. Therefore when we talk about global warming we don't mean that earth will just slowly get hotter. We mean that things will become more chaotic with more extreme variations and more unexpected events. We have seen big storms. There have been heavy snowfalls followed by a hot day. The jet stream moves because of the movement of other parts of the atmosphere and brings weather that should have gone to the Arctic or to Africa to Europe instead! People tend to talk about climate chaos because we don't know what may happen next! Remember the bubbles in water as it boils getting faster and faster as more heat is

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added and you will get a picture of the atmosphere of the earth.

This is God's world. The bible gives people the job of being stewards of creation. This means that as well as looking after each other, we should also look after planet earth. We need to be reminded of the effect of what we do on people all round the world.

Musical Suggestions

Hymn Books Used

BBC Songs of praise (SoP) Church Hymnary 4 (CH4) Common Ground (CG)

Hymns Ancient & Modern: New Standard Edition (AMNS)

New Century Hymnal (NCH) Rejoice and Sing (RS) Sing Praise (SP)

Singing the faith (StF)

A small thing like a hazelnut (CH4)

Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair (Ch4, SP, SoP, StF, AMNS)

For the fruits of all creation (CH4, SP, CG, RS, SoP, StF, AMNS)

For the healing of the nations, Lord we pray with one accord (CH4, RS, SoP, StF, AMNS)

God in such love for us lent us this planet (CH4, RS, StF)

God, whose farm is all creation (CH4, RS, SoP, StF, AMNS)

Let all creation dance in energies sublime (CH4, SP)

Lord, bring the day to pass when forest, rock and hill (CH4, RS, AMNS)

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided (CH4, SP, RS, SoP, StF)

Lord of creation, to you be all praise! (CH4, RS, StF)

Lord, your hands have formed this world (CH4)

Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain (CH4, RS, StF)

Praise God for the harvest of orchard and field (CH4, CG, StF)

The earth belongs to God alone and all that it contains (CH4)

The earth is yours, O God, you nourish it with rain (CH4)

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Think of a world without any flowers (CH4, RS, SoP, StF, AMNS)

We plough the fields and scatter (CH4, RS, SoP, StF, AMNS)