

From the first chapter of Genesis, we read these words:

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, ‘Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’ So, God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.”

Sky –Sky is a three-letter word we use to describe the expanse of space that surrounds our planet. Our planet is surrounded by the space which contains the elements we need as living beings to survive – oxygen, nitrogen, carbo dioxide for photo synthesis, and the particles of light themselves which pass through the atmosphere providing light and energy for our survival. But how are our lives influenced by what happens in the atmosphere which surrounds us? And just as important as this question is in itself, there is another question which all humanity needs to pay attention to, not in the next hundred years or so, but right now. And this is it. How are we, the stewards of God’s gift of creation, fulfilling God’s command to humankind to care for all His created order?

Jesus told His followers that His purpose was not to bring peace, but to bring a new order. A new way of equality. A new way of sharing all the gifts of Creation equitably among all peoples and not just a privileged few. This new fire, which Jesus was about setting, would be the cause of deep division in His day. Division that would be so profound that it would divide households and destroy family unity for many of the first generation of believers in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Today, we are faced with division because of how we use the resources of our planet, how we care for God's gift of creation, and how we forget to fulfill our role as stewards of creation.

I want to share with you several observations which have been made about how we, as human beings, are living in this time and space. Now, it should come as no surprise to any of you, that these same observations have been made for every society in every generation since the very earliest days of human history. The time, long ago, when we first walked with the Creator, on this very planet.

Observation:

- 1) People in power are not willing to take positions which deal with the root cause of climate change if those positions do not promote economic advancement and/or the development of resources. So, the question then becomes this. How do we change this model so we can arrive at a position which promotes the betterment of God's creation?**
- 2) If you want to upset the social norm, start telling the truth about climate change. The question is this, how can we do this? Can we speak out against this wrong? Does society in general listen**

when someone speaks to the damage being caused to our world?

- 3) If anyone doesn't agree with your position about something or someone, they are just plain wrong. Does this sound to you like the reaction of some of our world leaders today? Do they hold the same stance toward climate change? Are they able to see things from another person's viewpoint? Who is right here? Or, are we possibly both wrong?
- 4) Society demands conformity at all costs. Harmony makes us complacent. Is this truth or is it fiction? Are we conformists, or are we prepared to change our ways so creation can survive?

These are four observations which are pertinent for our time, especially when it comes to dealing with climate change.

We only need to look at the turmoil which is besieging our world. Even within this great nation of Canada, we are coming to the realization that climate change is affecting all God's gifts of creation. Will we never learn? History seems to repeat itself over and over. Look at the number of disastrous events which seem to be occurring around the planet. Look at what happens when wildfires consume vegetation, homes, destroying habitats for God's creatures, and even taking human life. And again, look at the severity of storms, extreme weather events, droughts, floods, landslides, sinkholes, earthquakes, and many other disasters occurring with more regularity around the globe today. More than anytime in recorded history, our world is being changed. And this is change which is not for the better. "Name calling", protests, and riots seem to be the way some people chose to devalue someone

else's positions. In doing so, people believe this makes their own position to be more acceptable. But does it?

The atmosphere around our planet mirrors the distress which our planet is experiencing. One only needs to look at the smoky skies we have seen this past summer. Do you remember the sun turning orange, the extreme dry weather we experienced when rain did not fall for months on end? Remember the wildfires, and the violent storms which have become more frequent with each passing year?

From our atmosphere, we breath in the oxygen we need to survive. From that same atmosphere, our land, the plants, and the rivers all receive the moisture we need to survive. Planets breathe in the carbon dioxide and give back oxygen so all life can survive. Our atmosphere also serves us as a filter. It filters out the harmful rays of the sun. Without the atmosphere we have around our planet, we would not be able to exist. Why are we not working to protect it and ourselves?

So, I want to return to the four observations I posed a little earlier.

How do we get nations and peoples to care about resource management for the betterment of God's creation?

How do we start telling the truth about climate change?

How can we find common ground so every voice to be heard and respected when it comes to caring for God's creation? Does what we do harm others? Does it harm the planet?

And finally, are we prepared to change our ways so creation can survive?

These are difficult questions to address. To be honest with you, I don't believe any of us has the answers to every one of these questions. But I do know one thing, we can not do this on our own. We need God's help. And for many of us, that means prayer. God has promised to never abandon us in our time of need, and we are in a time of need right now. Climate change is real. We can not ignore the signs we are witness to in the oceans, on the land, and in the skies above our heads. We need to join with all humanity and re-double our efforts to save this planet we call home. There may not be much time left for humankind if we fail to act.

On this last Sunday in the Season of Creation for 2024, we all need to do our part for the well-being of all creation. As stewards of God's creation, it is up to us to correct the damage we have visited on God's most wonderful gift, creation, itself.

Amen