

August Eco Newsletter

Sermon Extract (Phillip Brooks 18/8/21)

The parable of workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) makes the point that God's Kingdom isn't fair, but that God our Father is loving and generous. We are called to be loving and generous too. Amongst the many applications of this I would like to focus on our response to climate change.

In the last month, we have had a new UN report on climate change; we have had unprecedented heat waves and forest fires in Europe, and we have had devastating floods in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands. Although these events have caught the headlines, the effects of global warming on the third world are just as devastating; they just haven't caught the headlines. The industrialised countries have by far the biggest carbon footprint; but the poorer countries suffer the most, partly because they don't have the infrastructure to cope with natural disasters.

What does a Christian response to this look like? I would suggest two things. Firstly, a determined effort to reduce our own carbon footprint. This is part of our responsibility to love our neighbour. The other is to increase our giving to aid agencies. In the past I have sometimes responded to an appeal made by the Disasters Emergency Committee when a major catastrophe happens. But major catastrophes are going to happen with increased frequency even if we act quickly on climate change. We are called to be generous, just as God is generous, and doesn't give up on us.

New IPCC Report: Humanity's Role in Climate Change "unequivocal"

In a summary of the state of climate science, agreed by 195 countries and published on 9 August, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said humanity's role in driving climate change was "unequivocal", an upgrade on the language of "clear" used eight years ago.

New IPCC Report: 1.5°C is possible (New Scientist 21/8/21)

Don't give up on climate action yet, Climate Scientist Tamsin Edwards tells Adam Vaughan.

THE landmark report released last week by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) might have left you reeling about the current and future state of our planet. But Tamsin Edwards at King's College London, a lead author on the report, says it is understandable that it takes time for the gravity of the situation to sink in. "I think many people aren't that aware that we have already committed ourselves to changes that are irreversible. That is a profound thing to take on board," she says.

The IPCC's findings may seem gloomy, but Edwards says they also show there is still hope. The report finds that in the very lowest of five scenarios for future carbon dioxide emissions, the world is likely to hit the Paris Agreement's target of 1.5°C of warming in the next 20 years, before cooling later this century to 1.4°C.

"It is important to realise that it is still possible to limit warming to 1.5°C with not much overshoot, with immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in emissions. Obviously, optimism and pessimism isn't the remit of our report. All we can do is lay out the evidence," says Edwards.

Climate Solution? Recarbonise the planet (New Scientist 21/8/21)

Every year, the true impact of the climate emergency affects more and more people. As with the pandemic, scientists are now exhorting politicians to level with their voters, to tell them how it really

is – to explain why halving emissions of greenhouse gases over the next decade is an out-and-out imperative (as the science now tells us) if we are to avoid runaway climate change.

This means preventing those gases getting into the atmosphere in the first place by stopping the burning of all fossil fuels as fast as possible – not just in generating electricity. We need to electrify pretty much everything that helps 21st century society to function and ensure any extra electricity we need is 100 percent renewable.

But, this is only half the story. We are going to have to remove billions of tonnes of Carbon Dioxide to avoid long-term warming.

The idea of greenhouse gas removal is controversial. It seems illogical given the huge investment costs but we don't have any choice: we now know that a stable climate (and therefore the future of humankind) depends both on accelerated decarbonisation and carbon removal from the atmosphere.

Happily, there is a big upside in the shape of recarbonising the natural world – this means promoting the growth of natural vegetation such as soils, forests, wetlands, peat bogs, mangroves and seagrasses to draw down excess carbon. Doing so serves many purposes - regeneration of habitats, carbon removal and economic recovery after 70 years of degradation.

It has taken politicians the best part of 30 years (since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992) to get going on decarbonisation. They now need to get up to speed on this approach in just a few years, and COP26 has to be the place to make that happen.

Recycling Plastic

Soft flexible plastic cannot be recycled through our local council; but it can be recycled at both COOP (Newton Hall) and Sainsbury's (Arnison Centre). Please let us know if you discover that any other supermarkets are doing so, that we may publicise them too.

One of the biggest causes of waste is people putting contaminated plastic amongst their recycling. Please thoroughly **clean your plastic** of all food and chemicals before recycling, or you might cause a whole batch to be sent to landfill!

Please continue to pray for those preparing for COP 26

Please pray for all the scientists, economists and politicians preparing for COP 26, and that the recent spate of floods, heat waves and wildfires would concentrate minds into swift and large-scale action.