

Sermon 20 September 2015  
Psalm 19:1-6    Philippians 2:14-18 'Earth Sunday 2'

Prayer: May the thought of our hearts and meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight Oh Lord our God. Amen.

In the world wide church resource circles we / I tap into the month of September has been (*for the past 5+ years*) has been set apart from the following of the Lectionary **and had** a biblical focus on our Earth. I did follow this pattern one year – and as Shirley said 'I couldn't believe it – you said you were going to preach on trees and you did!!!' – This year all I am doing is two Sundays, last week with 'Earth Sunday' and this week with 'Earth Sunday 2'.

Last week we looked a little at the 'blue and green ball we call home' - what a mysterious and precise gift **we've been given responsibility** for and **called** as Jesus's followers to give our life in service for. Today I have another video, some of you may have seen it, and it is certainly worth another look. This is the mysterious, beautiful, wondrous place, our earth, our home and where our God's **good blessing** is seen.

I hope you enjoy the pictures and the psalm for today, as interpreted in this video.

"How could I say there is no God? When all around creation calls!! Do we not have a truly beautiful home planet? We believe God's gift of life, of creation to us, for us is a blessing, an original? The original blessing that is so good, what are we doing with it? How are we maintaining the blessed-ness? **Are we?**

I can't help wondering if Creation is now calling to us – crying to us for life. **We hold the Word of life** in our hands – what are we doing with it? **Shining like stars in the universe?** *Hiding and ignoring* and avoiding **and** by **doing nothing allowing** evil to prosper; death to triumph and this beautiful gift to die?Cv

the past 200+ years have been described in religious-philosophical language as 'Modernity'. One of the consequences is that in our / humanities drive to understand – "***everything***" we have put the ways of 'fact' and 'logic' above all else. This has had a consequence of allowing us to create what I believe, is a false distinction between 'human's' – as the THE living of earth and all else on earth; allowing a false division between us (humanity) and creation. This is not our Biblical tradition, we are "dust" and to dust we will return, as we are reminded in every funeral service committal we listen to. **We are one creation.**

The hard part if we acknowledge our partners of creation, is that while it may not be 'logical', it may still be true! Is belief dependent on factual proof??? Logic??? Cv

The Bible teaches the first humans were Adam and Eve, and they had 2 sons – Cain and Able. The brothers fought... Listen to their story Gen 4:8-10

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! **Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.**"

God hears calls for justice no matter where – or who it comes from; who will act for God? Who holds the word of life? Listen! **Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.**" – Creation **calls**, are *we* listening?

Are we? Having just been in Singapore, pre Grand-Prix! With the smog **and** hearing the locals moan about the forest burn-offs of their neighbours (Indonesia). I do know what they are moaning about.

<sup>1</sup> <http://eschooltoday.com/forests/problems-of-deforestation.html>

Indonesians are burning their forests for a few reasons- all of them belong in the lists of de-forestation with more land for farming, and logging are two. But on this earth – the effects of deforestation are killing us – a few of these are: soil erosion; climate change; and changes to the water cycle – for instance:

<sup>1</sup> ‘When forests are destroyed, the atmosphere, water bodies and the water table are all affected. Trees absorb and retain water in their roots. A large part of the water that circulates in the ecosystem of rainforests remains inside the plants. Some of this moisture is transpired into the atmosphere. When this process is broken, the atmosphere and water bodies begin to dry out. The watershed potential is compromised and less water will run through the rivers. Smaller lakes and streams that take water from these larger water bodies dry up.’

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) claims that about 36 football fields worth of trees are lost every minute. The deforestation of trees not only lessens the amount of carbon stored, it also releases carbon dioxide into the air. This is because when trees die, they release the stored carbon.

How many of us have been watching the news from California about the fires – and drought behind them? Our news on Thursday morning was about the worst drought conditions in Canterbury for 25 years – El Nino, yes but... We are consistently told – weather is going to get worse – extremes of hot and cold, wet and dry will not stop or slow down but increase. Kiribati is drowning – the Government has bought land in Fiji to re-settle. And I could continue easily with ‘facts’ and logic and scientific research that tells us our ecological footprint is too large and is killing – not creating life.

This beautiful and awesome creation – our gift is crying, speech is pouring out – are we listening? Or are we complaining and arguing? Our challenge is to be blameless and pure **children of God** without fault and shining like stars in the universe as we hold out the word of life. Paul wants to be proud of his students! Paul wants to rejoice in all that we do. Who do we listen to for advice and guidance? The voices of Creation, Modernity, Mega-rich, deported, mortgagee farm-owner, fire-destroyed home-owner? Who?

Do we have to wait? I don’t think so, irrespective of the debates – I trust our Biblical heritage and know it is our responsibility to care for creation, earth, home. So let the debate rage and get on with caring. I believe we can do something – now. We can act. So what can we do? One very easy way is to plant trees – as simple as that.

And if we can’t physically plant in our own backyard then there are trusted organisations we can donate to. In know it seems like there are millions of organisations asking for our charity-monies but there is a Greek proverb that says **“A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.”**

Creation is calling – do you believe?

We know we hold the word of life. Do we trust the power of the word we hold? It is not my brother or sister – this scripture says each one of us carry’s **life** in **our** hands. Amen

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