

Creation Stewards – Matthew 25 v14-30

A creation steward rules with care

God's first promise and command to the human race was to "rule" (Gen 1: 26) over the rest of creation. This may at first seem a harsh word to describe the command to be a creation steward. But the word translated "rule" is one often applied to royal rule. It is not a mandate for unfettered control or greed. The Hebrew ideal of kingship was that of a caring shepherd like David or Jesus himself, not a grasping despot. Creation care should not be thought of simply as an optional extra. It is God's command and central to being made in his image. John Wesley preached "No character more exactly agrees with the present state of man than that of a steward".

(John Wesley, Sermon 51, The Good Steward)

A creation steward respects the owner

The Bible also tells us that, "the earth is the Lord's" (Psalm 24:1) and that "the earth has been given to human beings" (Psalm 115:16). There is no conflict between these statements: the earth belongs to God by creation and to us by delegation; God has not handed his creation over to us in such a way as to relinquish his ownership. He has delegated to us the responsibility of looking after it on his behalf. This means that we must avoid both the deification and exploitation of nature.

A creation steward responds for others

John Stott says, "What God has given us is nature, what we do with it is culture. We are not only to conserve the environment, but also to develop its resources for the common good. It is a noble calling to co-operate with God to transform the created order for the pleasure and profit of all."

Conclusion

Everything God created was declared as good (Genesis 1: 31) and calls out for responsible stewardship. Whilst human beings have rejected God, resulting in a broken relationship between the Creator and creation, all creation still groans and waits for restoration that comes through God's Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8: 22).

Welcome

If all the animals in the world were in danger of extinction and you could save just one species, what would you save and why?

Worship

Read Psalm 24.

Pray in thanks for our world.

Pray in repentance for the way we treat it.

Pray for help to restore it.

Word

1. Why should we, as Christians, be concerned about climate change?
2. What can we do to encourage others to be better stewards of God's world?
3. What has all this got to do with mission?

Witness

Decide to do something different together as a cell to try to make our planet a better place.